



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Education and Culture

Lifelong Learning: Education and Training policies

School education and higher education

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

**FOCUS GROUP
ON KEY COMPETENCES**

REPORT

JUNE 2005

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Summary

A Focus Group of 5 experts was established by the Commission in the spring 2005 to allow an in-depth discussion on the key competences framework, developed earlier by a Working group on Basic Skills, Foreign Language teaching and Entrepreneurship as part of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

The work the Focus group informed the Commission in its preparations of a proposal for a Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council on key competences, due to be adopted by the Commission by the end on 2005. The Focus group suggested a number of amendments to the Framework for key competences, discussed its implementation and identified key messages on successful policies of key competences provision.

This report outlines the background of the work of the Focus group and its main conclusions on successful provision for key competences. The Annex of this report presents the “Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework” as it is amended by the Focus group.

1. FROM LISBON TO THE ‘EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010 WORK PROGRAMME AND WORKING GROUPS

The Lisbon European Council in 2000 recognised that Europe faces challenges in adapting to globalisation and the shift to knowledge-based societies. It set a new strategic goal for the European Union: 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’.

To achieve this, Europe’s education and training systems needed to be transformed. The Treaty sets out clearly that responsibility for education policy lies with Member States: work at European level takes place in the context of the open method of coordination. This process includes organising mutual learning activities, such as the exchange of good practice, study visits and peer reviews, and the adoption of common objectives and principles to support work at national level.

The Stockholm Council (2001) adopted quantitative objectives for quality, access and openness in education systems; and a detailed work-programme was adopted by the Barcelona Council in 2002¹. To take forwards the work, the Commission established a number of expert Working Groups focussing on one or more objectives of the work programme. One of the first working groups established within this programme was the one on Basic Skills, Foreign Language Teaching and Entrepreneurship.

¹ This work programme is referred to now as “Education and Training 2010” (http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_en.html)

The priority given to key competences reflects the range of evidence on the importance of key competences for individuals' lives and employability, for employers' productivity, and at society-level for GDP, social cohesion, increased participation in democratic citizenship. There is equally strong evidence to show that people in Europe do not have the key competences or do not have them to the necessary level. The emerging knowledge-society makes key competences even more important, but despite Member States' efforts too many young people are leaving school without achieving the key competences. The International surveys such as IALS show that in many European countries a considerable share of adults have not the necessary reading skills to function in society. Moreover, the adults with lowest skills tend not to participate in further training.

2. THE WORKING GROUP ON KEY COMPETENCES

One of the first Working Groups to be established in 2001 was on basic skills, foreign-language teaching and entrepreneurship. The work on key competences was to focus on identifying the basic skills and how they can be, together with traditional skills, better integrated in the curricula, learned, and maintained through life. Basic skills should be genuinely available for everyone, including those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners, and validation of basic skills should be promoted to support further learning and employability.

The Group's members were nominated by Member States, EFTA/EEA countries, candidate countries (from January 2003) and European-level associations. It focussed on identifying the skills needed by everybody in the knowledge-based society, and looking at how these could be integrated into compulsory and lifelong learning. Accessibility was also a concern: the group focussed on less advantaged people, those with special needs, school drop-outs and adult learners.

The Working Group produced a detailed framework of key competences, **the 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework'**² setting out the knowledge, skills and attitudes included in each domain, and a number of policy recommendations for implementation in its progress reports of 2003 and 2004. **This framework has been the basis for the work of the Focus group.**

3. THE FOCUS GROUP

The Focus Group met in Brussels 3 times between March and June 2005. The secretariat was provided by the Commission, and produced discussion papers before meetings and a note of discussions and conclusions reached. These documents have been available during the process for Working group B members at Commission's extranet.

The Focus Group was established to allow a detailed and in-depth discussion in a small group on the conclusions and outputs of the larger Working Group on key competences. The Working Group's reports provided the foundation³, and in particular:

² http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html#basic

³ Other documents were circulated to provide background information:
- Csapo, B., 'Knowledge and competences', *CIDREE Yearbook 4 - The integrated person: How curriculum development relates to new competencies*, CIDREE, Enschede, 2004, pp35-49

- European Reference Framework of Key Competences
- 2004 Overview of national developments
- 2004 Progress Report
- Implementation messages highlighted in the 2003 report

The Focus group 1) reviewed and refined the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Framework and 2) discussed the issues concerning its implementation. This work has informed the Commission’s development and drafting of a proposed Recommendation of the Council and the European Parliament on key competences, due to be adopted by the Commission by the end of 2005. The Focus group’s discussion produced also useful material that can be used as a starting point in the next phase of mutual learning activities, in particular with the countries reforming curricula and ensuring the achievement of European benchmarks, so that participating countries build on the progress made since 2001.

