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

WORKING GROUP

“MOBILITY AND EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION”

PROGRESS REPORT

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1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this document is to report on the first six months of activity of the Working Group F 'Mobility and European Cooperation'. This report is a contribution to the Joint Interim Report which will be submitted by the Commission and the Education Council to the attention of the European Council of Spring 2004.

1.1. Background

The promotion of transnational mobility for learning purposes assumes increasing importance in the political priorities of the European Union. It contributes to the feeling of belonging to Europe and to the development of a European conscience and makes it possible to improve the professional and personal skills and therefore the competitiveness of the European economy with respect to the rest of the world. Mobility has also the potential for helping people to gain the confidence and skills to live together in multiethnic and multi-lingual societies – both in Europe as a whole but also within their own countries.

The possibility of enhancing the quality of education and training experiences through a stay in another EU country must thus be provided to any European citizen, whether it is by training in an academic environment or by placements in a professional environment.

The 2000 Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council concerning an "action plan for mobility"¹ and the 2001 European Parliament and Council Recommendation on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers of July 2001² provide a framework for promoting in concrete terms political cooperation to increase quality mobility in education and training. They also intend to eliminate obstacles to mobility, ensure a better preparation before the departure and a more effective reception on arrival, as well as the possibility of putting in place instruments to have the experience acquired in another country recognised thereafter.

Further on, the Work Programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe adopted jointly by the Council and the Commission in February 2002³ has fully integrated the promotion of mobility, and of European cooperation, into objectives 3.4 and 3.5 thus bringing this relevant issue into an overall, coherent organising framework. The implementation of the Work Programme has been organised around eight blocks of work covering one or more objectives. Eight corresponding working groups are looking into each field. A Standing Group on Indicators has also been established to oversee the use of indicators and benchmarks.

¹ *Official Journal of the European Communities* C371 of 23 December 2000, p. 4 also on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2000/c_371/c_37120001223en00040010.pdf

² *Official Journal of the European Communities* L21 of 9 August 2001, p. 5/30 also on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2001/l_215/l_21520010809en00300037.pdf

³ *Official Journal of the European Communities* C50 of 23 February 2002, p. 1 also on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/archive/2002/c_05020020223en.html.

1.2. Mandate and work programme of Working Group F ‘Mobility and European Cooperation’ (see Annex 1)

Group F has a special position among the eight groups created for the monitoring of the Objectives Process since it fulfils a double function and work mandate:

- a) **monitoring the implementation of the 2001 Mobility Recommendation** and of the 2000 Mobility Action Plan, a task concerning only the 15 Member States;
- b) **contributing to the development of policy on «mobility» and «European co-operation»**, (objectives 3.4 and 3.5 of the Work Programme). This task concerns the 15 current Member States as well as Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and the 13 candidate countries.

1.3. Monitoring of the Recommendation on mobility

The members of the group from the 15 Member States exchange information and experience on the implementation of the Recommendation and assist the Member States and the Commission in the preparation of national reports and of the Community summary:

- A. Member States have presented by July 2003 an “evaluative implementation report” on the monitoring of the recommendation at the national level. These national reports will be the base of an “analytical summary” report that the Commission will submit to the Council and to Parliament in December 2003.
- B. Some of the invitations addressed by the recommendation concern mainly the Commission: on these items progress has been carried out with regard to for example to information (creation of the Ploteus portal see below section 2.1), transparency and recognition (Copenhagen process –see below section 2.1). Following another mandate of the recommendation a study will be launched in the second half of 2003 on the feasibility of a “European card on mobility”.

1.4. Monitoring of Objectives 3.4 and 3.5 of the Work Programme

The Work Programme has determined a series of objectives to be reached by 2010. For each of these objectives various key issues for further discussion have been identified. In the case of objectives 3.4 and 3.5 these key issues are the following:

Objective 3.4. Mobility: Key issues

- Providing the widest access to mobility to individuals and to education and training organisations, including those serving a less privileged public and reducing the remaining obstacles to mobility
- Monitoring the volume, directions, participation rates as well as qualitative aspects of mobility flows across Europe

- Facilitating validation and recognition of competencies acquired during mobility
- Promoting the presence and recognition of European education and training in the world as well as their attractiveness to students, academics and researchers from other world regions.

Objective 3.5. European Cooperation: Key issues

- Enhancing the effectiveness and timeliness of recognition processes for the purpose of further study, training and employment throughout Europe
- Promoting co-operation between responsible organisations and authorities in view of more compatibility in quality assurance and accreditation
- Promoting transparency of information on education and training opportunities and structures in view of the creation of an open European area for education
- Promotion of the European dimension of teaching and training.

The group started its work with the identification, among these key issues, of three priority themes, which will be the subject of the exchange of good practices as a basis for clear policy recommendations. Since mobility is a broad and horizontal subject, it was necessary to first concentrate efforts upon a limited number of aspects. For this reason the group agreed to deal in a first phase of its work with the issues under Objective 3.4 which would meet the three following conditions:

- A. avoid double work with developments already started in other groups or processes (Bologna, Copenhagen...-see below section 2).
- B. have a real political interest to be brought to the attention of Education Ministers and Heads of State and Government.
- C. allow the group to reach concrete results in the short/medium term (to be able to deliver first conclusions in time for the Spring 2004 Joint Interim Report).

After discussion at the first meeting of Group F on 6-7 February 2003 the Group agreed to focus discussion on the three following priority themes:

- 1) Access to mobility.
- 2) Quality in mobility.
- 3) Opening up Europe to the rest of the world.

A detailed description of the reasons for having chosen these three themes, of the discussions undertaken and of the first conclusions attained is provided below in section 3.

1. 5. Composition of the group, information on working methods and meetings

The group is composed⁴ of representatives of the 15 EU Member States, of 11 of the candidate countries (all except Lithuania and Estonia) and of Norway and Iceland. It also includes observers from UNICE -the European employers' association-, CES –the European Confederation of Trade Unions-, EVTA –the European Vocational Training Association-, and Cedefop. The group has a fair gender balance (see in Annex 4 the list of members) with some 22 men and 19 women among its members (including observers).

The group has met three times: on February 6-7, April 29 and June 30-July 1 2003. It works in plenary session, under the chairmanship of the Commission. It is assisted by experts meeting regularly with the Commission. An internal Commission working group has allowed to integrate all dimensions of mobility into the discussions, including contacts with relevant Commission services like DG Research and DG Employment.

2. INVENTORY OF OTHER MAJOR CURRENT INITIATIVES IN THE FIELD OF MOBILITY:

This section intends to present an overview of work, relevant to the activities of Working Group F, undertaken in the framework of other groups or processes. A brief inventory of relevant activities on mobility has been undertaken in order to avoid possible overlap between the various developments concerning mobility. This also underlines the profile of other actions and their links to Group F. This explains the choice of other themes, not dealt with elsewhere, to be the focus of the Group's work. The three themes finally chosen and the first results of their examination are considered below under section 3.

2. 1. Bruges/Copenhagen process of enhanced cooperation in VET

The Education Council adopted a Resolution on Enhanced Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training in November 2002⁵, followed on November 30 by the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational training⁶, signed by Education Ministers of 31 European countries. Three technical working groups have been set up to work on the priority tasks defined in the Copenhagen Declaration:

- **A single framework for transparency of competences and qualifications:** This framework should link the existing transparency instruments.
- **System of credit transfer for VET:** To develop common reference levels and a credit transfer system for VET, taking into account relevant experiences in higher education, such as the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- **Principles for quality in VET:** To develop common criteria for quality assurance, as the basis for initiatives such as European quality guidelines in VET.

⁴ See Annex 5 for a full list of members of Group F.

⁵ *Official Journal of the European Communities* C 13/2 of 18 January 2003 and also on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/c_013/c_01320030118en00020004.pdf

⁶ See its full text on http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/copenhagen_declaration_en.pdf

In addition to this the Copenhagen Declaration calls for the development of common criteria for the validation of non-formal learning, and lifelong guidance, which are being addressed by experts appointed by the Commission. The development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level is also in the follow-up to the Declaration.

The development of a single framework for transparency and of credit transfer system for VET, as well as lifelong guidance, is particularly relevant for mobility.

