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Directorate-General for Education and Culture

**IMPLEMENTATION OF
“EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010”
WORK PROGRAMME**

**WORKING GROUP B
“KEY COMPETENCES”**

**PROGRESS REPORT
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1. INTRODUCTION

The Lisbon European Council in 2000 set the main objective for the European Union, namely to become “the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. Achieving these goals would involve the transformation of the European Union’s social welfare and education systems. The Lisbon Council also identified 5 areas of “new basic skills” for the knowledge-based economy: ***ICT, technological culture, foreign languages, entrepreneurship and social skills***.

To ensure the contribution of education and training to the Lisbon process, the Stockholm European Council adopted in 2001 thirteen concrete future objectives in the field of education and training systems¹ that aim to improve the *quality, access and openness* of the European education and training systems. To ensure the implementation of these objectives, the Barcelona Council adopted a detailed work programme in 2002². The Barcelona Council also called for action ***to improve the mastery of basic skills*** and for promoting ***the European dimension*** in education and its integration into pupils’ basic skills by 2004.

The “**Education and Training 2010**” work programme now covers all actions in the fields of education and training at European level, including vocational education and training (the “Copenhagen process”) and takes into account the development of the European Higher Education Area (“Bologna process”). To take the process forward, the Commission has established expert groups to work on one or more objectives of the work programme. Composed of experts from 31 European countries as well as stakeholders and interested EU and international organisations, the expert groups’ role is to support the implementation of the objectives for education and training systems at national level through mutual learning activities such as exchanges of “good practices”, study visits and peer reviews. Among the first groups established in 2001 was the one on **basic skills, foreign-language teaching and entrepreneurship (Working Group B)**.

Of the thirteen objectives set out in the work programme, Working Group B is responsible for:

- 1.2. *Developing skills for the knowledge society;*
- 3.2. *Developing the spirit of enterprise;*
- 3.3. *Improving foreign language learning*³.

A particular focus of the work has been to identify what the skills needed by everyone in the knowledge-based society are, how these skills could be better integrated into curricula and maintained through life. The working group was also expected to consider

1 Council document 6365/02 of 14/02/2001

2 Detailed work Programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe (2002/C 142/01)

3 A specific working group has been established to work on language learning: see such a language learning indicator; see the report of the group in http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#language

how to make these skills genuinely attainable by all, including the less advantaged, people with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners.

Working Group B has submitted two progress reports. The first report (March 2002) defines 8 domains of key competences with the corresponding knowledge, skills and attitudes relating to each of these domains⁴. The second progress report (November 2003)⁵ builds on the first one and is based on the collection and analysis of good practices on social and interpersonal competence, on cultural awareness, on learning how to learn competence and on adult literacy.

The present progress report takes stock of the third phase of the work (November 2003 – July 2004) and is to a large extent influenced by the messages of the first Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation Education and Training 2010 work programme⁶ (JIR). The need for *comprehensive, coherent and concerted lifelong learning strategies* involves, in particular, ensuring that *all citizens are equipped with the key competences* that are necessary for a successful life in a knowledge-based society. Furthermore, *targeted efforts are needed for disadvantaged groups*: for those with low basic skills and qualifications, groups living in disadvantaged areas or outlying areas and people with learning difficulties or disabilities. The interim report also calls for a consolidation of *the European dimension in education*, thus reiterating the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council.

The working group held three plenary meetings during this period. In accordance with the work plan adopted in December 2003, the following activities were also undertaken by the group during this period of the work:

- (1) Study visits to Iceland and to the Netherlands⁷;
- (2) Mapping the use of key competences in participating countries as a follow-up to the recommendations of the 2003 progress report (Chapter 2.1 in the report and Annex 1 of the report)
- (3) Three subgroups were established to work on the priority areas. Each of them has had two meetings and produced a contribution to this present report as follows:
 - The *European dimension* in the framework of key competences (Chapter 2.2 in the report and Annex 2)
 - Developing the spirit of enterprise and education for entrepreneurship (Chapter 2.3 in the report)
 - The education and training of the *less advantaged learners* (Chapter 2.4).

4 The Key Competences in a Knowledge Based Economy: A First Step Towards Selection, Definition and Description. Document of the Commission Expert Group on “Key Competences”, March 2002.

5 Implementation of “Education and Training 2010” work programme, Working group on Basic skills, entrepreneurship and foreign languages. Progress Report November 2003.
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/basic-skills_en.pdf

6 “Education and Training 2010” The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms. Joint interim Report of the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the Detailed Work Programme on the Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe. Council document 6905/04.

7 Reports on these study visits are available at: <http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010>

- (4) Exchange of good policy practices in three areas of *less advantaged learners* (A full analysis of these examples is available in CIRCA intranet site)
- Ensuring disadvantaged learners acquired key competences such as reading;
 - Ensuring the transition from one educational level to another;
 - Education for less advantaged adults

In line with the messages of the JIR, the emphasis at this stage of the work has been to examine *the coherence and comprehensiveness* of the policies. This approach has been applied in particular to *entrepreneurship education* and to the education of *the less advantaged*. Another main objective of the work has been to add qualitative information to the quantitative benchmarks adopted by the Council in May 2003.

The European framework of key competences presented in the first working group report has been revised with a view to incorporating a European dimension. The revised framework on key competences is annexed (Annex 2).

The work undertaken by the group and the consequent conclusions and recommendations are based on the contributions shown below:

Activity	Participating countries	Participating stakeholders
Study visit to Iceland on “Life Skills” Nov 2003	Iceland (host), Austria, Czech Republic	Efvet/EVTA
Study visit to the Netherlands on 3Community Schools” Feb 2004	The Netherlands (host), Norway, Lithuania	Efvet/EVTA, EUNEC
Mapping the key competences frameworks	All countries except Bulgaria Slovakia, Turkey,	
Participation in subgroups		
<i>Sub-group 1:Entrepreneurship education</i> ⁸	Austria, Belgium (Flemish Community), Germany, The Netherlands, Greece	UAPME/ Unice
<i>Sub-group 2:European dimension</i>	Denmark, Italy, Hungary	ETUCE-DLF
<i>Sub-group 3: Less advantaged learners</i> ⁹	Ireland, Belgium Fl, Hungary, Finland, Norway, Romania, the UK (England)	CSR, EAEA
Good policy practice exchange	Austria, Germany, Belgium (French Community), Belgium (Flemish Community), Czech Republic, France, Hungary, Ireland, Lithuania, Norway, Malta, Poland, Romania, the UK (England)	

2. PROGRESS IN PRIORITY AREAS

2.1. Mapping the key competences

At its December 2003 meeting, the working group considered it would be useful to have a better picture on how key competences are dealt with in participating

8 The subgroup on entrepreneurship education consists of members from the Working Group B on basic skills and of member invited by Enterprise Directorate-General. For details see list of members in Annex 3.

9 The subgroup on less advantaged learners was formed together with Working Group G on and active citizenship and social inclusion. For details see list of members in Annex 3

countries. The Eurydice survey¹⁰ on key competences in 2002 described the situation in EU 15 but an update of the situation in these countries and inclusion the situation in other participating countries was deemed necessary. A questionnaire was distributed requesting the following information:

- The extent to which key competences are taken into account of in national frameworks;
- The extent of curricular reform with regard to key competences
- How extra-curricular work and the attainment of cross-curricular objectives are supported in schools.

The full analysis of the mapping is annexed (see annex 1). The mapping confirmed the trend already seen in the Eurydice survey: **most of the 26 countries that returned the questionnaire indicated that, either explicitly or implicitly, their national frameworks had chosen a “competence” based approach.** The notion of key competence has also gained wide acceptance in such new member states as Hungary, Lithuania and in such candidate countries as Romania. A quite different development has taken place in Italy, where the revised framework curriculum refers to knowledge and skills as learning objectives and not explicitly to competences. Although none of the frameworks is a precise match for the 8 domains defined by Working Group B, there is a large measure of overlap in particular as regards competences such as ICT, learning-to-learn, interpersonal and civic competences, entrepreneurship and cultural awareness.

While the Eurydice survey reported that **curriculum reforms** were underway in Belgium’s French Community, England and Wales, Scotland and Portugal, this year’s mapping indicates similar processes in Romania, Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Finland and Austria (upper secondary) with a greater emphasis on broader competences related to managing one’s own learning, working in teams, being able to communicate etc.

In many cases, the curriculum reform is accompanied by in **increased autonomy at local level**: schools and municipalities are expected to adapt the national framework to local needs and to plan and organise learning in line with nationally adopted goals. The consequences of this approach are obviously related to two important areas: the role of the teachers and the overall support and evaluation of the attainment of cross-curricular objectives. The professional development of teachers throughout their careers is a concern in most of the countries and this in addition to the fact that the attractiveness of the profession itself has suffered in many European countries.

The support for schools to develop **cross-curricular approaches** also needs to take account of a large number of organisational factors. The lack of time for joint planning, lack of inter-disciplinary materials and methods should also focus attention on the administration and management of the schools. Team work among teachers is supported in all countries so that the implementation of cross-curricular

10 EURYDICE (2002) Key Competences; A Developing concept in general compulsory education. Survey 5.

objectives is a possibility. On the other hand, the curriculum overload caused by new requirements can be countered by organising cross-curricular activities as the responses from Malta and Latvia indicate.

