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## Main policy lines of international organisations, relevant for education councils

State of affairs December 2010 - May 2011

### European Union

#### 1. Institutional context

##### 1.1 Economic governance and the impact on education and training

There are recent developments in the (economic) governance of the European Union with a possible major impact on education and training policies. We give a summary of the developments of the last months.

###### 1.1.1 What was previously decided ?

In xxx 2010 the ministers of education decided on the new generation of the education and training program, Education and training 2020. This programme relaunches the main policy lines that were already developed in the last decade.

In May 2010 the heads of state agreed on the new Europe 2010, that innovated the Lisbon strategy.

- In this conclusions education and training was integrated in the global reform strategy on the basis of two benchmarks : reduce the number of early school leavers and raise the participation in tertiary education.
- Secondly the stimuli towards member states are changed. The commission wants to raise ownership by the obligation of every member state to formulate a national reform strategy with national benchmarks. For education councils, it is important to be aware of the main policy lines in that national strategies.

### 1.1.2 New developments

A new challenge of the Union is to deal with the economic and financial crisis and the credibility of the Euro. The European institutions try to make links between the credibility of the Euro, the competitiveness of our economies and labour markets and the innovation of education and training. This is laid down in the Pact for the Euro (24 and 25 March 2011), endorsed by all the heads of state.

At the same time, there are more concrete arrangements for the monitoring process of the monetary stability. These measures intend to raise political commitment. The consequence of the linking of the “qualification benchmarks” (participation in tertiary education and early school leavers) to the economic and monetary strategy is a more regular reporting process with national action plan and feedback from the commission. The new macroeconomic surveillance framework is based on

- National reform strategies to be presented by every country in April 2011
- In June there will be an assessment by the commission
- The national governments take notice of that assessment and can take appropriate measures on which they report in the following cycle. Participating Member States will pursue these objectives with their own policy-mix, taking into account their specific challenges.
- Each year, concrete national commitments will be undertaken by each Head of State or Government. In doing so, Member States will take into account best practices and benchmark against the best performers, within Europe and vis-à-vis other strategic partners.
- The implementation of commitments and progress towards the common policy objectives will be monitored politically by the Heads of State or Government of the Euro area and participating countries on a yearly basis, on the basis of a report by the Commission

Sources :

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/119810.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ecofin/119810.pdf)

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/119990.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/119990.pdf)

[http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms\\_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/120296.pdf](http://www.consilium.europa.eu/uedocs/cms_data/docs/pressdata/en/ec/120296.pdf)

European semester: a new architecture for the new EU Economic governance – Questions and answers : [http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/m11\\_14.en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/europe2020/pdf/m11_14.en.pdf)

## 1.2 The contribution of education and training to the new European semester

### Education, Youth, Culture and Sport Council meeting, 14 February 2011

Ministers discussed the education-related aspects of the new strategic approach (as described in point 1.1.). Ministers agreed that, although progress has been made, more efforts would be needed to meet the education targets by 2020. Member States underlined that NFP's presented so far were provisional.

Several ministers pointed out that

- education issues should not only be focussed on figures and indicators: the human factor and qualitative interventions were also extremely important.
- Several Member States stressed the importance of the role of teachers and called for more efficient and regular professional development programmes for teachers.
- Most Member States recalled the importance of establishing LLL strategies, including making VET more attractive and promoting adult learning.
- Investing in education, training and research is crucial
- In the meeting there was also indicated that the member states should take more ambitious measures to diminish early school leaving.
- There were also critical questions on the impact of the European Union towards education and training policies.