– **Transparency instruments promoting mobility:**

- **The "EUROPASS Training"** has been created by the December 1998 Council Decision on the promotion of European pathways for work-linked training. This document, with contents and presentation defined at Community level, is issued by the body responsible for organising, in the Member State of origin, a period of training abroad. It provides the personal details of the trainee and information on the relevant training initiative (duration, host organisation, programme...).
- **The certificate supplement** allows to demonstrate an individual's actual skills to employers by providing a detailed description of the vocational qualification acquired by the holder of a vocational certificate and is issued by the awarding authorities. It builds upon the success of the **diploma supplement** in the field of higher education.
- **The European curriculum vitae** gives a comprehensive standardised overview of education attainments and work experience, including additional competences acquired outside formal training schemes.
- These tools should become part of the **single transparency framework** mentioned above. The outline of a proposal for a decision was met with a favourable opinion of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) of June 5/6 2003. It is based on:
 1. A modular structure, based on the European CV.
 2. A "Europass" group of experts to monitor it.
 3. A single body to coordinate implementation in each country.
- A network of **National reference points for qualifications** is being set up to provide information on national qualifications and certificates.

- **Lifelong guidance for mobility:** European co-operation in the field of information, guidance and counselling to support mobility in education and training is mainly mediated through the network of National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG). Other information networks also promote mobility for researchers and act as national reference points for recognition of qualifications in higher education (NARIC). The new Commission expert group is examining how best to achieve convergence, cooperation and complementary between these networks.

The Ploteus database, a portal providing information on learning opportunities in Europe, has been launched by the Commission in March 2003 ⁷. Together with EURES, the European database on job opportunities, it is part of a common service giving structured access to information on education and training at all levels in Europe.

2.2. An Action Plan on Language Learning and Linguistic Diversity. The Language Working Group.

2.2.1. The Action Plan

Following the successful European Year of Languages in 2001, a European Parliament Resolution of 13 December 2001⁸ called for measures to promote language learning and linguistic diversity. The Education Council on 14 February 2002 invited Member States to take concrete steps and invited the European Commission to draw up proposals in these fields⁹. The Commission has responded by adopting in July 24 2003 an Action Plan on language learning and linguistic diversity (2004-2006).

The Action Plan sets out the context and the main policy objectives to be pursued within three broad areas: extending the benefits of life-long language learning to all citizens, improving language teaching, and creating a more language-friendly environment. It contains concrete proposals for a series of actions to be taken at European level with the aim of supporting actions taken by local, regional and national authorities. The actions will use resources available in current community programmes and activities. A number of the proposed actions relate directly or indirectly to increasing the mobility of both language learners, and language teachers as to international mobility at large. Taken together, the actions proposed, and those taken by Member States, can secure a major step change in promoting language learning and linguistic diversity. In 2007 the Commission will review the action taken at all levels and report to the European Parliament and Council.

2.2.2. Conclusions of the Language Group

The Language Working Group is a sub-group of the 'Group B' on Basic Skills created within the framework of the Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe. In its first year of activity (since July 2002), this working group has been involved in the discussion leading to the drafting of the Action Plan on language learning and linguistic diversity. To promote and measure progress towards the stated objective of 'Improving foreign language learning' five priority areas identified were **linguistic diversity, early language learning, language learning in secondary education, lifelong language learning and training of language teachers**.

⁷ You may consult it at www.ploteus.net

⁸ *Official Journal of the European Communities* C177E of 25 July 2002, p. 334, also on <http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2002/ce177/ce17720020725en03340336.pdf>.

⁹ *Official Journal of the European Communities* C50 of 23 February 2002, p. 1, also on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/archive/2002/c_05020020223en.html.

Several studies were presented to the group and more than one hundred examples of good practice were exchanged, with the ultimate aim of extracting a set of policy recommendations for decision makers. These emphasise the need for a carefully formulated and explicitly stated language policy in order to improve the efficiency of language teaching. A generalisation of content and language integrated learning, the opening and strengthening of language resource centres and the promotion of autonomous learning skills are recommended.

The main features of a **linguistic competence indicator** – explicitly requested by the Barcelona European Council – were agreed upon. It should measure pupils' ability to speak, to write, and understand the written and spoken foreign languages at the end of compulsory education, and be expressed in the terms of the Common European Framework for Languages; it should measure skills in more than one foreign language.

Three more indicators were suggested, concerning the **training abroad of language teachers**, **early language learning** and the **opportunities for adult language learning**.

Future activity will focus on vocational, adult and informal languages learning as well as on the role of new technologies in language learning.

2. 3. The Bologna process

The process launched by the 1999 Bologna Declaration¹⁰ is very relevant for facilitating and developing transnational mobility at university level. Degrees awarded until recently by higher education institutions in most countries of Europe were internationally rather unknown (“unreadable”) and therefore little understood elsewhere. They also differed from country to country.

Being for these reasons perceived as contributing to Europe's competitive disadvantage, European education ministers decided in Bologna in 1999 to substitute them by a homogeneous, two-tier degree structure, based on the internationally-known Bachelor/Master architecture.

The key points of this process are the following:

- **Simplifying the structure of the various higher education qualifications through a system of easily 'readable' and comparable degrees** based on an articulation into undergraduate and postgraduate studies. At the same time, more flexibility is to be ensured by a credit system (ECTS) for transfer and accumulation.
- **Improving mobility within Europe and attracting students from around the world:** Through the removal of obstacles to the free movement of students, teachers, researchers and administrative staff, and through enhanced attractiveness of European higher education to students from Europe and other parts of the world. To these ends, coherent quality assurance and accreditation/certification mechanisms, and increased information tools should be put in place.

¹⁰ See the full text on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/erasmus/guide/bologna.pdf>

- **Ensuring high standards:** Quality is the basic underlying condition for trust, relevance, mobility, compatibility and attractiveness in the European Higher Education Area. Quality assurance systems should play a key role in ensuring high quality standards and in facilitating the comparability of qualifications throughout Europe. Scenarios for the mutual acceptance of evaluation and accreditation/certification outcomes are now being outlined.

A Follow-up Group and a Preparatory Group ensure adequate continuity and coordination in this process. A second ministerial meeting took place in Prague in 2001¹¹. The Berlin Conference of September 2003¹² will take stock of achievements and will refine the goals and intermediate priorities for the next years, focusing particularly on recognition and quality assurance. The 1997 Lisbon Convention on Recognition of Qualifications¹³ is also an important step to facilitate mobility by easing recognition procedures, and it should be ratified by all Bologna members in 2005 at the latest.

The reform of degree structures as well as the introduction of quality assurance procedures and of credit-based curricula are thus well under way in most European countries and will in the future contribute to increased mobility in higher education.

2.4. Skills and Mobility Action Plan

The Commission adopted its Action Plan for Skills and Mobility in February 2002¹⁴. The Action Plan aims to give EU citizens better mobility – both between jobs and between Member States - by 2005 rendering both occupational and geographical mobility easier to achieve. Its **action proposals** can be grouped into three main objectives:

- **Strengthening job mobility and skills development:** Making education and training systems more responsive to the needs of the EU labour market (especially for ICT skills), bolstering lifelong learning, making it easier to have skills and work experience recognised, and focusing on less-developed regions;
- **making geographic mobility easier:** Eliminating regulatory and administrative barriers, with full transferability of social security rights and pensions (including a new European health card), improving the recognition of professional qualifications and the provision of language learning, and agreeing a common immigration policy with comparable treatment of third-country nationals living in the EU.
- **improving information:** More vacancies available through EURES, and the launching of a mobility information campaign and a one-stop European mobility site.

¹¹ See the full text of the Prague Communiqué on <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/prague.pdf>

¹² The official web site of the Berlin Conference is: <http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de>

¹³ See the full text of the Lisbon Convention on: <http://conventions.coe.int/treaty/EN/WhatYouWant.asp?NT=165>

¹⁴ See full text of Action Plan on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0072en01.pdf

Since the adoption of the Plan progress on its implementation has been advancing in most areas, particularly on legal proposals to ease geographical and occupational mobility:

- As concerns **ICT skills**, a proposal for an **e-learning** programme was adopted by the Commission in December 2002;
- A proposal for a directive recasting and simplifying the different existing Community instruments on the **right of residence** of salaried and independent workers, retired people and other inactive people was adopted by the Commission in May 2001 and is being discussed at the Council. It should be adopted in 2004. This proposal includes students among its target groups
- Increasing the EU-wide transferability of **social security rights** has been furthered through progress on the reform and simplification of Regulation 1408/71 on the co-ordination of social security systems. A political agreement within the Council on a new Regulation should take place before the end of 2003. In addition, an extension of EU social security rights to nationals of third countries has also taken place, which should have a direct impact on mobility towards the EU.
- The Commission tabled in March 2002 proposals for a Directive to lower the regulatory and administrative barriers to the **recognition of professional qualifications** regulated professions. This text should also encourage mobility by facilitating the transfer of qualifications from one EU country to another.