3.1. Focus’s groups suggestions concerning the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning - A European Framework

The Focus Group broadly agreed with the framework developed by the Working Group. The full refined framework is attached at Annex A: this section sets out the thinking behind the Focus Group’s amendments to the document.

3.1.1. General remarks

The Focus Group recommended a number of amendments to the framework for clarity of thought and/or expression. It also emphasised or confirmed a number of themes which run through the document, of which the most significant are:

- the re-iteration that language, literacy and numeracy are fundamental skills, underpinning all other learning;
- the recommendation that the framework should not seek to distinguish between ‘levels’ of competence in this framework that aims to serve as a more general reference tool⁴;
- a recognition of the diversity of Europe’s languages and cultures, and of the strengths and advantages that can be drawn from diversity; and

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- *Defining a Strategy for the direct assessment of skills*, 2004 – online at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/leonardo/new/leonardo2/study_en.html
 - Wienert, F.E., ‘Concept of competence: A conceptual clarification’, *Defining and selecting key competencies*, Hogrefe and Huber Publishers, Seattle, 2001, pp45-65
 - weblinks to a forum on the economics of education, run by an EU-sponsored think-tank (www.education-economics.org); and to the ‘new perspectives for learning’ dissemination site for EU-supported educational research (www.pjb.co.uk/npl)

⁴ The ongoing work on European Qualification Framework relates to this need, as it describes learning outcomes and aims to facilitate comparisons of qualifications. For details, see: http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/presentation_eqf_en.pdf

- a commitment to seeing learners as individuals, with different backgrounds, situations, needs and interests and learning also socially in groups;
- preamble – the Group felt that the framework would benefit from a preamble setting out certain overarching principles and issues, so that it could stand alone as a reference document. This should clarify the premises of the document, provide an overview of the framework and its purpose, and prepare readers for the framework's interlocking structure.

3.1.2. Remarks concerning definitions of key competences

Communication in a foreign language – it was felt important to recognise the multilingual nature of communities, particularly in bilingual/multilingual countries and for migrant groups. People need competence in the language of the country in which they live – for them, this is neither their mother tongue nor a ‘foreign’ language, and they will have different needs and motivation for learning. After discussion, the Group concluded that a footnote would be added to reflect this.

Mathematical competences and competences in science and technology - the Group was concerned to ensure that scientific competences were not seen solely as part of the development of technology, and to recognise the value of scientific knowledge and thinking in its own right. It was also keen to emphasise the importance of the natural world and sustainable development. Across the whole domain, people need both a certain level of factual knowledge and an understanding of the process for finding an answer. The Group emphasised that this competence supported critical thinking, risk assessment and decision-taking in everyday life, for example about personal finance and mortgages, or risks associated with immunisations.

Digital competence – the text was revised slightly to strengthen references to the collaborative use of Information Society Technologies for networking, learning and exchanging knowledge.

Learning to learn – the Focus Group recognised that learning to learn was important, and also that there were a range of ideas about what the competence meant in concrete terms. After a series of discussions, the text was revised to distinguish between the definition of competence, and its component parts, to emphasise the importance of motivation and confidence, and to recognise that learners are individuals within a particular situation with different obstacles to face.

Interpersonal and civic competence – this competence was largely accepted, and the Focus Group suggested that the text should recognise that people have (and make use of) different identities in different situations. Civic competence should include having ‘a sense of belonging’ and commitment. The group proposed amendments to ‘Knowledge of key figures...’ to focus on aims/values/policies and to include social movements.

Entrepreneurship – there are significant linguistic difficulties around this title, and it was agreed that a linguistic footnote was necessary. Although there was broad agreement with the original thinking, there was concern that the text was very similar to other domains such as learning to learn. The Group felt that while entrepreneurship was broader than ‘business skills’ it clearly implied being business-like in getting things done – references to creativity, innovation and risk-taking were strengthened, as was the emphasis on turning ideas into action and outcomes.