Sources

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/11/st05/st05505.en11.pdf>

Related documents:

'Annual growth survey: advancing the EU's comprehensive response to the crisis'

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/pdf/en/10/st18/st18066.en10.pdf>

Annex to the Annual growth survey: progress report on Europe 2020 including the provisional national Europe 2020 targets of all Member States (except, for educational targets, NL and UK)

[http://ec.europa.eu/economy\\_finance/articles/eu\\_economic\\_situation/pdf/2011/com2011\\_11\\_annex1\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/economy_finance/articles/eu_economic_situation/pdf/2011/com2011_11_annex1_en.pdf)

## **1.3 The Hungarian Presidency of the EU**

### **1.3.1 A strong Europe with a human touch.**

Strategic framework and programme of the Hungarian Presidency of the EU

The priorities of the Hungarian Presidency are determined by the trio work programme and by the economic crisis:

- Growth, jobs and social inclusion
- Stronger Europe – Building on the foundations and protecting the future
- A Union close to its citizens
- Enlarging responsibly and engaging globally

In the chapter 'Education, Youth, Culture, Audiovisual Policy and Sport' we read that the Hungarian Presidency will dedicate special attention to the evaluation of national reform programmes implementing the Europe 2020 Strategy (see above point 1.1.)

The HP will seek to contribute to achieving the Europe 2020 objectives, namely to reduce school drop-out rates below 10% and to reach at least 40% of 30-34 year olds completing third level education or equivalent by 2020. This will be complemented by the establishment of a comprehensive European framework and exchange of good practices. The HP wishes to promote student mobility for educational purposes and the improvement of the quality of mobility-related services. The HP also intends to focus on the links between employability and education and training.

Improving access and the quality of early childhood education can have a positive impact on later education and work opportunities. In order to help to reduce the number of early school-leavers and to integrate vulnerable children, the EYSC Council will launch the policy cooperation of the Member States at European level and establish the framework of such cooperation in the field of early childhood education.

The HP seeks to support European cooperation on modernising higher education by examining the governance aspects of diversification and quality of higher education. The HP will discuss the results of the Action Plan on Adult Learning and will continue the Belgian Presidency's work on vocational training, placing special emphasis on enhancing the relevance and the attractiveness of vocational training, while bearing in mind the needs for the labour market.

<http://www.eu2011.hu>

#### **1.4 Participation of Croatia in Youth in Action programme and in the action programme in the field of lifelong learning (2007-2013)**

The European Commission and the republic of Croatia made this agreement in the Memorandum of Understanding. .

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc/croatia\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme/doc/croatia_en.pdf)

#### **1.5 Governance and legislation: Smart Regulation in the EU**

Communication from the Commission, 8 October 2010

The EU Better Regulation strategy is based on three key action lines:

- Promoting the design and application of better regulation tools at the EU level, notably simplification, reduction of administrative burdens and impact assessment.
- Working more closely with Member States to ensure that better regulation principles are applied consistently throughout the EU by all regulators.
- Reinforcing the constructive dialogue between stakeholders and all regulators at the EU and national levels.

This Communication outlines the measures the Commission plans to ensure the quality of regulation throughout the policy cycle, from the design of the policy to its evaluation and revision. Smart regulation is a shared responsibility and its success depends on all institutions and stakeholders involved in the formulation and implementation of EU policies.

Consulting citizens and other stakeholders both when developing policies and when evaluating whether they have done what they set out to do is an essential element of smart regulation. The Commission consults in a variety of ways on the basis of minimum standards that have been in place since 2002. ('Towards a reinforced culture of consultation and dialogue - General principles and minimum standards for consultation of interested parties by the Commission', Communication from the Commission, 2002:

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52002DC0704:EN:NOT>).

In order to strengthen the voice of citizens and stakeholders, the Commission will

- prolong the consultation period from 8 to 12 weeks from 2012 onwards

- carry out a review of its consultation policy in 2011
- increase the availability of roadmaps and work plans in order to allow citizens and other stakeholders to plan inputs to the policy process and to express their views at a much earlier stage.

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52010DC0543:EN:NOT>

## 2. The Europe 2020 strategy and Education and Training 2020

### 2.1 Council conclusions on the role of education and training in the implementation of the Europe 2020 strategy

See point 1.2.

