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IMPLEMENTATION OF “EDUCATION & TRAINING 2010” WORK PROGRAMME

STANDING GROUP ON INDICATORS AND BENCHMARKS

FINAL LIST OF INDICATORS TO SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME ON THE FUTURE OBJECTIVES OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION OF THE WORKING GROUPS

The Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks is an expert group set up in 2002 by the European Commission to give advice on the use of indicators as tools for measuring progress towards the common objectives set within the framework of the work programme on the future objectives of the education and training systems.

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FINAL LIST OF INDICATORS TO BE USED IN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE OBJECTIVES REPORT

Results of the consultation of the Working Groups on the work of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks

1 - Introduction

The Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks finalised in April 2003 the discussion on the “indicative list of indicators” of the Detailed Work Programme by adopting a list of indicators based on valid, comparable and available data.

A consultation of the eight Working Groups (Objectives) was consequently launched in view of receiving comments and agreement on the proposed indicators. The Working Groups were asked to analyse the indicators on the following points: :

- their consistency with the aims stated within the objectives/key issues;
- their suitability to assess progress towards the related objectives;
- their coverage of the key issues related to each objective;

The Working Groups were also invited to identify areas within which the development of new indicators was needed.

The consultation was concluded at the end of May. The reports from the working groups were presented and discussed individually in the SGIB meeting on 5-6 June 2003 focussing on:

- general comments on the use of indicators within the different objectives;
- amendments to the list of indicators proposed by the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks;
- suggestions of new indicators to be developed.

The opinions expressed by the Working Groups on the indicators proposed by the Standing Group were in general favourable, although in some cases the limitations of the proposed indicators in relation to the complexity of the subject areas was clearly recognised. This brought to a series of amendments, deletions and additions to the initially proposed list.

Following the consultation, the final list of indicators was adopted by the Standing Group.

All the indicators included in the list are respecting the following criteria:

- they are all based on already available data
- they are all based on valid and comparable data¹

¹ The Commission data in the area of mobility need to be elaborated further.

- they have all been accepted both by the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks and the Working Groups responsible for the relevant areas/objectives.

FINAL LIST OF INDICATORS

Objective 1.1

- Age distribution of teachers together with upper and lower retirement age.
- Number of young people in the 0-15 and 16-19 age groups and as percentage of total population.
- Ratio of pupils to teaching staff by education level.

Objective 1.2

- Percentage of those aged 22 who have successfully completed at least upper secondary education (Isced 3) .
- Percentage of pupils with reading literacy proficiency “level 1” and lower on the PISA reading literacy scale.
- Distribution and mean performance of students, per country, on the PISA reading literacy scale.
- Distribution and mean performance of students, per country, on the PISA mathematical literacy scale.
- Distribution and mean performance of students, per country, on the PISA science literacy scale.
- Percentage of adults with less than upper secondary education who have participated in any form of education or training, in the last 4 weeks by age group (25-34, 35-54 and 55-64).

Objective 1.4

- Students enrolled in mathematics, science and technology as a proportion of all students in tertiary education (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6).
- Graduates in mathematics, science and technology (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6) as percentage of all graduates (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6).
- Total number of tertiary (ISCED 5A, 5B and 6) graduates from mathematics, science and technology fields.
- Share of tertiary graduates in mathematics, science and technology per 1000 inhabitants aged 20-29 - Broken down by ISCED levels 5A, 5B and 6.

Objective 1.5

- Public expenditure on education as a percentage of GDP
- Private expenditure on educational institutions as a percentage of GDP
- Enterprise expenditure on continuing vocational training courses as a percentage of total labour costs.
- Total expenditure on educational institutions per pupil/student by level of education (PPS)

- **Total expenditure on educational institutions per pupil/student by level of education relative to GDP per capita.**

Objective 2.1

- **Percentage of population aged 25-64 participating in education and training in 4 weeks prior to the survey by level of educational attainment.**

Objective 2.2

- **Hours in CVT courses per 1000 hours worked (only enterprises with CVT courses), by NACE.**
- **Hours in CVT courses per 1000 hours worked (all enterprises), by NACE**
- **Participation rates in education by age and by level of education.**
- **Share of the population aged 18-24 with only lower secondary education and not in education or training**