The increased autonomy of schools has also raised the question of maintaining the **overall quality of education** and ensuring in particular regional equality. 16 out of 25 responses indicate that some national testing takes place in order to monitor the attainment of basic skills such as reading, writing and numeracy. The majority of countries participate in PISA, some in TIMMS and PIRLS, all of which give indications of the performance in comparison with other countries. The Finnish project on developing a learning-to-learn indicator, the Swedish approach of assessing attitudes and the Hungarian tests that are aimed at assessing pupils' ability to use their knowledge reflect a willingness to measure broader competences. In pupil assessment, the methodology is moving towards more descriptive methodologies, such as the use of portfolios for completing the traditional assessment.

In the area of **adult education** and training the overall emphasis is on employability, social inclusion with a particular focus on disadvantaged learners. The competence areas that are dealt with most effectively are **ICT, literacy and numeracy, foreign languages, language of the hosting country and communication in the mother tongue**. The first two priorities were highlighted also in the collection of good policy practice examples: in addition to organising reading and numeracy tuition by traditional means, the use of ICT as a tool is gaining more and more importance, and is therefore one of the future challenges to be faced.

The emphasis on these fundamental skills characterizes the attempts to develop lifelong learning strategies that take into account the various needs of disadvantaged learners. However, in addition to these traditional basic skills, **learning to learn** and **entrepreneurship** competences were identified as future priorities in many countries. The need for developing **assessment methodology** for adult skills is widely recognised as a priority¹¹. Moreover, some countries have still to develop a **proper infrastructure** to adult learners.

The main points of the mapping can be summarised as follows:

- The evidence suggests that there is substantial activity across Europe in the area of **curricular reform**: this varies in scale from far-reaching curricular reform, as in Romania, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Ireland, to initiatives with more specific targets.
- Most of the responses reviewed indicated that national frameworks for key competences had been defined — explicitly or implicitly.
- The evidence suggests that key competences are now being incorporated in national curricula across Europe.

11 The Commission has recently launched a study on Direct Adults Skills Measurement that will propose methodological approaches that would be feasible for these purposes. The results of the study will be available in 2005.

- There was considerable overlap with the key competences domains identified by WG B, although the key competences were often described in different terms.
- Across Europe, there was evidence of a perceived need to prepare students better for the challenges of working life in a rapidly-developing European economy.
- Broadly speaking, the subject-based nature of teaching was perceived as an obstacle to developing the **cross-curricular approaches** that were believed to fulfil the above goal.
- The evidence suggests that there are currently **few systematic tools** in use for measuring the acquisition of key competences.
- There is, however, widespread national **testing in literacy and numeracy**, and on a more limited scale in the areas of science and foreign language acquisition.
- As regards key competences for **adults**, the focus was on **literacy and numeracy, ICT and foreign languages**.

2.2. The European Dimension of Key Competences

2.2.1. Background

A sub-group was established to examine how the European dimension could be brought into the existing 8 domains of key competences, as a response to the request voiced by the Barcelona European Council and the messages in the 2004 joint interim report. The mandate of the subgroup was to explore first of all how the “European Dimension” could be defined. Secondly, it was expected to reflect how the European dimension is linked to three elements of a “key” competence, (i.e. personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship and employability). Finally, the subgroup was asked to make firm proposals on how the elements of European dimension could be brought into the existing framework of key competences.

2.2.2. Defining the European dimension

The subgroup considered that defining the “*European Dimension*” was the fundamental starting point for the work. Even though the debate on the European dimension is not a new one, a clear definition of it could not be found in official documents. For example, in the *Resolution of the European Council* (1988) and in the *Green Paper on European dimension in education (1994)*¹² both list objectives and strategies for implementing the European dimension in education, but do not offer a definition of the concept itself. The *Green Paper*, for instance, refers to “European Citizenship” that is based on “*shared values on interdependence, democracy, equality of opportunity and mutual respect*” for different cultural and ethnic identities and to educating people “*for democracy, for the fight against inequality, to be tolerant and to respect diversity*”. Similarly, in the recent study *on European Dimension in Secondary Education*¹³ commissioned by the European Parliament (2003) the lack of such a definition is striking although the study does make important suggestions on implementation.

In his analysis of the concept of the “European dimension”, Barthélémy¹⁴ illustrates the various aspects linked to the European dimension and the consequent difficulties in defining it. The European dimension can be seen as an “overarching” concept that allows various components of knowledge to be considered and covers a broad set of social phenomena. It is related to the concepts of ‘Europe’, its civilization, values and projects.

The European dimension has often been linked to “active citizenship” and “European citizenship”. Then again, difficulties emerge when attempting to explain what the European dimension could be. The European Commission Study Group on Education and Training (1997)¹⁵ described the development of Europe as being based on ‘*a shared political culture of democracy*’ to which Europeans feel they belong as citizens. This

12 COM 1993/0457 final

13 European Parliament, Directorate-General for Research, Education and Culture Series EDUC 113 EN

14 Dominique Barthélémy: Analysis of the Concept of European Dimension. European Education, 1999 vol;31, no 1, pp 64-95.

15 Study group on education and training : report : accomplishing Europe through education and training / EU, European Commission. Luxembourg : EUR-OP, 1997. -- 153 p. ; ann. -- ISBN 9282794938

citizenship emerges from new social relations that Europeans have established among themselves and goes beyond formalised legal entitlements (such as the European Citizenship defined in the Maastricht Treaty) and is essentially *a feeling of belonging to a multicultural and multilingual community with a common sense of developing the future together*. The same group identifies a set of key values that are “oriented towards the future” and form the basis for the common European development: human rights/human dignity; fundamental freedoms; democratic legitimacy; peace and the rejection of violence; respect for others; a spirit of solidarity; equitable development; equal opportunities; the principle of rational thought/the ethics of evidence and proof; conservation of the eco-system; personal responsibility. These fundamental values are naturally reflected in the Treaties that have established the European Union as well as in the draft European Constitutional Treaty¹⁶.

The term “active citizenship” has been widened by the Council of Europe to include “*Democratic citizenship*” and “Education for Democratic Citizenship”¹⁷. This approach requires that in order to become “participatory citizens”, the ethical, political, legal, cultural, socio-economic and psycho-sociological dimensions have to be involved. In this approach the “European dimension” can be seen as a transversal theme, touching upon all the dimensions listed.

The “*European dimension*” and “*learning for active citizenship*” have always been an unfolding element in the *European education, training and youth programmes*. All these programmes underline that participation and inclusion do not end at national borders. Mobility and partnerships offered by the programmes provide practical and first-hand experience with the “European dimension”. A study on the contribution of the programmes to the development of citizenship with a European dimension¹⁸ confirms the central role that formal and non-formal education and training can make in this area. The study re-affirms the importance of addressing both *structural* and *political aspects* of learning for citizenship (rights, information and inclusion) as well as the cultural and personal aspects such as identities, feelings and skills.

A public consultation exercise on the future development of Community education and training programmes, which took place between November 2002 and February 2003, revealed that promoting the European dimension and the European citizenship was also seen as crucial to future programmes. The Commission’s proposal¹⁹ for a new generation of Community Education and Training programmes responds to this need as it enhances the European dimension in education and vocational training and promotes youth mobility.

16 The draft Constitutional Treaty for Europe. For details, see http://europa.eu.int/futurum/eu_constitution_en.htm

17 Council of Europe DGIV/EDU/CIT (2000) 40

18 The Contribution of Community Action Programmes in the Fields of Education, Training and Youth to the development of Citizenship with a European Dimension. Final Synthesis report: August 1977, analysis done by University of Birmingham (Dr Audrey Osler). (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/archive/citizen/birmingham.pdf>)

19 COM(2004) 156 final, see http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/doc/official/keydoc/keydoc_en.html

2.2.3. *The European dimension in the context of key competences*

The need for enhancing the “European dimension” in the framework of key competences should be seen in the context of the present challenges that are facing Europe: globalisation, that boosts economic, political and cultural integration, and international competition both affect all citizens both at national and at local levels. Values such as democracy and welfare are challenged by xenophobia, racism and violence, yet they are taken for granted by many. The Eurobarometer on public opinion concerning the European Union also reveals that the basic values underlying European cooperation should be made better known by strengthening the dimension of the European Union that focuses on people.²⁰

As regards the above-mentioned problems with defining the “European dimension” and the challenges facing the European project, the experts in the working group emphasise that the “European dimension” is, first of all, based on a recognition of the *cultural, historical and social relationship and on interaction in the development of the common, shared values as a foundation for living democracy*. The acquisition of relevant *key competences* with a relevant “*European dimension*” is therefore crucial for individual citizens as far as their work, involvement in decision-making and a rich and inspiring life are concerned.

Moreover, in order to become a living reality, “European dimension” requires actions and involvement from both the *individual and society*: the individual is required to make European democracy “alive” through awareness, involvement and acknowledgement of mutual interests and through exchanging views constructively as a basis for legitimate decision-making – at local, regional, national and European level, while society at large shoulders a sizeable responsibility in supporting actively the growth of such activities by providing and maintaining democratic infrastructures, institutions, fora and by establishing the practical means for everyone to make themselves heard, keen to participate and exercise their basic rights.

