

## AT THE INTERFACE OF LIFELONG LEARNING – FULL BACKGROUND PAPER

This paper supports the Working Group ‘*At the Interface of Lifelong Learning*’, which is part of the Adaptability European Thematic Group. The paper has two sections:

- 1) Summary of the key debates and European policy context.
- 2) Key actors to involve in the Working Group and further detail on EQUAL activity (DPs and TCAs) under this theme.

The paper is supported by three annexes: 1) Detailed policy overview; 2) Summary table of DPs and TCAs related to this theme; 3) Bibliography.

### 1. KEY DEBATES – AT THE INTERFACE OF LIFELONG LEARNING

#### 1.1. KEY FOCUS OF WORKING GROUP<sup>1</sup>

The specific focus within lifelong learning is on **working at the interface of lifelong learning by taking account of both supply and demand and by developing inclusive policies and practices**. Key topics within the theme include:

- the adaptation of individuals combined with adaptation of SMEs;
- the provision of support services for learners and SMEs;
- developing workplace learning;
- building the demand a) for training and b) for a more diverse workforce;
- developing a ‘learning culture’ in the workplace;
- strategic planning for employers; introducing training strategies;
- Human Resources planning;
- strategic lifelong learning partnerships (and networks);
- encouraging SMEs to invest in high-quality training.

#### 1.2. DEFINITION OF LIFELONG LEARNING

The EU has adopted the following definition<sup>2</sup> of lifelong learning:

- **“All learning activity undertaken throughout life, with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competences within a personal, civic, social and/or employment-related perspective”**

Lifelong learning is therefore about:

- acquiring and updating all kinds of abilities, interests, knowledge and qualifications from the pre-school years to post-retirement. Lifelong learning promotes the development of knowledge, skills and competences to enable each citizen to adapt to the knowledge-based society and actively participate in all spheres of social and economic life, taking more control of his or her future.
- valuing all forms of learning, including: formal learning, such as a degree course followed at university; non-formal learning, such as vocational skills acquired at the workplace (this is especially pertinent to SMEs, which often favour informal workplace learning); and informal learning, such as inter-generational learning, for example where parents learn to use ICT through their children, or learning how to play an instrument together with friends.

<sup>1</sup> GHK, *Adaptability: Thematic Reference Paper*, 2002.

<sup>2</sup> European Commission. *Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, EC, 2001.

### 1.3. THE EUROPEAN CONTEXT FOR LIFELONG LEARNING

Key points:

- The concept of lifelong learning has evolved over time. It addresses both economic and social factors, including personal development and citizenship as well as the adaptability of the labour force.
- It is increasingly used as a framework and philosophy for reform by policy makers at all levels, particularly transnational.
- The move towards a **knowledge-based society** carries both opportunities for personal advancement and the threat of being 'left behind'. Continual learning and the updating of skills is key to thriving in the changing environment.
- There is a need to improve **participation and attainment** in education and training across Europe.
- Traditional educational systems are inflexible, compartmentalised and institution-focused. They need to be re-thought in order to best respond to the challenges of the knowledge society.
- There is a recognition that more needs to be done to build the demand for lifelong learning in enterprises (discussed below).

The Communication<sup>3</sup> from the EC on the *Future of the European Employment Strategy* recognises that while significant progress has been made with respect to the development of lifelong learning strategies, there is much still to do. Action is required from a range of relevant actors – public authorities, individuals, enterprises, social partners, NGOs and learning providers. Firms need to invest more in the training of adults to increase productivity, update skills and retain workers. The growing inequality in access to training is highlighted as a matter for serious concern.

### 1.4. IMPLEMENTING THE LIFELONG LEARNING AGENDA

The EC Communication<sup>4</sup> *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality* emphasises three **principles** underpinning lifelong learning:

- the centrality of the learner
- equality of opportunity
- high quality and relevance.

There are a number of building blocks upon which member states are invited to elaborate their strategies, including: building up partnerships; analysing learning requirements; increasing public and private investment; removing the obstacles to access; introducing a culture of learning; and quality controls and indicators.

Implementing the lifelong learning agenda requires a **cultural change** within organisations. The aim is the creation of **learning organisations** which are characterised by constant updating of skills and competencies to better support sustainable growth. This requires a step change in a number of areas,<sup>5</sup> including enterprises viewing training and development as part and parcel of what it does rather than something that is done to employees. Managers and supervisors also have a role to play as more effective facilitators for learning.

### 1.5. FOCUSING ON DEMAND: LIFELONG LEARNING AND SMEs

Key points:

- The lifelong learning agenda covers many issues from the broad education/training policy agenda to the mechanics of delivering effective programmes within enterprises. The main

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<sup>3</sup> European Commission, *The future of the European Employment Strategy (EES) "A strategy for full employment and better jobs for all"*, 2003

<sup>4</sup> European Commission, *Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, 2001.

<sup>5</sup> GHK, *Adaptability Theme E: Lifelong Learning Working Paper*, 2002.

priority guiding the Working Group is how the demand for lifelong learning can be built – particularly as it relates to the role SMEs should play.

- SMEs are vital to the delivery of the lifelong learning agenda. They employ a large percentage of Europe's workforce, but offer less training to their employees in comparison to larger organisations.
- Another reason why SMEs are a vital source of demand for lifelong learning is that their employees tend to participate less in continuing education than those employed by large enterprises. SMEs have fewer resources to devote to formal training and are arguably more motivated by short-term market imperatives.
- There is also a need for continual research into the learning needs of SMEs and providers must respond appropriately.

### 1.5.1. Engaging SMEs

Factors involved in **engaging SMEs** and creating learning organisations include:

- increased accessibility (flexible provision has a crucial role here);
- business relevance;
- demand-led provision;
- recognition of non-formal and informal learning;
- and harnessing new methods of delivery.

## 1.6. THE ROLE OF SOCIAL PARTNERS

Key points:

- Related to the role of SMEs is that of the social partners. They too have an important role to play at European level in the development of a European area of lifelong learning.
- They are in an ideal position to negotiate and implement agreements in respect of education and training in the workplace and to share learning in this area across the EU. Through social dialogue they can:
  - negotiate and promote investment in time and resources, encourage the development of learning organizations
  - jointly develop issues such as employee development plans
  - promote lifelong learning at a local level through learning partnerships.
  - develop instruments for the portability of qualifications at European level eg through voluntary development of European diplomas and certificates and the valuing of non-formal and informal learning.
- The Social Partners will submit to the Spring 2003 European Council the first implementation report on lifelong skills and competencies development at enterprise and sectoral level. At sectoral level, they have adopted two agreements in agriculture and banking sector in the area of lifelong learning.

## 1.7. EU INITIATIVES TAKING THE LIFELONG LEARNING AGENDA FORWARD

In addition to the Communication itself, several other initiatives at European level contribute towards the development of lifelong learning. The following section outlines their key features.

**Social Policy Agenda.** (DG Employment and Social Affairs). In the Social Policy Agenda (2000-2005), the Commission puts emphasis on Lifelong Learning. It underlines the aim to reduce inequalities and promote social cohesion, including through lifelong learning. It is a strategy designed to respond to the need to modernise the European social model and to implement the political commitments made at the Lisbon summit. The aim is to promote quality and to maximise the mutual reinforcement of economic, employment and social policies in our changing environment. The Agenda recognises the potential of lifelong learning in this 'virtuous circle'

The work programme on the **Future Objectives of Education Systems.** (European Council) A detailed work programme has been prepared to further efforts to strengthen cooperation on education and training policy.

**The European Employment Strategy (EES).** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) The EES also supports the aims of lifelong learning through a *horizontal objective on lifelong learning* and

specific thematic guidelines under all four Pillars of the strategy. Following the Lisbon European Council, lifelong learning has become a more clearly defined priority

**The European Social Fund (ESF).** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) Programmes increasingly embody a wider commitment to develop a framework for lifelong learning in the workplace. This includes efforts to recognise qualifications and skills and to develop multimedia training packages and distance learning methods to support ICT skills in SMEs. Outcomes expected from include the enhancement of *business adaptability, and development of a culture of training and lifelong learning which is particularly important for SMEs*. SMEs are a specific target group for ESF support in all Member States across all the policy fields of the ESF and across all the pillars of the EES.

**The Skills and Mobility Action Plan.** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) This plan aims to ensure that by 2005, European labour markets are open and accessible to all. It provides impetus to promote human resource development in accordance with the Lisbon goals, primarily creating *opportunities for citizens to move around the EU for educational or professional purposes*.

**The eEurope Action Plan.** (DG Education and Training) The eLearning initiative section of the Plan seeks to *promote a digital culture* and wider use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training.

**The White Paper on Youth.** (DG Education and Training) This provides the Community with a framework for cooperation in the field of youth policy, focusing on *participation of young people*, their education, employment and social inclusion.

**Leonardo da Vinci.** (DG Education and Training) Leonardo contributes to the implementation of a vocational training policy for the Community. The second call for proposals, valid for the period 2003-2004, has been *refined in the light of lifelong learning priorities*. The priorities: (1) Valuing learning, (2) New forms of learning and teaching and basic skills in vocational education and training, and (3) Guidance and counselling. Involvement of SMEs is key to the programme and there is an emphasis on the dissemination and exploitation of results from projects relevant to SMEs.

**Socrates.** (DG Education and Training) This is the EU's education programme. Eight different actions have been defined for the implementation of the programme, of which the most relevant to lifelong learning is Action 3: *Adult Education and other Educational Pathways* (Grundtvig). Grundtvig aims to strengthen the European dimension in adult education and lifelong learning. It targets adult learners, teachers and trainers in both formal and non-formal education across Europe.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP).** (DG Research, Development Technology and Innovation) This programme will provide new opportunities to reinforce research in the area of lifelong learning, and thus build on the insights gained in this field under previous programmes. The budget for the Sixth FP will be €17.5 billion with research relevant to lifelong learning undertaken primarily under Priority 7 (*'Citizens and Governance in a Knowledge-Based Society'*). The budget for this priority is €225 million. Work relevant to this area was also undertaken under socio-economic dimension of the 5<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme.

