



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
Directorate-General for Education and Culture

**IMPLEMENTATION OF
“EDUCATION & TRAINING 2010”
WORK PROGRAMME**

REFORMING LIFELONG GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

CONTRIBUTION OF THE COMMISSION’S EXPERT GROUP

PROGRESS REPORT

NOVEMBER 2003

Contact: john.mccarthy@cec.eu.int, tel: + 32 2 298.44.73

Background

The European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance was established to support policy development in the field of career guidance¹ as part of the adaptation of the education and training systems in Europe to a framework of lifelong learning to meet the 2010 Lisbon goal. This adaptation includes both the Objectives and Copenhagen processes. The Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance was set up particularly to assist the work of Groups G (access, social inclusion, active citizenship) and H (making learning attractive, links with working life) of the Objectives process, and to respond to the call of the Copenhagen Declaration for the strengthening of the policies, systems and practices for career guidance to support occupational and geographical mobility. Career guidance was also referenced as a priority area for action in the Commission's Communication on Lifelong Learning. Certain aspects of that Communication's concerns such as definitions and principles for guidance, quality assurance of delivery from a consumer perspective, and the European dimension of guidance, inform the work of the Expert Group.

Composition

Its 25 members include officials of education and labour ministries, representatives of social partners, European Parents Association, European Youth Forum, European Consumers Association, International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance, the World Association of Public Employment Services, OECD, CEDEFOP, ETF, and European experts from Member States and Future Member States.

Work to date

The Expert Group has met four times since December 2002. The following is a brief account of its work:

1. Objectives for education and training systems

Given the transversal nature of career guidance - it contributes to the achievement of a number of EU public policy goals such as investing efficiently in education and training, workforce/human resource development, Employment Strategy, mobility, social inclusion - the Expert Group developed **policy recommendations** for all of the **Objectives for education and training**. The recommendations concerned:

- Lifelong access for citizens to career guidance
- Flexible delivery systems
- Quality assured services
- Collection of relevant statistical information and development of comparable indicators

¹ Career guidance refers to a range of activities that assist people to develop meaning in their lives through their educational, occupational and personal choices and to develop the skills to manage their learning and career. The term "career" refers to paid and non-paid work activities that citizens undertake during the course of their lives in a range of contexts such as home, community, employment.

- Training citizens to manage their career and learning as basic skills learning
- Role of social partners in workplace guidance development
- Guidance role of teacher/trainer
- Protection of citizens who use web-based and software guidance products and services
- Promotion of gender equity and of maths, science and technology careers
- Increased investment in guidance to increase programme completion rates and matching between education and training and the needs of the labour market
- Making Europe the reference field for guidance information and delivery in education, training and employment.

The detailed recommendations are attached in Annex 1.

2. Copenhagen Declaration follow-up

Key factors for the development of careers guidance in VET in Europe identified by the Expert Group were:

- Promotion of the attractiveness of VET training opportunities and careers
- Development of workplace guidance for VET graduates
- Development of progression pathways through learning for VET participants and graduates
- Use of EU programmes to strengthen policies and systems for guidance in Europe.

Detailed recommendations are given in Annex 2.

3. Definitions and principles for guidance

Work is currently in hand to develop a Strategic Statement on Guidance in Europe based on current public policy objectives that European governments share, and the research findings of OECD, CEDEFOP, ETF and World Bank on existing policies for career guidance in Europe. The issue of definitions and principles for guidance will be addressed in the context of this statement.

4. Quality assurance for guidance services and products: consumer perspective

Discussion on this topic has been informed by the Commission's *Green Paper "Services of General Interest"* (2003) and by the deliberations of the Technical Working Group on the Quality of VET. CEDEFOP has contracted a study examining quality guidelines and criteria to assist the Expert Group.

5. European dimension of guidance

In response to the OECD (2003) findings that policy objectives for guidance were poorly defined, articulated, and communicated, the Expert Group has decided to develop a handbook on policies for career guidance targeted at policymakers. Such a handbook will draw on the experiences of European and non-European policymakers and provide for the exchange of ideas and sharing of practices among policymakers. The Commission will assist the work of the Expert Group by contracting the preparation of materials for the handbook.