Cultural expression – the group was keen to raise the profile of creativity within this domain and to reflect the multicultural nature of many European countries.

3.2. Focus group’s conclusions on the implementation of key competences

The Focus Group reviewed the range of good practice, conclusions and recommendations for implementation produced by the larger Working Group in its 2003 and 2004 progress reports and added their own input, focussing particularly on comprehensiveness, validity and balance.

Policy making

The Group welcomed the Working Group’s conclusions and further emphasised the importance of (a) involving stakeholders in policy discussions and decisions, and (b) recognising and building on ‘bottom-up’ solutions, particularly in the context of increasing autonomy of schools, but recognising that practices may not be directly transferable. Changing practice/policy successfully depended on building a wide coalition of support, but was also often dependent on political will.

Implementation for the key competences framework should follow established good practice for policy-making:

- set clear objectives, priorities and target groups
- establish a way to evaluate impact, and manage the risk of unintended consequences of measurement/targets
- ensure coherence with other policies, and work with partners and stakeholders to deliver an effective and coherent infrastructure for individuals
- involve both researchers and practitioners in developing policies, and build on existing good practice and ‘bottom-up’ ideas.
- make sure the initiative will become a sustainable policy

Leadership at national level (by ministries) and local level (by headteachers etc) is essential in order to gain wide consensus on the importance of key competences. Clarity about regulation is important so as not to stifle innovation, particularly in the context of increasing institutional and professional autonomy.

Systems, structures and support

Key competences implementation should be integrated into existing systems and structures if it’s to become sustainable – in broad terms this means embedding it into schools and lifelong learning policies and provision. The group strongly stressed that any competence development depends on the acquisition of basic skills in literacy, numeracy and ICT.

As a ‘hub’ for learning, schools could engage adults in returning to learning. For adults, the Group emphasised the importance of learners’ social and economic contexts, the

support they need in order to be able to access provision, but also the need to build on their interests, motivation and enthusiasm, recognising their prior experiences.

In short, establishing provision is requires:

- teachers’ and trainers’ competences to support cross-curricular/transversal competence development and team teaching
- appropriate infrastructures for lifelong learning provision – locations, teachers, embedded in other learning etc
- access for all learners: outside working hours, with childcare facilities, disabled access, support materials and technology
- funding and quality assurance mechanisms that promote developing systems towards taking care of all students despite their disadvantages.

Guidance and support for learners should in particular:

- dovetail with social and employment policies – common priorities and logical structure, as well as coherent messages and support for individuals,
- partnership with employers and other partners to demonstrate and organise in concrete terms need for key competences, close links between schools and local businesses, the local community etc.
- outreach activities – formal promotion, but also informal networks targeted at priority groups,
- well structured information about world of work, competences people need and available opportunities and support; also focussed on the learner as an individual, and how to meet their needs and aspirations.

Priorities

The Group felt that while key competences are important for everyone, the identification of priority groups helped to focus resources and policy making. Adults in need of the most basic skills were easily overlooked, but also in most need; other groups that should be considered were adults who only need to develop some of the key competences, older people, and children at risk from the intergenerational cycle of low educational levels and/or low expectations.

Priorities should be set at national, regional or local level, in line with decision-making structures, and to reflect the particular situation. A number of possible groups have been identified for consideration:

- pre-school children
- children of families with low educational levels and/or low expectations
- disaffected young people and those who have dropped out of education

- learners with special educational needs
- people who don't speak the language needed for day to day life
- minority groups
- adults who have not got the most basic skills
- adults who need to update their competences or address particular gaps
- older people

Contextualised learning

School curricula are already often organised to support the 'subject' competences. For the transversal competences in particular this would imply breaking out of these traditional subject structures. Competences such as interpersonal, learning to learn, entrepreneurship and cultural expression cannot be effectively developed in isolation, but rather by being embedded in activities and learning across the curriculum. The whole group agreed that competence development should not be seen as 'content-free' or focussed only on weaker students, but rather competences should be developed in the context of the learners' studies, projects or work – this was also applicable for adults through vocational or recreational learning. The 'hidden curriculum' of organisation, atmosphere and expectations should also be considered. This approach would place new demands on teachers' and trainers' own competences, and should also impact on their ways of working⁵.

