



EUNEC-newsletter 6 November 2005

1 EUNEC conference 'The consultation on the EQF' (24-25 October 2005)

On **24-25 October 2005**, EUNEC, the European Network of Education Councils, held a conference in Brussels on the consultation of the European Commission on the **EQF**. Representatives of twelve education councils debated on this item. The purpose of this conference was double.

- EUNEC tried to understand the concept of the EQF and to discuss on the stakes, the benefits and the obstacles of the EQF. You can download on the report of this conference on www.eunec.org

- EUNEC wanted to produce some elements of reflection, which member councils could use to give advice to their governments. The aim of this text is not to formulate statements for the European Commission. This text is an instrument to help education councils to give advice to their own ministers of education and -where possible- to other ministers involved. You can download the text on www.eunec.org

2 Mia Douterlungne, new general secretary of EUNEC

On 24 October 2005, EUNEC took formal leave of its general secretary Mr. **Jacques Perquy**. On December the 1st, Mr. Perquy retires as general administrator of the Flemish Education Council (Vlor). The Executive Committee of EUNEC decided to appoint Mrs. **Mia Douterlungne**, the successor of Mr. Perquy at the Vlor, as new general secretary of EUNEC.

3 EUNEC as an international non profit organisation

On 18 October 2005, the Belgian Minister of Justice granted **legal personality** to EUNEC as an international non profit organisation under the Belgian law. In the immediate future, the statutes of EUNEC will be published in the Belgian law gazette.

4 European news

The European Union is preparing a **next step** into the realisation of a European education policy. Some preparatory documents are meant for the summit of the heads of state in March 2006; other documents are meant as working documents for a co-decision procedure for the Parliament and the Commission. The secretariat of EUNEC wants to focus the attention of its members on these important documents. Depending on the budget, the Executive Committee of EUNEC plans activities in one or two of these fields. The consultation procedure of the Member States has started. Education councils, which want to inspire the decision, should do this by their representative in the decision making gremials of the Union.

The following documents were at stake at the last meeting of the Education Committee of the 14th and 15th of November.

4.1 A draft report on the progress of the integrated education policy (2006)

In the Communication on “**Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe**” adopted on November the 10th, the Commission presents its contribution to the 2006 Joint Progress Report on the implementation of the “Education and Training 2010” work programme to be jointly agreed with the Council in February 2006.

The communication approved by the Commission on November the 10th concludes that Member States must accelerate the pace of reform in their education and training systems, or large proportions of the next generation will face social exclusion. The matter is urgent: despite the important efforts made by all Member States, there is too little progress against the European “benchmarks” fixed for improving young people’s qualifications and competences.

The Communication notes that, although lifelong learning is gaining ground in Europe, too few adults are participating in lifelong learning and national strategies should urgently be implemented in all countries. Higher education suffers from underinvestment due to a lower contribution from the private sector in European higher education. Higher education should become more open to non-traditional learners. The status of vocational education and training is improving but remains a point of concern. The EU benchmark on increasing the number of maths, science and technology graduates has been achieved, but we are still a long way from achieving the targets related most closely to social inclusion and the knowledge-based society. There is too little progress against the benchmarks related more closely to social inclusion.

The Commission also sends the message that reforms should be both efficient and equitable, and that learning partnerships need to be developed at all levels in order to improve the governance of the systems; the evaluation of policies also needs to be improved in order to monitor the effectiveness of reforms. Better use of the structural funds should also be made in relation to investment in human capital.

The process will be coordinated by an education and training 2010 coordination group. The peer learning activities will go on as foreseen.

You can download this document on http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html

4.2 Draft conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the role of the development of skills and competences in taking forward the Lisbon goals (EDUC 140 - 13032/05)

The Union is preparing two documents on competences and skills (point 4.2. and 4.3. of this newsletter). The relationship between both is not clear, the relationship with the EQF neither, although the EQF is mentioned.