Therefore, the European dimension can be seen as a cultural construction at individual and social levels:

- *The European dimension allows a person to **identify himself or herself** as a European, providing a continuation of a perception of life in a family, a community, region, nation, EU, leading ultimately to the perception of being a world citizen.*
- ***Socially** it means living in a European house that is based on democracy, human rights and responsibility for a peaceful and sustainable development of the world.*
- ***Culturally** it means creation, maintenance, exchange and enjoying of a diverse, vital and rich heritage in terms of environment, architecture, music, literature and visual art.*

The term “key competence” has been defined to serve three different (although overlapping), aspects of life: personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship and employment²¹. The “European dimension” furthers these aspects in the following way:

Personal fulfilment

20 Public Opinion in the European Union » Eurobarometer 59 (June 2003) European Commission, DG Press and Communication.

21 See the working group’s progress report November 2003

- The European dimension is a *continuation* of the perception starting from family, local community, region and country to the European level and ultimately leading to a acknowledgement of being a world citizen;
- European values can serve as a personal reference and framework, being aware and enjoying the richness and diversity of cultures, including languages, thereby contributing to the formation of personal identity and extending one's roots;
- Interaction and implementation of the "European values" in personal life create a safe and solid basis for personal well-being.

Active citizenship

- The European dimension is a continuation of local, regional and national levels as regards constructive participation in democracy including the broad entrepreneurship competence as defined by Working Group B;
- Europe is a reference for commonly agreed decisions at national, regional local levels but also in the global context;
- The European values include responsibility as part of the democracy – there has to be an interaction between the opportunities given and constructive participation in using and shaping them;
- The European dimension nurtures cultural literacy, both by appreciating the shared cultural knowledge and diversity of Europe and by contributing to it.

Employability

- The European dimension means awareness and active use of the opportunities offered by European cooperation, in particular through mobility in the fields of education, training and employment;
- The European dimension, in line with the principles of internal markets, allows enterprise and employment abroad to be organised and established across borders and/or cooperation with different nationalities to develop in one's working life.

2.2.4. Integrating the "European dimension" into the eight domains of key competences

The eight domains of key competences have been revised in order to enhance the "European dimension" of this framework. Given the very purpose of this framework (it should remain at a rather general level to allow appropriate applications at national level) and the fact that the framework already has an emphasis on broad competence acquisition and on active and participatory citizenship, some changes have been proposed in **interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, civic competence and cultural awareness**. The proposed changes include all three areas relating to the competences, knowledge, skills and attitudes and in most of the cases the different elements were re-grouped to accommodate the additions.

The revised framework is shown in Annex 2.

2.2.5. *What does the European Dimension mean for education?*

The 2004 joint interim report of the Council and the Commission underlines the need for consolidating the European dimension in education. In spite of the progress achieved by, for example, European programmes in education, training and youth, surveys regularly confirm that the European project has not succeeded in attracting the appropriate level of interest or the full support of EU citizens. The role of the schools was also highlighted in the work of the Convention on the Future of Europe: schools have a fundamental role to play in allowing everyone to be informed and understand the meaning of European integration.

However, the European dimension as described above is acquired not only through *formal education* and training but also through *non-formal* and *informal* learning. The awareness of basic European values such as democracy, justice and social solidarity, the respect of human rights is also acquired *through the experience and practice* in the learning environment, which is an essential aspect to be considered in addition to knowledge provision. Therefore, the respect of the richness and diversity of languages and cultures of the European countries is one of the guiding principles of including the European dimension into education and training.

In concrete terms this means that the European dimension is linked to the physical *mobility* of pupils, students, researchers and teachers. Creation of a European area of education and training needs obstacles to the recognition of diplomas and qualifications to be removed so that people can study and work anywhere in Europe. The European education, training and youth programmes that support partnerships and cooperation with schools in other European countries provide *real opportunities* for pupils and students to learn about European cultures.

The European dimension is also an element in the *content* of teaching and learning. It is crucial that pupils learn about the common history of Europe, learn how ideas, knowledge and skills have been exchanged over thousands of years and served as inspiration for the development of a common, though diverse, European culture. Learning foreign languages also promotes an understanding of cultures. Understanding the European institutions such as the European Union and the Council of Europe is crucial, not only in the global context but also in the context of countries' commitments to solve common problems that are of importance to all.

As a result the inter-disciplinary nature of the European dimension and the fact that its involvement in learning activities calls for reflection at all levels, *a national-level debate* would be useful to clarify the role of the European dimension in education and in particular as part of education in democratic citizenship. A good starting point for the debate would be *an analysis of the existing materials*, what it is to cover and even possible prejudices.

As indicated by several studies, there is information available on European issues, but this information is often scattered. It would therefore be advisable to *establish portals* to collate the various sources and to provide information, not only for different subjects such as history and geography, but for arts and transversal themes such as education in democratic citizenship.

The challenges of enhancing the European dimension in education and training and promoting European citizenship are common to all European countries. The exchange of good practice would therefore be a useful step towards progress in this area.

2.3. Entrepreneurship education and learning

2.3.1. *Entrepreneurship as a key competence – introduction and rationale*

The Lisbon European Council in 2000 identified entrepreneurship as one of the ‘new basic skills’ for the knowledge-based economy. Further conceptual work on the definition of key competences in general and in particular of those eight competences considered as key competences was undertaken by Working Group B (‘Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship’) as a follow-up to the Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems²², where Objective 3.2 supports the development of education for entrepreneurship.

In the educational field entrepreneurship is often taken in the narrow meaning of the term and therefore it suffers from a certain *image problem*, which mainly results from falsely narrowing down ‘entrepreneurship’ to ‘running a business, being an employer/self-employed’. Schools and those in the educational field often do not see it as their task to prepare pupils for running a business, but rather see their task as one of developing basic competences for a successful life. The first section of this paper comprises a short outline of entrepreneurship as a key competence in a broad sense and as an important personal quality crucial to the ability to manage one’s life.

The etymology suggests a more suitable interpretation: In French, where the English expression comes from, “entreprendre” means “to undertake, to take initiative”. The same etymology is true for translations of entrepreneurship into many other languages (e.g. intraprendere in Italian or unternehmen in German). Within the framework of key competences entrepreneurship is not seen as a distinct psychological variable but rather an interplay of different skills, knowledge, affective factors and personal qualities. The combination of such competences are, among others, an inevitable precondition for successful entrepreneurs but it is also obvious that each individual has the need for those competences in order to manage his or her personal life. The term entrepreneurship is therefore used to label a certain set of competences needed by and useful to all.

Looking at the definition adopted by DG Enterprise’s expert group for education and training for entrepreneurship, it is clear that running a business is only a limited aspect of it. This definition includes two components²³

- *a broader concept of education for entrepreneurial attitudes and skills, which involves developing certain personal qualities and is not directly focused on the creation of new businesses; and,*
- *a more specific concept of training on how to create a business.*

22 OJ 14.06.2002 2002/C 142/01

23 Best Procedure project on "Education and training for entrepreneurship", Final Report of the Expert Group, November 2002

An understanding of Entrepreneurship as a general competence is stressed by the definition adopted by WG B in its list of key competences²⁴:

Entrepreneurship has a passive and an active component: the propensity to induce changes oneself, but also the ability to welcome and support innovation brought about by external factors by welcoming change, taking responsibility for one's actions, positive or negative, to finish what we start, to know where we are going, to set objectives and meet them, and have the motivation to succeed.

Inspired by and building upon OECD's DeSeCo-Project²⁵ WG B defines key competences as follows:

Key competences represent a transferable, multifunctional package of knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory school or training, and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of Lifelong Learning.

In detail, this definition comprises two major criteria for a key competence:

- Competences that can be labelled "key" are *transferable* and *multifunctional*. This means that they can be applied in a variety of situations and contexts.
- Key competences are needed by and useful to each and every one of us in order to be successful in life. They are a prerequisite. Individuals lacking key competences are likely not to achieve personal fulfilment, not to get a good job and not to become an active member of society.

Transferability and multi-functionality as well as success in life refer not only to employability but to a variety of aspects running horizontally and vertically through a life that can be roughly structured into three areas or clusters which are essential for living and working in a modern society:

- Leading a **private life** that promotes personal fulfilment including family, friends, leisure activities and so on
- **Professional life** that primarily secures income but also acts as a source for personal fulfilment and contributes to the quality of life.
- **Participating in society** and contributing to its further development by being an active citizen on different levels, becoming involved in NGOs and so on.

From this outline it becomes clear that entrepreneurship, if only understood as the abilities and skills applicable for running an enterprise, could not be included in a set of key competences. But as previously shown, **both WG B and experts of DG Enterprise adopted a definition of entrepreneurship that goes far beyond such a narrow interpretation.** Entrepreneurship includes, for instance, planning, organising, analysing,

24 Working Group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship. Progress Report, November 2003. Annex 2.

25 Rychen, D. S. & Salganik, L. H. [Ed.]: Defining and Selecting Key Competencies. – Göttingen: Hogrefe & Huber Publishers, 2001.

communicating, doing, de-briefing, evaluating and recording progress in learning. That set of “management competences” is relevant in private life for managing one’s household etc. as well as for business and also for participation in society. Other important aspects of entrepreneurship that are obviously equally relevant in all three areas of life include identifying one’s personal strengths and weaknesses, displaying proactive behaviour, being curious and creative, understanding risk, responding positively to changes and the disposition to show initiative.