2.5. A Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area

The Commission Communication “A Mobility Strategy for the European Research Area (ERA)”¹⁵ aims at enhancing the living and working environment of researchers in order to attract and maintain a high level of human resources in research. Two main lines of action are proposed:

- the first one is related to the establishment of the dynamics required for a favourable environment for mobile researchers throughout their career. It implies:
 - **Legal improvements concerning particularly admission conditions, access to employment, social security and taxation.** By the end of the year it has been planned the adoption of a Directive and an Action Plan on the conditions of entry and of residence of third-country researchers. A Proposal of Directive has been already tabled on the conditions of entry and residence of third-country nationals for the purposes of studies.
 - Better information on job offers and vacancies, grants and fellowships at different level (EU, international, national and regional), as well as information about legal

¹⁵ COM(2001)331 final of 20.06.2001. full text on http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2001/com2001_0331en01.pdf See also the First Implementation Report SEC(2003)146 of 4.02.2003.

and administrative issues will be provided through the pan-European **Researchers' mobility portal**¹⁶.

- More efficient provision of practical, customised assistance to mobile researchers through the **European network of mobility centres**.
 - **Benchmarking exercise** in order to examine the key aspects of research policy; development of statistic studies in order to monitor the fluxes of researchers.
- The second line of action **concerns financial measures in order to reach a critical mass of mobile researchers**. While the 6th Framework Programme has increased the overall budget by 17% with respect of the 5th Framework Programme, the budget for Human Resources and Mobility (the Marie Curie Actions) –with a total allocation of 1.58 billion Euro- has increased by approximately 70% in comparison to the previous Framework Programme.

Moreover the forthcoming Communication on issues related to the career of researchers in ERA, will consider the issue of mobility in the context of the development of the researchers' career. The issue of human resources and mobility in R&D has also been raised in the context of 3% objective, especially in the Communication "More research for Europe – towards 3% of GDP"¹⁷. This topic is further developed in the recently adopted Communication "Investing in research: an action plan for Europe"¹⁸

2. 6. The next generation of Community programmes in education and training

A public consultation on the future development of the EU Education, Training and Youth Programmes for after 2006 (when the current programmes come to an end) was launched in November 2002. The results of this consultation process are providing input to the Commission in the preparation of the proposal on the new programmes on these fields for 2007-2013, which will be submitted to the European Parliament and Council in early 2004. Increasing and improving mobility for learning purposes will be a political and strategic priority for this new generation of programmes.

3. PRIORITY THEMES AND FIRST RESULTS OF THE WORKING GROUP (FOLLOWING WORK BETWEEN FEBRUARY AND JULY 2003)

It is clear from section 2 that a great deal is being undertaken at European level in many contexts and fora on mobility-related issues. The general overview above has clarified the choice of the group to focus its work on other priority themes.

Right from the beginning the group has taken a proactive stance in order to develop operational proposals as soon as possible. On the basis of the "key issues" identified by the Council in the Work Programme, the Commission proposed, and the group approved,

¹⁶ See this portal on: <http://europa.eu.int/eracareers>

¹⁷ COM(2002)499 final of 11.09.2002. See the full text on:
http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/era/pdf/com3percent_en.pdf

¹⁸ COM(2003)226 final of 30.04.2003 and SEC(2003)489 final of 30.04.2003. See the full text on
http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/fr/com/cnc/2003/com2003_0226fr02.pdf

for the first phase of its work, **three themes to articulate reflection: access to mobility, quality in mobility, and opening up Europe towards the rest of the world.**¹⁹

As mobility and co-operation are horizontal themes, directly coping with each of the key issues proposed in the detailed work programme exceeded what the working group may reasonably do to deliver results in the short or medium term. Therefore the best way to proceed was to concentrate efforts on a few, but wide-ranging issues fulfilling the conditions exposed in section 1.3. The three above-mentioned topics are not being addressed directly in the other ongoing processes and initiatives mentioned above in section 2, concrete results could be delivered on all of them in the short/medium term and are of a real political relevance for furthering mobility.

Group F has advanced in the definition of common criteria and of the concrete actions at the European level concerning the three themes. Discussions have concentrated on the definition of concepts and areas of work (stage 1 of the common sequence for work set up for all Objectives Groups). It has also dealt with the collection of good practices (stage 2 of the common sequence of work) and on the definition of some preliminary recommendations for further action (stage 3 of this work sequence).

The following three sub-sections refer discussions on the three priority themes. They follow the same structure: first a general description of the relevance of the issue and of possible areas for action and a second, a more focused reflection on the envisaged results the group might endorse in the future. From these three sections some general recommendations have been taken up in section 4.

3. 1. Access to mobility

3.1.1. Introduction

Mobility offers the opportunity to increase knowledge, competencies and personal-social development. The learning potential of transnational mobility is increasingly valuable for economy and society – but people can only benefit if they have real access to such opportunities and do actually take them up. However, how many people have access to existing mobility opportunities, and do all social groups take them up equally? What are the reasons for the shortfalls on both counts, and how can these be reduced?

Social inequalities: encouraging the demand for mobility

The Group has analysed the **different personal and social circumstances combining to favour or hinder access to and take-up of mobility.** Socially linked inequalities of educational access, experience and outcomes are still significant features in Europe whilst the consequences of educational failure are becoming more important than ever in shaping life chances and maintaining employability. Access to mobility for learning purposes tends to follow the same pattern as for education in general:

- where mobility schemes are organised through education and training institutions and agencies, take-up patterns are bound to follow the distributional skews already existing (unless directly countered by positive discrimination measures);

¹⁹ See in Annex 1 the Commission note of 28 January 2003 to the attention of the members of Group.

- at least some of the social factors contributing to educational disadvantage will equally reduce mobility opportunities and their take-up; these factors include the familiar personal and social attributes such as socio-economic status, gender, ethnicity and disability and also the cumulative effects of disadvantage, such as lack of confidence and poorer networks of information and support.

The **disadvantaged share** at least the following **access problems**:

- They are underrepresented either in education and training courses per se or in sectors in which mobility offer is most likely to be available. They are **simply less present** in the spaces where the chance to learn in another country is on offer.
- Even if they are present they **do not take advantage of the available opportunity structures** as much as they should because of lack of information, confidence or financial resources, or due to complications in personal/family life.
- When they do take part, they **cannot necessarily rely on a framework of emotional and practical background knowledge and support** to contextualise and valorise the experience in addition to support received (or not) professionally.

At the same time, it is important to bear in mind that some disadvantaged individuals and groups face particular kinds of obstacles and special difficulties in access to mobility. This is the case for **people with disabilities**, a diverse but often highly disadvantaged sector of the population that deserves and needs special consideration.

Improving the provision of mobility and exchange opportunities

Mobility schemes' design and implementation pre-structure access opportunities and take-up patterns. The schemes have largely been designed for young, single and childless people in initial education and training in the formal sector. Thus individuals and groups that neither fit the user image (e.g. young mothers) nor adapt to the contexts involved (e.g. school drop-outs) are likely to have less access opportunities. Either the programmes cannot readily reach the non-average user or its conditions (timing and duration, social support facilities, financial arrangements) make it difficult to participate. **Mobility schemes** for learning purposes are also better developed in the higher education and compulsory school sectors **and less developed in vocational education and training (VET)**. At the same time, there are likely to be differences in access opportunities between industries/occupational sectors. Employer- and workplace-based mobility schemes for learning purposes mirror the unequal patterns of access to continuing vocational training (CVT). Those better qualified, in higher level positions or in larger companies are offered training/mobility more often than others less well-placed.

Financing mobility and exchange

The Group has also stressed how **the availability of funding support for participating in mobility schemes is a major defining factor** in determining access to this learning experience. The proportion of the population that could benefit from a supported period of mobility will depend upon the available money. Funding formulas for student/trainee support vary widely. Most mix grants/subsidies and individual contributions from participants themselves. In addition, employers, foundations and various scholarship schemes make also contributions. Public funds at EU and national levels remain though the main source of financial support. A very complex funding mapping exercise would

be needed to work out precisely who funds what, in which kinds of ways, for whom and under which conditions. It could be more useful **to develop a typology of funding principles and practices** for particular kinds of schemes and specific target groups and then look at whether particular kinds of arrangements are typical **for** particular sectors or target groups. **Identifying the patterns and what lies behind them** is a **precondition for developing more effective policies contributing to equality of access.**

3.1.2 Envisaged results on access to mobility: A set of policy recommendations on access for disadvantaged and a typology of funding mechanisms

The two main aspects to be considered within this theme concern thus how to address **social inequalities and improve access to disadvantaged persons** (including people with disabilities) and also the question of the **funding of mobility**. A strong commitment (at all levels) is clearly required in order to enhance significantly the chances of participation in mobility actions for people with particular difficulties. The operational results of the Group's discussions bear the following points in mind:

- Taking a **lifelong learning approach** to access **remains important**, even if it is young people and young adults who are most likely to undertake mobility for learning purposes.
- Although there are many areas in which information and data are lacking in this area, **sufficient knowledge and experience exists** in the Member States to enable us **to identify the main problems and trends** in access, and therefore to propose initial recommendations for action.
- Particular attention should be given to the **common obstacles faced by disadvantaged individuals and groups** in general, whilst recognising that particular groups may face specific obstacles and therefore may need special support measures. Recommendations should be directed to **actions and measures that would help individuals to overcome these barriers and would lend effective incentives** to improve access to mobility at the institutional level.
- Improving access to **VET-related mobility** for learning purposes in both the initial and continuing training sectors **deserves particular attention**. Within this, opportunity structures and take-up patterns in workplace, employer and company based mobility schemes are of special interest, **not least with respect to SMEs**, where resources and circumstances are likely to constrain access.