This first document has a more conceptual and principle character. **Skills and competences** cover the range of all forms and levels of learning, encompassing the results of formal, non-formal and informal learning. They contribute to personal fulfilment, active citizenship and social cohesion, whilst providing a foundation of economic growth. They also contribute to adaptability, innovation and the growth of entrepreneurship.

Raising the level of the competences should be part of lifelong learning and include the acquisition of key competences. There should be a parity of societal esteem for general education and VET. In matters of skills and competences collaboration of all relevant ministries is necessary. They should also involve economic and social partners and other stakeholders in this process. Innovative methods of delivering should be used.

A new domain of collaboration is the development of sectoral skills and the development of sector-based instruments (VET and HE).

You can download this document on

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st13/st13032.en05.pdf>

4.3 A proposal for a Recommendation of the Council and the Parliament on key competences for lifelong learning (EDUC 159 – 13425/05)

The Commission also adopted **a proposal for a Recommendation of the Council and the Parliament on Key Competences** which sets out what are considered to be the essential skills, knowledge and attitudes that every European should have to prosper in a knowledge-based society and economy (EDUC 159 - 13425/05). The eight key competences identified include: (1) Communication in the mother tongue; (2) Communication in foreign languages; (3) Basic competences in maths, science and technology; (4) Digital competence; (5) Learning to learn; (6) Interpersonal, intercultural and social competences, and civic competence; (7) Entrepreneurship; and (8) Cultural expression. These are underpinned by basic skills, and include 'horizontal components' such as critical thinking, creativity, the European dimension, and active citizenship. Taken together, they contribute to achieving personal fulfilment, active participation and improve a person's employability.

The communication is based on the work done by the working group B in the process on objectives for education and training systems. The wordings of the eight domains are more general and broader than the lists of competences in the reports of that working group. The more generic approach gives member states more opportunities to realise their own policy goals within the framework of the union. A crucial question is again the relationship with the EQF.

You can download this document on

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st13/st13425.en05.pdf>

4.4 Draft resolution of the council on mobilising the brainpower of Europe: enabling higher education to make its full contribution to the Lisbon Strategy (EDUC 135 - 12638/05)

Partly based on the communication of the Commission on "mobilising the brainpower of Europe" the Council is actually preparing a resolution on **higher education**. The resolution underlines the need for more autonomy in the governance of higher education systems and the need for more partnerships with the broader community and industry. Important for EUNEC is also the call to involve all stakeholders in the preparation and implementation of reforms. Higher education systems should also become more responsive to the education needs of disadvantaged groups and new groups acceding to higher education. To realise these objectives it is necessary to mobilise more funding for higher education (including funding from private resources).

Higher education will be part of the biennial reporting process on the implementation of the education and training 2010.

You can download this document on

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st12/st12638.en05.pdf>

4.5 Draft resolution of the parliament and the council on a European quality charter for mobility (EDUC 144 – 13112/05)

As an underpinning instrument for the renewal of the Community programmes the Commission prepared **a draft quality charter for mobility**. The charter puts forward principles to guarantee the quality of academic mobility. Essential is that a stay abroad is prepared, coached and that there is a follow-up. The preparation is meant for setting up a learning plan. During the stay the student needs to be coached. There should be an insight in the costs of the stay abroad before the students leave. The progress made in

academic mobility will be part of the biennial reporting process on the implementation of education and training 2010.

You can download this document on

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/fr/05/st13/st13112.fr05.pdf>

4.6 Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council: the European indicator of language competence (EDUC 123 – 11704/05)

The Commission proposes to add a new indicator on **language competence** in Member States (. The indicator should be measured from pupils at the end of compulsory education or training, i.e. at age 15. The indicator will be measured in at least two languages other than mother tongue (i.e. English, French, German, Spanish and Italian). The indicator will aim at reading, speaking, listening and writing. A European Indicator of Language Competence Advisory Board will monitor and co-ordinate the process.

You can download this document on

<http://register.consilium.eu.int/pdf/en/05/st11/st11704.en05.pdf>

5 Website

The **website** of EUNEC is renewed. You can send all remarks and questions on the new concept and content and on this newsletter to eunec@vlor.be.