Keeping in mind the broad definition and the components of entrepreneurship it could easily be demonstrated that schools are dealing with entrepreneurship at all stages, though usually beginning with the more general skills and competences at primary school level and later adding the more specific concept of training on how to create a business especially at upper secondary level. But education in entrepreneurship is not only a matter for schools. As opposed to the teaching of subjects like maths or physics, where schools generally have a monopoly, there is a strong influence on developing entrepreneurship from the perspective of non-formal and informal education. Contributions from outside schools and closer co-operation between schools and other institutions therefore deserve special attention as will be shown later in this paper. This is why the group prefers the title “**Entrepreneurship education and learning**” denoting that the acquisition of that set of competences will be through both formal, non-formal and informal channels. "Education" can therefore mean a process guided by more formal structures, including the period of compulsory education, and "Learning" will include experiential learning - or "learning by doing" in either informal or non-formal practice. In this sense entrepreneurial competences become integral to Lifelong Learning for which the motivation inherent in "learning to learn" becomes critical.

As entrepreneurship education is normally expressed in framework curricula as a **cross-curricular objective**, there are several factors that affect its successful implementation at school level. Coherent policies are needed in order to support cooperation between the different sectors involved at all levels of decision-making and administration. *The following paragraphs aim to underline the necessary elements that should be taken into account in formulating policies for the promotion and coherent implementation of entrepreneurship education.* These elements have been explored by the subgroup with regard to measures needed both at the EU and the national levels.

2.3.2. Policy measures needed for implementing entrepreneurship education – How can EU policies better support the national policies on entrepreneurship education?

The Lisbon Council conclusions, by recognising entrepreneurship as one of the basic skills have already helped to guide discussions and policies in the right direction. The 2004 Council and Commission Joint interim report on the Education and Training 2010 process²⁶ reiterates the need for promoting entrepreneurship as one of the key competences for all citizens and calls on the Member States to support further work on this issue, thereby reinforcing the messages from Working Group B and in the related reports from DG ENTR.

26 OJ of 14/06/2002 2002/C 142/01

The following recommendation is given with a view to achieving effective cooperation at the EU-level for the promotion of entrepreneurship:

Recommendation 1:

As promoting entrepreneurship education is a horizontal issue, **inter-directorate cooperation** is vital in order to ensure a coherent and **comprehensive strategy** concerning education and training, enterprises and employment. Such a strategy should include **European-level indicators, dissemination of good practice and monitoring of progress** within the global framework of Lisbon European Council conclusions.

The following elements are crucial:

- **Inter-Directorate cooperation**, of which the establishment and work of a subgroup between DG EAC and DG ENTR is a good example, should be made systematic and sustained. The reports produced at the EU-level, such as the Employment reports, Education & Training 2010 biennial reports, reports on entrepreneurship etc. should reflect this coherent cooperation.
- The European-level strategy should clearly **define the actions and responsible actors** in order to meet the Objective 3.2. Increasing the spirit of enterprise of the Detailed work programme
- **European-level indicators** would be useful to make policies more coherent at national level. The measurement of the extent to which countries have managed to create inter-ministerial cooperation for promoting entrepreneurship, would be one area where a qualitative indicator would be useful. Such an indicator would also indicate good practices for the purpose of mutual learning.
- Organising a possible **conference(s)** bringing together representatives of the national ministries of industry and education and all relevant stakeholders (social partners etc.) to present examples of projects and strategies implemented and evaluated could give a strong incentive to cooperation at national level.
- Existing **examples** in Europe should be presented and disseminated in order to stimulate mutual learning. A portal in the internet that would be accessible to policy-makers and practitioners should be established to disseminate good practice examples. The other means of the Open Method of Coordination such as study visits and peer reviews should be organised to reflect the needs of countries and the good policy practices already in place.
- Progress in the Member States with implementing entrepreneurship education should be **monitored** in the framework of the Lisbon objectives. The European Commission will coordinate the monitoring of the process and include an evaluation of entrepreneurship education objective in its reports on education and training, enterprise, employment policies.

2.3.3. *Establishing a coherent framework for entrepreneurship education and learning at national level*

The subgroup recognised that there are a number of good initiatives in various countries in promoting entrepreneurship education and learning. However, it is essential that these **initiatives are supported by a coherent and comprehensive policy** that involves all sectors and actors in the field. The following **recommendations** are explained in more detail to identify the different **elements** that need to be taken into account. Some **examples** are presented to illustrate how some countries have successfully met the challenge.

Recommendation 2:

In order to create coherent and comprehensive policy at **national** level to support entrepreneurship education and learning, it is crucial to establish **permanent and sustained inter-service and inter-ministerial coordination** involving all the departments and actors concerned. This cooperation should lead to an action plan with **clear objectives, benchmarks and monitoring** of progress.

The following elements are crucial in formulating a successful policy:

- Since promoting entrepreneurship involves well established cooperation between ministries and other agencies, it is vital that permanent structures, such as steering groups bringing together different Ministries, are put in place. Ensuring a well structured dialogue and partnership (including social partners representing all levels of employers and employees, NGOs etc) would facilitate common efforts in the area. In addition, links to relevant policies such as consumer protection should be included.

In Austria, for example, the Ministry for Education, the Ministry for Economic Affairs and the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber have established permanent high-level contacts to promote entrepreneurship.

- National education and training systems, including curricula and the **implicit assumptions regarding** the different traditional paths of education and training, should be analysed in order to clarify whether they encourage or hamper the development of the entrepreneurial mindset;

The Davies Review²⁷ in the UK revealed that less than 30% of young people gain “enterprise” experience at any point in their school career. Moreover, few gain the necessary awareness of finance and economic issues, vital skills for any would-be entrepreneurs. Interestingly, almost the opposite situation can be found in Austria: due to a well developed apprenticeship system, those in vocational training are more likely to establish small enterprises after completing their training.

27 Review of enterprise and the economy in schools and further education (Davies review)
<http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ebnet/DR/DR.cfm>

- Quantitative and qualitative benchmarks or targets should be set at a national level in order to facilitate the achievement of firm and measurable goals.

In the UK, in England, the recommendations of the Davies Review have been accepted by the Government, and a statutory requirement for Work-related Learning is in place to implement by September 2005, an entitlement to five days of enterprise education for all pupils aged 15 in secondary schools.

Recommendation 3:

All national curricula should include **explicit objectives** for entrepreneurship education, accompanied by **practical implementation guidelines**, support mechanisms and teacher training in order to facilitate the local implementation of entrepreneurship educational and learning objectives.

- Having entrepreneurship **explicitly included in the national framework curriculum** would provide the incentive for better cooperation. National policies should make it clear that **cross-curricular objectives** such as entrepreneurship just as high a status as the more “measurable” subjects. The promotion of coherent **lifelong learning policies** in general gives a proper framework in developing entrepreneurship as one of the key competences²⁸.

In Austria entrepreneurship education is part of the curricula of middle and higher vocational training schools, for example in the form of students running a training (fictitious) firm. The government sponsors the running of training firms several hours a week for one year for all pupils in schools and colleges teaching business administration (where this is a compulsory subject) and in other institutions of secondary level (on an optional basis).

In Greece, the Ministry of Education is promoting comprehensive measures to introduce entrepreneurship education in secondary education.

The Czech curriculum reform has used the framework of 8 key competences as a starting point and defined objectives and implementation guidelines for entrepreneurship education. The new curriculum refers explicitly to entrepreneurship competence. In secondary education entrepreneurship is represented in a larger competence domain “Man and the World of Labour”.

- **In the initial and continuing training of teachers**, heads of schools and other staff, the role of entrepreneurship should be enhanced, especially because it supports other learning objectives such as the management of one’s own learning. It is also worthwhile to emphasise that teaching approaches that support activities leading to better entrepreneurial competences of pupils may contribute to the overall motivation and well-being of pupils at school²⁹.

28 The Council (Education) adopted a view at its meeting on 26 Feb 2004 that it would be desirable that coherent lifelong learning strategies be in place by 2006 (2004 Joint Interim Report to the European Council).

29 The Council (Education) Resolution of 25 November 2003 calls for finding ways to combat early school leaving and disaffection among young people by, for instance, organising learning activities which pupils find rewarding and are linked to working life.

The Enterprise Education Pathfinders project in the UK(ENGLAND) promotes cooperation between schools and local companies especially in the disadvantaged areas by offering opportunities for young people to experience and understand enterprise, business and the economy and financial literacy, thus motivating them and helping them to optimise the benefits of schooling.

- **Education in general**, and in particular the pedagogical approaches, should encourage the understanding of risk-taking and initiative-taking and dealing with failures constructively.