For adults, competence development should also be embedded in vocational or recreational learning provision, both in order to provide context (because competence is the knowledge, skills and attitudes appropriate to the situation) and because this is more likely to persuade people to return to learning.

⁵ The Commission was addressing the competences of teachers and trainers separately, and the Group discussed issues with the lead policy official.

Key Competences for Lifelong Learning

– A European Reference Framework

I. Preamble

This framework sets out eight domains of competences, selected according to the criteria set out in the following definition:

The key competences are the transferable, multifunctional knowledge, skills and attitudes that all individuals need for personal fulfilment and development, social inclusion and employment. These should have been developed by the end of compulsory education and should act as a foundation for further learning as part of lifelong learning.

The competences are: communication in the mother tongue; communication in foreign languages; mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology; digital competence; learning to learn; interpersonal, intercultural and social competences and civic competence; entrepreneurship; and cultural expression.

In this context, competences are considered to comprise a combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes that is appropriate to the context. The description of competence views individuals and learners as social agents with tasks to accomplish in their personal, social and economic circumstances, environments and fields of action. Learning is seen as essentially a social process: in the knowledge society, the development and application of learning is increasingly done with others. The framework is intended to serve as **a reference tool** for policy makers, employers, education and training providers and learners themselves by defining the competences that are considered necessary for all in a knowledge-based society. They should be acquired by the end of compulsory education and be developed, maintained and updated throughout lifelong learning.⁶

Although divided in separate domains for clarity, these eight domains of key competences are not mutually exclusive. In languages, where ‘mother tongue’ may be an ambiguous concept in multilingual families, the framework takes the pragmatic approach that ‘mother tongue’ is an individual’s natural/preferred language for thought and communication. For people whose mother tongue is not the language of the country where they live, learning the official language is essential.

Many of the competences overlap and interlock: aspects essential to one domain will support competence in another, for example interpersonal competence and entrepreneurship (in its broad sense) both relate to engaging with a situation and with others, and the self-management of entrepreneurship evidently supports that needed for

⁶ The Education and Training 2010 work-programme has included more detailed examination of a number of these subject areas, such as languages, or maths, science and technology, and on related issues such as social cohesion, or the recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Detailed reports and recommendations are available online at http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/objectives_en.html

learning-to-learn. Knowledge, skills and attitudes from many competences combine to support themes that do not have a domain of their own, such as health or the promotion of sustainable development.

This interlocking structure means that there are a number of transversal themes that are applied throughout the framework. Competence in the fundamental basic skills of language, literacy, numeracy and ICT is an essential foundation for all other learning, and learning-to-learn is applied to support all learning activities. Knowledge is seen as both a goal in its own right, and a tool to support other goals. Within the framework, transversal skills include **critical thinking, creativity, initiative taking, problem solving, risk assessment, decision taking, managing feelings constructively and communication** – although detailed definitions are included in the competence that most closely fits them, these should be applied across all domains of key competences.

II. Key Competences

1. Communication in the mother tongue

Definition: Communication is the ability to express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing), and to interact linguistically in an appropriate way in the full range of societal and cultural contexts — education and training, work, home and leisure.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence

Communication in the mother tongue requires **knowledge** of basic vocabulary, functional grammar and the functions of language. It includes an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, the main features of different styles and registers of language, and the variability of language and communication in different contexts.

Skills in communication consist of the ability to communicate in oral and written forms in a variety of communicative situations and to monitor and adapt one's own communication to the requirements of the situation. The abilities to write and read different types of texts, search, collect and process information, use aids, formulate and express own arguments in a convincing way appropriate to the context are also included.

A positive **attitude** towards communication in the mother tongue involves a disposition to critical and constructive dialogue, the willingness to strive for and appreciation of aesthetic quality in expression and a positive attitude to intercultural communication.