“Mainstreaming-plus” could be one way forward. This means:

- taking **concrete measures to redress social demographic imbalances in participation** in mobility programmes for learning purposes by designing policy and action that takes the full variety of circumstances and needs into account;
- **monitoring the measurable effects** of these actions to adjust action;
- **introducing special measures** where mainstreaming does not produce results;
- **raising levels of** public and private material and human resources **investment** in education and training to a level that can support an equally distributed uptake of lifewide and lifelong learning, including mobility elements.

Therefore the group aims at developing **policy recommendations** on the possible means **appropriate to facilitate the participation of disadvantaged persons in transnational mobility**, including also those with disabilities. There are already in the field good practices and ideas proving the possibility of obtaining concrete results. The tools proposed will though have to be adapted to the concrete needs of the various categories of persons included under the heading “disadvantaged people”.

The following **areas for action** are particularly relevant:

- **Institutional support structures:** Such as user-friendly information on learning opportunities, mutual recognition and accreditation arrangements, reintegration measures for those returning from a mobility experience...
- **Increasing individual motivation:** Through personal mentoring, providing opportunities to expand horizons, addressing poor self-confidence or lack of information and support networks, developing social and communication competencies to cope with unfamiliar context...
- **Support measures:** Better information, advice and counselling services, quality services such as childcare provision for specific individual needs...

A more detailed list of **specific recommendations** on both access for disadvantaged in general, and also with a focus on VET is provided here:

Recommendations on access for the disadvantaged in general:

- Databank on good practice at the institutional level
- Good practice awareness campaign – brochures, webpages, etc.
- Consultancy service mediated/funded by Community action to send experts between countries to provide advice on how to improve quality of service
- Dedicated study focussing on known problem groups and building in a before-and-after monitoring dimension
- In-service education and training courses for mobility service providers under the new Community ETY programme/s
- Incentive measures to encourage improved quality of provision (e.g. Annual Mobility Scheme Prizes, special top-up funding awards for schemes that show promise)

Recommendations for enhancing access to VET-related mobility

- Make specific provision for a dedicated IVET action under the new generation of Community action programmes
- Develop appropriate measures to link Ploteus und Eures
- Dedicated study on employee motivation for mobility managed by a consortium between the Social Partners, industry and higher education research centres
- Exchange of good practice on workplace/company based training mobility schemes

- Dedicated needs analysis inquiry for and with SMEs and their employees
- Invite stakeholder organisations to draw up an action plan and good practice brochure.

With regard to **financing forms for facilitating and encouraging participation in mobility** the Group recommends to **start with the establishment of a typology of funding mechanisms based on good practices**. This may be a **basis for disseminating the use of innovative schemes** such as special top-up funding awards for mobility schemes particularly facilitating access, or complementary grants for those most in need.

Another important development concerns the **portability of student support**, which a number of EU countries allow in order to facilitate mobility. However, a solution should be found to avoid a general movement of students towards countries with portable student support systems. This question may be addressed by the Group in the future.

3.2. Quality in mobility

3.2.1 Introduction

This aspect concerns in particular the ways and means for a good preparation of a mobility experience before the departure, for accompanying participants during their stay abroad and for the follow-up after the return to the country of origin. This will be a question of major importance for the future Community programmes as well as for national programmes and individual projects.

A definition of ‘quality’ and its relevance to mobility

In objective 3.4, the results of mobility are defined as intercultural understanding, personal development, and vocational skills: *“Mobility helps to promote the feeling of belonging to Europe, the development of European awareness, and the emergence of European citizenship. It allows young people to improve their personal skills and employability, and offers trainers the chance to broaden their experience and enhance their skills”*. It is indeed clear to the Group, from evaluations of mobility projects and programmes, that stays abroad can bring about foreign language proficiency and intercultural skills and develop entrepreneurial, communicative and interpersonal skills in the participants as well as their ability to cope with diversity. These are increasingly appreciated skills in an increasingly globalised and rapidly changing society.

However, these valued skills do not necessarily come by themselves. The mere fact of living and working or studying in another country will not automatically bring about positive results in terms of skills acquisition and personal development. A stay abroad can also be a stressful and disturbing experience. Participants may even return with prejudices confirmed instead of dispelled, and with a sense of defeat and limitations rather than a feeling of having opened up to new horizons. This is especially the case when we deal with the so-called disadvantaged target groups: people with low skills levels, social problems or disabilities (see section 3.1 above).

Therefore, it is important to ensure that mobility is organised in such a way that these good results take place. That is a major incentive for tackling “quality in mobility”. Skills acquisition in many projects is not at an optimum – the distance between what actually

happened, and what could have happened if the project had been better planned, implemented and followed up is too big. In other words, more value for our money can be achieved if more focus is placed on the quality issue.

Many of the skills acquired during a stay abroad are not of a kind that lend themselves to direct measurement. The focus must be the process (quality assurance): make sure that mobility projects are carried out according to criteria that will ensure quality, even if the latter may not be measured each individual participant.

Quality as “good practice” and as common criteria

As far as quality in mobility is concerned there is often reference to “examples of good practice”, but these are in most cases nothing more than descriptions of a practice that worked for a specific target group at a given moment and in a set of specific circumstances. They are thus very difficult to transpose to other target groups and circumstances. In order to extract the value and disseminate it a set of common concepts and a coherent descriptive framework is necessary to see how the individual parts relate to one another and how they alone or in combination affect the final outcome.

Quality criteria, in order to be genuinely helpful, must cover all kinds of mobility. They must be formulated around what is common for all types of mobility and target groups. Some general criteria seem to have established themselves over the years. One of the most fundamental is that **mobility used as a didactic tool not only comprises the actual period spent abroad, but also preparation before departure and follow-up:**

➤ Preparation

The preparation phase also comprises *motivation* of participants and *selection*. Preparation proper comprises five different aspects:

- **linguistic preparation:** equip participants linguistically so that they can benefit optimally from the experience;
- **cultural preparation:** ensure that participants know how to deal with cultural differences so that these do not disrupt the learning process;
- **pedagogical preparation:** to give them an insight into learning processes during the stay abroad, in order to equip them to avoid problems in their learning;
- **practical preparation:** to prepare them to deal with all practical problems (administration, accommodation, transportation, social security etc.) to avoid too much energy being diverted from the learning;
- **psychological preparation:** to equip them to deal with the psychological effects of being abroad (“culture shock”, loneliness, feelings of inadequacy during stay and alienation upon homecoming).

➤ During the stay abroad

A necessary prerequisite to a fruitful experience abroad is the degree of *immersion* into culture and mentality of the host country. Participants must be involved in meaningful

interaction with the environment in order to acquire skills (academic, vocational and/or personal) and develop positive attitudes, but this does not necessarily come by itself and must be carefully orchestrated (especially for short term stays). Central during this phase is also the way in which participants are *supervised*.

➤ **Follow-up or debriefing**

During follow-up participants talk about events so that experiences – good or bad – are all transformed into learning. Participants may also be helped to identify the processes of learning and personal development they have undergone and to valorise these in the context of education and training, in working life and as citizens.

Gathering and interpreting examples of good practice

A major problem in connection with mobility and especially the dissemination of the results is the *compartmentalisation* between different programmes and sectors of the educational system. This means that many valuable experiences are lost over time, and that project organisers need to reinvent them again and again thus diverting energy away from what should be the main consideration of any mobility project: creating the best possible framework for the participants to learn in. In order to benefit from this richness in experience it is necessary to be able to pool all the examples of good practice rather than keeping them within the confines of their environment of origin.