### 2.2 Informal meeting of education ministers

Hungary, 29 March 2011

#### Informal meeting of Education Ministers

In the context of the 2011 European Year of Volunteering, the meeting discussed what Member States can learn to promote 'active citizenship'.

The idea of citizenship education is to equip young people with a better understanding of the values which underpin European democracy, human rights and social responsibility, as well as helping them to acquire competences such as financial literacy and entrepreneurial skills which can improve their employability.

Commissioner Vassiliou emphasised that by acquiring the attitudes, attributes and skills that will empower them to become active and responsible citizens, young people are more likely to respect each other and to play a role in their communities through, for example, volunteering.

### 2.3 Progress towards the common European objectives in education and training (2010/2011) - Indicators and benchmarks

The European Commission's annual progress reports measure developments in education and training across the EU, using a series of indicators, benchmarks and research results.

The report, which covers all EU Member States, plus Croatia, the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Turkey, Norway and Liechtenstein, contains overviews and detailed statistics identifying which countries perform above or below the EU average and which are catching up or falling behind compared to the others.

Key results:

**2020 benchmarks:** although it is too early for precise projections, past trends suggest that most of the benchmarks for 2020 should be attainable if Member States continue to give them high priority and invest efficiently in education and training. This is true, in particular, for the two education headline targets on early school leaving and graduates.

**2010 benchmarks:** EU countries have made progress but only achieved the target on the number of graduates in maths, science and technology, with a 37% rise since 2000 - easily outstripping the target of 15%. Significant, but insufficient, progress was made in reducing the school drop-out rate, increasing the number of pupils completing upper secondary

education, improving reading literacy skills and increasing the share of adults participating in education or training. (Full data for 2010 will be available early next year)

**Participation and attainment:** since 2000, overall participation in education has increased as well as the qualification levels of adults. The share of children in pre-primary education has risen as well

**Gender gaps remain significant** both in performance and in choice of subjects. For instance, girls outperform boys in reading, and boys account for most early school leavers. Men outnumber women among graduates in maths, science and technology subjects.

Full version, main messages of the report and results per country at [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc2881\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc2881_en.htm)

### 3. Specific policy lines within Education and Training

#### 3.1 Vocational Education and Training

##### 3.1.1 Informal Council for The Copenhagen Process

The Belgian Presidency organized this two-yearly ministerial conference for the Copenhagen process; ministers from 33 countries looked at the evaluation report for the last decade and set priorities for the new decade, with the aim to strengthen European collaboration in the field of vocational education and training.

During the ministerial meeting, a conference has been organized on how quality assurance and transparency can close the gap between VET, schools and higher education, and so promote mobility and lifelong learning. EUNEC executive committee was invited and participated at this conference (see document 'attended events').

<http://www.eutrio.be/pressrelease/education-ministers-want-greater-collaboration-vocational-training>

##### 3.1.2 The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020

7 December 2010

On the basis of 8 years of European cooperation (from the Copenhagen Declaration of 29-30 November 2002), the European Ministers for VET, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges, defined the long-term strategic objectives for the next decade (2011-2020).

###### I. A new impetus for VET in Europe

The European Commission adopted on 9 June 2010 a communication 'A new impetus for VET in Europe to support the Europe 2020 strategy', which proposed in broad terms a future agenda for the European VET policy.

Future challenges have to do with

- Labour market evolution: People with low (or no) formal qualifications will find it more difficult to find a job.
- The right skills: Need for closer collaboration between stakeholders active in skills anticipation, including representatives of professional sectors, social partners, relevant civil society organizations, and education and training providers.