2. Communication in foreign languages

Definition: Communication in foreign languages⁷ broadly shares the main skill dimensions of communication in the mother tongue: it is based on the ability to understand, express and interpret thoughts, feelings and facts in both oral and written form (listening, speaking, reading and writing) in an appropriate range of societal contexts — work, home, leisure, education and training — according to one’s wants or needs. Communication in foreign languages also calls for skills such as mediation and intercultural understanding. The degree of proficiency will vary between the four dimensions, between the different languages and according to the individual’s linguistic environment and heritage.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to this competence

Competence in additional or foreign languages requires **knowledge** of vocabulary and functional grammar and an awareness of the main types of verbal interaction, a range of literary and non-literary texts, and the main features of different styles and registers of language. Knowledge of societal conventions, cultural aspect and variability of languages is essential.

Essential **skills** consist of the ability to understand spoken messages, to initiate, sustain and conclude conversations and to read and understand texts appropriate to the person. Appropriate use of aids and ability to learn languages autonomously as part of lifelong learning is essential.

Sensitivity to cultural differences and interest and curiosity in languages and intercultural communication are crucial elements of a positive **attitude** in language learning.

⁷ It is important to recognise that many Europeans live in bi-lingual or multi-lingual families and communities, and that the official language of the country in which they live may not be their mother tongue. For these groups, this competence may refer to the official language, rather than to a foreign language: their need, motivation, and social/economic context for developing this competence will differ from those learning a foreign language for travel or work.

The European Union has for some time used as a reference document the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEF) developed by the Council of Europe. The CEF sees users and learners of a language primarily as ‘social agents’ with tasks to accomplish in their specific circumstances, environments and fields of action. The learning and usage of foreign languages build on the individual’s general and communicative language competences and allow them to develop multilingual and multicultural competences. The approach of the CEF broadly corresponds to the one chosen by WGB for “key competences”. For more information on the CEF, see: http://www.culture2.coe.int/portfolio/documents_intro/common_framework.html.

3. Mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology

Definition:

A. Mathematical competence⁸ is the ability to use addition, subtraction, multiplication, division and ratios in mental and written computation to solve a range of problems in everyday situations. The emphasis is on process and activity, as well as knowledge. Mathematical competence involves, as appropriate to the context, the ability and willingness to use mathematical modes of thought (logical and spatial thinking) and presentation (formulas, models, constructs, graphs/charts) which have universal application in explaining and describing reality.

B. Scientific competence refers to the ability and willingness to use the body of knowledge and methodology employed to explain the natural world, to identify questions, to draw evidence-based conclusions. Competence in technology is viewed as the application of that knowledge and methodology in order to modify the natural environment in response to perceived human wants or needs. Both areas of this competence involve understanding the changes caused by human activity and responsibility as an individual citizen.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

A. Necessary **knowledge** in mathematics includes a sound knowledge of numbers, measures and structures, basic operations and basic mathematical presentations and an understanding of mathematical terms and concepts and to understanding of questions mathematics can offer answers to.

Skills include the ability to apply basic mathematical principles and processes in everyday contexts at home and work, and to follow and assess chains of arguments, reason mathematically, understand mathematical proof and communicate in mathematical language and to use appropriate aids.

A positive **attitude** in mathematics is based on the respect of truth and willingness to look for reasons and their validity.

B. For **science and technology**, the essential **knowledge** comprises the basic principles of the natural world, fundamental scientific concepts and principles, and technology and technological products and processes. It includes an understanding of the advances, limits and risks of scientific applications and technology in societies at large (in relation to decision-making, values, moral questions, culture etc), both in specific areas of

⁸ Mathematics, although intrinsically linked to numeracy, is of higher complexity. “Mathematical behaviour” is about describing reality through constructs and processes which have universal application. It is best described as a combination of skills and attitudes. The definition emphasises the importance of “mathematical activity” and acknowledges the “links with reality” as a current emphasis in maths education.

science such as medicine, and also an understanding of the impact of science and technology on the natural world, and the implications for sustainable development.

Skills include the ability to use and manipulate technological tools and machines as well as scientific data to achieve a goal or to reach a decision or conclusion. Skills also call for the ability to recognise the essential features of scientific inquiry and the ability to communicate the conclusions and reasoning that led to them.

Critical appreciation and curiosity, disposition to ethical issues and respect for both safety and sustainability are the basic elements of a positive **attitude** towards science and technology – in particular as regards scientific and technological progress in relation to oneself, family, community and global issues.⁹

4. Digital competence

Definition: Digital competence involves the confident and critical use of Information Society Technology¹⁰ (IST) for work, leisure and communication. These competences are related to logical and critical thinking, to high-level information management skills, and to well developed communication skills.