6. Guidance aspects of future EU Education and Training Programmes

As part of the consultation exercise on the next generation of Education and Training Programmes, the Expert Group produced a series of recommendations on guidance aspects. The main points raised concerned the need for: transversal support for lifelong guidance actions; systematic evaluation of past actions to identify the lessons learned; mechanisms to promote synergy between education and employment programmes; and strengthening the focus on policies and systems and the transferability of results in addition to promoting innovation. The detailed recommendations are given in Annex 3.

The records of the meetings of the Expert Group, the background and working documents it has considered, research findings from country studies of policies for career guidance and relevant synthesis reports of these studies can be accessed through the Virtual Community established by CEDEFOP for the Expert Group. Its address is:

http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance

ANNEX 1: RECOMMENDATION AND COMMENTS OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S EXPERT GROUP ON LIFELONG GUIDANCE ON THE OBJECTIVES FOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

Introduction

The Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance has reflected on how to tap the full potential which guidance can make to realising the Objectives for Education and Training Systems. While the initial focus of their recommendations below is on those objectives being dealt with by Groups G and H, career guidance is also helpful in achieving the objectives being dealt with by Groups A to F.

Policy Recommendations

Objectives 2.1 and 2.3 Access and progression through learning; promotion of active citizenship, equality and social cohesion (Group G) :

Recommendation One: Access to Lifelong Guidance Services. Governments, in co-operation with social partners, and voluntary and private sectors, should ensure that all citizens in all Member States and future Member States have ready access to career guidance throughout their lives in order to enable the citizens of Europe to engage in lifelong learning opportunities that are meaningful to them and related where appropriate to social and economic needs.

Recommendation Two: Required Characteristics of Lifelong Guidance Services

To optimise effectiveness, governments should require that lifelong guidance services provided by public, private and community/voluntary sectors assist learners in the recognition of their informal learning and empower citizens to negotiate progression in their learning, work, and non-work lives. Provision should be characterised by outreach to where learners and potential learners live and congregate; be culturally sensitive; have adequately trained personnel; assure quality of service; and support intergenerational guidance.

Recommendation Three: Quality Assurance and Co-ordination

Governments should play a key role in promoting quality assurance for lifelong guidance services and in ensuring that such services provided by public, private and voluntary/community sectors work together in a co-ordinated way to provide lifelong guidance services for all citizens.

Recommendation Four: Feedback Mechanisms

In order to promote innovation and develop systems which are more responsive to real needs, governments should require the establishment of mechanisms which ensure that education and training providers are systematically provided with feedback from guidance services concerning the unmet needs of individual learners and potential learners.

Recommendation Five: Better Statistical Data

Governments should promote the collection from citizens of statistical data on guidance provision, including the development of indicators, such as how and when career guidance is accessed, by whom and from whom, in order to further the lifelong learning

agenda. In particular, household surveys (e.g. the Labour Force Survey) could be used to capture the perspective of citizens/users.

Objectives 2.2 and 3.1 Making learning more attractive; strengthening the links with working life, research and society (Group H)

Recommendation Six: Promoting Social and Economic Benefits of Learning

Governments should require lifelong guidance services to actively promote the social and economic benefits of learning in different learning settings (home, education, workplace, community) and to train citizens to manage their careers.

Recommendation Seven: Lifelong Guidance at the Workplace

Governments should promote the key role of the social partners both in developing lifelong learning and guidance in the workplace, including SMEs, and in actively supporting career guidance activities in other settings.

Objective 1.1 Training of teachers and trainers (Group A)

Recommendation Eight: Guidance Role of Teachers and Trainers

Governments should require that the new approach to teacher training includes a specific dimension on the guidance role of the teacher/trainer, within a lifelong learning framework

Objective 1.2 Basic skills (Group B)

Recommendation Nine: Managing One's Learning and Career

Governments should require that policies in education for basic skills include specific reference to the skills of managing one's own learning and career². The concept of social skills as presented in the Objectives should be more clearly defined to include skills such as teamwork, self-reliance and initiative taking (entrepreneurship in a broader sense) that are important for life in general and especially relevant for employability.