- Ageing society: Increased need for LLL.
- The dual objective of VET: contributing to employability and economic growth, and responding to broader societal challenges.
- Quality and excellence: transparency and a common approach to quality assurance are necessary to build up mutual trust which will facilitate mobility and recognition of skills and competences between the diverse VET systems in Europe.
- Empowering people: this means enabling people to acquire knowledge, skills and competences that are not purely occupational (key competences; it should be possible to acquire them as well in VET as in any other form of education).
- Internationalizing VET: the mobility of learners in VET remains low; better targeted information provision and guidance are needed.
- Investing in VET – a shared responsibility: An increased emphasis on adult learning in recent years requires additional resources. The economic downturn should not lead to reduced investment in VET.

Important achievements of the Copenhagen process. It has played a crucial role in raising awareness of the importance of VET at both national and European level. Progress is most evident in the common European tools (Europass, EQF, ECVET, EQAVET). The Copenhagen process has triggered profound reforms, amongst others the development of NQF's with a view to implementing the EQF, and the shift to a learning outcomes approach.

The wider EU policy context. The Copenhagen process is an integral part of ET 2020 strategic framework and the objectives in the VET field should remain consistent with the overall objectives in ET 2020. VET should play its part in achieving the two Europe 2020 headline targets in the education field (less than 10% early school leavers; at least 40% of 30-34 years old with tertiary or equivalent education).

## II. A global vision for VET

By 2020, European VET systems should contribute to excellence and equity in LLL by providing:

- Attractive and inclusive VET
- High quality I-VET
- Easily accessible and career-oriented C-VET
- Flexible systems of VET based on a learning outcomes approach and which cater for the validation of non-formal and informal learning
- A European education and training area with transparent qualifications systems
- Substantially increased opportunities for transnational mobility of VET students and professionals
- Easily accessible and high-quality lifelong information, guidance and counseling services.

## III. Strategic objectives for the period 2011-2020, followed by short-term deliverables 2011-2014.

11 strategic objectives are adopted for 2011-2020. Six are based on the strategic objectives of ET 2020

- Improving quality and efficiency of VET and enhancing its attractiveness and relevance
- Making LLL and mobility a reality
- Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

Five transversal objectives are adopted:

- Greater involvement of VET stakeholders and greater visibility

- Coordinated governance of European and national instruments in the areas of transparency, recognition, quality assurance and mobility
- Intensifying cooperation between VET policy and other relevant policy areas
- Improving the quality and comparability of data for EU policy making in VET
- Making good use of EU support.

For each strategic objective, a number of short –term deliverables (2011-2014) are adopted (22).

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

## 3.2 Higher Education

### 3.2.1 Consultation on priorities for the modernization of Higher Education

The European Commission plans to adopt a new Communication on the modernization of higher education in the third quarter of 2011 to provide strategic direction for the development of European higher education in the next ten years. This new Communication will revisit and update the existing Communication on modernization of higher education, which was adopted in 2006.

The consultation asked for your views about policy priorities for higher education reform in the EU in the next five to ten years, including in the areas of education, research and innovation. The consultation period ended on 15 March 2011.

<http://ec.europa.eu/yourvoice/ipm/forms/dispatch?form=Modernisation>

## 3.3 Recognition of informal and non formal learning

The Commission has launched a public consultation on possible future action to support the promotion and validation of non-formal and informal learning ([more details](#)). The aim is to collect views on whether further action is needed, if so, what type of action is required and which policy priorities should be given attention.

The consultation was open until 9 February 2011. The results will be analyzed and summarized in a report that will be published on the website (link below) in the first semester of 2011.

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/consult/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html)

## 3.4 Early school leaving

### 3.4.1 Tackling early school leaving: A key contribution to the Europe 2020 Agenda

Communication from the European Commission, 31 January 2011

The Communication analyzes the impact of ESL on individuals, societies and economies, outlines its causes, and gives an overview of existing and forthcoming EU-level measures to tackle it.

ESL is caused by a mix of individual, educational and socio-economic factors; it is also a gender issue. Member States experience different challenges with regard to ESL; however, only few Member States follow a consistent and comprehensive strategy to reduce ESL. Many initiatives are not sufficiently linked to other policies addressing young people.

