

ROADMAP			
TITLE OF THE INITIATIVE	Draft Joint Report on the implementation of the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) – Communication from the Commission to the Council		
LEAD DG – RESPONSIBLE UNIT	EAC-A-1, IN ASSOCIATION WITH EMPL	DATE OF ROADMAP	03/02/2015
<p style="color: red; font-weight: bold;">This indicative roadmap is provided for information purposes only and is subject to change. It does not prejudice the final decision of the Commission on whether this initiative will be pursued or on its final content and structure.</p>			

A. Context and problem definition

- (1) What is the political context of the initiative?
- (2) How does it relate to past and possible future initiatives, and to other EU policies?
- (3) What ex-post analysis of existing policy has been carried out? What results are relevant for this initiative?

(1) The ET 2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training was established via **Council conclusions of 12 May 2009** (OJ C 119, 28.5.2009, p. 2-10). These conclusions stipulate that the ET 2020 cooperation will function in work cycles of 3 years and that – at the end of each cycle – **a Joint Council-Commission Report** should be drawn up. Furthermore, both the Council Conclusions on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (OJ C 324, 1.12.2010, p. 5-15) and the Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning (OJ C 372, 20.12.2011, p.1-6) stipulate that reporting on their implementation would be incorporated in this joint report.

Joint Reports evaluate the overall progress in achieving the objectives under the ET 2020 framework and serve as a basis for establishing a fresh set of priority areas for the following work cycle. Such priority areas function within the context of the ET 2020 strategic objectives that have been fixed in the Council conclusions of 2009 and that remain stable.

As such, **the 2015 Joint Report is not a new “initiative” in the strict sense**, but constitutes an element of recurrent reporting and agenda setting in the context of the already existing ET 2020 strategic framework. Acting as a forum for reflection on shared education challenges and for the setting of common strategic goals and monitoring of progress towards these, ET 2020 helps to channel educational input into other major EU processes, notably Europe 2020 - see the bullet points under question 2 for a fuller mapping.

In institutional terms, the draft Joint Report is prepared by the Commission. It is transmitted in the form of a Communication from the Commission to the Council. According to the current planning of the Latvian and Luxembourg Council Presidencies, the Commission should adopt a draft Joint Report at the end of July 2015, for adoption by the Council on 23 November 2015.

(2) The ET 2020 Council conclusions of 2009 established a strategic framework up to 2020. It covers **learning in all contexts** – whether formal, non-formal or informal – **and at all levels**: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning. All these areas are covered by the Joint Report. This implies that, within the Commission, the Joint Report is now prepared by EAC in close association with EMPL.

ET 2020 is firmly **embedded in the political priorities of the Commission**. The new ET 2020 priorities and improved working methods established in the Joint Report will further sharpen this contribution to the EU’s overall political agenda:

- **ET 2020 contributes directly to the EU’s priority of boosting jobs, growth and investment**, which requires investing in education and training with the aim of improving educational outcomes, overcoming skills gaps, enhancing employability and social inclusion, and boosting innovation and competitiveness. To be effective in these areas, Europe’s education systems must be modernised. Commissioner Navracsics’ mission letter states that “The **European Semester** should be the vehicle for pursuing the modernisation of education systems”. ET 2020 is the instrument to bring this into practice through a further sharpening of ET 2020 assistance to clusters of Member States facing issues identified in the CSRs.
- ET 2020 forms the cooperation framework to address the need for **measures against radicalisation, fanaticism and violence** in education and training (put on the agenda by the tragic Paris events in January 2015). Using ET 2020’s 3rd strategic objective, a new strand of activities will be worked out embedding democratic values and respect for fundamental rights, combatting discrimination and

promoting social cohesion and intercultural competences.

In addition, ET 2020 and its renewed priority areas will actively contribute to other major Commission priorities:

- the Digital Single Market, notably via the ET 2020 Working Group on Digital and Online Learning;
- the package on promoting integration and employability in the labour market (longer term unemployed), especially its skills and qualifications dimension;
- the European Agenda on Security, via the reinforcement of the 3rd strategic objective under ET 2020;
- the European Agenda on Migration, via "integration through learning", including European cooperation on local language learning, the development of civic competences and other ET 2020 activities.