ICT skills comprise the use of multi-media technology to retrieve, assess, store, produce, present and exchange information, and to communicate and participate in collaborative networks via the Internet.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

Digital competence requires a sound understanding and **knowledge** of the nature, role and opportunities of IST in everyday contexts: in personal and social life as well as at work. This includes main computer applications such as word processing, spreadsheets, databases, information storage and management, and an understanding of the opportunities of Internet and communication via electronic media (e-mail, network tools) for leisure, information sharing and collaborative networking. Individuals should also understand how IST can support creativity and innovation, and be aware of issues around the *validity* and *reliability* of information available and the *ethical principles* of in the interactive use of IST.

Skills needed include: the ability to search, collect and process information (create, organise, distinguish relevant from irrelevant, real from virtual) and use it in a critical

⁹ As with other domains, this description refers to the knowledge, skills and attitudes that everyone should develop. There is a European benchmark to increase the number of graduates in these fields by 15% by 2010, and at the same time to redress the gender imbalance: this competence also forms a basis for more advanced learning and/or a career in science and technology.

¹⁰ Information Society Technologies offer services based on the use of Information and Communication technologies (ICT), the Internet, digital content, electronic media, etc, via for example a personal computer, a mobile telephone, an electronic banking machine, an eBook, digital television etc.

and systematic way; the use of aids to produce, present and understand complex information; the ability to access, search and use internet-based services; and the ability to use IST to support critical thinking, creativity, and innovation.

A critical and reflective **attitude** towards available information and a responsible use of the interactive media is the basis for a safe use of IST autonomously and in teams and for broadening horizons by taking part in communities and networks for cultural, social and professional purposes.

5. Learning-to-learn

Definition: ‘Learning to learn’ is the ability to pursue and persist in learning. Individuals should be able to organise their own learning, including through effective management of time and information, both individually and in groups. Competence includes awareness of one’s learning process and needs, identifying available opportunities, and the ability to handle obstacles in order to learn successfully. It means gaining, processing and assimilating new knowledge and skills as well as seeking and making use of guidance. Learning to learn engages learners to build on prior learning and life experiences in order to use and apply knowledge and skills in a variety of contexts – at home, at work, in education and training. Motivation and confidence are crucial to an individual’s competence.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

Learning to learn requires an individual to have **knowledge** and understanding of their preferred learning strategies, the strengths and weaknesses of their skills and qualifications, as well as of the education and training opportunities and guidance/support available to them. It also includes an awareness of the competences, knowledge, skills and qualifications required for particular work or career goals and an understanding of the opportunities of continuous learning in a knowledge-based society.

Learning to learn **skills** require firstly the acquisition of the fundamental basic skills necessary for further learning. Building on this, an individual should be able to access, gain, process and assimilate new knowledge and skills. This requires effective management of one’s learning, career and work patterns, and in particular the ability to persevere with learning, to concentrate on extended periods and to reflect critically on the purposes and aims of learning. Individuals should be able to dedicate time to learning autonomously and with self-discipline, but also to work collaboratively as part of the learning process, draw the benefits from a heterogeneous group, and to share what they have learnt. They should be able to evaluate their own work, and to seek advice, information and support when appropriate.

A positive **attitude** includes the motivation and confidence to pursue and succeed at learning throughout one’s life. A problem-solving attitude supports both learning and an individual’s ability to handle obstacles. The desire to apply prior learning and life experiences, and the curiosity to look for opportunities to learn and apply learning in a variety of life-wide contexts.

6. Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, civic competence

Definition: These competences cover all forms of behaviour that one must master as an individual in order to be able to participate in an effective and constructive way in social life and resolve conflict where necessary. Interpersonal skills are necessary for effective interaction on a one to one basis or in groups and are employed in both the public and private domains.

Civic competences can be described as the set of competences that allow the individual to fully participate in civic life.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

A. Personal and social well-being requires an understanding of good physical and mental health as a resource for oneself and one's family and **knowledge** of how to build and maintain it through a healthy lifestyle. For successful interpersonal and social participation it is essential to understand the codes of conduct and manners generally accepted in different societies and to be aware of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, society and culture – and the evolution of these concepts. It is important to understand that an individual's identity can include their national cultural identity in interaction with one of Europe and the rest of the world and to understand the multi-cultural dimension of European societies.