Early school leaving can be prevented through systematic evidence-based policies. Comprehensive policies should focus on

- Prevention (increasing participation in good quality early childhood education and care; systematic language support for children with a migrant background; active desegregation policies which improve the social, ethnic and cultural mix in schools; positive discrimination measures; flexible educational pathways)
- Intervention, addressing emerging difficulties at early stage (measures at school level: schools as learning communities; early warning systems; better cooperation with parents; networking with actors outside school; involving regions more strongly; student-focused measures focusing on mentoring, tutoring, personalized learning, guidance..)
- Compensation, offering opportunities for those who dropped out aiming to provide a 'second chance'. There is evidence that prevention of ESL shows better results than compensating the negative effects of ESL.

EU-level cooperation

- ESL will be addressed in the National Reform Programmes setting national targets.
- ET 2020 supports the implementation of policies against ESL
- A proposal for a Council Recommendation on reducing ESL + a Staff Working document of the Commission.
- A Commission Communication on ECEC
- A Commission Communication on a New European Agenda on Integration (2011)
- VET modernization agenda
- A benchmark on employability will be proposed by the Commission in early 2011

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlycom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlycom_en.pdf)

### **3.4.2 Proposal for a Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving**

31 January 2011

The Recommendation sets out the main elements of a coherent, comprehensive and evidence based policy against early school leaving. These include prevention, intervention and compensatory measures. They address all levels of education and training.

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlyrec\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlyrec_en.pdf)

### **3.4.3 Accompanying document to the proposal for a Council Recommendation**

Commission staff working paper

The document includes examples of good practices from different Member States

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/earlywp_en.pdf)

## **3.5 Early Childhood Education and Care: Providing all our children with the best start for the world of tomorrow**

Communication from the Commission, 17 February 2011

The plan aims at giving every child a better start in life and to lay out the foundations for successful lifelong learning, social integration, personal development and employability later in life.

The proposals will contribute to two of the headline targets of Europe 2020: reducing the share of ESL and lift at least 20 million people out of the risk of poverty and social exclusion.

The proposal calls for

- Universal access to quality pre-school education, based on stable funding and good governance
- An integrated approach to education and care, taking account of children's needs in a holistic way
- Age-appropriate curricula with the right balance of hard and soft skills
- More focus on the professionalization of staff with appropriate qualifications, salaries and working conditions
- Quality assurance systems and standards to monitor progress

The Commission proposes a list of issues for policy cooperation among Member States, in the field of access to ECEC and of quality of ECEC.

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/school-education/doc/childhoodcom_en.pdf)

### **3.6 Adult education**

Final conference on the Adult Learning Action Plan

The action plan 'It's always a good time to learn' (2008-2010) provided for the first time a set of common priorities to be encouraged in the adult learning sector, introduced the sector to the Open Method of Coordination and thus initiated intensified European cooperation. In December 2010, this Action Plan came to the end of its lifecycle; this conference is the major concluding event and provides an opportunity to assess the results, and gives inspiration on what should be done through to 2020.

<http://adulthoodlearning-budapest2011.teamwork.fr/en/background>

## **4. Developments in other policy domains**

### **4.1 Internal Market**

#### **4.1.1 Consultation on the Professional Qualifications Directive**

The public consultation is aimed at gathering stakeholders' views on a modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive (Directive 2005/36/EC).

This Directive, adopted in 2005, sets the rules for mutual recognition of professional qualifications between Member States. Beyond a few innovations, it mainly consolidated and simplified 15 previous Directives, some of which dated back to the 1960s.

The reform of the system of recognition of professional qualifications as a means to facilitate mobility is one of the priority actions proposed by the Commission in the Single Market Act. With the view to preparing this reform, the Commission launched in March 2010 a major evaluation of the Professional Qualifications Directive.