(3) In preparation for the ET 2020 Joint Report, a substantial **mid-term stocktaking** of the strategic framework has been conducted. The **Council conclusions of 24 February 2014** (OJ C 62, 4.3.2014, p. 4-6) invited Member States and the Commission to use "the mid-term stocktaking exercise to help prepare the next draft Joint Report, with a more forward-looking focus which identifies key priority areas and concrete issues for future work".

The mid-term stocktaking – which was conducted in 2014 – included:

- Formal input by the Member States in the form of ET 2020 National Reports (via a standard questionnaire);
- Extensive consultations with Member States in the High Level Group on Education and Training, the meetings of Directors General for school policy, for vocational education and training and for higher education, the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training, and the Education Committee (Council Working Party);
- Extensive consultations at meetings with the European social partners;
- Input by the stakeholders (including civil society) at the Education, Training and Youth Forum of 9-10 October 2014, which was specifically dedicated to input in the stocktaking (preceded by a stakeholders survey);
- An independent external mid-term evaluation of ET 2020 conducted by Ecorys. The final report was submitted on 3 November 2014.
- A specific analysis of progress in the area of VET for the period 2011-2014 carried out by Cedefop (ETF in case of candidate countries). The report will be published in March/April 2015.

The **main conclusions that can be drawn from these inputs** can be summarised as follows:

- **Integrated nature of ET 2020:** It is crucial to maintain a coherent and integrated framework covering all sectors of education and training so as to foster lifelong learning and permeability between sectors;
- **Strategic objectives:** The existing strategic objectives, as established in 2009, are still fit for purpose, even in light of the new challenges;
- **Link to the overall political context:** ET 2020 must remain strongly embedded in the EU's overall political agenda, especially the strategy for jobs, growth and investment and the initiatives against radicalisation, fanaticism and violence;
- **Priorities:** Many of the existing priority areas will require further cooperation – in an updated form – during the next work cycle. Innovations will notably take place within the framework of the Copenhagen-Bruges process for vocational education and training (which is a contributing process to ET 2020), where new deliverables have been developed for endorsement in the Joint Report. In addition, stakeholders have signalled the need for a greater emphasis on the implementation of the 3rd strategic objective (equity, social cohesion and active citizenship), responding also to the recent Paris events; employability (linking to the Commission priority of a new boost to jobs, growth and investment), and the digital revolution in learning (linking to the Commission's priority on the digital single market);
- **Mutual learning:** This is the heart of ET 2020 and it has been recognised in the stocktaking as providing strong EU added value. It can be further enhanced through a more systematic approach of its planning, a better clustering of countries during peer learning activities, and a more effective dissemination and valorisation with an improved knowledge transfer from the technical to the political level;
- **Operationalisation:** The operational nature of ET 2020 could be further improved e.g. via a work plan, sharpened monitoring, an annual ET 2020 policy debate, and an extension of the 3-year work cycles to 5-years to synchronise ET 2020 with the 5-year political cycle governing the EU.

What are the main problems which this initiative will address?

The main problem addressed by the Joint Report is the EU's continued weakness in the areas of jobs, growth and investment and the issue of how the contribution of education and training to this can be sharpened. The

recently highlighted problem of radicalisation, fanaticism and violence - and how education play a role in fighting it - is also addressed..

In this light, the Commission will propose updated priorities and improved working methods to enhance ET effectiveness as a contributor to the EU's political agenda (cf. the previous section of this roadmap).

Who will be affected by it?

ET 2020 is a voluntary framework.

Where a Member State decides to make use of the tools developed via ET 2020 cooperation (e.g. voluntary handbooks, reference and self-assessment frameworks, peer review results etc), ET 2020 activities can affect the learning environment in its entirety: education and training planners and policy-makers, education and training providers, educators and trainers, and learners, apprentices and workers. This, in turn may affect

- (a) the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens; and
- (b) sustainable economic prosperity and employability, social cohesion, active citizenship, ownership of democratic values, and intercultural dialogue.

Is EU action justified on grounds of subsidiarity? Why can Member States not achieve the objectives of the proposed action sufficiently by themselves? Can the EU achieve the objectives better?

ET 2020 cooperation activities between the Member States take place on a voluntary basis only and in full respect of the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and organisation of education and training systems (in conformity of Art. 165-166 TFEU). ET 2020 cooperation does not result in legislation entailing harmonisation of Member States' laws or regulations nor any financial obligations. Member States participate in ET 2020, and apply ET 2020 mutual learning lessons and tools, when and to the degree they find it useful.