Examples of good practice need not necessarily be success stories. Often, valuable lessons can be learnt from projects that go wrong, but the results of such projects are often hard to get at, since they are not disseminated. Projects need to be analysed in order to bring out the transferable elements to other target groups and environments.

3.2.2. Envisaged results on quality in mobility: The development of a set of relative common criteria for mobility actions

Following the above considerations the Group has agreed that a set of quality criteria (a checklist) formulated as **minimum criteria** that can be extended if national practices require so, is a good first beginning. But setting up general quality norms for mobility is difficult, since the term covers a multitude of very diverse activities for an equally diverse range of target groups. It is thus necessary to talk about **relative quality criteria** rather than absolute quality norms. The concept of quality criteria in this context simply means that the modalities applied should be adequate (relative) to the needs of the target group, and not conform to a pre-defined norm irrespective of the nature of the target group.

The diversity in forms and target groups of mobility (spontaneous or individual mobility versus organised mobility; institutional mobility for educational purposes versus placements in companies...) requires a diversified quality strategy – it is not possible to use the same model for all types of mobility. Flexible and diverse quality criteria and strategies for quality assurance are thus necessary.. However, **a quality strategy has to build on a common core of agreed quality criteria.**

The challenge ahead for Group F is now the **definition of operational quality criteria** that can be integrated into quality strategies at programme and institutional level, and can win general acceptance both for stays at educational establishments and placements in public and private enterprises and organisations. This **should be done on the basis of a**

systematic study of examples of good practice from all the various areas involved with mobility, which in turn should be carefully analysed in order to extract the core values that can be applied outside of their specific context. The experience in Community programmes, where a quality charter is already in application in the Erasmus action of the Socrates programme, should also be considered.

An **indicative list of core quality criteria** for organised mobility is enclosed below, which will be developed and refined following exchange of good practice:

Quality criteria for *sending institutions* would contain procedures for

- selection and motivation of participants
- clear partnership agreement – who does what – and establishment of communication lines with appointed person in hosting organisation
- elaboration of personalised education plan accepted by all parties
- preparation of the individual participant at linguistic, cultural, practical, mental and pedagogical level
- social security, insurance
- supervision during stay abroad
- debriefing after homecoming
- recognition of the experience

For *hosting institutions*, provisions for

- accommodation and practical details (doctor, dentist, pharmacy etc.)
- educational, social and cultural integration
- educational accompaniment during stay (tutoring)
- nominate a person in overall charge of welcoming and tutoring the mobile person

For *companies hosting trainees on placements*

- clear and unequivocal decisions concerning insurance, social security, and possibly salary of trainee
- clear repartition of tasks in the event of sickness or an accident
- clear agreement on training plan, including length and progression
- appointment of a mentor
- clear description of mentor's task
- provisions for ongoing (formative) evaluation of trainee's performance

and general well-being

- detailed evaluation of placement with trainee and sending organisation.

Mutatis mutandis, most of these criteria also determine the quality of individual mobility.

3. 3. Opening up Europe towards the rest of the world (Mobility from outside the European Union)

3.3.1 Introduction

The Group's deliberations during this initial period have so far concentrated mainly on **higher education**. However, the group is convinced that the more difficult topic of vocational training will also have to be addressed.

This section contains a short list of relevant and possible actions (see below in 3.3.2). In the sub-section on envisaged results (3.3.3) focus is given to those concrete aspects which the Group has considered most relevant for immediate discussion and on which several proposals have already been identified.

Discussion on these possible actions has taken as a starting point the achievements of European cooperation in education and training. The European programmes were primarily geared to enhance intra-European mobility and cooperation. Recently this focus has been complemented by a global perspective. The Barcelona Council of Spring 2002 has thus pledged the EU to become a world-wide educational reference, and "*the most favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions*". Mobility into the EU would serve to measure Europe's global attractiveness in educational terms. But Europe is still far from attaining this aim. **Europe is behind other highly developed countries**, such as the US or Australia. Europe's total numbers and quotas of foreign students can well compare with those of the US. Nevertheless:

- More than 50 percent of all foreign students in Europe are themselves Europeans. Europe attracts considerably fewer non-Europeans than the US (about 80 percent).
- Europe's attractiveness is even lower when measured against "potential", i.e. against its population size. Since the population of Europe is much larger than that of the US, one would also expect it to attract considerably more non-European foreign students. But this is not the case. Europe attracts only 7 (non-European) students per 100,000 inhabitants, while the figure for the US is 16, and for Australia 52.
- Finally, there are indications that Europe is not always attracting the top-performers among internationally mobile students, who often prefer US institutions.

3.3.2 Possible actions to be considered

a) Joint and Double Degrees

Curricula all over the world are primarily geared to the needs of domestic students. At the same time, Europe's universities and colleges have started to set up innovative new study programmes, which target foreign students, from Europe and elsewhere. One such example are joint or double degrees, which are based on study at (at least) two higher education institutions in two different European countries, and lead to the degrees of both institutions (and countries). While originally devised for purposes of intra-European

cooperation, they are very attractive for non-European students, too. The recent initiative to create “European Masters” within the future *Erasmus Mundus* Programme is a key element in this new approach to facilitate further mobility into the EU from other parts of the world by creating an attractive, joint educational offer.

Since *Erasmus Mundus* is already giving high priority to this approach, the Group has decided not to focus its discussion on this issue for the time being.

b) Programmes Taught in Non-Native World Languages

Rarely spoken domestic languages as a medium of tuition can act as a barrier for the attraction of foreign students. Another way of enhancing Europe’s attractiveness to students from other continents, particularly for higher education institutions in countries with (globally) rarely spoken languages can be to set up programmes taught in (non-native) major world languages. But the number of these programmes is still very small. The provision of this type of higher education is also very unequally spread over Europe. In addition, promoting this kind of education should also take into account the need to preserve Europe’s cultural and linguistic diversity. The recommendations of the Action Plan on Language Learning should also be considered.

c) A Welcoming Environment

The wider “environment” plays a role in the attractiveness of Europe for non-European nationals. This concerns a wide range of issues and players. Further action is taken here. For instance, rules and regulations for entry and stay will be addressed by a European Directive on entry for purposes of education and training under preparation. Education ministries in some Union countries work on simplified entry and admission procedures. To encourage better welcome by administrations some countries have launched awareness-raising campaigns.

Even though the challenge is considerable, change is taking place. Group F underlines the importance of acting on this sector and encourages further action at both legal and practical level by the relevant national and Community bodies.

d) Scholarship and Funding Programmes

Scholarship and other funding programmes are classical instruments of maintaining and increasing the inflow of foreign students, academics, scientists, professionals, trainers and trainees into a country. In terms of scholarship programmes, the European Union (and some of its member states) is a model for the world. Major programmes to promote external mobility have been launched in the past years (ALBAN, Asia-Link, AUNP). *Erasmus Mundus* is likely to further improve provision with increased funding for mobility towards the EU at master’s level.

But there are limits to substantially improving Europe’s competitiveness through scholarships only. The number of foreign students world-wide is estimated at 2 million at present and likely to treble at least in the next 20 years. It is not possible to fund scholarships for even a fraction of these students – and not necessary, since many can finance their foreign education themselves.

Scholarship programmes should thus be designed as highly targeted instruments to reach objectives set at national/EU level. Since scholarships can play an important role in attracting highly qualified persons from other continents, the exemplary offer in some

European countries can be used as a pool from which to choose examples of good practice.

3.3.3. Envisaged results on opening up Europe to the rest of the world

After analysing the above-mentioned areas the group has concentrated on completing the European approach to improve the attractiveness of the European Union (beyond what is already proposed by Erasmus-Mundus) by focusing on two areas of work which are of particular relevance at this stage:

A. Marketing European education through a joint ‘European label’

The Group has analysed “marketing” as an important tool for enhancing Europe’s attractiveness in the rest of the world. This could be a “pro-active” effort to promote a educational course or a number of courses. In order to “transport” these offerings it is also necessary to market the institution providing these courses, as well as the more immediate region, the country and, sometimes, the continent. During the last years, a number of European countries have launched major marketing efforts in order to bring to the attention of potential students (mainly in Asia and Latin America) the benefits of studying in their country. Cooperation between these national efforts in global marketing is not yet systematic and cooperation levels might be increased considerably.

It is therefore proposed to develop a “European label” to complement institutional and national promotion efforts. Potential students from non-European countries very often find it difficult to differentiate between the individual European countries but at the same time they have an idea of “Europe”. Therefore, every country and their institutions could benefit from joint efforts.