Within the Student Company Programme promoted across Europe by Junior Achievement – Young Enterprise students create and run mini-companies for one school year. These are real enterprises operating in a protected environment, producing and selling real products or services. Students decide upon the product or service, choose their managers and sell shares to raise capital. They produce or order the product made to their design. They sell products and keep accounts. As a result of participation in these programmes students learn how to work in a team, improve their communication skills, develop enthusiasm and self-confidence, they become more willing to take responsibility and use their initiative. In some countries programmes using these or similar pedagogical tools receive significant financial support from the public sector. In Norway, public funding to Young Enterprise Norway is granted by three different Ministries. In Ireland, a number of state programmes use the methodology of mini-companies (examples are the Transition Year Programme and the LCA).

2.3.4. Improving the image of entrepreneurship

Recommendation 4:

In order to raise the profile and the **image** of entrepreneurship education and to highlight its vital contribution to society at large, it is important to emphasise the **wider competences** that are related to better management of learning, career and life in general and acquired through entrepreneurship education and learning.

- It is essential that policies and practices ensure that entrepreneurship is understood in its **broader meaning** and highlight its contribution to **personal fulfilment** and to the development of the **society as a whole** in order to avoid the common misunderstanding that it is only about establishing business. Moreover, curriculum developers should make it clear how the existing elements in the curricula are actually linked to entrepreneurship competence (initiative-taking, managing one's learning etc.) to promote an understanding of the broad definition of entrepreneurship competence. Moreover, entrepreneurship competence contributes to **managing one's own learning** and thus encourages people to fulfil their potential to a greater degree.

In Iceland there is great emphasis placed on innovation through the "Young inventors competition 30", which is embedded the national curriculum with about a third of all primary schools participating. The major aims are to encourage students' creativity, to develop their idea, and enter them into a competition. The winners receive prizes for designs and inventions.

In the Netherlands, the Entrepreneurial City is a project based on creating “learning landscapes”. Children are trying to achieve a certain goal, e.g. setting up their own power station at school or starting their own Third World shop. These projects appeal to basic entrepreneurial qualities, such as independence, creativity and co-operation. Several schools in different parts of the Netherlands have participated.

- In promoting entrepreneurship, it is important to define the different **target groups** (such as heads of schools, administrators, teachers, parents, school boards) and accordingly to provide information that focuses on its broad benefits. It is important to make sure that all new proposals concerning entrepreneurship education are adequately explained and publicised, particularly to parents, in order to secure their support.

In the UK(ENGLAND), Enterprise Insight is a national campaign coalition that works in partnership with the key enterprise capacity-building and educational organisations. Local activities are driven by regional campaign teams organising an Enterprise Week, creating networks of young people, facilitating enterprise activities within the community with the objective of creating a culture of enterprise in the UK(ENGLAND).

- Transforming entrepreneurship education objectives into **real and achievable “products”** such as mini-companies run by pupils, or modularising objectives into concrete programmes and courses facilitate schools to implement the objectives.

The Driving Licence for Entrepreneurs in Austria has 4 modules. The first module follows the broad conception on entrepreneurship and can be chosen in lower-secondary. The following modules in upper-secondary education lead to a certificate that is recognised by employers.

2.3.5. Empowering schools to implement entrepreneurship education and learning successfully

Recommendation 5:

Schools should be provided with **practical support** and **incentives** that facilitate the implementation of relevant activities related to entrepreneurship education and learning.

Since entrepreneurship education is a **cross-curricular objective**, schools should be encouraged to work jointly with the **local community** to provide out-of-school learning opportunities and thus to transform schools into learning environments that support the development of a broad entrepreneurship competence.

- Schools should be empowered to **create a learning environment** that supports the acquisition of **cross-curricular competences such as entrepreneurship**. This means that they should have the appropriate resources in terms of time, funding and flexibility to coordinate activities aimed at developing pupils’ competences. They should be encouraged also to organise courses outside the formal educational programme, as this would improve their ability to take new initiatives.

- Promoting **self-assessment of schools**, with the focus on cross-curricular objectives such as entrepreneurship competence, will encourage them to take up innovative approaches and programmes. Including cross-curricular objectives into the self-assessment of schools will also make it clear that they are an important issue
- Cross-curricular aspects in general cannot be properly assessed by using traditional methods like tests. Schools should therefore be encouraged to develop and use innovative assessment methods. Accompanying formal pupil assessment with supplementary means such as **portfolios** would not only motivate students to participate in different activities, but make the competences of pupils more visible and boost their ability to organize their own learning processes. As such, alternative assessment strategies could also contribute to entrepreneurship. It is also important that alternative methods of achievement documentation are recognised by the relevant parties, in particular by employers.

In Belgium the Flemish Community has developed an instrument for use by the inspectorate of secondary education that aims to help schools to achieve more cross-curricular objectives by offering tools for creating a “vision” of how to deliver key competences successfully, to put them into practice and evaluate the effectiveness of the process. This process supports entrepreneurship education as it is part of the objectives under the regional curriculum.

- Access to entrepreneurship education **material** and **examples of good practice** should be organised to enable teachers and students to match ideas to needs and receive support in the form of positive exchange visits to help them develop these ideas.

In the Netherlands, the Ministry of Economic Affairs funds the implementation of pilot projects in the schools. Support includes the development of teaching methods and materials and other activities such as the organisation of seminars, training for teachers etc. The final goal is to encourage take-up of these projects by other schools in the country and to achieve a wide dissemination of good practice.

- **Companies** could be given appropriate and proportionate **incentives** (tax and others) to welcome students and contribute to their training. **Responsibilities** of teachers, schools, enterprises in relation to security for instance should be clarified at all levels when students visit or train in companies in order to learn about enterprise. Regulations should be clear enough not to hinder schools in their application of innovative educational approaches.
- **National competitions** that highlight the most innovative programmes and practices would provide a stimulus and a framework for improving their practices with regard to entrepreneurship education.
- Appropriate **career advice, guidance and counselling** should be ensured for all schools and pupils. At the moment, most of this advice is provided by large organisations. The role of **local businesses** in this respect should be increased to provide better understanding of careers also in SMEs and their role in the economy.

2.3.6. *Indicators*

The discussion in the subgroup acknowledged the difficulties in creating *quantitative indicators* on entrepreneurship education, in particular with regard to the broad conception of entrepreneurship as a life skill. Given this difficulty, it was considered that *qualitative indicators* would be more helpful in this context. The following points were presented for further development:

- The Commission should try to **involve institutions** in the various countries in order to develop the collection of information on entrepreneurship education and to develop ways to assess progress in participating countries.
- As it is not possible at the moment to have comprehensive quantitative data on entrepreneurship education (i.e. about all existing programmes and activities), **indicators targeting some specific and well-known programmes** can help in creating a first basis for monitoring progress. To this end, the new Commission's project on "Mini-companies" can contribute in a major way, as it is planned that data on the most important programmes using the methodology of mini-companies and virtual firms will be collected in all countries and at European level.
- **Qualitative indicator No. 1** in the latest report from the Expert Group coordinated by DG ENTR ("*establishing a high-level coordination group for entrepreneurship education*") should be incorporated into the recommendations of this group. This could even be seen as a benchmark setting a target for the establishment of these groups.

2.3.7. *Future prospects*

The Commission intends to continue the cooperation between Directorate-Generals for education and entrepreneurship. The joint subgroup will hold a meeting in September 2004 to prepare a meeting with the Working Group B and the expert group in DG ENTR.

Commission Communication on entrepreneurship education is due to be published in 2004/2005 and in 2005, a joint conference on entrepreneurship education will take place.

The Standing group on indicators and benchmarks will examine the proposals on entrepreneurship education indicators as part of their plan for the development of new indicators.

2.4. Disadvantaged learners

2.4.1. Background

The 2004 joint interim report of the Commission and Council on the Implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme reiterated the need for addressing disadvantaged learners. As the theme “disadvantaged” touched upon several objectives, a joint subgroup was established with members of Working Group G on Open Learning Environment and Active Citizenship³⁰. As its first task, the subgroup mapped out the critical stages encountered by disadvantaged learners in the course of lifelong learning and on that basis, Working Group B decided to collect good policy practice examples in three areas:

- Securing key competences such as reading skills for all;
- Securing a smooth transition from one educational level to another, and;
- Addressing the learning needs of less advantaged adults.

The selected priorities are closely related to the *benchmarks* adopted by the Council (Education) in May 2003. Examining the essential factors of policies aimed at producing qualitative information on the phenomena and leading to messages and recommendations to policy makers.

The following chapters draw the main conclusions from the exercise. The findings of the mapping as well as the findings of international studies such as PISA have been taken into account.

The following definition for the less advantaged learners was agreed upon as a starting point for the work:

Children, young people and adults who, due to disadvantage caused by a combination of personal, social, cultural and economic circumstances, need additional support to enable them to reach their full educational potential.

This definition acknowledges the need for a *holistic approach* when addressing the disadvantage problem. In addition to the situation of the individual and their family, it is vital to understand *the whole social situation* of the individual in order to coordinate measures effectively.

2.4.2. Securing key competences for disadvantaged learners

The need for comprehensive policies for securing key competences such as reading is supported by the latest PISA 2000 analysis. An analysis of the PISA 2000³¹ results indicates that in addition to relevant pedagogical approaches for teaching reading, overall success very much depends on the *broader competences* that make learning meaningful.