As a first step in the evaluation process, the Commission reached out to competent authorities and national coordinators, who draw "experience reports" giving valuable information on how the rules work in practice. (link to this report in the previous 'Main Policy Lines', EUN/EC/DOC/039). The consultation constitutes the second step of the evaluation process. The main objective is to consult stakeholders on three major challenges for the reform of the system of recognition of professional qualifications:

- simplifying the existing rules to the benefit of individual citizens;
- integrating professions into the Single Market;
- injecting more confidence into the system.

The consultation was open until 15 March 2011.

[http://ec.europa.eu/internal\\_market/consultations/2011/professional\\_qualifications\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/internal_market/consultations/2011/professional_qualifications_en.htm)

## 5. Studies

### 5.1 The Future of Learning: New Ways to Learn New Skills for Future Jobs

Institute for Prospective Technological Studies, 2010, European Commission, JRC (Joint Research Centre)

This report synthesizes the findings of four online consultations; the aim was to develop visions and scenarios on the ways in which people acquire, retain and update the necessary competences for successful and prosperous lives in a fast changing world, with a view towards addressing emerging competence needs and ways to increase individual employment opportunities.

The findings suggest that, while the existing physical and formal structures of education and training will remain intact, schools and universities will change significantly with respect to pedagogical strategies. Learning and teaching processes will be more flexible in addressing and implementing individual needs and preferences. Teachers will become mentors and guides in self-regulated, personalised and collaborative learning processes. Schools will open up to society by integrating external learning resources and practical learning opportunities. Technology will assist learning institutions in facilitating both, personalisation and institutional flexibility.

Furthermore, experts believe that all citizens will have to continuously update and develop their skills; assume responsibility for their qualifications and pro-actively develop their professional career. While attaining formal qualifications will remain key for grasping new employment opportunities, informally acquired skills will be better recognised and mechanisms will be put in place that will allow people to obtain formal recognition for their professional expertise.

[http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC60869\\_TN.pdf](http://ftp.jrc.es/EURdoc/JRC60869_TN.pdf)

### 5.2 New skills for new jobs. Policy initiatives in the field of education.

Eurydice, November 2010

With 24 countries participating, the consultation provided an opportunity to gather information on recent national developments in skills forecasting and to assess how this information is channelled into education and training provision.

Among the main findings:

- Virtually all European countries are reinforcing their capacity to forecast, anticipate and match skills needs;
- Most countries rely on specific institutional mechanisms bridging the worlds of education and employment through cooperation and partnership;
- Strategies to connect education and training to the labour market take a variety of forms ranging from comprehensive measures to more targeted approaches (curriculum reform, education and training of teachers and trainers, student assessment and quality management);

- As a result of the economic crisis, education decision-makers in some countries now seem to be more aware of the challenges arising in the labour market. In many cases the crisis has had a significant impact on the transition of young people from school to the labour market. This might prompt more countries to take steps to further improve the responsiveness of their education and training systems to meet labour market needs.

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/125EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/125EN.pdf)

### **5.3 Grade Retention during Compulsory education in Europe: regulations and statistics**

Eurydice, January 2011

The study compares how grade retention - making pupils repeat a school year - is applied in schools across Europe and produces an inventory of the legislations and practices in place. It shows that those practices vary greatly between countries: whether a child has to repeat a year at school depends more on the educational culture concerned and teacher appraisal than on the child's performance. It covers 31 countries (all EU Member States, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey).

Among the main findings:

- Pupils may fall behind for a year in countries where primary education admission requirements are based on maturity and development
- Lack of sufficient progress is the most common reason stated in regulations for deciding that a pupil should repeat a year
- In most countries, the major influence in the decision-making process is the opinion of teachers; parental opinion plays a minor role.
- Despite similar regulations, grade retention rates vary widely between European countries. In countries with high rates, the idea that grade retention is beneficial for pupils is still prevalent in the education community.

This issue is part of the wider struggle against school failure and early school leaving; problems which have long been priorities of national education policies and now have a high priority in the European policy agenda.