Objective 3.3

- **Distribution of lower/ upper secondary pupils, learning foreign languages.**
- **Average number of foreign languages learned per pupil in upper secondary education.**

Objective 3.4

- **Inward and outward mobility of teachers and trainers within the Socrates (Erasmus, Comenius, Lingua and Grundtvig) and Leonardo da Vinci programmes**
- **Inward and outward mobility of Erasmus students and Leonardo da Vinci trainees**
- **Foreign students enrolled in tertiary education (ISCED 5 and 6) as a percentage of all students enrolled in the country of destination, by nationality (European country or other countries)**
- **Percentage of students (ISCED 5-6) of the country of origin enrolled abroad (in a European country or other countries)**

2 – New indicators to be developed

As a result of the consultation, it was also agreed that the following areas should be considered as priorities for the development of new indicators.

- **Language competencies**
- **Efficiency in expenditure on education and training**
- **Learning to learn skills**
- **Percentage of teachers and trainers in continuous training**
- **Social background of tertiary students**

- **Social cohesion and active citizenship**
- **Equity**
- **ICT**
- **Mobility**

These areas are either not covered by the final list of indicators presented above, or are covered by indicators which are not considered entirely appropriate to monitor the follow up of the Lisbon objectives in the field.

A more detailed account of the discussion on the new indicators proposed by the Working Groups can be found in Annex III.

3 - General remarks emerging from the consultation

As it was observed by most Working Groups, indicators are only one of the tools, together with peer review and exchange of good practice, within the Open Method of Co-ordination in education and training. It was pointed out that the use of indicators should therefore be seen in a wider context and attention should focus on the correlation with the other tools used for monitoring the Objectives process. It was also suggested that further discussions and reflections are needed on the appropriateness of each tool to the individual objectives and related issues under consideration. In particular questions were raised on whether all issues lend themselves to be measured through statistics and whether measuring in statistical terms should be given priority over other monitoring tools. In this context, it was stressed that indicators should not be interpreted in isolation, but in relation with good practice and peer reviews.

In connection with the preceding, the issue of qualitative versus quantitative indicators, which was often raised both during the consultation and in discussions in the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks, has opened the longstanding debate on qualitative versus quantitative evaluation methodologies in education and training. The argument is mainly based on the observation that by using quantitative indicators some relevant, and often very important, qualitative dimensions are left out. These dimensions are most often closely linked to quality issues in education. Hence the repeated request from several working groups for indicators that would reflect more clearly quality issues. Although the relationship between indicators and key quality issues needs to be further developed and clarified within the Groups, a marked interest has been expressed for indicators that do not measure, but evaluate programmes according to agreed criteria. These indicators are usually established on the basis of information collected through questionnaires requiring a YES / NO answer.²

The remarks on the lack of complexity of some of the indicators proposed by the SGIB, also seem to fit into the same logic and debate and has led to an increased demand for output indicators, e.g.: indicators that require more sophisticated

² For instance, an indicator concerning “the availability of continuous in-service training within working hours for teachers and trainers”, could be established using that methodology.

operationalisation and are therefore considered to be able to reveal more in depth qualitative aspects of the education and training systems.

In the absence of harmonised statistical data at international level the groups often suggested to use national data and surveys, where available. The question of using non-comparable data in the follow up of the Lisbon process should be clarified.

In general, the consultation has shown a certain degree of unease among some of the Working Groups on the use of indicators and, more generally, about the use of statistics as an every day tool. The complexity of the processes leading to the development of new indicators, or to the modification of existing data collection has not been acknowledged by some Working Groups.

4 – Further steps

The consultation showed the need to ensure close co-operation between the Working Groups and the Standing group on Indicators and Benchmarks. To this end it was proposed to set up a limited number of Task Forces including representatives of the SGIB and of Working Groups to discuss specific issues. These should be set up to start with in connection with the priority indicators and areas to be developed that have been singled out following the consultation (See section 3 above).