30 Open learning environment, active citizenship and social inclusion

31 OECD 2003: Education Policy Analysis.

Learning strategies, in particular recognising one's own learning style and being able to regulate learning are crucial elements not only for learning skills as such but for using them adequately in new situations. Moreover, the *reading habits* of young learners and the *overall culture* in relation to reading are factors that determine successful learning, in particular when television and internet are seen as threatening the development of more comprehensive reading competence.

The policy practice examples from **UK (England), Hungary and Romania** address the need for comprehensive approaches. In these countries there is a *national strategy* that is based on either *national or international evaluations* of readings skills, that have revealed the need for tackling the issue. In the case of the UK(England), where the overall infrastructure is well-established, the focus has been on improving teachers' awareness and competences to teach reading and in providing schools with the means to deal with the issue. Among other measures, this has meant involving the heads of schools in training, thus recognising their responsibility for the planning and practical implementation of the programmes and providing schools with practical ideas and materials for implementing the programme. Moreover, in order to break the generational cycle of underachievement, the UK (England) has developed a *family literacy* programme. This programme, that is a component of "Skills for life" learning infrastructure, works with parents, grandparents and other primary carers to support literacy and numeracy activities with their children.

The **Maltese** programme that addresses the young people at risk of educational failure actively involves families' support for the learning process. It also enhances the lifelong learning of parents as they participate in the programme. For schools the programme offers support for integrating students with low basic skills in order to help them to catch up and continue a normal education. The final objective of the programme *is to incorporate the methodology into everyday school practice* in order to avoid failure and dropping out.

The Hungarian policy is a good example of making full use of *research findings* in the field of education and transferring this knowledge to teacher training, to development of tests and materials for schools. The research findings on the *core skills* that are pre-requisites for reading, provide a useful tool for understanding and improving the learning needs of individual children. Moreover, the Hungarian policy includes the development of an *infrastructure of support services* such as a comprehensive network of speech therapists.

The Romanian policy measures address the *overall culture of reading* by creating an infrastructure of libraries and campaigns for promoting reading all over the country. A special focus is on *parents* as they are in a key position to support their children's learning.

In case of the **UK (England)**, there are measurable *national targets* set that are combined with *tests and statistical follow-up*. Although there is a danger that testing will result in a narrowing down of the skills to be taught, concentrating only on those that are tested at the expense of broader competences, a close monitoring programme will allow measures to be targeted at the groups that need them most. This has been the case in the UK(England), where the best results of the literacy strategy have been achieved in the *most deprived areas*.

Another major area for securing key competences for all is the development of support mechanisms to help for pupils with **special educational needs (SEN)**. The overall trend

is towards *inclusion*, although the OECD statistics³² show that there are still major differences from one country to another on how pupils with the same kinds of SEN needs are taught: in a special school, in special classes or in mainstream settings. Moreover, the definitions of special needs also vary from country to country and this makes comparisons complicated. However, the *equity of the educational systems* has been set as one of the top priorities in all European countries and the trends towards more inclusive settings are to be seen in this context.

The Lithuanian project “*A School for All*” indicates that in addition to re-allocation of resources (e.g. by converting special schools into resource centres) it is changes in the *attitudes* of teachers, administrators and the society as a whole that are crucial. The regulations have to be changed to accommodate *an individualised curriculum and syllabus* adapted to the needs of the learner. A coherent system includes the transition from compulsory education to upper secondary level with equal rights to continue learning. This is piloted in Lithuania: students with SEN have been integrated in vocational training with personalised objectives and syllabus. The project aims to gain experience on what is needed in order to make this a permanent structure. The equal rights to education are reflected also in the Czech example on establishing a curriculum and *infrastructure for profoundly mentally handicapped children*, which follows developments in other European countries.

The Belgian (French Community) example widens the support outside the school by creating a legal framework for the “*école de devoirs*” that have been in place for decades and are now being better incorporated into the education system in order to support disadvantaged learners. In many cases they are run by NGOs that have links to formal, non-formal and informal education and they help students to acquire proper attitudes towards lifelong learning.

An interesting approach has been developed in **Belgium’s Flemish Community**. In addition to reception classes for the children of *immigrants* under 18 years of age, the “Equal opportunities policy” not only guarantees pupils a right to choose their school, but also a support mechanism to help the local community to organise things effectively. Each local community has a consultation forum in which the school actively participates. Moreover, the policy contains a set of measures that are coordinated on the basis of indicators. Socio-economic indicators (the education level of parents, the number of school failures etc) determine whether a school can obtain extra resources for a period of three years. The schools decide upon their objectives for the period and are obliged to review the results in half-way through the programme. The final evaluation is done by the inspectorate. Other support measures coordinated by the ministry include *the promotion of art education* with a view to improving the integration of immigrants. The in-service teacher training is supported by organisations that promote language learning, intercultural education and experimental approaches in education. As in previous examples, securing the involvement of adults in language learning is a crucial element of the policy.

Opening up schools to the local community has been in evidence in **the Netherlands** where community schools³³ have developed their practices targeting the ideas of lifelong

32 Education Policy Analysis, OECD 2003.

33 See the report on the study visit at:
http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic

and life-wide learning. Substantial involvement by parents and a cross-sectoral approach in organising services for families, youth and children is helping ethnic minorities to integrate in society, enhancing a sense of belonging to the local community and preventing school failure. The Dutch example also illustrates how the role of volunteers is crucial in making learning an everyday activity regardless of age or formal position.

Indicators such as those relating to the acquisition of key competences and to school dropouts show that *males are performing less well* in fundamental competence areas and are more likely not to fulfil their educational potential. They also account for the majority attending special education schools and classes. The examples are implicitly addressing this problem, *but none of the examples described the measures being used to tackle this issue.*

The mapping of the key competences also indicates trends that are contributing to the education of the disadvantaged learners. The fact that most of the European countries have chosen a competence-based approach when designing their national educational frameworks, thus placing an *emphasis on broad, cross-curricular competences* in addition to more specific knowledge, can be regarded as a way to address more accurately the needs of disadvantaged groups. This trend is combined with *increased decentralisation and autonomy* at school level. This makes it easier for schools to adapt national frameworks to suit local circumstances and to take more account of the specific needs of local people. However, local-level autonomy poses a challenge to the securing of a quality education. This challenge has been addressed by increasing *national testing*, usually in basic skills, although many countries have reported their attempts to include broader competences such as learning-to-learn elements into these tests. The traditional inspection of schools is changing towards supporting schools in attaining cross-curricular objectives. In **Belgium (Flemish Community)**, for instance, the curriculum reform is proceeding in tandem with a system where inspectors help schools to create ‘visions’, i.e. defining their roles as providers of quality learning for all and developers of mechanisms, self-evaluation and further development. This approach should help achieve a better acquisition of key competences and this also applies to disadvantaged learners.

2.4.3. Securing the transition from one educational level to another

Perhaps the most revealing indicator of the coherence of the lifelong policies is that showing transition from one educational to another. The benchmarks relating to school dropouts and to completion of upper secondary education confirm the importance of ensuring adequate support for transitions: almost one-fifth of young Europeans leave school before completing their upper secondary education.

The examples, although few in number, confirm the need for comprehensive approaches. In **Norway** the *legislation* states that each municipality should have a follow-up system for drop-outs. In **Austria**, the legislation has been changed to allow for early school leavers to complete their compulsory education and thus become eligible for *vocational training*.

The **Irish** and **Norwegian** examples show that *a national strategy* has been created to tackle dropping out of school. In Ireland, the strategy relates to national plans on poverty and social exclusion and is based on a social partnership agreement that contains special initiatives on tackling educational disadvantage. The high priority given to disadvantaged learners is reflected in the budget: 8.3% of the budget is devoted to tackling educational disadvantage.

The national strategies have been translated into *practical programmes*, both in Norway and Ireland, with a clear division of tasks and responsibilities at the regional and local levels. In Norway the responsibility has been given to municipalities, while in Ireland “School Completion Programme” clusters have been created for the implementation of the strategy.

Both the Irish and Norwegian programmes aim to *meet the individual needs* of the young people at risk. Norway has separated the general career guidance from more *individual counselling* that addresses the personal-level difficulties in continuing schooling of the young people. In Ireland, the various activities planned for the children and young people at risk aim to increase their motivation and sense of belonging among their peers who continue studying.

In **France**, a working group is proposing to increase pupils’ knowledge of the different learning paths and career options in the last year in compulsory education. In concrete terms, dedicated lessons on guidance are proposed during the last year to ensure that pupils make the right choices for secondary education and understand the need for pursuing their education and training. The proposal calls for a different approach for those who intend to continue in vocational training, thus addressing more accurately the needs and motivation of individual learners.

In the light of the figures, the Norwegian strategy is expected to increase the completion of upper secondary education that already is quite high. The Irish statistics show also a clear fall in dropouts.