The European added value of this approach would essentially consist in the **identification of a set of key messages**, which could be transmitted by various means, such as text and/or logos or other visual material. In order to develop such key elements (messages) a research project might be launched on the image of Europe which young people in important countries of origin have. This is necessary because what these young people feel as positive about Europe and which would then become the basis of the “key messages” might be totally different from the advantages European themselves find worth mentioning about their continent and its educational offer. In other words, one would need this “market research” to find out in which exact way promoting Europe may help promoting national systems and institutions and vice versa.

B. Better monitor Europe’s progress in extra-EU mobility

The quality of statistics on international mobility outside of scholarship programmes leaves much to be desired, even in higher education. Since the discontinuation of the *UNESCO Statistical Yearbook* in 1999 there is no regular (annual) and easy-to-read international data publication on foreign students. It is therefore no longer possible without undue effort to monitor Europe’s relative attractiveness for foreign students. There is also no regular source of information on international movements of academics and scientists. In addition, available data are provided from national sources and are not readily comparable. Definitions used in national data collection for one and the same category differ between countries. As the recent Kassel University study for the European Parliament on statistics on student mobility in the EU disclosed, this results in

the fact that even a seemingly straightforward (i.e. comparable) category such as “nationality” is not homogeneously defined across Europe.

Without sound mobility data, it is almost impossible to measure Europe’s progress towards becoming the favoured destination of students and scholars from all over the world. Therefore the Group has examined the two following conclusions:

- First, and in a medium and long-term perspective, **the official statistics produced by OECD, UNESCO and EUROSTAT would need to devote more attention to international mobility (more and more precise data parameters), and be based on more accurate, timely and comparable data.** However, it would take considerable time to implement these changes, and the Union needs results much earlier (well ahead of 2010) to measure progress towards the Lisbon mobility goal.
- Therefore, another initiative might be needed at least for the short term: **the creation of a regular (annual) publication (“mobility monitor”) with key data on international mobility flows, both inside of and (particularly) into the Union.** Models for such a publication already exist at national level in The Netherlands, Germany and the US. It would not require new surveys, but could be based on existing (but unpublished and often difficult-to-locate) data in national statistical offices and similar institutions. It should provide easy-to-read data on major mobility trends, be a source for essential mobility-related information needed by political decision-makers at national and Community level, and would also be the tool to measure progress towards the goal set by the Barcelona European Council.

Further discussion of these recommendations will take place in the framework of the more general work to be undertaken on the question of indicators (see below section 3.4), and in close contact with the Standing Group on Indicators.

3. 4. Indicators and statistics for measuring mobility

In connection with the need (see above subsection 3.3.) of monitoring mobility towards the EU, **Group F has expressed a general concern for the absence of reliable data on mobility** (see in Annex 4 a note of 23 May to the Standing Group on Indicators). It has also stressed its interest to contribute to the development of the proposals with a view to a **pragmatic approach to solve this problem** (in particular in cooperation with the Standing Group). Some further indicators might be developed using currently available information, for instance on flows of students from outside the European Union as well as within the EU, beyond the figures for mobility in the Community programmes. Group F has underlined also that a more comprehensive picture of mobility was needed: gender, socio-economic status and other relevant data. The messages coming from the European Parliament study on statistics on student mobility should also be considered.

The Standing Group on Indicators has thus proposed, following the discussion in Group F, four indicators for measuring mobility, which have been fully endorsed by Group F in its meeting on June 30-July 1:

- Inward and outward mobility of teachers and trainers within the Socrates (Erasmus Comenius, Lingua and Grundtvig) and Leonardo da Vinci programmes
- Inward and outward mobility of Erasmus students and Leonardo da Vinci trainees

- Foreign students enrolled in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a percentage of all students enrolled in the country of destination, by nationality (European country or other countries)
- Percentage of students (ISCED 5-6) of the country of origin enrolled abroad (in a European country or other countries)

The Standing Group and Group F propose the creation of a small Task Force to look further into the development of these indicators, in connection also with the need to better monitor mobility towards the EU.

3.5. Further stages of work for Group F

The Commission has received from the Group information on good practices relevant for the three priority themes. The material thus provided will allow to **develop exchange of good practices during the second half of 2003** after it is analysed to determine which examples are most interesting to support policy recommendations for wider use.

Concerning the planned schedule of work, a seminar with Community support is planned for October 16-17 in Vienna organised by the Austrian authorities. The focus of this seminar will be on access and on quality in mobility.

The last meeting of Group F in 2003 is planned to take place in November to discuss the draft analytical summary by the Commission on the follow-up to the Mobility recommendation, and on the main conclusions from the examination of the best practices submitted by the Member States.

The proposed Task Force on Mobility Indicators may be launched in the autumn 2003, as will be a feasibility study on a “European mobility card”.

4. FIRST GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS EMERGING FROM THE WORK OF GROUP F

Although the group has not yet reached stage 3 of work, which would allow for clear policy recommendations to be drawn from the results of stage 1 and 2, some political messages may already be submitted to the attention of the political level:

1. **Necessity to strengthen educational mobility quantitatively**, which is important for the new Community programmes on education and training for 2007-2013.
2. Transnational **mobility in the field of vocational training is well behind** that in the field of **higher education**. Consequently a key objective should be to devote targeted and concerted action towards reaching a comparable level in VET mobility.
3. **Increasing mobility has to go in parallel with efforts to improve quality in mobility**, in particular with regard to:
 - a) Recognition of acquired learning (both formal and informal) during the experience of mobility;

- b) preparation, tutoring and follow-up (support structures for mobility);
- c) language learning (see above recommendations of the working group on languages in section 2.2).

Agreement on a “quality charter” (checklist of quality criteria to be made obligatory or not as appropriate) would be helpful.

4. **Equal opportunities for “disadvantaged” persons regarding access to transnational mobility requires more attention.** Good examples of practice are available that show it is possible to design effective measures to facilitate access for those people who face particular access obstacles, although it is not necessarily easy to achieve concrete and measurable results. 'Mainstreaming-plus' policies (that is, good quality measures for all together with positive discrimination actions where demonstrably necessary) offer a way forward.
5. **Additional efforts have to be made at European level to improve the attractiveness of Europe** in order for its education/training systems to become world references. A “European label” based on market research for the promotion of education in Europe may be developed.
6. **Need for relevant data (and of indicators) concerning transnational mobility both inside Europe and from outside the Union.** Building upon the proposed indicators for measuring mobility a joint task force should be set up between Group F and the Standing Group on indicators, as well as other relevant actors like Eurostat and Eurydice.

Annex 1

Mandate of Group F ‘Mobility and European Cooperation’

Mandate of Working Group F on Mobility and European Cooperation

1. Introduction

The working group on mobility and European cooperation has a dual role to play:

- a) monitoring the implementation of the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 10 July 2001 on mobility within the Community for students, persons undergoing training, volunteers, teachers and trainers, and of the Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council, of 14 December 2000, concerning an "action plan for mobility";
- b) contributing to the development of European policy within the framework of the "detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe" adopted jointly by the Council and the Commission on 14.02.02.

2. Action framework

a) - **the Recommendation** of the EP and of the Council of 10.07.01, the aim of which is *to encourage cooperation between Member States on the subject of mobility by supporting their activities and fully respecting their responsibilities within the framework of their national legislation;*

- **the Action Plan** of the Council of 14.12.01, the general aim of which is *to adopt a European mobility strategy and define and democratise mobility*, and the more specific aims of which are: *to promote mobility by training people and providing more resources, by developing multilingualism, by making it easier to find information on mobility and by drawing up a mobility chart; to look into the financing of mobility so as to make it financially and socially accessible to all; to increase and improve mobility through the introduction of new forms of mobility, improved reception facilities, creation of a status for people opting for mobility, the adoption of clear and transparent mobility calendars; to gain more from periods of mobility by increasing crossover opportunities through the recognition of diplomas and qualifications and recognition of experience acquired.*

b) the detailed work programme on **the follow-up of the objectives** of education and training systems, aimed on the one hand at "increasing mobility and exchange" (objective 3.4) and on the other hand at "strengthening European cooperation" (objective 3.5).

3. Mandate

a) -To exchange information and experience on the implementation of the Recommendation.

- To assist the Member States in preparing their national evaluation reports and to assist the Commission in preparing the analytical summaries on the implementation of the Recommendation (and of the mobility action plan).

b) - In the context of following up the detailed work programme on the objectives of education and training systems, each working group is mandated to collect, within its areas of responsibility, information designed to ensure consistency in the reports and to

avoid any repetition. The first task of the working groups set up by the Commission is to contribute towards the preparation of an interim report which must be transmitted to the Council in spring 2004 and which should describe the progress that the training and education systems have made towards meeting these objectives.