Objective 1.3 Access to ICT (Group C)

Recommendation Ten: Standards and Ethics of ICT Products and Services

Governments should require that policies for ICT in education and training pay greater attention to issues of quality standards, ethics, and protection of citizens interests with

² cf. OECD Education Policy Analysis (2002) : Chapter Five – Rethinking Human Capital

respect to web-based and other ICT-based career guidance and information products and services.

Objective 1.4 Increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies

(Group D)

Recommendation Eleven: Awareness Raising in an Equal Opportunities Context

Governments should require that policies for career guidance within education and training systems promote awareness of learning and career opportunities within science and technology and support action to overcome gender stereotyping with the assistance of government, local communities and social partners.

Objective 1.5 Making best use of resources (Group E)

Recommendation Twelve: Role of Lifelong Guidance in Reducing Wastage in Human Resource Development

Governments in Member States and future Member States should invest significantly in career guidance provision in education, training and employment settings in the light of the contribution of such provision to increasing completion rates in second- level and higher education, in reducing mismatches between education and training and the needs of the labour market, in facilitating the transition to work as well as return to studies, in creating awareness of learning and career opportunities within science and technology, and in overcoming learning and career stereotyping³.

Objective 3.4 and 3.5 Increasing mobility exchange and strengthening European cooperation (Group F)

Recommendation Thirteen: Europe as the Reference Field for Lifelong Guidance

Governments should require that national lifelong guidance services adopt Europe as a minimum reference field for guidance services in education, training and employment. To meet this requirement, governments should actively support and promote information tools such as PLOTEUS, guidance networks such as EUROGUIDANCE and EURES, and programmes for transnational exchanges and placements for guidance personnel such as ACADEMIA, and should strengthen the European dimension in the initial training of guidance practitioners.

³ Commission's Communication on Investing Efficiently in Education and Training : an Imperative for Europe, Section 5.1 (2002)

ANNEX 2: POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION'S EXPERT GROUP ON LIFELONG GUIDANCE FOR THE INTERIM REPORT FOR THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS

ACCESS AND PROGRESSION THROUGH VET

Introduction

Career guidance contributes to several public policy goals:

- **Labour market efficiency**
- **Education and training investment efficiency**
- **Social inclusion**
- **Workforce /economic development**
- **Lifelong learning**

Recent studies of career guidance policies undertaken in Europe by CEDEFOP, ETF and OECD have identified major gaps in policies and systems for guidance provision in Europe, in particular for VET participants and for employed people. Recommendations 3 and 4 below are a response to such findings.

1. Attractiveness of VET

Governments and social partners, in association with career guidance services, should promote the attractiveness of VET learning and career opportunities in order to support workforce development and the needs of enterprises.

2. Career progression through VET

Governments with social partners should support the career progression of the workforce through the development of learning and qualifications pathways for VET participants over the life span.

3. Career management skills for VET participants

Governments and social partners should support the development of career guidance provision within VET and at the workplace in order to develop the career management skills of VET participants and graduates.

4. Strengthening of guidance policies.

EU Programmes and Initiatives should be used to strengthen policies and systems for guidance in the EU.

ANNEX 3: NEW GENERATION OF EU PROGRAMMES AND INITIATIVES

Recommendations and views of European Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance

PART ONE: RECOMMENDATIONS

1.1 **The new generation of EU programmes and initiatives should include as a transversal element support for information, guidance and counselling actions** that contribute to the attainment of the Lisbon Council (2000) and public policy goals of economic development, social inclusion, labour market efficiency and lifelong learning.

1.2 **Lifelong learning, encompassing lifelong guidance, should be the organising principle of the new generation of education and training programmes** and be also reflected in the new employment and ESF programmes

1.3 As a prelude to the new generation of programmes, **the European Commission should gather together** in an integrated and user friendly way **what has been learned in the last 10 years from EU programmes and initiatives**, including qualitative analyses. This could be done as part of a Knowledge Management System.

