



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 14.12.2012
C(2012) 9643 final

Dear President,

The Commission would like to thank the German Bundesrat for its Opinion on the Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions "Draft 2012 Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020) – Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe" {COM(2011) 902 final}, and apologizes for the long delay in replying.

The Commission appreciates the support expressed by the German Bundesrat for the Commission's view that European cooperation in education and training should better support the Europe 2020 Strategy.

In the annex to this letter you will find the Commission's comments and replies to the main points raised in the Bundesrat's Opinion.

The Commission looks forward to further develop our political dialogue.

Yours faithfully,

*Maroš Šefčovič
Vice-President*

*Mr Winfried KRETSCHMANN
President of the Bundesrat
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ANNEX

COMMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION ON THE OPINION FROM THE GERMAN BUNDESRAT ON COM(2011) 902 final

General remarks

The Commission Communication "Education and Training in a smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe" of 22 December 2011 {COM(2011) 902 final} responds to the Council's invitation to prepare a joint Commission-Council report about the implementation of the "Strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020)", as set up by Council Conclusions of 12 May 2009¹ (point 2 e under "FURTHER AGREES THAT ..."). The Communication of the Commission constitutes the Commission's draft for this Joint Report.

This joint report serves a number of different purposes: it evaluates the overall progress in achieving the objectives of the strategic framework during the most recent work cycle; it also serves as the basis for establishing a fresh set of priority areas for the following work cycle (the Council Conclusions stipulate that the period up to 2020 be divided up into a series of work cycles with the first cycle covering the 3 years from 2009 to 2011).

The Council Conclusions also contain a provision according to which the strategic framework may be reviewed and any necessary adjustments made by the Council in the light of any major new developments in Europe, particularly decisions taken on the European strategy for growth and jobs beyond 2010.

On the basis of the aforementioned provisions, on 20 December 2011 the European Commission adopted the draft 2012 Joint Report that evaluates the progress achieved during 2009 - 2011, sets out a new set of priority areas for the 2012 – 2014 work cycle and takes into account the implications of the European Union's Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth, agreed in 2010, on the governance of ET 2020.

On this basis the Education Committee held deliberations on the draft and introduced amendments. The final version of the 2012 Joint Report was adopted by the Council on 10 February 2012.²

Tertiary or equivalent education attainment (point 5 of the Bundesrat's Opinion)

The 2012 Joint Report is in line with the Bundesrat's request to refer systematically to "equivalent" educational attainment, when addressing the Europe 2020 headline target on tertiary education.

In line with the Bundesrat's request, the graphical presentation of ex post data on tertiary or equivalent educational attainment as well as of national targets explicitly includes for Germany the ISCED-4 level.

¹ OJ of 28 May 2009 C 119

² OJ of 8 March 2012 C 70/9

Governance under ET 2020 (point 8)

The European Commission welcomes that the Bundesrat acknowledges the necessity for a continued improvement of the quality of education and training systems in Europe and that the Bundesrat appreciates in this context the European added value of the European cooperation in the field of education and training.

It also agrees with the Bundesrat, in relation to the risk of creating red tape and the impact on human resources, about the need to be wary of creating new structures when reviewing the governance under ET 2020. In respect of the Commission's suggestion to set up an Education and Training Forum, the Commission would like to clarify that this Forum would not be a body or committee but an event. The new Forum would replace the existing "Stakeholders's forum on European co-operation in education and training ", which is an annual conference.