## 1.8. CURRENT DEBATES – WITHIN MEMBER STATES

Key points:

- The Joint Employment Reports between 1999 and 2002 show a steady progression over time relating to the development of lifelong learning within Member States.
- All Member States have now laid the groundwork for comprehensive strategies, although full implementation will take time.

### 1.8.1. Examples of Member State policies aimed at stimulating lifelong learning at Enterprise level

The Joint Employment Report 2002 reports that entitlement of workers to individual training plans is becoming more common. Member States where these are in place include Belgium, Denmark,

the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Portugal and Finland an entitlement to a minimum number of hours training per year is being introduced. Some Member States, for example Ireland, Belgium and the United Kingdom, report an increase on expenditure by enterprises on continuing vocational training and this is confirmed by European data as a general trend. Some Member States also highlight a rise in public spending and overall an upward trend is visible in expenditure and with some movement towards greater sharing of the costs between all the actors concerned.

## 2. KEY ACTORS TO INVOLVE IN THE WORKING GROUP

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There are a range of organisations and individuals with expertise in lifelong learning and, as such, may be of interest to this Working Group. The list below focuses particularly at EU level. It is divided into the following sections:

- EQUAL DPs and TCAs
- Social Partners
- EU Programmes
- European Organisations
- National-level Organisations
- Individual experts/academics.

### 2.1. EQUAL DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIPS AND TRANSNATIONAL PARTNERSHIPS

Working at the Interface of Lifelong Learning (supply and demand) links in with one of the three overall topics to emerge from the DP analysis of Theme E<sup>6</sup> partnerships, namely 'providing support services both to learners (in training and in work) and to SMEs'. This question was also a key point to emerge from the Barcelona conference.

The sort of activities being undertaken within EQUAL include DPs and TCAs<sup>7</sup> focusing specifically on: strategic planning for SMEs; supporting the introduction of training strategies for SMEs; building local networks to facilitate change (including cultural change in the form of stimulating demand for a more diverse workforce); HR planning – strategic lifelong learning partnerships and strategies – quality systems – monitoring and evaluation.

Annex 2 provides a summary table of Adaptability DPs which may be particularly relevant to the activities of the Working Group. It provides a starting point for further verification with member states. Some of the key member-state actors on the basis of this analysis include Italy, GB, Ireland, Sweden and Germany (within Theme E) and France and Spain (within Theme F).

The ETG is focusing particularly on the work undertaken at a transnational level. Annex 2 also includes a brief summary of some of the key TCAs operating in the Adaptability pillar with relevance to this Working Group. The list includes some cross-pillar TCAs comprised of DPs in Adaptability and other pillars (notably, Employability).

### 2.2. SOCIAL PARTNERS

The social partners at European level signed the *Framework Of Actions For The Lifelong Development Of Competencies And Qualifications* (outlined in Annex 1) and, as such, bring a position to lifelong learning debates. They are:

- **The European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC).** The ETUC has a study and research centre (European Trade Union Institute) that works in the socio-economic field and for Industrial Relations.
- **The Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE).** It has a Social Affairs Committee that looks at education and training issues. UNICE's position paper on the Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning places an emphasis upon a shift from

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<sup>6</sup> GHK, *Working Paper: Theme E Development Partnerships*, 2002.

<sup>7</sup> GHK, *Working Paper: TCA Analysis*, 2002.

focusing on the supply side of lifelong learning to building demand at enterprise level through advice and guidance.

- **The European Association of Craft, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (UEAPME )** Its position paper on the EC memorandum on lifelong learning emphasises the need for SME-specific lifelong learning provision and partnership approach to delivery.
- **The European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP).** CEEP is a public employers organisation. It has a permanent committee on Social Affairs, Employment, Vocational Training & Social Dialogue. In its position paper on the Commission memorandum on Lifelong Learning, CEEP approves the approach outlined in the document that lifelong learning is an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment.

The ETG work should also take account of opportunities that are being taken forward at European level at the level of the sectoral social dialogue, through the particular actions of the specific sectoral European social partners.

### 2.3. EU PROGRAMMES

The key European level programmes likely to have generated work of relevance to the sub-theme are Leonardo da Vinci and Socrates (Grundtvig). There are useful tools for the discovery of projects and products of interest from both programmes.

The first phase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme has a searchable database that has the facility to search for projects and products by sector, theme (eg lifelong learning, development of methodologies for overcoming obstacles to training in SMEs), type, geography. An initial search found four projects within the theme of lifelong learning.

The Grundtvig section of the Socrates programme has a web-based virtual community. Within the community there are thematic project interest groups and links to experts involved in the work. Sam Allwinklen from Napier University, United Kingdom manages the lifelong learning project interest group network. Other experts involved in the group are:

- Laurent Criquet, manager of an academic centre of vocational training (Cafoc, Aix-Marseille)
- Joan Font Pérez, who has expertise relating to lifelong learning in vocational education, arranging lifelong learning opportunities, and employability and lifelong learning
- Lars Franson, who has expertise in e-learning methodology and the application of lifelong learning
- Kennet Lindquist, who has experience working with organisations and stimulating them in their usage of innovative methods and technologies supporting and enabling lifelong learning
- Jose Machado, who has experience in small business development, the assessment of prior learning, the development of needs assessment tools and the use of learning plan production tools.

### 2.4. EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS

The implementation of a European area of lifelong learning will require effective cooperation and coordination between relevant European agencies and organisations. Three such organisations are key sources of information and expertise in education and training and as such may be of interest to the ETGs work:

- The **European Training Foundation's (ETF)** mission is to contribute to the process of vocational education and training reform that is currently taking place within its partner countries and territories. ETF, as its principal mission, assists its partner countries in reforming and modernising their vocational education and training and employment systems within the framework of the EU's external relations policies. The Foundation works in partnership with EU institutions, Member States and major development agencies. Primarily, it aims to:
  - Support the process of vocational education and training reform that is taking place within the partner countries and territories;
  - Harness, mobilise, develop and disseminate European expertise and good practice in the field of vocational education and training;
  - Promote effective cooperation in vocational education and training between the European Union and the partner countries and territories.

- The Foundation works particularly closely with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)
- **CEDEFOP** is the European agency that helps policy-makers and the European Commission, the Member States and social partner organisations across Europe make informed choices about vocational training policy. CEDEFOP is also a key source of information, running the European Training Village (ETV) interactive website that offers the facility to exchange information and news, hold virtual conferences and build networks. CEDEFOP also produces studies and reports on vocational training issues, such as quality, transparency, the accreditation of non-formal learning, sectoral trends, new qualifications, mobility and funding. In all its activities, CEDEFOP aims to provide a link between its target groups: policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners in vocational education and training.
- **EURYDICE** is the information network on education in Europe. It produces information on national education systems and policies, acting as an observatory, highlighting both the diversity of systems and their common features and promoting better understanding of these systems and the common issues that run through them. In 2000, the Network celebrated its 20 years of existence. Working on behalf of policy makers and the world of education, EURYDICE prepares and publishes:
  - regularly updated descriptive analyses of the organization of education systems;
  - comparative studies on specific topics of European interest;
  - indicators on the various levels of education from pre-school to higher education, surveys on topics on the agenda of policy makers.
  - EURYDICE also has its own database, EURYBASE, which constitutes a further highly detailed reference source on education systems in Europe.

As well as the organisations above that have a responsibility for the implementation of the European Area of lifelong learning, there are other European Level organisations that may be of interest to the ETG. The following is a list of organisations that were involved in the consultation that fed into the Communication *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*:

- **European Association for the Education of Adults (EAEA)**. The EAEA's mission is to work for the creation of a learning society. It does this by encouraging the demand for learning by individuals, organisations and communities, and in particular by women and excluded sectors of society. It equally seeks to improve the response of providers of learning opportunities and of local, national and transnational authorities and agencies.
- **Corporate Social Responsibility Europe (CSR)** has 57 company members and 15 national partner organisations. It is involved in thematic work and dialogue and hosts an online CSR information centre. CSR Europe has three main objectives:
  - To promote the business case for corporate social responsibility;
  - to offer business managers learning, benchmarking, and capacity building opportunities;
  - to energise a broader stakeholder dialogue between businesses, European policy makers, governments, investors, social partners, civil society and academics.
- **European Association of Universities (CRE)**. The European University Association is the main organisation of European universities. EUA's mission is to promote a coherent system of European higher education and research based on shared values, through active support and guidance to its members, thus enhancing their contribution to society.
- **European Forum of Vocational Education and Training (EFVET)**. EFVET is an European-wide professional association, which has been created by and for providers of technical and vocational education and training (TVET) in all European countries. Its mission is to champion and enrich technical and vocational education and training through transnational co-operation.
- **European Vocational Training Association (EVTA/AEFP)**. EVTA is an association made up from fourteen different organisations from a variety of sectors. They undertake joint action in a variety of areas related to the quality and efficiency of vocational training.
- **The Platform of European Social NGOs**. The platform was established in 1995, and now covers 37 European NGOs, federations and networks that are working to build an inclusive society and promote the social dimension of the European Union. It brings together over 1700 direct member organisations, associations and other voluntary bodies at local, regional, national and European level representing the interests of a wide range of civil society.