The study visit to **Iceland** provided Working Group B with an opportunity to witness an interesting approach to developing social and interpersonal competence. In Iceland, Life Skills is a discrete subject in lower-secondary and upper-secondary schools. To prevent dropout, the first year of upper-secondary education devotes a lot of attention and resources to *life skills*³⁴ that is a combination of social and interpersonal competence, *learning-to-learn* and civic competence. The courses were designed in *modules* so that those whose studies are interrupted can return and continue without losing their what they have learnt. *Funding* of these upper-secondary schools is based on the *output*; the number of candidates in the final exams forms the basis for school’s budget. The same type of funding mechanism has been put in place in Finland’s vocational training institutions, along with new legislation on student welfare systems. The examples show that funding mechanisms can be conducive to schools in *creating appropriate support for all students to complete their studies*.

2.4.4. Education of the less advantaged adults

The 2003 interim report of Working Group B made a number of recommendations in relation to adult education. The group concluded that all adults, particularly the less advantaged, should be given the opportunity to develop and maintain key competences throughout their lives. The sub-group on disadvantaged learners further pinpointed a number of features typifying successful policy initiatives that complemented the recommendations made in 2003:

34 For details, see http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/study_visit_iceland.pdf

- Policies should be formulated with reference to EU, national and regional strategic priorities;
- A cohesive infrastructure for adult education involving key stakeholders is a prerequisite for success, and policies should be built on existing good practice maintaining a balance between innovation and consolidation;
- Clarity of aims and priorities is essential, with needs of disadvantaged prioritized;
- Well-defined, measurable outcomes with achievable targets are needed, with appropriate use of resources;
- A learner-centred approach should be adopted: beneficiaries' differing needs are recognized and addressed. Outreach activities should be directed at particular target groups and incentives such as training allowances should be considered;
- Guidance and other support structures should be in place;
- National certification pathways offering a variety of modes of assessment should be used;
- Monitoring review and evaluation must be included;
- Policy successes are capable of being sustained and developed.

The working group decided to collect further examples of policy practices on the education of less advantaged adults. The focus on these examples was agreed to be on policies with successful outreach activities, meaningful combinations of works (practice) and learning and links to other relevant policy measures in the *field of vocational training, employment and social policy*.

The strongest *national strategies* combining these elements were seen in examples from **the UK(England), Ireland, Czech Republic and Poland**, where the national plans and strategies on combating poverty and social exclusion form an essential part of measures for improving basic skills. These strategies are based on *partnership* and shared responsibility between stakeholders. In Poland, the NGOs play a big role in facilitating learning for disabled adults and in Ireland, the key commitments in National Partnership Agreements are to tackle the educational disadvantage suffered by school dropouts and adults with literacy difficulties. The Skills for Life in the UK(England) provides for a comprehensive programme that covers the provision for basic skills for young people and adults (16+). The Irish programme involves a major expansion of basic skills programmes for adults.

In most of the cases the results of the *International Adult Literacy Study (IALS)* have been the wake-up call for the revision of adult education policies. Literacy is also one of the top priorities of the United Nations' educational programmes. *The UN Literacy Decade* has provided for a framework for action in **Germany**. In Germany, UK(England), Ireland and Poland there are clear *quantitative national targets*. Indeed, the challenge is vast: In the UK(England), there are 7 million adults with literacy needs, and in Germany, for instance, they number about 4 million. The quantitative targets seem to be consistent with the scope of the measures needed. They also allow for a close follow-up of the progress.

In **the UK(England)**, *national standards for teachers and learners* and a *national curriculum* have been developed to ensure the overall *quality of the provision*. In Ireland

there is a quality framework for adult literacy and an assessment framework is being piloted.

The use of ICT is the focus in the **German** approach and part of the **Polish** strategy. The German Alfa Portal for Literacy learning addresses illiterate adults by providing an e-portal that contains material for self-directed learning, networks for tutors and teachers and general information about illiteracy. ICT plays also a major role in the Polish strategy. ICT, in particular if internet-based, provides many possibilities: professional networks among trainers to exchange views and to develop training materials, distribution of relevant materials such as easy-to-read versions of newspapers. ICT allows also for setting personal objectives and for a flexible use of learning material. However, a pre-requisite for the efficient use of ICT is that there is a *comprehensive infrastructure* and that learners are given basic ICT skills. In most cases it is also clear that *counselling and personal coaching*, accompanied by appropriate *incentives*, are vital to make learning through ICT a reality.

In the **Czech Republic**, the retraining courses that address the long-term unemployed are organised under the National Employment Plan. The courses place strong emphasis on developing broad competences that involve psycho-social, language skills, legal aspects of working life (civics) and for instance being able to present one's own competences (a personal portfolio) appropriately to employers. A large group of experts is also developing a system that aims to help individuals to identify their potential more clearly. The AIP (Analysis of Individual Potential) is handled by the local labour agencies and gives a picture of a person's strengths, training needs and possible employment.

2.4.5. *Conclusions: National strategies for disadvantaged learners*

The aim of the collection of good policy practice examples was to identify *the essential elements of coherent and comprehensive policies that respond to the needs of disadvantaged learners*. Based on the examples (unfortunately only few), discussions in the subgroups and the more in-depth lessons learnt from the two study visits, the following conclusions have been drawn:

1. Participation in international studies such as PISA, IALS, TIMMS and PIRLS and organising national tests serve as an incentive for a national debate and for choosing priorities. This has been most evident in addressing the need for improving the basic skills, such as reading, of young people and adults. However, as is the case in most of the countries, testing should be accompanied by an assessment of the acquisition of broader competences such as learning to learn, social, interpersonal and civic competence, cultural awareness and entrepreneurship.
2. National strategies addressing the need of disadvantaged learners are successful provided that the following conditions are met:
 - Strategies must be based on a clear *identification of the target group(s)* and on clear *national (quantitative) targets*. (UK/England, IR, PL, DE)
 - Strategies must be closely linked to *social and employment policies* and take a holistic view of the needs of the learners. Provision for disadvantaged learners should also be in close relation to support measures *such as guidance and personal counselling*. (UK/England, IR, PL, NO, NL, CZ, BEfl).

- A *solid infrastructure for support services* clarifying the responsibilities of all actors must be created. The design of policies should be based on a strong *partnership* and involvement of NGOs. Also, it is vital to involve families in lifelong learning and to commit them to supporting the learning of their children. (BEfr, PL, HU, IR, UK/England, MT, NL).
 - Policies should be based on *funding mechanisms that encourage* schools and training institutions to take care and support learners with a disadvantage. Some countries have interesting experiences in output-based funding, where the budget income of schools or other educational institutions is based on the *output*, i.e. on the number of students who have successfully completed their studies. This mechanism has been seen as favourable for disadvantaged students as it is in the interest of the school to ensure the completion for all and to develop adequate support for disadvantaged learners. (IS, UK/England, NO).
 - The systems should *recognise prior learning*, for instance by using *modules* that allow studies to be continued without the loss of any previous credits and that are flexible for the user and lead to certificates. (IR, UK/England).
3. Policies addressing reading ability should also promote an *overall reading culture* and the *reading habits* of families and pupils themselves. This is of utmost importance as regards boys as readers. (RO, UK/England, IR, MT, BEfr)
 4. In implementing programmes it is necessary not only to train teachers, but to involve those who are responsible for the planning and implementation of programmes. The role of the heads of schools, school boards should therefore be recognised (UK/England, BEfl). In order to have these people meaningfully involved, they need to gain the necessary know-how and expertise through specific training in the area of educational administration, leadership and school governance.
 5. The full use of *research findings* for the improvement of teachers' competences, offering them practical means to assess, teach and follow the children's development, in particular in relation to the background skills for reading and writing, can help the disadvantaged children to catch up. (HU). However, there is a need for promoting research on the development, the transmission and the evaluation of the cross-curricular competences that are gaining more ground at all stages of learning.
 6. The policies that address the *learning needs of disadvantaged adults*, in addition of what has been mentioned above, should in particular provide learning opportunities that are linked to work and/or vocational training. They should be supported by other services that make it easier for learners with family responsibilities (IR) to take part. Programmes should be supported by national curricula, trainers training, assessment criteria and they should lead to national certificates (UK/England, IR). The use of ICT and internet-based learning opportunities allow flexible and individual use to be made of the material by networking learners and trainers; however, a proper infrastructure and basic ICT skills are needed. (DE, PL, IR).

3. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

3.1. Key competences

Following the recommendations of its November 2003 progress report, Working Group B mapped out the use of key-competence frameworks in countries participating the “Education and Training 2010” work programme. The mapping revealed that a competence-based approach has gained ground in European countries: **national frameworks are emphasising broad competences in addition to knowledge**. This has been the case in reforms in Belgium (French Community), Finland England, Wales, Scotland, Portugal, Spain and Luxembourg. The curriculum reforms that are underway in Czech Republic, Hungary, Ireland, Austria (upper secondary) and Belgium (Flanders) also follow this trend.

At the same time, decentralisation and the growing independence of schools accompany these reforms. The aim of maintaining *quality* prompted national testing and national quantitative targets to be introduced so that attention could be focused on priority areas. Following the acknowledgement of the need to develop broader competences, there are attempts to *measure and assess competences such as learning to learn, social and interpersonal competences* in addition to more specific skills and knowledge. An approach emphasising broader competences can be beneficial for the disadvantaged learners, provided that schools are duly helped to deal with the cross-curricular objectives³⁵.