-More particularly, **the mandate of the working group on mobility and European cooperation**, taking into account the action framework and the various activities undertaken at European level in the field of mobility (skills and mobility action plan, Copenhagen declaration...), as well as the experience acquired in this field in European programmes such as Socrates, Leonardo and Youth, is as follows:

- to establish an inventory of initiatives undertaken in the fields of education, training and any field where experiments with mobility and cooperation have taken place;

- to identify themes suitable for exchanges of best practice;

- to formulate priorities relating to the indicators and benchmarks, taking particular account of the list of indicators shown in the work programme for objectives 3.4 and 3.5.

4. Work plan

In view of the group's wide mandate and the very short deadlines set for producing certain data, it is essential to create a proper timetable for the activities in 2003. These activities will include meetings, collection of information, preparation of documents by experts, creation and convening of small working groups on specific themes, exchanges and debates on fundamental questions, and regular provision of information to the coordination group. The following timetable is proposed:

MEETING ON 6-7 FEBRUARY: presentation, discussion and adoption of the group's mandate, its working methods, the timetable, a chart for the establishment of the national reports on the Recommendation (and on the action plan); identification of the key themes for exchanges of best practice in the fields of mobility and European cooperation.

APRIL MEETING: first discussion of the inventory of initiatives undertaken in the field of mobility and European cooperation; continuation of the work on exchanges of best practice, in particular the methodological aspects; adoption of the plan for the interim activity report to be presented within the context of the objectives, including the basis for the specific activities in these fields; continuation of the discussion on the key themes.

JUNE MEETING: definition of the priorities relating to the indicators and benchmarks; review of progress on the national reports; progress report on activities undertaken.

SEPTEMBER MEETING: discussion of the Commission report relating to the Recommendation and the mobility action plan, drawn up on the basis of the national reports; discussion concerning the data collection methodology (in particular the statistical tools).

NOVEMBER MEETING: presentation, discussion and adoption of the interim report containing proposals for the future.

Annex 2

From the Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and training systems in Europe: Objectives 3.4 “Increasing Mobility and Exchange” and 3.5 “Strengthening European Cooperation”.

OBJECTIVE 3.4 – INCREASING MOBILITY AND EXCHANGE

Mobility helps to promote the feeling of belonging to Europe, the development of European awareness, and the emergence of European citizenship. It allows young people to improve their personal skills and employability, and offers trainers the chance to broaden their experience and enhance their skills. In an increasingly complex Europe all the available means for facilitating and promoting mobility must be used in the most effective way possible, so that people - in particular young people - can identify with Europe. Mobility in education or training, including pre-doctoral research training, also plays a part in creating a European education and training area and can contribute to achieving a European Research Area.

The European Union already has a solid basis in this field. The Socrates, Leonardo and Youth programmes and the assistance provided for research worker mobility are among the areas where EU activities provide an example to the world, even though concrete experience also shows that mobility as an instrument has not yet reached its full potential in providing support for the Lisbon objective.

Numerous other Community initiatives, such as the mobility action plan approved by the Nice European Council, the recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council on the same subject, and the creation of the task force on new European labour markets (the establishing of which was backed by the Stockholm European Council) all testify to the importance of mobility and to the political recognition of that importance. These will be implemented in close co-ordination with the mobility initiatives in the European Research Area.

Specific goals are included in the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council (no. 13 concerning mobility of researchers and no. 26 concerning mobility of students, teachers and training and research staff).

A. Key issues

Providing the widest access to mobility to individuals and to education and training organisations, including those serving a less privileged public and reducing the remaining obstacles to mobility

Monitoring the volume, directions, participation rates as well as qualitative aspects of mobility flows across Europe

Facilitating validation and recognition of competencies acquired during mobility

Promoting the presence and recognition of European education and training in the world as well as their attractiveness to students, academics and researchers from other world regions.

B. Organisation of the follow-up

- a. Starting period: During 2002 (2nd stage)

- b. Indicators for measuring progress (Indicative list to be reviewed as appropriate):
- Proportion of national students and trainees carrying out part of their studies in another EU or third country
 - Proportion of teachers, researchers and academics from other EU countries employed at different educational levels
 - Number and distribution of EU and non-EU students and trainees in education and training.
- c. Themes for exchanging experience, good practice and, as appropriate, peer review (Indicative list):
- Financing, participation and geographical distribution of EU and national exchange programmes
 - Social benefits, i.e. in public transportation, museums etc, granted to people during mobility
 - Evaluation of the results and development of EUROPASS
 - Information on mobility offers and conditions of the EU and the Member States
 - ECTS in vocational training.
 - Development of "certificate supplement" in vocational training (similar to diploma supplements in higher education)
 - Transferability of national grants for foreign education and training periods

OBJECTIVE 3.5 – STRENGTHENING EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION

In the new Europe of the knowledge society, citizens should be able to learn and work throughout Europe, and make full use of their qualifications wherever they are. In the higher education area in particular, the obstacles to mobility and to recognition of qualifications are already being tackled, both through the EU instruments (such as the ECTS or the university partnerships within the Socrates programme) and through the “Bologna process”. However, in many areas there is substantial work to be done. Therefore higher education institutions and other educational authorities should be encouraged to develop more compatible systems of qualifications across Europe and a common understanding of what are the minimum levels of quality required for accreditation. The policies on the transparency and recognition of qualifications, must be strengthened. The development of joint degrees and qualifications and of the accreditation systems must be supported if the education and training institutions in Europe are to be recognised world-wide as centres of excellence.

A. <u>Key issues</u>

Enhancing the effectiveness and timeliness of recognition processes for the purpose of further study, training and employment throughout Europe

Promoting co-operation between responsible organisations and authorities in view of more compatibility in quality assurance and accreditation

Promoting transparency of information on education and training opportunities and structures in view of the creation of an open European area for education

Promotion of the European dimension of teaching and training.

B. Organisation of the follow-up

a. Starting period: During 2002 (2nd stage)

b. Indicators for measuring progress (Indicative list to be reviewed as appropriate):

- Proportion of undergraduate and postgraduate students and researchers continuing their studies in another EU or third country
- Percentage of graduates obtaining joint degrees in Europe
- Percentage of students and trainees within ECTS or EUROPASS and/or obtaining Diploma/Certificate Supplement

c. Themes for exchanging experience, good practice and, as appropriate, peer review (Indicative list):

- Promotion of accreditation in higher education
- Promotion of joint courses and degrees in Europe which are internationally recognised; promotion of relevant marketing initiatives
- Inclusion of the European dimension in education and training

Annex 3

“Issues paper” for members of Group F on the possible priority themes for exchange of good practice (28 January 2003).



Brussels, 28 January 2003
DG EAC B/1/CSC D(2003)

**NOTE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE WORKING GROUP
“MOBILITY AND EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION”**

Subject: Issues paper.

1. PURPOSE OF THIS NOTE

The working group will have to select a limited number of issues on which to focus its work. Therefore, in its first meetings the group will have to identify which among the relevant themes most urgently need discussion. This note is intended as a contribution towards this task.

2. BACKGROUND

The “Detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe” endorsed by the Barcelona European Council in March 2002 includes the strategic objective of “Opening up education and training systems to the wider world” (Strategic objective 3). To achieve this, five specific objectives were agreed upon, two of which focused on mobility (3.4: Increasing mobility and exchanges) and co-operation (3.5: Strengthening European cooperation).

For each objective the Council indicated some key issues, identified themes for exchange of experience and proposed a list of potential indicators.

3. PRIORITY THEMES

As mobility and co-operation are horizontal themes, directly coping with each of the key topics proposed in the detailed work programme exceeds what this working group can reasonably do to deliver results in the short or medium term.

Therefore we think that the best way to proceed is to concentrate our efforts on a few, but wide-ranging issues. We propose three such themes, but it should be kept in mind that, within these themes, the group should focus its work on matters for which concrete results can be delivered in short/medium term and for which good practice has political relevance. The proposed themes are the following:

- (1) Access to mobility.
This includes issues related to financing, information, guidance, coping with disabilities, addressing the problems of disadvantaged citizens and removing specific legal or administrative obstacles.
- (2) Quality of mobility.
This includes issues like quality criteria to be satisfied before, during and after the mobility experience, by promoters (sending and receiving organisations) as well as by concerned authorities.
- (3) Mobility from outside the EU.
This includes issues like making European education and training better known and easier to understand, providing for a friendlier to access, and increasing their appeal.

Below a few considerations on each of these three themes are provided, to spur the debate. Section 4 lists several activities going on at European level which are relevant to the issues below.

