

## 1° Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel – London 16-17 March 2009

### - SUMMARY REPORT -

This paper summarises the proceedings of the EU High Level Reflection Panel (HLRP) on Entrepreneurship Education which took place on 16-17th March 2009 at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), London.

The London HLRP represents one in a series of four such Panels on Entrepreneurship Education taking place between March and November 2009. Each of these will bring together national level policy makers (from both education and enterprise departments) and stakeholder representatives from a regional cluster of seven or eight EU (and EEA countries).

Participants in this HLRP included representatives from **Belgium, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg the Netherlands and the UK**, as well as some relevant stakeholders (including business associations, teachers and students).

In developing the notion of entrepreneurship, it is important to maintain a clear message that it is not only about enterprise and business, but allowing our children to develop skills for life. A critical aspect of the debate is to ensure the thread of Entrepreneurship Education runs throughout the education system, from primary through tertiary and encompassing vocational and adult education.

Participants agreed that there is no shortage of ideas, the problem is how to use them. A common obstacle to developing policy at national level has been recognised in the lack of coordination between different entities. A national strategy or framework should be set up, supported by all departments, with clear outcomes identified for each level of education. Also, there is in general a lack of financial resources for these activities. It is important to create a stable framework, so that available funding is not short-term based.

External bodies can be associated to the implementation of policy. In Belgium, Luxembourg and the UK, some NGOs (supported by the private sector) have been given a public role in promoting and delivering entrepreneurship education. In France, junior enterprises run by university students are supported by the government: this is seen by students as a good example that could be applied by other countries as well.

The following debate touched on issues such as whether entrepreneurship education is currently part of the established curriculum or is rather offered by schools on a voluntary basis, and whether it is preferable to deliver it with a cross-curricular approach or as a specific subject.

In the UK, a reform has been introduced in England, for students of the age 14-19. This was firstly started by making funds available to schools for pilot projects; subsequently general guidelines have been drafted by the government. The approach was to embed enterprise across the curriculum, instead of introducing a separate subject. Entrepreneurship is seen as the ability of young people to handle uncertainty, respond to change and be creative. Currently 90% of secondary schools in England offer this type of education.

In Luxembourg, a cartoon on starting a company is used in all primary schools, while in secondary education the main tool is student companies, either implemented as part of the established curriculum or on a voluntary basis.

In Ireland entrepreneurship is part of the established curriculum as a specific subject, which was an advantage in terms of take-up by the schools. However, Ireland is also trying to further develop a horizontal approach. In Iceland, education for innovation is embedded in the curriculum. In Belgium, France and the Netherlands activities are of a voluntary nature.

In reality, the skills to be an entrepreneur transcend all subject areas. The challenge is to transform schools and universities into places where environments enable the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills. According to the representative of teachers, teachers themselves will not create any obstacles if entrepreneurship is correctly understood as a tool to help young people.

There was a debate over the role of business in Entrepreneurship Education in terms of shaping the curriculum and the way that business is engaged. Business must recognise that the development of enterprising people serves the whole of society – business included.

Participants highlighted that it is necessary to keep this dialogue at European level going. Many expressed an interest in studying more in detail other countries' good practices and plans, among those presented during this Reflection Panel. For instance, the DREAM programme in Belgium, where a student works one full day with a real entrepreneur, was seen as an easily transferrable model.