Skills to communicate constructively, express and understand different viewpoints and negotiate with the ability create confidence and feel empathy are the core of this competence. Ability to cope with stress and frustration and to express it in a constructive way as well as the ability to distinguish between various spheres of life (professional, personal) are essential for coping with various social requirements. As regards **attitudes**, respect for others, willingness to overcome prejudices and disposition to compromise, assertiveness and integrity are essential.

B. **Civic competence** is based on an **understanding** of concepts such as democracy, citizenship, civil rights and of how they are expressed the international declarations and applied and exercised by various institutions at the local, regional, national, European and international levels. Knowledge of main events, trends and agents of change in national, European and world history and present, with a specific view on European diversity is essential, as is knowledge of the aims, values and policies of social and political movements.

Skills relate to the ability to engage effectively with others in the public domain, display solidarity and interest in solving problems affecting the local and wider community. It involves critical and creative reflection and constructive participation in community/neighbourhood activities as well as decision-making at all levels from local to national and European level, in particular by voting.

Respect of human rights and equality as a basis for democracy, appreciation and understanding of differences between value systems of different religious or ethnic groups lay the foundations to a positive **attitude**. It comprises also the display of a sense of belonging to one's locality, country, EU and Europe in general and (one's part of) the world and the willingness to participate in democratic decision making at all levels. Constructive participation also involves civic activities, support for social diversity and

cohesion and sustainable development, and a readiness to respect the values and privacy of others with a propensity to react against anti-social behaviour.

7. Entrepreneurship

Definition: Entrepreneurship¹¹ refers to an individual's ability to turn ideas into action. It requires creativity, innovation and risk taking, as well as the ability to plan and manage projects in order to achieve objectives. This supports everyone in day to day life at home and in society, employees in being aware of the context of their work and being able to seize opportunities, and is a foundation for entrepreneurs establishing social or commercial activity.

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

Necessary **knowledge** includes available opportunities for personal, professional and/or business activities, including 'bigger picture' issues that provide the context in which people live and work, such as a broad understanding of the workings of the economy, and the opportunities and challenges facing an employer or organisation. Individuals should also be aware of the ethical position of enterprises, and how they can be a force for good for example through fair trade or through social enterprise.

Skills relate to proactive project management (involving skills such as planning, organising, analysing, communicating, managing, de-briefing and evaluating and recording), and the ability to work both as an individual and collaboratively in teams. The judgement to identify one's strengths and weaknesses, and to assess and take risks as and when warranted is essential.

An entrepreneurial **attitude** is characterised by initiative, independence and innovation in personal and social life, as much as at work. It also includes motivation and determination to meet objectives, whether personal goals or aims held in common with others, and/or at work.

8. Cultural expression

¹¹ 'Entrepreneurship' has different connotations in different languages. It is used here in the sense of its French root 'entreprendre' (to undertake) and should be understood as in this broad sense rather than as 'business skills' alone.

Definition: Appreciation of the importance of the creative expression of ideas, experiences and emotions in a range of media, including music, performing arts, literature, and the visual arts¹²

Essential knowledge, skills and attitudes related to the competence

Cultural **knowledge** includes a basic knowledge of major cultural works, including popular contemporary culture as an important part of human history in the contexts of national and European cultural heritage and their place in the world. It is essential to understand the cultural and linguistic diversity of Europe (and European countries) as well as the evolution of popular taste and the importance of aesthetic factors in daily life.

Skills relate to both appreciation and expression: self-expression through the variety of the media with individuals' innate capacities and appreciation and enjoyment of works of art and performances. Skills include also the ability to relate one's own creative and expressive points of views to the opinions of others and to identify and realise economic opportunities in cultural activity.

A strong sense of identity is the basis for respect and open **attitude** to diversity of cultural expression. A positive attitude also covers creativity, and the willingness to cultivate aesthetic capacity through artistic self-expression and interest in cultural life.

¹² The role of cultural and artistic expression is essential for all individuals, both for the learning process as means for acquisition of knowledge and skills, in particular in early learning, and as an enrichment of life in general. The initial education should, therefore, develop the potential which can be built on throughout life through formal, non-formal and informal learning.