## 2.5. NATIONAL LEVEL ORGANISATIONS

CEDEFOP has created a list of actors at national level working in the area of lifelong learning, below is a selection:

- Adult Education Association, (VOFO), Norway
- Swedish Council for Working Life and Social Research, Sweden
- The Centre for Research in Lifelong Learning, Glasgow Caledonian University and the University of Stirling, United Kingdom
- Graduate School in Life Long Learning, University of Roskilde, Denmark
- Danish Research and Development Centre for Adult Education, Denmark
- Institut für Berufsbezogene Erwachsenenbildung, Austria
- National Institute for Adult and Continuing Education, United Kingdom
- The Marchmont Observatory, University of Exeter, United Kingdom
- National Association for Adult Vocational Training, France
- Max Goote Centre of Expertise for Vocational Education and Adult Education, Netherlands.

## **2.6. INDIVIDUAL EXPERTS/ ACADEMICS**

The following is a further list of experts/ academics who have undertaken work relating to the sub-theme. They are listed under the European Human Resource Development Base (EHRD Base), which has a network of experts involved in EU projects and their partnerships and related organisations concerned with HRD. The individuals listed are identified as experts in lifelong learning and/or HRD:

- Kelleher, Michael, Visiting Professor in HRM (Nottingham Trent University)
- Kessels, Joseph, Professor of HRD (Twente University)
- Poell, Rob, Associate Professor of HRD, University of Nijmegen
- Sambrook, Sally, Visiting Research Fellow in the area of HRD
- Fox, Roger, FAS - Training and Employment Authority (Ireland)
- Dehnbostel, Peter, Universität der Bundeswehr Hamburg; Fachbereich Pädagogik
- Dif, M'Hamed, BETA/ Cra-Céreq Alsace
- Garibaldi, Francesco, Fondazione Istituto per il Lavoro (Italy)

## ANNEX 1: DETAILED POLICY OVERVIEW

### 3. CURRENT DEBATES – EU LEVEL

This section outlines the current debates at EU level in more detail, through the following sections:

- **Facts** on lifelong learning in Europe
- Key **trends** relating to lifelong learning
- Development of the lifelong learning **concept**
- **Implementing** the lifelong learning agenda
- Previous **lessons** from Community Initiatives.

This is followed by a sub-section focusing on the key issues within the lifelong learning debate related to building the **demand for lifelong learning in SMEs**, as this is a key area for the Working Group.

#### 3.1. FACTS ON LIFELONG LEARNING IN EUROPE

The Joint Employment Report 2002 provides the following facts on lifelong learning:

- There has been a slowdown in educational **attainment**. The adult population (those aged 25-64) with at least an upper secondary level education rose by only 0.2% in 2001 (to 63.8%). This is compared to a rise of 1.2% in 2000. The attainment rate for women has increased at a faster pace than that of men.
- The **participation** rate for the adult population in education and training continues to be low and has stayed stable at 8.4%. Broken down by age and attainment level, the participation rate shows wide variation. Older people with lower levels of attainment are far less likely to participate in education and training than younger, more highly qualified people. Those aged 25-34 are nearly five times more likely to participate than those aged between 55-64. Those with low skills are over 6 times less likely to participate than those with high skills. Women also participate more than men (9% compared to 7.9%).
- The **early school-leaving** rate (defined as those aged 18-24 leaving the education system prematurely, with lower secondary education or less) fell marginally from 19.7% in 2000 to 19.4% in 2001. In certain Member States, the rate remains persistently high especially in Portugal (over 45%) and in Spain and Italy (over 25%). The EU average male rate is considerably higher than for females (21.9% compared to 16.8%).
- **E-learning**: The EU average rate of access to the Internet for all educational levels was 93% in 2002, a 4% increase on the previous year. Over the same period the rate for secondary schools increased by 2% to 98% and by 6% to 90% for primary schools. The ratio of students to on-line computers decreased from 15 in 2000 to 10 in 2002. While, in 2002, 74% of primary and 65% of secondary teachers of non-computer subjects use computers regularly in the classroom. However, 40% of primary and 47% of secondary teachers have not received any ICT related training.

In November 2001, launching the Communication *'Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality'*, Viviane Reding, the Commissioner responsible for education said:

*"Last year, fewer than 10% of Europeans of working age undertook any training. This is manifestly not enough and if we do nothing about it then Europeans will find it difficult to be part of an international economy and of societies in which knowledge and skills are becoming obsolete ever more quickly. The time has come to act and not just think about it. Today's Communication provides the Member States and other economic and social players with the tools to invest more effectively in people and consequently in sustainable prosperity. One of the next steps could be to develop trans-Europe networks of knowledge and science in order to enhance the competitiveness of our human resources".*

## 3.2. KEY TRENDS RELATING TO LIFELONG LEARNING

Key to lifelong learning is the ability of individuals and organisations to adapt to and manage change. The European economy and society is in a constant state of flux and reformation, driven by challenges such as

- globalisation,
- the move towards a knowledge-based economy and the increasing economic share of the service sector,
- the pace of scientific and technological change
- and the scale of social restructuring.

Such changes present Europe's citizens with increased opportunities for individual fulfillment. Examples of these opportunities include changes in areas such as methods of communication, cost of travel and flexible employment. The ability to manage change and take advantage of these opportunities is increasingly reliant upon the continuous acquisition and updating of knowledge and skills.

### 3.2.1. Shift to a knowledge-based economy and society

The corollary of the opportunities outlined above is the risk and uncertainty associated with the shift to a knowledge-based economy and society. Rapid change and the requirement placed upon individuals and organisations to adapt contains the threat of greater inequalities and social exclusion through the erosion of old skills and outdated modes of production.

Learning is a key factor in thriving in a changing society and this presents a serious challenge to Member States' systems of education and training. Participation and attainment are key to meeting the challenge. The facts outlined at the top of this section show the scale of the challenge faced in this area and, despite the narrowing of disparities between Member States, there are almost 150 million people in the EU without an upper secondary level of education<sup>8</sup>. They are the people facing the greatest risk of marginalisation and social exclusion.

The challenge facing Europe's policy makers is to positively manage economic and social change by creating conditions in which all European citizens can participate fully in their society. At the **2000 Lisbon Summit**, the EU defined a comprehensive strategy aimed at long-term economic growth, full employment, social cohesion, and sustainable development in a knowledge based society. The Summit concluded that, through continual learning and the updating of skills and competencies, the challenge of change could be met. The Presidency conclusions state that "lifelong learning is an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment", thus **confirming lifelong learning as an essential component of the European social model**.

### 3.2.2. The role of lifelong learning

In simple economic terms, the employability and adaptability of citizens is vital for Europe to meet the Lisbon objectives. Skills shortages will be a limiting factor on the capacity for future growth, whereas a skilled and adaptable labour force can be a powerful driver of prosperity. Lifelong learning, therefore, has a key role to play in delivering sustainable full employment and economic growth. The EU currently suffers from under-investment in human capital. This is within the context of a global economy where gaining competitive advantage is increasingly dependent on such investment. It is therefore vital to **build demand for lifelong learning at an individual and organisational level** (SMEs are vital to this) as well as **facilitating the supply of suitable learning**.

### 3.2.3. Questioning traditional educational systems

The changes and requirements outlined above raise fundamental questions about traditional education and training systems. Traditional policies and institutions are too inflexible, compartmentalised and institution-focused to empower citizens for actively dealing with the

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<sup>8</sup> European Commission, *Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, EC, 2001

restructuring entailed in the move towards a knowledge-based economy. There is increasing recognition across Europe that education and training systems need to be rethought within the philosophy and framework of lifelong learning.

Whereas traditional systems have focused upon institutional arrangements, a key characteristic of lifelong learning is the centrality of the learner within formal, non-formal and informal learning experiences. Lifelong learning takes a comprehensive view of the supply and demand for learning opportunities, recognising the value of skills and knowledge gained in all areas of life.

### 3.3. DEVELOPMENT OF THE LIFELONG LEARNING CONCEPT

#### 3.3.1. Early history

In the early 1970s, the concept of lifelong learning gained credence following interest from international bodies such as the Council of Europe, UNESCO and OECD. In the 1980s, fuelled by the increasing speed of the decline of manufacturing and the end of a job for life, the idea of continual education was becoming a policy priority. In the 1990s, international bodies (in particular the OECD and the European Commission) began to discuss new strategies for implementing lifelong learning and in 1994 The Commissions' White Paper, '*Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*', first presented lifelong learning as a concept around which to base Community action. The paper presented lifelong learning within the context of adaptation to new technologies and the social and economic changes engendered in it.

Following the setting of the Lisbon strategic goal, the Feira European Council in June 2000 invited the "Member States, the Council and the Commission ... within their areas of competence, to identify coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning for all". In November 2000, building on the conclusions from the 1996 European Year of Lifelong Learning and subsequent experience gained at European and national levels, the Commission issued *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*.

#### 3.3.2. Memorandum on Lifelong Learning

The Memorandum formed the basis of a European-wide consultation that involved 3,000 individual submissions to the Commission, the Member States, the EEA, candidate countries, European institutions, bodies representing civil society and the social partners. Around 12,000 citizens participated in events organised as part of the consultation. Building upon the results of the consultation, in November 2001, the Commission issued the communication '*Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*'.

The Memorandum on lifelong learning used the definition established within the context of the European Employment Strategy. Responses to the consultation welcomed the idea that the **definition of lifelong learning should include all phases and forms of learning**. There were, however, concerns that the labour market dimensions received too much emphasis and responses tended to cite other aspects of lifelong learning, such as active citizenship, personal fulfilment and social inclusion.

As noted above, the idea of lifelong learning has been the subject of policy discussion and development since the 1970s. Initially related to ideas of a better society and higher quality of life, as it developed it also became bound to economic theories of human capital. These differing views as to the purpose of lifelong learning have married, and lifelong learning as it relates to European policy today is about much more than economics.