The independent evaluation of ET 2020 conducted by Ecorys has found that cooperation at European level has an added value compared to purely national action by the fact that:

- (a) ET 2020 accelerates policy learning on themes of common concern at European level, e.g. those identified in the European Semester, with an increased volume and scale of learning, exposing policy-makers to much more (good) practice compared to what Member States would be able to organise without the existence of ET 2020;
- (b) ET 2020 equips national policy-makers in education and training with concrete tools on themes of common concern that help them in their work (including voluntary monitoring frameworks, competency grids, self-assessment tools, quality assurance guides, policy handbooks), which could not be developed at the same level and scale in a national context.

B. Objectives of the initiative

What are the main policy objectives?

- (1) Ensuring that ET 2020 cooperation activities contribute in an effective manner to the EU's overall political agenda**, especially the strategy for jobs, growth and investment as well as the initiatives against radicalisation, fanaticism and violence.
- (2) Ensuring the good functioning of the ET 2020 strategic framework:** As indicated above, the adoption of a Joint Council-Commission Report is explicitly foreseen in the Council conclusions of 2009 launching ET 2020. At the end of an ET 2020 work cycle, a Joint Report must evaluate the overall progress in achieving the objectives under the ET 2020 framework and should serve as a basis for establishing a fresh set of priority areas for the following work cycle.

Do the objectives imply developing EU policy in new areas?

No. The Joint Report remains within the context of the already existing ET 2020 strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training.

C. Options

- (1) What are the policy options (including exemptions/adapted regimes e.g. for SMEs) being considered?**

(2) What legislative or 'soft law' instruments could be considered?

(3) How do the options respect the proportionality principle?

(1) Within the context of the existing ET 2020 strategic framework and with the aim to reinforce ET 2020's contribution to the EU's overall political agenda, **the main policy options** that are being considered are:

- Updating and sharpening the ET 2020 priority areas in line with the Commission's priorities, including contribution to addressing skills mismatches and tackling youth unemployment, new deliverables on vocational education and training, revised priorities for the European Agenda for adult learning, and a greater emphasis on the implementation of the 3rd strategic objective (equity, social cohesion and active citizenship), employability, and the digital revolution in learning;
- Enhancing ET 2020 mutual learning through a more systematic approach of its planning, a better clustering of countries during peer learning activities, and a more effective dissemination and valorisation of outputs with an improved knowledge transfer from the technical to the political level;
- Improving the operational nature of ET 2020 e.g. via a work plan, sharpened monitoring, an annual ET 2020 policy debate, and an extension of the 3-year work cycles to 5-years to synchronise ET 2020 with the 5-year political cycle governing the EU.

Since ET 2020 cooperation takes place on a voluntary basis, no exemptions or adaptation regimes must be foreseen.

(2) In the areas of education and training, the Treaties exclude legally binding acts that would entail harmonisation of Member States' laws or regulations (Art. 2(5) TFEU). ET 2020 functions only on the basis of voluntary cooperation between Member States. In accordance with the Treaties, ET 2020 focusses on **developing exchanges of information and experience** on issues common to the education and training systems of the Member States (Art. 165(2) and 166(2) TFEU). This may lead to the development of non-binding, voluntary monitoring frameworks, competency grids, self-assessment tools, quality assurance guides, and policy handbooks.

(3) Under the **principle of proportionality**, the content and form of Union action shall not exceed what is necessary to achieve the objectives of the Treaties. By setting up a "light" framework for cooperation, ET 2020 respects the proportionality principle and implements the Treaties which state that "The Union shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States" (Art. 165(1) TFEU) and "shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States" (Art. 166(1) TFEU).

D. Initial assessment of impacts

What are the benefits and costs of each of the policy options?

- **Updating and sharpening the ET 2020 priority areas:** The benefit is that the priorities are brought fully in line with the new political agenda (new Commission). There are no significant costs related to this updating.

- **Enhancing ET 2020 mutual learning:** The benefit is to foster the exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education and training systems of the Member States, thereby also improving the capacity of the Member States to respond to needs for modernisation identified during the European Semester and contribute to the jobs, growth and investment agenda. Better planning and better dissemination of mutual learning outcomes also has the benefit of increasing the potential for synergies (also in terms of organising and logistics), avoiding overlaps, and improving the valorisation of mutual learning activities. There are no significant costs related to enhancing mutual learning.