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/126EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/126EN.pdf)

### **5.4 Adults in Formal Education: Lifelong Learning in Practice**

Eurydice, February 2011

This report presents the situation following the Action Plan on Adult Learning ,It's always a good time to learn' (European Commission, 2007). In particular, the report looks at the Action Plan's objective of providing adults with opportunities to go ,one step up' and upgrade their educational attainment; it focuses on opportunities for under-qualified adults to achieve a formal qualification, and it also covers policies and measures for enhancing the participation of adult returners to higher education.

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic\\_reports/128EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/thematic_reports/128EN.pdf)

## **5.5 Survey on Initial Teacher Education Programmes in Mathematics and Science (SITEP 2011)**

More than 800 HE institutions will be surveyed during March/April 2011. SITEP has been launched in order to establish how specific competences and skills, which are considered crucial for future mathematics or science teachers, are taught within existing initial teacher education programmes and how they are integrated in the overall workload.

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/SITEP.php>

## **5.6 Recommended annual taught time in full-time compulsory education in Europe 2009/2010**

The Eurydice data collection on taught time targets recommended compulsory curriculum by grades/stages for full time compulsory education. The taught time presented in the national figures corresponds to the most common general education programme in the country concerned. It includes the time spent by a student in receiving instruction on all the subjects integrated in the compulsory core or compulsory flexible curriculum in the school premises or in out-of school activities which are formal part of the programme.

The report presents both data by subject and country as annual compulsory taught time in hours of 60 minutes per grade bearing in mind the number of taught days and weeks per year as well as the number and length of the class periods.

[http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/tools/127\\_taught\\_time\\_EN.pdf](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/tools/127_taught_time_EN.pdf)

## **5.7 Skills supply and demand in Europe. Medium term forecast up to 2020. CEDEFOP 2010**

Cedefop's new skill demand and supply forecast up to 2020 sets the scene for anticipating future trends.

The aim of this report is to provide policy-makers, employers, skills providers, employment services and individual learners with better information to make more informed decisions. Europe is on its way to an economy where services and knowledge- and skill-intensive occupations will prevail. But even in occupations that are decreasing, substantial employment opportunities will remain as older generations leave the labour market and need to be replaced. It is evident from the forecast that Europe not only needs to step up investment in education and training, but also encourage employers to use better the skills and talents of their staff. The forecast suggests that aggregate demand and supply trends across countries are converging in the medium to longer term, but we need to dig deeper to grasp what is really going on. Changing skill needs, job polarisation and skill mismatch interact in complex ways. The forecasts in this report shed some light on these phenomena, but better data are urgently needed for more analysis.

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3052\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3052_en.pdf)

## **5.8 Changing Qualifications. A review of qualifications policies and practices.**

CEDEFOP 2010

This review examines how the role and functions of qualifications are changing in Europe. Covering a wide range of sources - including a review of research in several social science fields and case studies of countries and an overview of Cedefop's own work - it outlines four possible scenarios for developments in the next ten years and identifies the cornerstones for a reform strategy.

[http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3059\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/3059_en.pdf)

## **5.9 CEDEFOP working plan**

In the coming year, the Centre's plans include:

- the publication of Cedefop's research on the economic and social benefits of vocational education and training
- the completion of a lifelong guidance policy review
- a report on adult learning at the workplace
- an examination of the role of validation in enterprises
- a study of labour market polarisation

In addition, the Centre will continue its coordination of Study Visits for education and training specialists, its work on new skills for new jobs and the related issue of skills mismatches, and further development of qualification frameworks across Europe – an issue which will be examined in depth at a Hungarian Presidency conference in May.

<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/news/17534.aspx>

## **6. The European Year of Volunteering**

2011 is the European Year of Volunteering, a campaign to celebrate the work of existing volunteers, address the challenges they face and encourage more people to get involved.

More info on [www.eyv2011.eu](http://www.eyv2011.eu).