#### 3.3.3. Social as well as economic benefits

As well as the economic benefits, lifelong learning also feeds the ambition of the EU to become more inclusive, tolerant and democratic. It promotes a Europe in which citizens have the opportunity to participate in building a better society, to become fulfilled and to realise their ambitions. Consensus regarding lifelong learning can be surmised around the following four

broad and mutually supporting objectives: personal fulfillment, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability/adaptability.<sup>9</sup>

### 3.3.4. Personal, civic and social purposes

Lifelong learning therefore encompasses learning for personal, civic and social purposes as well as for employment-related purposes. It implies raising investment in people and knowledge; promoting the acquisition of basic skills, including digital literacy; and broadening opportunities for innovative, more flexible forms of learning. The aim is to provide people of all ages with equal and open access to high-quality suitable learning opportunities, and to a variety of learning experiences, throughout Europe.

### 3.3.5. Accessible to all citizens

Learning should be accessible to all citizens on an ongoing basis. In practice this should mean that citizens each have **individual learning pathways**, suitable to their needs and interests at all stages of their lives. Lifelong learning is also about providing "second chances" to update basic skills and offering learning opportunities at more advanced levels. Education systems have a key role to play in making this vision a reality. Systems of provision need to become more open and flexible and the Communication emphasises the need for Member States to transform formal systems in order to break down the barriers that exist between different forms of learning.

### 3.3.6. Agreement to the strategic approach

This increased flexibility will be facilitated by bringing together education and training strategies and plans concerned with youth, employment, social inclusion, and research policy within a framework of lifelong learning. This requires a more coherent and economical use of existing instruments and resources through the use of the open method of coordination. Member States develop and implement coherent and **comprehensive strategies for lifelong learning**.

## 3.4. IMPLEMENTING THE LIFELONG LEARNING AGENDA

The Communication '*Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*' emphasises three **principles** underpinning lifelong learning:

- the centrality of the learner
- equality of opportunity
- high quality and relevance.

### 3.4.1. Building blocks

Drawing upon the above principle, existing practice and strategies emerging in the Member States, the Communication outlines a number of **building blocks** upon which member states are invited to elaborate their strategy. These are:

- Building up **partnerships**, not only between decision-making levels (national, regional and local), but also between public authorities and education service providers (schools, universities, etc.), the business sector and the social partners, local associations, vocational guidance services, research centres, etc. At the Community level, the Commission will encourage exchange of best practice in this area.
- A detailed **analysis of learning requirements** in the knowledge-based society which will entail redefining basic skills, to include for instance the new information and communication technologies and of foreseeable employment market trends. The analysis should include in particular the specific needs of the groups which have had no training or education for a long time and the adaptation requirements of teachers and trainers.
- Implement or encourage a substantial **increase in public and private investment** in learning. This does not only imply increasing public budgets but rather redistributing existing resources and encouraging new investment patterns. In particular, tax incentives should be introduced for everyone wishing to undertake training.

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<sup>9</sup> European Commission, *Making a European area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, EC, 2001

- Make learning provision more accessible, more visible, introduce new provision and **remove obstacles to access** to this provision, particularly by creating more local learning centres, making it easier to learn at the place of work and making suitable adjustments to working hours. Special efforts are necessary in this context for different groups such as ethnic minorities, people with disabilities or people living in rural areas. The role of information and guidance services should be better recognised and consolidated.
- Give learning a higher profile, both in terms of image and by providing incentives for the people most reticent to opt for training. The point is to **introduce a culture of learning**, i.e. make it obvious for everyone that learning at any age is essential in the new knowledge-based economy.
- Introduce **quality control and indicators** to measure progress. In concrete terms, provision must be made for standards, guidelines and mechanisms whereby achievements can be recognised and rewarded.

### 3.4.2. Priorities for action

The Communication also outlines a number of **Priorities for action**. Each priority relates closely to a number of the building blocks. The priorities as they appear in the Communication can be summarised under six main headings :

- Valuing learning

A comprehensive new European approach to valuing learning is seen as a pre-requisite for the area of lifelong learning, building on the existing right of free movement within the EU. Proposals focus on the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning as well as on the transfer and mutual recognition of formal certificates and diplomas.

- Information, guidance and counselling

This is addressed mainly at European level, with proposals that aim to facilitate access to learning through the availability of quality guidance services.

- Investing time and money in learning

Member States have been called on to raise overall levels of investment in education and training. Increased investment and targeted funding are called for, along with mechanisms for increasing private investment.

- Bringing learning and learners closer together

Key actions are encouraging and supporting learning communities, cities and regions as well as enabling workplaces to become learning organisations. Importance is also attached to the development of local learning centres.

- Basic skills

This means ensuring that the foundations of lifelong learning are accessible to all citizens, at all stages of their lives and not just within compulsory education.

- Innovative pedagogy

This involves shifting the emphasis from knowledge acquisition to competence development, and the new roles for teachers and learners that this implies.

### 3.4.3. EU initiatives supporting implementation

In addition to the Communication itself, several other initiatives at European level contribute towards the development of lifelong learning. The following section outlines their key features.

**Social Policy Agenda.** (DG Employment and Social Affairs). In the Social Policy Agenda (2000-2005), the Commission puts emphasis on Lifelong Learning. It underlines the aim to reduce inequalities and promote social cohesion, including through lifelong learning. It is a strategy designed to respond to the need to modernise the European social model and to implement the political commitments made at the Lisbon summit. The aim is to promote quality and to maximise the mutual reinforcement of economic, employment and social policies in our changing environment. The Agenda recognises the potential of lifelong learning in this 'virtuous circle'

The work programme on the **Future Objectives of Education Systems**. (European Council) A detailed programme of work has been prepared to take forward European cooperation on education and training policy. The Barcelona European Council (March 2002) stated the ambition that Europe's education and training systems should become a "world quality reference" by 2010. Forwarding this aim, the education Ministers of 31 European countries adopted the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (30 November 2002). This declaration gives a mandate to develop actions in the fields of transparency, portability and quality in vocational education and training. Changes are already taking place to make systems more open and flexible to give young people the chance to move between different pathways in education and training. Examples of actions taken include: provision of courses with greater breadth and generic skills relevant to modern work and society, more work-related training, and mechanisms to encourage more progression, such as bridging courses, modularisation and dual qualifications. As the section below shows, the involvement, representation and participation of SMEs are crucial in this context.

**The European Employment Strategy (EES).** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) The EES also supports the aims of lifelong learning through a horizontal objective on lifelong learning and specific thematic guidelines under all four Pillars of the strategy. Following the Lisbon European Council, lifelong learning has become a more clearly defined priority.

**The European Social Fund (ESF).** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) The ESF is the EU's main financial tool for supporting the EES. Of the €60 billion available through the ESF over the period 2000-06, at least €12 billion is jointly earmarked for lifelong learning. Evidence from the evaluation of the 1994-99 programming period highlights ESF support for learning, including: developing basic skills and upgrading existing skills; promotion of training cultures in enterprises and developing continuous training; development of certification and qualification frameworks; development of new approaches to learning through modular and open learning; help to reform technical vocational training curricula; strengthening links between education and the workplace; promoting better careers information and guidance.

Programmes increasingly embody a wider commitment to develop a framework for lifelong learning in the workplace. This includes efforts to recognise qualifications and skills and to develop multimedia training packages and distance learning methods to support ICT skills in SMEs. Outcomes expected from this include the enhancement of business adaptability, and development of a culture of training and lifelong learning which is particularly important for SMEs. SMEs are a specific target group for ESF support in all Member States across all the policy fields of the ESF and across all the pillars of the EES. ESF programmes have strengthened their focus on supporting human resource development in SMEs. Most Member States have activities in which SMEs benefit exclusively or together with other target groups. Generally, support is given in the form of training people working in SMEs.

**The Skills and Mobility Action Plan.** (DG Employment and Social Affairs) This plan aims to ensure that by 2005 European labour markets are open and accessible to all. It builds on the Communication '*Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*'. In so doing, it provides a political vision to promote human resource development in accordance with the Lisbon goals, primarily creating opportunities for citizens to move around the Union for educational or professional purposes, making it easier for them to take advantage of the benefits of European integration and the European Single Market. The portability and recognition of qualifications is key to this. The Commission and the Member States have also developed a number of tools to support this:

- the Certificate Supplement for vocational qualifications;
- the European Community Course Credit Transfer System ( ECTS ) for recognition of periods of study abroad;
- the common European format for Curriculum Vitae for a simple and efficient presentation of individual qualifications and skills;
- Europass training, a passport indicating the knowledge and experience acquired in formal and non-formal training.

**The eEurope Action Plan.** (DG Education and Training) The eLearning initiative section of the Plan seeks to promote a digital culture and wider use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in education and training. The main aims of the European Commission's

eLearning initiative are to speed up the deployment of a high quality infrastructure at a reasonable cost; to step up training and overall digital literacy; and to strengthen cooperation and links at all levels – local, regional, national and European – between all sectors involved, from schools and training colleges to equipment, content and service providers.

**The White Paper on Youth.** (DG Education and Training) This provides the Community with a framework for cooperation in the field of youth policy, focusing on participation of young people, their education, employment and social inclusion. The Paper proposes a new framework for cooperation, consisting of two components: increasing cooperation between Member States and taking greater account of the youth factor in sectoral policies.

**Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci.** (DG Education and Training) Socrates is the EU's education programme. Its main objective is to build up a Europe of knowledge and thus provide a better response to the major challenges of promoting lifelong learning, encouraging access to education for everybody, and helping people acquire recognised qualifications and skills. Eight different actions have been defined for the implementation of the programme, of which the most relevant to lifelong learning is Action 3: Adult Education and other Educational Pathways (Grundtvig). Grundtvig aims to strengthen the European dimension in adult education and lifelong learning. It targets adult learners, teachers and trainers in both formal and non-formal education across Europe in a range of projects and initiatives, and reflects a commitment at national and European level to ensure learning opportunities continue throughout life.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme contributes to the implementation of a vocational training policy for the Community. Its aim is to promote new practical approaches in vocational training policies. The second call for proposals, valid for the period 2003-2004, has been refined in the light of lifelong learning priorities. The priorities: (1) Valuing learning, (2) New forms of learning and teaching and basic skills in vocational education and training, and (3) Guidance and counselling. Involvement of SMEs is key to the programme and there is an emphasis on the dissemination and exploitation of results from projects relevant to SMEs. A number of project results relevant to SMEs from the first phase of Leonardo have been identified, and are being published in specialised brochures, targeted at SMEs.

**The 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (FP).** (DG Research, Development Technology and Innovation) This programme will provide new opportunities to reinforce research in the area of lifelong learning, and thus build on the insights gained in this field under previous programmes. This research will be undertaken primarily under Priority 7 ('Citizens in an Evolving Knowledge Society').

### **3.5. LESSONS FROM PREVIOUS COMMUNITY INITIATIVES**

There are also lessons to be taken from previous community initiatives ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT relevant to lifelong learning and EQUAL. Whilst almost all ADAPT projects were concerned in some way with learning and the need for people to develop new skills, about 300 projects were directly concerned with the planning, development and delivery of lifelong learning. Most of these were working with SMEs and many were concerned with the opportunities and challenges of the information society and have explored issues such as:

- Individual employability and enhancing competitiveness in firms.
- The wide range of potential co-operation, and the wide variety of potential partners.
- Using ICTs to provide flexible access to and delivery of learning.
- The new types of skills needed by businesses as a result of the widespread use of ICTs and how to assess and address them.
- Strategies to convince SME managers of the need for continuous development and lifelong learning.

According to the report '*Lifelong Learning Good Practice and Lessons from ADAPT*' projects in ADAPT highlight the:

- need for a detailed understanding of both SMEs' and employees' needs;
- value of developing systems from the bottom up, based on users' needs;
- wide range of locations and delivery methods that are possible;

- valuable role that ICTs can play; and
- the value of tapping into existing resources, through individual champions and networks.

ADAPT experience also highlights challenges in (a) drawing out the inter-connections between formal learning and non-formal/informal learning; and (b) developing learning organisations where learning and business processes are linked.

Similarly, many EMPLOYMENT projects were concerned to improve the delivery of lifelong training to vulnerable groups. Approaches included:

- Developing new pathways to qualification eg through new access routes to vocational training, including literacy programmes, and language and computer skills modules.
- Creating new further training qualifications to extend the skills of trainers to deal with special needs groups, developing tools to assess and accredit existing skills.
- Initiating new flexible, learner-oriented and experience-based learning programmes combining strong motivational elements with skill development.
- Diversifying vocational choices, and identifying and offering training in future-oriented professions.

### **3.6. BUILDING THE DEMAND FOR LIFELONG LEARNING IN SMES**

#### **3.6.1. What are the learning needs of SMEs?**

As can be seen from the above section, SMEs play an important role in making lifelong learning a reality in Europe. There are around 20 million SMEs in Europe<sup>10</sup>, employing a large part of its workforce. Out of a total of 112 million employed people, 74 million are in SMEs; of these, 38 million are in companies of less than 10 employees.<sup>11</sup> This makes SMEs a vital source of demand for lifelong learning. At present however, this demand is largely untapped and employees of SMEs participate less in continuing training than do employees of large enterprises. Research shows SMEs to be motivated by short-term market imperatives and have few resources to devote to training in the formal sense. They are also frequently disappointed by the learning services that they are delivered. If the European area of lifelong learning is to become a reality then there needs to be a targeted involvement of SMEs. The building blocks of the Communication on lifelong learning underline the importance of gaining insight into their learning needs.

Research regarding the exact nature of learning in SMEs is lacking. As noted above, they are a key source of potential demand and increasingly initial and continuing training is work-related. This situation provides an ideal opportunity to build demand for lifelong learning in the workplace and understanding is key to this. The needs and wants of SMEs must be researched before policy responses can be properly formulated.

#### **3.6.2. Key questions for research**

Research must answer questions such as: why are companies training more? Is it really because they see the benefits of lifelong learning and a more skilled and adaptable workforce or is it because the initial education and training system is failing to produce a labour force with the requisite skills? What drivers for learning, e.g. changes in technology, regulatory environment, business growth, involvement in supply chains can be harnessed to create demand? Is learning in companies for personal benefit as well as for company good? What percentage of SMEs offer some kind of development to their employees? What is the real extent of 'learning enterprises' and are there transferable lessons in terms of good practice? Can lifelong learning be linked to wider business support provision? What are the characteristics of enterprises that do not offer learning, what could be done to reverse the situation? Care should also be taken to investigate non-formal workplace learning so as not to present a misleading picture of the incidence and nature of learning within SMEs. In general, research is needed on the nature and extent of learning in companies, including non-formal learning and its recognition and reward.

<sup>10</sup> European Commission, *The SME Envoy: an active interface between the Commission and the SME Community*, Commission Staff Working Paper, EC, January 2003

<sup>11</sup> Eurostat, *Enterprises in Europe*, EC, 2001

### 3.6.3. Achieving a cultural change within organisations

Meeting the challenge of change to embrace the principles of lifelong learning implies a cultural change within organisations, in the relationships between employers and employees/potential employees, different tiers of staff, learning and other service providers, and suppliers and customers. The aim must be to create a 'learning organisation' that, through the constant updating of skills and competencies, is adaptable and capable of sustainable growth.

### 3.6.4. How to create learning organisations

Factors involved in creating learning organisations include: <sup>12</sup>

- Employers developing capacity within their own enterprises so that the learning and training process becomes part and parcel of what the enterprise does. Training and development therefore is not something done to employees, but rather something created by the enterprise, something closely related to work, and something in which the employees feel that they and the enterprise have a significant stake.
- Developing new forms of collaborations and partnerships, new liaisons, and new ways of working together in order to change the nature of many traditional relationships such that of the 'customer and supplier'.
- Sharing success in order to create greater faith and commitment to the training and learning process. Successes need to be highlighted and shared, within and beyond individual enterprises. Thus, sharing successes, as well as suppliers, resources and personnel, is important, particularly in terms of increasing enterprises' awareness and commitment to learning.
- The requirement for management and supervisors to become more effective facilitators of learning, and to create and support opportunities for learning, increases dramatically with the introduction of new forms of work organisation. Providing training for supervisors and managers in the skills of training and learning has been shown not only to build organisational capacity but also to extend supervisors' and managers' involvement in the whole enterprise. They begin to see the enterprises' operations – including human resources development - as an integrated whole.
- Human resources systems must, however, not only encourage the acquisition of new skills, aptitudes and attitudes, by, for example, providing learning and training opportunities, they must also be structured to allow their acquisition to be recognised, acknowledged and rewarded. If, for example, there is no tangible recognition by the enterprise of employees' gaining learning in a particular area, it will be more difficult to motivate them to engage in the learning and assessment processes. Thus reward systems, and other aspects of human resources systems, must be re-designed to take account of these new realities.
- Plans based on an assessment of individual skills and competences, in a strategic fit with overall human resource development plans at the enterprise level are an effective method of stimulating and sustaining demand. The social partners can also help to raise awareness about the importance of lifelong learning and encourage and train employees and managerial staff to act as learning facilitators or mentors for others.
- Much preparatory work is needed before actually designing or delivering training. The sooner co-operation between the training organisation and SME occurs, the more likely it will be that responses will be successfully incorporated.
- Training is of course important but not always sufficient – there is a need for 'flanking' or accompanying measures – for example, guidance and support. These must be anchored to or an integral part of the training. Responses to needs must be 'integrated' i.e., they must not sit in isolation from other activities and developments in the enterprise. Of course, such an integrated, systems approach has implications not only for training providers, but also for

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<sup>12</sup> GHK, *Adaptability Theme E: Lifelong Learning Working Paper*, UK, 2002

enterprises. Flexibility on the part of the provider, the enterprise and individual workers is essential.

### 3.6.5. How to engage SMEs

In terms of successful learning provision, existing good practice highlights key points in relation to engaging SMEs:

- Increased Accessibility: Flexibility, in terms of timing, cost, delivery method and marketing of learning opportunities, is vital.
- Business Relevance: Provision has to be flexible, individually tailored and of high quality. Providers need to supply courses that fit this criteria and SMEs themselves need to explore ways of facilitating access to this learning (e.g. in partnership with other enterprises through learning networks and competence sharing, and in cooperation with guidance services.)
- Accurate Information, Guidance and Advice: This needs to be demand-led. It should also maximise the potential of ICTs in providing up-to-date information regarding provision.
- Recognition of Non-formal and Informal Learning: Much of the learning that takes place in SMEs is not formal. It is important to recognise and value this learning as such and provide opportunities for it to take place. This can help contribute towards the development of a learning culture.
- New Methods of Delivery: Using ICTs to deliver training has a number of potential benefits (flexibility, access, range of provision, timing.) However, e-learning methodologies must be appropriate to the circumstances of SMEs, the content delivered and employees learning.

As stated above, enterprises are emerging as a driving force behind lifelong learning. If the European area of lifelong learning is to succeed it must successfully involve SMEs. More investigation is required to establish the extent of 'learning enterprises' in order to determine just how widespread human resources development really is. The sharing of learning and good practice in creating adaptable learning organisations is also vital. Research into SME needs to provide effective market information and facilitate an appropriate response by providers is key. The work of the Commission's SME envoy and the role of lifelong learning partnerships is also highly relevant.