3.1. Access to mobility

- Expanding access to mobility will require improved co-ordination between the many decision-making levels with a view to exploring new financing arrangements and launching a major public awareness campaign highlighting opportunities for educational mobility.

Over the past fifteen years the European Union has invested considerable sums in the promotion of mobility and has created through its programmes a solid basis in this field. However, if the ambitious objectives set by the Lisbon Process are to be achieved, this primary source of funding must be complemented by significant increases in investment in mobility from other sources. Greater access to mobility for both individuals and education and training organisations, including those serving a less privileged public, will mean a gradual integration of mobility in national policies for lifelong learning and the achievement of greater efficiency of educational investment in the European context.

- The policies, systems and practices that support information and guidance on mobility must be strengthened. It will be necessary to reflect further on the European dimension of guidance and in particular on the convergence of existing European networks and structures in the field of information, guidance and counselling.

With mobility placed firmly at the forefront of the policy agenda, citizens in a knowledge-based economy have an increasing need for information concerning learning opportunities throughout Europe, while guidance practitioners require knowledge about other systems, methodologies and practices.

It will be necessary to determine precisely what kind of information people moving between countries require with respect to learning opportunities, recognition of qualifications and how this information material should be prepared and disseminated.

3.2. Quality of mobility

Quality assurance must be pursued in the preparation and implementation of mobility projects, as well as in their follow-up. Quality criteria should be established to be respected by promoters of mobility projects: sound partnership with the host organisation, adequate previous preparation of persons sent abroad, well defined mentoring arrangements, agreement on the content and objective of the mobility experience, appropriate consideration of the legal and administrative framework. Envisaging some form of follow-up should in itself be a required quality standard. A major issue is that of the value of the mobility experience in terms of its visibility and recognition in the home country or for further mobility purposes. The adoption of a quality charter for transnational mobility, defining the basic criteria, could be an approach to examine.

The quality of mobility in general could also be improved through adequate dissemination of best practices. The opportunity for a quality label may be examined.

3.3. Extra-EU mobility

The "external" side of mobility (i.e. between the EU and the rest of the world) has become a priority since the European Council of Barcelona in March 2002 called for the EU to become a world-wide reference for the quality and relevance of its education and training systems and institutions and the most-favoured destination of students, scholars and researchers from other world regions.

The main issues in relation to external mobility are related with making the European education and training systems:

- easier to understand in other countries, through more compatible and better readable learning paths and diploma;
- better known and easier to access, through better information (Internet portal enabling prospective students to find where in Europe they can study a given subject; disseminating information materials, attending world education fairs, marketing the European learning provision);
- more appealing, particularly by pursuing the recognition of European diplomas and by providing students the basic support (getting visas, housing, insurance, assistance on arrival, support for family members, etc.).

It should be noted that this type of mobility particularly suffers from the lack of reliable statistics.

4. EXPERIENCE TO START FROM

It is clear that discussion on these issues should also rely upon the amount of experience gained and the projects started at various levels – beside the implementation of the mobility actions included in the large spending programmes.

Below some relevant work in progress or recently carried out at European level is mentioned.

- In relation to making qualifications and skills more transparent:
 - National Reference Points for Qualifications have been set up by now in almost all Member States, as in several EEA and acceding countries. NRP's are supposed to become their country's main reference for any issue related to qualifications; in particular, they are involved in the development and the use of certificate supplements for vocational qualifications. Their resources are national, but the Commission and Cedefop provide support to their activity as a network. The format for certificate supplements for vocational qualifications has been agreed upon and in several countries work has begun to actually produce them.
 - The European CV format was formally established through a recommendation, issued after wide consultation. It is downloadable from the Cedefop site or can be obtained addressing the National Reference Points for Qualifications (cf.).
 - The implementation of the Europass Training Decision is going on in all Member States; so far around 35 000 Europass Training documents – aimed at making mobility experience recorded and easier to communicate – have been issued to trainees in the whole EU. Preparation of a proposal for a future, wider instrument is also going on, mainly through the working group on transparency in VET (cf. below).
 - Following the recent Council Resolution on enhanced cooperation in VET, and bringing forward the work of the European Forum on the Transparency of vocational qualifications, a working group on transparency in VET has been created. In the short term, it will focus on working towards a single framework for transparency tools, which is intended to replace the current Europass document, integrating the European CV and other transparency tools like the certificate supplement, the diploma supplement, the language portfolio.
- To satisfy the demand for information on learning opportunities in Europe – to benefit European citizens as well as prospective incoming students from outside – a European Internet portal on learning opportunities (PLOTEUS) has been developed and will be launched in the beginning of March. Work was also started towards the interoperability of national VET databases.

As concerning the contents, PLOTEUS relies upon the Euroguidance network, co-funded under Leonardo and operating in all countries participating in the programme. The Euroguidance network is an example of how the European dimension to guidance is put into practice providing a common platform for sharing information.

- Concerning in particular the extra-EU mobility, and the closer co-operation it requires, the Bologna process aims at creating by 2010 more coherence and compatibility within the European Higher education area, and more competitiveness with respect to the rest of the world. Mobility, both intra-European and external, should benefit from the reforms in progress and stimulate

a new type of "vertical" mobility (with students studying for whole degrees abroad).

The ERASMUS-World programme, proposed by the Commission to specifically address the issue of external mobility, is currently being discussed and is expected to be adopted before the end of 2003. It is likely to be a new, powerful tool to stimulate cooperation and mobility between the EU and the rest of the world, through the development of EU Masters and mobility grants for foreign and European students.

5. INFORMATION SUPPORT

There is a widespread perception that information on issues related with mobility – statistical data and analyses, case studies, etc. – is not as adequate as a thorough policy debate would require.

The main information sources that will be addressed at international level include Eurydice, Cedefop and OECD.

6. NEXT STEPS

For each theme, an issues paper will be prepared by the Commission and by expressly contracted experts.

It will probably be necessary to establish sub-groups, to progress work on a specific theme or in relation to a particular target group.

Annex 4

Note to Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks 23 May 2003.



Brussels, 23/05/03
D(2003)

Group F – Mobility and European Co-operation

Feedback on Working document on Indicators for Measuring Progress towards the Common Objectives

1. Context for discussion

The feedback of the Expert Group on the Working Document takes place against a background where the use of indicators is seen as one element, together with peer review and exchange of good practice, in the methodology of the Open Method of Coordination (OMC). Indicators should not therefore be seen as the only means by which progress towards the attainment of the Objectives should be measured.

Based on the consultation note sent prior to the meeting, conclusions of the Standing group on indicators and benchmarks are explained and particularly its proposal to use as indicators the data on mobility within the Socrates and LdV programme. The reasons why the UNESCO, OECD, EUROSTAT (UOE) data collection had not been included is clarified, namely that the focus of the UOE data collection is tertiary students with foreign citizenship. This is, however, not the same as mobile students. First, many tertiary students with foreign citizenship are no longer mobile students, since they may have lived all their life in the country where they studied. Secondly, a growing number of families live outside the country of which they are citizens, therefore students with home citizenship can now also be incoming and thus mobile students.

2. Opinion on the indicators proposed

The expert group agreed that mobility data from the SOCRATES and LEONARDO DA VINCI programmes is a fine source of information, but not enough to cover the whole of mobility since overall mobility is much larger than mobility supported by the EU.

With regard to the EU mobility programmes, the expert group underlined that:

- Mobility of trainers should be included in the indicator on teacher mobility.
- Other actions of EU-programmes (particularly Grundtvig and Lingua) should also be analysed for relevant data.

Moreover, the expert group emphasised that:

data from UNESCO, OECD and Eurostat (UOE- data collection) should be considered even though it is deficient with regard to measuring mobility flows.

there is a need not only to analyse general numbers but also to be able to enrich our vision by having a more complex picture including mobility data for men and women, according to educational level, employment situation, age group or social class

national data should be analysed even when they are not completely comparable. This would allow at least a rough impression of how things stand and what are the trends right now.

Finally, the expert group agreed to take into consideration the recommendations of the European Parliament study “statistics on student mobility within the European Union”, which had been proposed by the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks as a remedy for the lack of data in the area.

3. Interaction between Group F and the Standing Group on Indicators

The expert group agreed that it was important to ensure a more structured level of co-operation, and a higher level of ongoing dialogue between the thematic and the expert groups. It is important to engage the thematic specialists at an earlier stage in discussion on the types of indicators, which are available. Therefore increased levels of contact between members of both groups at national level and participation of representatives at each other's group meetings is important. The involvement of experts on mobility statistics in this joint work should also be considered.

Annex 5 List of Members of Group F.

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MOBILITY AND EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION (GROUP F)
List of members of the Group
(Updated 15 July 2003)**

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