- **Improving the operational nature of ET 2020:** The benefit of introducing a work plan, sharpened monitoring, an annual ET 2020 policy debate in the Council, and an extension of the work cycle to 5-years would be to increase the political ownership of ET 2020, especially at Member State level, and to synchronise ET 2020 better with the EU's political cycle. There are no significant costs related to these measures.

Could any or all of the options have significant impacts on (i) simplification, (ii) administrative burden and (iii) on relations with other countries, (iv) implementation arrangements? And (v) could any be difficult to transpose for certain Member States?

No significant impacts of this nature are foreseen. There will be no additional reporting burdens for the Member States.

No Member State transposition is required. ET 2020 is a voluntary framework.

(1) Will an IA be carried out for this initiative and/or possible follow-up initiatives? (2) When will the IA work start? (3) When will you set up the IA Steering Group and how often will it meet? (4) What DGs will be invited?
Not applicable.
(1) Is any option likely to have impacts on the EU budget above € 5m? (2) If so, will this IA serve also as an ex-ante evaluation, as required by the Financial Regulation? If not, provide information about the timing of the ex-ante evaluation.
No. Updating through the Joint Report ET 2020 does not have an impact on the EU budget. The only cost involved in ET 2020 is related to the organisation of meetings and working groups. The current policy options do not foresee significant increases in the number of ET 2020 meetings.

E. Evidence base, planning of further work and consultation

(1) What information and data are already available? Will existing IA and evaluation work be used? (2) What further information needs to be gathered, how will this be done (e.g. internally or by an external contractor), and by when? (3) What is the timing for the procurement process & the contract for any external contracts that you are planning (e.g. for analytical studies, information gathering, etc.)? (4) Is any particular communication or information activity foreseen? If so, what, and by when?
(1) As stated in section A(3) of this roadmap, the preparation of the Joint Report was done via a broad mid-term stocktaking , including and independent external mid-term evaluation of ET 2020 conducted by Ecorys. The evaluation was submitted on 3 November 2014 and includes 23 concrete recommendations that form an input in the Joint Report. In addition, factual information on evolutions in the Member State compared to the ET 2020 European benchmarks in education and training is available via the annual Education and Training Monitor . A specific stocktaking exercise was carried out in the field of vocational education and training for the period 2011-2014. Cedefop (together with ETF in case of candidate countries) has assessed the progress towards the so called short-term deliverables and strategic objectives agreed in 2010 in the Bruges Communiqué. (2) No further gathering of information is required. Most inputs in the stocktaking have been analysed and are ready for transposition into the draft Joint Report. (3) Contracts for the external mid-term evaluation and for the synthesis of the ET 2020 National Reports have ended in 2014. Final reports were received in 2014 and the contracts are closed. (4) At this stage, the various inputs in the mid-term stocktaking are being systematically presented and discussed with the Member States in the Education Committee (Working Party of the Council). Public communication on the main conclusions of the mid-term stocktaking will take place after the adopted of the draft Joint Report by the Commission (foreseen for the end of July 2015).
Which stakeholders & experts have been or will be consulted, how, and at what stage?
As indicated above, during the 2014 mid-term stocktaking: - Member States have been extensively consulted throughout the year in writing (via the standard questionnaire of the National Reports) and orally (during the meetings of the High Level Group on Education and Training, the meetings of Directors General for school policy, for vocational education and training and for higher education, the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training, and the Education Committee); - European social partners have been consulted in writing (written contributions were received in June 2014) and orally at two dedicated meetings with EAC (5 June and 13 November 2014) and during the European sectoral social dialogue meeting in education (6 November 2014); Specifically in the sector of vocational education and training (development of new VET deliverables), the social partners were also consulted at the meetings of the Directors General for vocational education and training (27-28 March and 13-14 October 2014) and at the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (2 June and 4-5 December 2014); - Non-governmental education and training stakeholders and civil society organisations have been

consulted at the Education, Training and Youth Forum (9-10 October 2014) which was specifically dedicated to their input in the ET 2020 stocktaking (450 participants). The Forum was preceded by an online survey (114 responses were collected from EU and national level organisation). In addition, the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking was discussed in detail and in a dialogue with EAC at the annual conference of the EUCIS-LLL platform on 3 June 2014;

- **Independent external evaluation by Ecorys** that was conducted throughout 2014 incorporated interviews with 151 stakeholders (mainly governmental participants in ET 2020 activities) as well as the results of a broader e-survey with 420 responses.