With respect to **key competences for adults**, the focus is usually on literacy and numeracy, ICT and foreign languages. However, many countries indicated the need for improving **learning to learn competence** as a foundation to further learning and to provide for opportunities for **entrepreneurship learning**.

The above-mentioned analysis implies that mutual learning activities in the framework of the open method of coordination would be useful for countries that are in the process of reforming their national educational frameworks, developing strategies aimed at securing key competences for various target groups and developing tools for measuring the acquisition of key competences.

3.2. The European dimension

The Barcelona European Council and the 2004 Joint Interim Report of the Council and the Commission both called for the enhancing of the European dimension in education and training. A subgroup was established to define the concept and to revise the framework for key competences with a view of adding the relevant elements to it.

35 The November 2003 progress report of the Working Group B presents examples of good policy practice on social and interpersonal competence, learning to learn and cultural awareness.

The European dimension was seen as enriching the three elements of a key competence (personal fulfilment, social inclusion and employment) by providing a smooth transition from local, regional and national frameworks to the European-level framework and leading finally to a perception of being a world citizen. The European dimension is closely related to democratic citizenship. It is therefore an essential part of **social and interpersonal competence, civic competence and cultural awareness** and these three domains were reviewed accordingly. In education and training, the European dimension is best learnt **through practice** and from a **learning environment** that respects the diversity and richness of the cultures and languages of Europe. In terms of content it is a question of subjects such as history, geography and languages but it should be supported by various forms of non-formal and informal learning activities.

The European dimension is a vital part of **citizenship education** that has been chosen as one of the priorities by the Dutch Presidency. Therefore, a close monitoring of the developments with appropriate contributions being forwarded to the Dutch Presidency are necessary to promote the European dimension in education.

The European framework for key competences has been revised by the working group through adding a specific European dimension to **social and interpersonal competences, civic competence and cultural awareness**.

3.3. Entrepreneurship education and learning

Entrepreneurship has been considered as one of the key competences in the knowledge-based society. A joint sub-group with experts invited by the Director-General of Enterprise was established to see how entrepreneurship learning would be best incorporated into education.

The recommendations on entrepreneurship education stress the need for **permanent co-operation structures** and coherent national policies to support entrepreneurship education. Entrepreneurship is suffering from a certain **“image” problem** that can be tackled by the providing the schools, parents and local societies with appropriate information. Entrepreneurship should be seen in its **broader sense**, in other words seen as something that actually helps people to manage their own learning and improves life skills in general; activities in the context of entrepreneurship education can improve pupils’ motivation and address the learning strategies of those who usually feel disaffected at school. It is a **cross-curricular objective** and for its implementation schools have to be provided with **adequate resources** in terms of time, finance and flexibility. The **responsibilities of all the actors** should be made clear to make provision for students to gain experience in companies.

3.4. Securing key competences for disadvantaged learners

In order to ensure that education and training can contribute to the Lisbon process, it is crucial to concentrate efforts on lifelong learning opportunities of the less advantaged groups. The European benchmarks on reading ability, school dropouts, completion of upper secondary education and participation in lifelong learning call for actions to be targeted on this area.

In the light of the policy examples received, it is clear that improving the **reading skills** of pupils is not only a pedagogical issue. *Policies should address the overall reading*

culture and the reading habits of young people (in particular the habits of boys) and in society in general. Teachers working with children who have an educational disadvantage also need to be supported by **scientifically developed tests, training, materials and support services** so that they can impart the core skills that are prerequisites for reading, writing and language development. In implementing programmes, the role of the heads of schools, school boards, administration and the support of parents are crucial for success. Examples received show that the approaches of Ireland, the UK(England), and Hungary can offer some interesting ideas to be passed on to countries that are planning similar activities.

There is a wide debate on **inclusion of students with special educational needs (SEN)** that is linked to increased demand for **equal opportunities in education**. The right to learn, in particular in mainstream settings, has been emphasised in internationally adopted resolutions. Further debate and learning from successful policies and practices would be useful in order to find appropriate means for ensuring the social inclusion of SEN students. The existing cooperation between Nordic and Baltic countries would, for example, provide interesting elements for further examination.

Securing the **transition** from one educational level to another is one of the most important elements of coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning policies. **Legislation** should clearly set out the right of young people to fulfil their educational potential. **Close monitoring** is needed, backed up by **follow-up and support services** that include personal counselling whenever necessary. **Syllabuses** should allow **prior learning** to be credited and **individualised learning paths** must be flexible. The **funding** of schools should be organised in a way that ensures the successful schooling of disadvantaged learners.

In the light of the **indicators** and of the examples of good policy in practice that were sent in, mutual learning activities could be organised in such a way that countries that have a high participation rate can pass on their knowledge to those that are determined to improve their situation. For instance, Norway, Austria and Ireland would be able to share their experiences with countries where tackling the issue of school dropout and completion of upper-secondary education has been set as a priority.

In the field of *adult education*, the development of *national strategies* has been most in evidence in the UK (England), Ireland and Poland, where adult education programmes are closely linked to other policy areas such as **employment and social policy**. The use of **ICT in literacy skills learning** is being developed in Germany and Poland. In particular the national strategies already developed would form a worthwhile basis for further mutual learning activities among the various countries since they respond to the need for creating comprehensive lifelong strategies.

3.5. Policy messages

Following the key issues identified in the detailed work programme and the messages of the 2004 Joint Interim Report on the implementation of the “Education and Training 2010” work programme, the working group has agreed to the following messages on the acquisition of key competences in the knowledge-based society. These are:

Equipping all citizens with the key competences they need

- (1) As most of the European countries have chosen a **competence-based approach** in their national educational frameworks, schools and other educational institutions should be supported in implementing **also the broader competences that are expressed in cross-curricular objectives**. This means not only support for the professional development teachers but also for providing schools with real tools and incentives to develop **learning environments that involve families and the local community** in order to make learning an everyday activity for everybody.
- (2) Schools and other educational institutions need to be provided with adequate **resources and support** for planning, implementing and evaluating the attainment of these objectives. In particular, the **heads of schools, school boards and parents** need to be given the necessary know-how and expertise **through specific education and training in the area of educational administration, leadership, and school governance** in order to ensure their meaningful involvement in the process.
- (3) **Research** is needed on how best to support the development of **cross-curricular objectives** and on the evaluation and assessment of the achievement of these objectives. More effort is needed to use existing **research findings** so that teachers are given the means to assess, teach, monitor, follow up and support children's development, in particular in relation to the development of fundamental skills such as reading, writing and numeracy.
- (4) Policies addressing **reading skills** should also promote **the overall reading culture** and cultivate the reading habits both of families and pupils. This is of the utmost importance as regards **boys** as readers. The involvement of parents to support their children's learning is essential.
- (5) As regards **adult education and training provision**, coherent **national strategies** that are based on partnership and comprise **clear targets, national standards, training programmes for trainers, assessment and quality assurance tools should be put in place to ensure continuity for lifelong learning**. More attention should be paid on **entrepreneurship and learning to learn** competences. Opportunities and training for the use **ICT** should be provided for all adults. **ICT** should be fully used in learning such basic skills as reading and writing.

Targeting efforts at disadvantaged groups

- (6) **National strategies** addressing educational disadvantage should be designed in close connection **with social and employment policies**. Strategies should clearly identify target groups and be based on real targets/benchmarks. They should be supported by an infrastructure of support services such as **guidance** and personal **counselling**.
- (7) **Opening up schools** to the local community by involving other sectors of administration, parents, NGOs, associations and local companies is essential for

creating a sense of belonging and for making learning an everyday activity for everybody. Involving the local community promotes the idea of lifelong (and life-wide) learning.

- (8) It is important that the **funding mechanisms** are consistent with policy goals, that they provide incentives and encourage schools and training institutions to develop support systems for learners with a disadvantage. Moreover, it is essential to smooth the way for those who return to education by developing **recognition of prior learning**, for instance by using **modules** that allow studies to be continued without the loss of any previous credits. All measures should lead to national certificates.
- (9) Participation in **international studies** and **organising national testing** can raise awareness, help in setting priorities and allow for a closer monitoring of progress. Testing should not, however, prevent emphasis being placed on **broad competences** and achievement of **cross-curricular objectives**.

<i>Promoting the spirit of enterprise in education and training</i>

- (10) As promoting the development of spirit of enterprise is a horizontal issue, **policies targeting education and training, entrepreneurship and employment should work together coherently** in order to create a comprehensive approach to address the various aspects that are related to the issue. To achieve a coherent approach, it is crucial **to establish permanent and sustained inter-service coordination**, involving all the departments and actors concerned.
- (11) All **national curricula** should include **explicit objectives** for entrepreneurship education, accompanied by appropriate guidelines and support mechanisms that facilitate local implementation. Since entrepreneurship education is **a cross-curricular objective**, schools should be provided with a coherent support mechanism that makes the practical implementation of relevant activities easier (as stated in the recommendations above).
- (12) It is important to emphasise the **wider competences related to entrepreneurship** that are linked to better management of one's life in general in order raise its image and the vital contribution it makes to society. Moreover, it is vital to emphasise that activities that are designed to develop an entrepreneurial mindset can increase the **motivation** and well-being of those who are likely to feel disaffected in school.

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