## 3.7. ROLE OF THE SOCIAL PARTNERS

Key points:

- Related to the role of SMEs is that of the social partners. They too have an important role to play at European level in the development of a European area of lifelong learning.
- They are in an ideal position to negotiate and implement agreements in respect of education and training in the workplace and to share learning in this area across the EU. Through social dialogue they can:
  - negotiate and promote investment in time and resources, encourage the development of learning organisations
  - jointly develop issues such as employee development plans
  - promote lifelong learning at a local level through learning partnerships
  - develop instruments for the portability of qualifications at European level eg through voluntary development of European diplomas and certificates and the valuing of non-formal and informal learning.

In the "**Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competencies and Qualifications**" agreed on 28 February 2002, the European social partners, the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE/UEAPME) and the European Centre of Enterprises with Public Participation and Enterprises of General Economic Interest (CEEP) highlighted competence development and gaining qualifications for all age groups as the major challenge for lifelong learning and its contribution to a prosperous and inclusive society.

The framework defines four priorities considered by the social partners to be essential for the lifelong development of competencies:

- identification and anticipation of competence and qualification needs,
- the recognition and validation of competencies and qualifications,

- information, support and guidance, and
- resources.

The following is a *selection of points* from the framework that relate most closely to the theme of working at the interface between supply and demand in lifelong learning.

### **Identify and Anticipate the Competencies and the Qualifications Needed**

- Identifying competencies and qualifications needs and anticipating their development represents a complex task given the numerous socio-economic factors, which must be taken into consideration, but it is imperative nevertheless.
- Identification of competencies at enterprise level must become a main axis of human resources policies covering all employees in enterprises and an issue for in-depth social dialogue:
  - responsibility lies at the highest managerial level for deciding the overall competencies development plan necessary for the success of a company's business strategy;
  - individual competencies development plans jointly elaborated by the employer and the employee are important to foster joint efforts to develop the employee's competencies;
  - developing a learning environment is also important for success; professionals and managers play a crucial role in this respect.

### **Recognise and Validate Competencies and Qualifications**

The European social partners regard the recognition and validation of competencies as essential, in order that:

- each employee is aware of and encouraged to develop her/his competencies in the course of her/his occupational life;
- each enterprise has the tools to better identify and manage the competencies in the company.

### **Informing, Supporting and Providing Guidance**

In order that both employees and enterprises can pursue a strategy for competencies development, it is necessary:

- to enable each employee and each enterprise to access all the necessary information and advice;
- to provide SMEs with suitable information and to assist their managers through the creation of customised support.

With this aim in mind, the social partners call for:

- the development of facilities allowing employees and enterprises to be supported in their choices of learning, and to tailor the content according to competencies they have already developed, for example through a one-stop-shop facility in Member States, including a database on lifelong learning possibilities and opportunities for career evaluation;
- To promote a lifelong learning culture, both trade union and employer organisations have a key role to play in informing, supporting and advising their members and need to develop in house expertise to perform this role.

### **Mobilising Resources**

- As regards the social partners, they consider the lifelong development of competencies as a priority and assert the principle of shared responsibility for mobilising and optimising resources. The social partners want to promote co-investment and to encourage new ways of resourcing lifelong learning, through the effective and creative management of funding, time and human resources.

The social partners feel that the success of the framework depends on shared responsibility by relevant actors with regard to the four priorities and they have asked for the intensification of dialogue and partnership at the appropriate levels - enterprise, sectoral or national. CEEP, UNICE/UEAPME and ETUC intend to promote the framework in the Member States at all appropriate levels. Each year, an annual report of national actions identified under each priority will be drawn up. In 2006, after three annual reports, the impact on companies and workers will be evaluated with a view to updating the priorities.

## **4. CURRENT DEBATES – WITHIN MEMBER STATES**

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Key points:

- The Joint Employment Reports between 1999 and 2002 show a steady progression over time relating to the development of lifelong learning within Member States.
- All Member States have now laid the groundwork for comprehensive strategies, although full implementation will take time.

### **4.1.1. Comparing the progress of the Member States**

A key source for the comparison of actions at Member State level is the Joint Employment Report. The Employment Strategy agreed at the Luxembourg Summit 1997, introduced an employment package adopted each year by the Commission at the December European Council. Under the 'Luxembourg Process' the Commission produces a set of guidelines aimed at setting common policy orientations for Member States. Member States then produce responses in their annual National Action Plans for Employment (NAP). The NAPs are then analysed by the Commission and the Council and the Joint Employment Report summarising the progress of Member States in achieving targets towards the European Employment Strategy is then produced. Member States and the social partners have been asked from the start to develop possibilities notably for lifelong learning and progress can therefore be tracked over time.

### **4.1.2. Joint Employment Report 1999**

The Joint Employment Report for 1999 highlighted the emergence of skills gaps in the form of an unfulfilled demand for a better skilled workforce. It showed that many Member States were beginning to recognise lifelong learning as a priority. Participation in lifelong learning activities was however generally considered to be inadequate and concrete targets were lacking in many Member States.

### **4.1.3. Joint Employment Report 2000**

The 2000 Joint Employment Report showed that although most Member States have taken steps in the direction of lifelong learning, the majority of NAPs showed a 'piecemeal approach' had been taken and a comprehensive strategy existed only in those few countries where lifelong learning had already been identified as a priority. Progress in development and implementation of policies related to lifelong learning was found to have been generally slow. According to the NAPs, only two countries (the Netherlands and Denmark) had set out a comprehensive approach in terms of lifelong learning policies, made reasonable progress in implementing their strategic goals and set targets to monitor progress.

Finland, Sweden and Ireland on the other hand, while having a comprehensive approach and making reasonable progress in implementing their strategic goals, had no national target to help them measure outcomes. Belgium, which had set a national target, failed in introducing a comprehensive strategy to achieve that target. The United Kingdom had a slow implementation process and Portugal, Austria, France and Germany, despite their good policy initiatives, had not made a lot of progress, since their initiatives seemed to be at an early stage or were too limited in their nature. Finally, four countries (Italy, Spain, Greece, and Luxembourg), had neither introduced a comprehensive approach to promote lifelong learning nor set national targets in this regard.

### **4.1.4. Joint Employment Report 2001**

The Joint Employment Report 2001 showed that lifelong learning had become an established policy priority throughout the European Union and a significantly higher profile was being given to the issues in 2001. It showed that comprehensive strategies were in place in about half of the Member States, (Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden, the UK, France and Germany, with the latter two being in the process of refining some final stage elements) but such strategies were at an early stage of implementation. In addition, the majority of Member States showed insufficient evidence of co-ordination and synergy between the relevant Ministries.

Other weak points included: few Member States set targets for increases in human resource investment (Belgium on in-company training) or participation in further learning (Netherlands, France, Belgium (Flanders), Portugal and Germany); there was a need for better promotion and exploitation of non-formal learning; more attention should also be given to measures such as advice and guidance services.

#### 4.1.5. Joint Employment Report 2002

The Joint Employment Report 2002 shows that the development of lifelong learning strategies is progressing. **All Member States have now laid the groundwork for comprehensive strategies, although full implementation will take time.** Some progress, though at a slower pace, can also be seen on making these strategies more coherent, although the transitions within and between education and training systems and the labour market are still not addressed in a comprehensive manner. **A growing number of Member States are setting targets for educational participation and attainment and the increase in expenditure on human resources visible in the majority of Member States** testifies to their strengthened commitment, despite the continuing lack of national targets on investment. The widening gap in the take-up of education and training opportunities between those with low and high skills and between older and younger age groups gives cause for serious concern.

Many actions have been taken to promote a better match between education and training supply and labour market demand, including steps to make initial education more vocationally relevant, to expand and reform apprenticeship systems and, in a few Member States, through mechanisms to better anticipate skill needs. However, **overall, provision remains supply-led and the responsiveness of systems needs to be further enhanced and more account taken of mobility issues.**

Two thirds of Member States have now set national targets on participation and attainment. However, there is a tendency to focus more on the younger age-groups and, whilst this is important, attention also needs to be given to how to better reach older age groups, the low-skilled, vulnerable groups, SME employees and those on atypical contracts. Equally, more attention needs to be given to promoting a broader culture which values learning. Although tangible progress has been made in the development of national lifelong learning strategies, further emphasis needs to be given to workplace and other non-formal learning, disadvantaged groups, monitoring systems and better co-ordinated guidance services.

Agreements on vocational training at cross-industry and/or at sectoral level exist in nearly all Member States and very often collective agreements set the framework for continuing training actions. More Member States are experimenting with various forms of financial incentives for skills development including individual training accounts, vouchers, training levies and fiscal reforms. Initiatives linking working time with training (for example working time accounts, educational and training leave and job rotation schemes are continuing. Efforts to develop accreditation systems for non-formal learning are being taken forward. There are some signs of a movement towards a longer-term more strategic approach to workforce development and the promotion of more integrated packages of measures promoting lifelong learning but generally little attention has been given to promoting a broader culture of learning in the workplace.

## 4.2. EXAMPLES OF MEMBER STATES POLICIES AIMED AT STIMULATING LIFELONG LEARNING AT ENTERPRISE LEVEL

### 4.2.1. Entitlement to individual training plans

The Draft Joint Employment Report 2002 reports that entitlement of workers to individual training plans is becoming more common. Member States where these are in place include Belgium, Denmark, the Netherlands, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom. In Portugal and Finland an entitlement to a minimum number of hours training per year is being introduced. Some Member States, for example Ireland, Belgium and the United Kingdom, report an increase on expenditure by enterprises on continuing vocational training and this is confirmed by European data as a general trend. Some Member States also highlight a rise in public spending and overall an upward trend is visible in expenditure and with some movement towards greater sharing of the costs between all the actors concerned.

#### 4.2.2. Paid educational leave

Paid educational leave is a key method in motivating people to participate in lifelong learning and facilitating access. It provides a framework and opportunity for the development of a culture of lifelong learning. Educational leave, paid or unpaid, exists in some form in most Member States although the schemes vary a great deal in terms of target groups and/or sectors, eligibility criteria, types of training covered, eligible providers as well as the regulatory and fiscal framework.

Most schemes cover both public and private sector employees although there may be more than one scheme targeted at different categories of employees. For example, in Germany employees in most Länder are legally entitled to paid educational leave, Luxembourg has a separate scheme for civil servants and Portugal operates different schemes for student workers and teachers. Some schemes are open only to permanent employees whereas others are available to temporary workers (e.g. Finland), fixed term contractors (e.g. France) and part-time workers (e.g. Spain). Countries which have paid educational leave schemes have a variety of funding arrangements. In France, for example, a percentage of the training levy on companies is allocated to training leave. In Austria, Belgium and the Netherlands, enterprises are supported for some of the costs of training leave if they replace the employee taking the leave with an unemployed person (known as job rotation schemes). The following lists some examples of practice in this area:

- In general terms, every citizen in Denmark - whether unemployed or in employment - has a legal right to leave for the purposes of further training. There are at the moment no restrictions of any sort on the selection of the field or subject of this further training. People in employment are entitled to 52 weeks of training leave of their own choice within five years. A condition to this is that that they were in employment for at least three years in the last five. The employee has the right to re-employment with the previous employer / in the Civil Service on conclusion of the training leave.
- In Finland all citizens have the opportunity to take sabbatical study leave to participate in further education if they have been employed by the company for over a year and the course is a minimum of eight weeks and a maximum of two years long. After completing their training employees may go back to their company. Employees are not then able to take another sabbatical within five years.

## ANNEX 2: SUMMARY TABLE OF RELEVANT EQUAL DPs AND TCAs

This section looks at the EQUAL activity already identified in relation to the sub-thematic area. It draws on the large-scale analysis of DPs and TCAs undertaken by GHK. As such, it is based on the initial DP summaries and TCA agreements provided by partnerships at an early stage of the programme. The list of DPs below is not definitive, owing to limitations on the amount of detail within the initial summaries. With DPs also undertaking numerous activities, it is clear that some with a focus elsewhere could be partly relevant.

The table below categorises DPs which have already been identified as having some relevance to working at the interface of Lifelong Learning.

### Theme E

AT-4-11/25	developing a model for support of diversity and differences in the workplace, cultural diversity management
Befr-22	<b>Objective:</b> Collaboration amongst organisations and employers to gather information and identify areas of skills deficiencies. <b>Activities:</b> employment/labours studies, data collection, developing partnerships with the private sector.
Benl-01/EQ/3.E/002	<b>Objective:</b> to create the conditions that will allow SMEs and the self-employed to adopt electronic commerce. <b>Activities:</b> SWOT analysis for individual SMEs wishing to adopt e-commerce, establishment of a support network of e-businesses within district.
Benl-01/EQ/3.E/005	<b>Objective:</b> to introduce policies that would encourage SMEs to adopt strategic policies to address their training needs so that they can be more competitive. <b>Activities:</b> use of IT applications and distance-learning, creation of benchmarking and skills audit tools.
FR-PAC-2001-11309	<b>Objective:</b> To understand the structure of the transport and logistics sector in order to: improve job information systems, help low-qualified employees to adapt, help recruitment and create a professional network. <b>Activities:</b> Analyses of current and future needs, creation of operational tool (database, training modules), implementation, creation of website on the sector
FR-PAC-2001-10534	<b>Objective:</b> to improve the rate of access to training by focusing on the individual's capacity and company's role rather than the training content. <b>Activities:</b> development of tailored training, development of communication policy for company directors, formalisation of in-house training
DE-EA-27435	training for low-skilled employees in SMEs of selected service sectors and those in the second labour market (I.e. ILMs) in ICT applications, customer service and communication to be delivered through online learning, exchange of employees in SMEs and ILMs/jobrotation
DE-EA-81513	improvement of skills and competences of employees in SMEs, particularly in agriculture and tourism, and the training of assistance to unemployed people based on the needs of SMEs
DE-EA-49478	development of further education and training concepts, development of regional competence centre for SME, focusing on crafts, services and tourism

DE-EA-46136	development and use of flexible employment systems, work policies that promote integration, organisation and personal development solutions to cope with needs of SMEs, including on-demand training and counselling services, in-house learning modules and self-organised and self-directed learning, solutions
DE-EA-17551	to enable SMEs to mobilise the potential of certain groups of employees (women, older, lower skilled, foreigners) through appropriate training structures
GR-200767	The developed Co – Operation between the project's partners has as a main target :the adaptation of the biological animal products' industrial process to the new economy and Lifelong learning of employees in (SMEs) in the field, employers and executives of SMEs in the field and of unemployed and long-term unemployed
GR-200859	The proposed project is called "The Development of a Model System for Life-long Training and Distance Accreditation of Skills in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises". The objectives are the dissemination and consolidation of life-long education and training in SME's as a culture, as well as innovative application of new technologies in training and accreditation of vocational skills, especially in IT and the internet.
IE15	Assess HR practice in public, private and 3rd sectors in the Dublin area to explore how they can become more accessible to excluded groups at recruitment and retention levels
IE 12	Design and test an "integrated, flexible, enterprise and community-based, 'lifelong-learning-job rotation mechanism in the BMW region". Will provide accredited learning/job opportunities to unemployed and employed disadvantaged people.
IE14	Research and develop training responses to reduce discriminatory practices in the labour market. 100 people to be trained to become advisers on how to support inclusive work practices etc in the workplace
IT-IT-G-ABR-056	Researching labour market needs; developing training programmes with SMEs and establishing a local area skills observatory in the Chieti area
IT-IT-G-LOM-011	Addressing limited take-up of IT among SMEs in Milan and surrounding areas. Will establish a sub-regional e-business observatory; facilitate contacts between IT suppliers and other firms, provide consultancy to firms and training to employees on IT issues in the workplace
IT-IT-G-LOM-009	Actions to review the training needs of enterprises and employees in the Lodi area focusing on vocational training and on the needs of female workers in particular. Involves new partnership development, training programmes and the establishment of a human resources centre in Lodi.
IT-IT-G-LOM-020	Addressing economic development needs in rural areas in the Province of Pavia through training and business support programmes
IT-IT-G-LIG-005	Training development for artisans in Savona. Includes development of better training networks between firms and education institutions, and an increased focus on making the skills of younger people relevant to market needs
IT-IT-G-VEN-039	Researching labour market needs and developing training responses for industrial SMEs in the Vicenza and Treviso areas. Includes setting up an observatory, developing training plans with companies and introducing voucher training schemes for workers
IT-IT-G-EMI-031	Piloting of training models in Ferrara focusing separately on company and worker needs; consists of research stage, model development, and dissemination

- IT-IT-G-ABR-052 Project to improve human resource management in SMEs in the Abruzzo region, focusing on both employees and firms. Includes research phase and experimentation with integrated training packages in order to move firms towards a "network" model of production and to ingrain life-long learning among workers.
- IT-IT-G-PUG-057 Surveying skill needs among managers and workers in SMEs in Puglia region. Development, piloting and dissemination of new training and educational methods
- IT-IT-G-SIC-076 Develop a lifelong learning training system with local partners in Catania, Sicily
- IT-IT-G-CAM-024 Developing e-commerce capabilities among SMEs in Caserta. Includes technical e-commerce training; creation of an electronic marketplace and establishing a service centre for all participating SMEs which will handle online transactions
- IT-IT-G-LAZ-047 Helping SMEs to be more innovative in part by providing the appropriate training for its workers.
- IT-IT-G-TOS-013 Supporting companies and their workers to adapt to economic changes. Activities include monitoring exercises to ensure that training for adaptability is provided and that it is not exclusive.
- NL-2001/EQE/0025 For skilled craft sectors - Develop innovative methods, new forms of education to reflect personal needs, promotion of girls/women to technical education, improve links between education/training and jobs, use ICT for distance learning.
- PT-2001-073 1) Create technical instruments that stimulate and support organisations in their Human Resources development processes to encourage lifelong learning 2) Apply and validate these instruments to a significant population within a specific sector 3) Give methodologies a transnational and trans-sectoral character
- SE-13 Stimulate and inform companies and organisations in the local area to invest in their future by taking a greater social responsibility. Activities for target groups (employers, employees, unemployed, those on sick leave, professional and industrial organisations) are education, exchange of experience, study visit, development of methods, forming network, development of follow-up and evaluation program
- SE-36 Project aims, through the target group of personnel managers and human resource management staff in authorities and companies, to develop and support values, norms, structures and working methods which encourage a culture of diversity in the workplace. Activities 1) R & D 2) Interactive and intensive knowledge dissemination via the website and e-newspaper
- SE-35 To promote lifelong learning, improve working conditions and encouraging recruiting and retaining people who have been exposed to discrimination in the labour market in the food production sector. 1) By utilizing the diversity in working life 2) by guidance for employees 3) by guidance and career planning for lifelong learning
- SE-34 Collecting, developing and spreading educational material and methods on how to increase equality and variety in voluntary organisations and businesses.
- SE-1 Develop new methods and approaches to make competence development available for groups with the most urgent needs and make lifelong learning work in practice -work undertaken in 3 regions. Issues of equality between men and women will be a major focus.
- SE-4 Develop workforce diversity in Swedish Industry. Develop and implement new structures, methods and activities at Volvo cars and a number of selected suppliers.

- Ukgb-54 I) To achieve an overall increase in the level of recruitment, development and retention of disadvantaged groups in the labour market across the sub-region through ii) an employer focused model aimed at SMEs addressing the business case for improved recruitment, retention and work-force development iii) focus on the interface between demand and supply to ensure sustainable employment iv) focus intervention on bottlenecks in employment v) new partnership approaches vi) working transnationally on actions to ensure inclusive and diverse recruitment practices.
- Ukgb-70 I) To develop and pilot and evaluate a range of innovatory approaches to lifelong learning for target groups and employers - 20 pilot results, and dissemination; whole or partial adoption of 20% of piloted best practice - 4 separate policy debates ii) created a permanent network of beneficiaries and key agencies (6 physical and virtual networks) iii) developed and worked within a transnational network
- Ukgb-32 I) To provide positive support to non-traditional learners especially marginalised groups ii) to establish social recruitment company iii) to develop social/soft skills development iii) work with employer and work-based training iv) facilitation of work based job-rotation v) sustainable employment.
- Ukgb-11 I) Promote skill development, lifelong learning and inclusive work practices in construction to recruit and retain those suffering discrimination and inequality in the labour market; ii) Test and develop a sector-specific transferable model of intermediary support to help vulnerable workers and unemployed access, remain and progress in employment iii) Provide vulnerable construction workers including self-employed and unemployed with opportunities to develop and improve basic and key skills. Iv) Raise developer and contractor and subcontractor awareness of the value of developing a more skilled empowered workforce.
- Ukgb-14 Piloting ways of providing positive action in the construction industry, piloting measures that target specific groups and facilitate access to job growth, piloting ways of working with employers on the design of the workplace that facilitates retention and the integration of people who find it difficult to enter this sector.
- Ukgb - 8 I) To develop new approaches to workplace learning for those facing barriers to participation, and by building ladders of opportunity increase its effectiveness in securing inclusive working practices. ii) Forging strong social partnerships iii) establishing sectoral support networks iv) developing and piloting training materials/support forums for learning representatives and key workers v) create tools to support learning engagement and progression and learning management systems. These will be delivered via learning portals, supporting the integration of PPE models into learndirect, piloting the PPE models in five sectors and mainstreaming the approach in pilot sectors.
- Ukgb-3 To assist adults in work to improve their skills and to have the opportunity to achieve academic credits. Key target groups are SMEs in manufacturing/supply chain who are affected by changes in manufacturing/supply chains. Activities include: convincing people of benefits of learning, improving basic and IT skills, improving employee and SME adaptability, adapting to technological and organisational change.

## Theme F

- FI-18 The aim of the project is to solve the training and development needs of the personnel in SMEs and their networks in the area have not been systematically analysed. The area does not offer any training or support and counselling services which would meet the needs. The project has a wide range of actors and it offers wide-scale and diverse development actions e.g. training, support and counselling services for SMEs in the Kainuu region. A great number of SMEs participate in the project.

FR-RAL-2001-10535	<b>Objective:</b> to develop and implement a system of job and skills development for SMEs and for job seekers to improve the skills match. <b>Activities:</b> identify job requirements and skills availability, make an inventory of future jobs and skills required in SMES
FR-RAL-2001-10837	<b>Objective:</b> to develop HR management with the cooperation of SMEs and their employees in order to meet the requirements of the new "Supply Chain" structure on SMEs <b>Activities:</b> training on the performance and implications of "supply chain" workings, coordination between companies and recruitment organisations to fit skills to jobs, , development of progress plans and performance improvement plans for SMEs.
FR-LOR-2001-10599	<b>Objective:</b> to assist SMEs in the Lorraine region to improve training and HR management techniques. <b>Activities:</b> inform SMEs of skills management possibilities through creation of a network, assist in the implementation of HR and skills management.
DE-EA-56483	Focus on food sector to improve the ability of companies to adjust to change through, improve access to the labour market, ensure job security, ensure lifelong learning and integration-orientated work organisation - development of sustainable SMEs work organisation and training
DE-EA-57032	Training strategies for promoting adaptability of employees within SMEs, promotion of innovation within SMEs, regional support structure
PT-2001-199	To support and develop organisational innovation measures in SMEs of region, acting specifically on human resources management practices, to accomplish enterprise goals that associate the competitiveness of the company to the job security of its workers and social cohesion.
ES-209	To adapt to the human resources of the strategic productive sub-sectors of Jaén, to position and to improve the sustainability of the SMEs in the market of the 21st century, in order to support the creation and the maintenance of the employment, as well as generating added value in the rural areas of the county.
ES-473	The Project aims to establish a permanent web to catch and exchange information in order to detect SMEs' and country workers' technical and professional needs, to favour the use of new technologies by capacitating the workers and their introduction to SMEs productive processes, to allow the country SMEs and workers continuing creation of new markets needs as well as the changes emerged from new community, national and autonomic laws and to promote an equality between men and women.
Ukgb-19	i) to form 5 clusters of SMEs ii) to help SMEs in the textile sector to adopt work/life balance iii) to enable people with low level skills to attain high level skills in ICT iv) to provide inclusive ICT training for all beneficiaries v) to improve access to the advice, guidance and training through E-learning
Ukgb-63	i) To support people in rural businesses ii) to develop capacity and manage change iii) to support innovative, collaborative learning models
Ukgb-69	i) To support the adaptability of firms in creating schemes or toolkits to help employers look at new work/life balance practices for their employees ii) encouraging employers to adopt practices that suit their businesses and their employees.

### Transnational Co-operation Agreements (TCAs)

TCA Id.	TCA Name	Summary of Thematic Focus
<a href="#">688</a>	LANDSCAPE for Equality	There is an emphasis upon matching the needs of the local labour market and SMEs, through skills assessments, networking enterprises, sharing good practice, raising awareness of training and modernising management systems.

<a href="#">932</a>	GLOBALFAD TRANSNATIONAL COOPERATION PARTNERSHIP	Themes are very focused upon use of ICTs in SMEs
<a href="#">1239</a>	EQUAL-Cert	Focus on developing and accrediting training (especially ICT) for employees of SMEs
<a href="#">1608</a>	Innovative Competencies and E-learning	The TCA concentrates on the low take-up of ICTs amongst SMEs and aims to address this problem in order to enhance SMEs competitiveness and worker employability
<a href="#">1225</a>	Integr@l Azioni	The TCA focuses mainly on the improvement of competences of employees in SMEs by training and more specifically training at distance.
<a href="#">1632</a>	COUPOLE	All DPs focus on new training techniques but in different sectors of economy. Training for the employees as well as for staff. The aim is to build up a detailed manual with practices and guidelines for trainers to insert people professionally and this for a long time.
<a href="#">2202</a>	TRANSAFRAN	To create activities for people having difficulties being inserted in the labour market who are in need of adaptation. The underlying problem is about job promotion linked to acquisition of new competences or the transfer of know-how. The aim is to make people in difficulties ready to adapt easily to new developments in enterprises in one sector of activities or region.
<a href="#">1591</a>	De.Se.Pe.C.A.	To defend the general interests of the fisheries sector and aquaculture in Europe. To improve HR and training in these sectors. To stimulate the use of new technologies with preservation of the environment. To insert gender equality in these sectors. To transfer the know-how to young people and especially young migrants. To facilitate the access to these sectors.
<a href="#">1652</a>	Highway of career	To help employees manage their career and to possess the competences needed in a quickly changing economic environment. A life long learning strategy is needed. Also linked to the free movement of free persons in Europe.
<a href="#">528</a>	Creative Solutions	Tackling discrimination and inequalities in the creative industry sector through measures to improve the ability of the target group to enter the sector, training programmes and assessment/certification of competences.
<a href="#">931</a>	Equal Partnership for Libraries	Common objective is to develop library staff to play a more effective role in their community ; aim is to develop distance learning material (ICT based) and methodologies in support of this
<a href="#">933</a>	DONATA	Main aim is to link those wishing to be trained, the companies and training providers, improve coordination and create networks. The other main aim is to make companies understand the value of lifelong learning.
<a href="#">1244</a>	Competences contre discriminations	Common objectives are to: transfer the methodology for the creation of a network dealing with the supply and demand of skills; benchmarking activities on skills mapping, develop innovative methodologies for long-distance learning
<a href="#">1635</a>	Envi-E-Ripresa-Resteco	Common theme is experimentation with new training models - utilising new ICT / environmental sector technologies.
<a href="#">353</a>	Mary Connaught	Focusing on diversity management by: promoting equality and good HR practices; training to reduce discrimination; and cultural change within organisations.
<a href="#">1554</a>	CO@DE	Business development (to support growth of SMEs)--e.g. encouraging the creation of networks with other SMEs regarding the use of ICT for training, strengthening SMEs by strengthening relations between SME and employees. Ultimate beneficiary appears to be the SME, rather than the employee.

<a href="#">2075</a>	Alphabetisation (Basic Literacy)	Sensitisation of employers and the general public to help employers understand needs of people with literacy issues.
<a href="#">272</a>	The Inclusive Workplace	The focus is on social dialogue in pursuit of effective workplace learning.
<a href="#">1804</a>	Empower Professionals	The problems of high level of drop outs from school or from apprentice training. The existing educational methods do not cover the needs of the pupils with learning difficulties or/and the needs of pupils with anti-school attitudes.
<a href="#">661</a>	Competence Development Counselling Centres	Focuses on training needs of those excluded from formal and structured professional development because either a) they work for SMEs that don't provide these or b) they are unemployed. Aim is to develop long-term skill development and improve competitiveness of SMEs
<a href="#">995</a>	E-learning 4 U	Aims to deliver training to lessen the effects of the digital divide
<a href="#">2434</a>	DISABILITY FORUM	Work with SMEs to discover their needs and to devise training methods appropriate to meeting those needs as well as meeting the needs of people with disabilities

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