1.4 The **content of new generation of programmes** and initiatives **should reflect EU policy priorities for guidance** and have the **flexibility to adapt to changing priorities** over their lifetime.

1.5 The new generation of programmes and initiatives should **include a quality management approach at all stages of its work**. For guidance actions this should involve the use of guidance experts in the selection of projects and in active and thematic monitoring, as well as the application of common standards across centralised and decentralised selection procedures.

1.6 **Mechanisms for interconnectivity between programmes and initiatives should be strengthened**, especially between those from the education/VET and the employment and ESF fields, and particularly for the application of ESF to the future Member States.

1.7 The new generation of programmes should **include measures which promote an impact on policy and systems and transferability** of what has been learned as well as encouraging innovation.

PART TWO: COMMENTS AND RATIONALE BEHIND THE RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Continued inclusion of information, guidance and counselling as a transversal element of E.U education, training and employment programmes and initiatives

Information, guidance and counselling contribute to four public policy goals which are common to all Member States, EEA, and Future Member States:

- Economic development
- Social cohesion
- Labour market efficiency
- Lifelong Learning.

These contributions have been acknowledged in a wide range of communications produced by the Commission and from the Member States and have been highlighted in Council Resolutions and Declarations of Ministers. They have also been recognised in the objectives and actions of EU Programmes and Initiatives since PETRA. Such public policy goals are fundamental to the attainment of the Lisbon Council (2000) aim of making Europe the most competitive economy and knowledge based society in the world by 2010. Continued support for actions in the field of information, guidance and counselling through European programmes and initiatives is therefore necessary, including to achieve convergence in access for and delivery of such services for European citizens.

2.2 Building on what has been learned

There are two issues of concern here.

2.2.1 Firstly it makes no sense to continue reinventing the wheel. In order to prevent this happening, the first step is to establish a systematic inventory of what has taken place in the field of information, guidance and counselling across the Programmes and Initiatives since 1995. There is a related need to conduct a qualitative analysis or assessment of the outcomes and results of these actions on guidance, and of their impact on individuals, organisations, and systems at local, regional, national and European levels. Such an inventory and analysis are part of the work programme of the Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance, and should be completed by the end of 2003. The inventory and analysis could be part of a Knowledge Management System strategy applying to all areas of programme content and learning to date. This should be managed centrally by the Commission or one of its agencies, and be easily accessible in a user-friendly form to all national programme agencies and potential action promoters.

2.2.2 Secondly there is a need to disseminate widely what has been learned to date. This will enable interested parties to apply existing knowledge to new situations and circumstances.

2.3 Relating programme actions in information, guidance and counselling to policy priorities

Lifelong learning should be the organising principle for the new generation of education and training programmes and should also be a principle of relevant employment and ESF programmes and initiatives, reflecting its transversal relevance in the European Employment Strategy guidelines. The importance of guidance in promoting and supporting lifelong learning has been recognised in the Commission's Communication on Lifelong Learning, in the Social Dialogue Framework for Qualifications and Competences, and in the Joint Statements of the Public Employment Services on their Role in the Labour Market. Information, guidance and counselling have only recently become significant stated policy considerations at European level. Lifelong learning policies on information, guidance and counselling at European level could give a coherent and comprehensive vision for guidance in the next generation of programmes. There is a need to reinforce policies for guidance in the lead up to 2010 and beyond, so that programme actions in the field of guidance do not become a series of unrelated and peripheral activities. The other public policy priorities relevant to guidance, as referred to in 2.1 above, should also be reflected in the programmes.

2.4 Getting added value: programme monitoring mechanisms

Here we distinguish the need for two complementary types of monitoring for actions on guidance: active monitoring and thematic monitoring. Competently undertaken, active monitoring ensures that the European taxpayers' money is not wasted through inefficient project management. The assistance of experts in the field of guidance in active monitoring work will ensure quality control. Thematic monitoring brings clusters of projects together, creates synergy between their work, and adds value both to the programme and to individual projects.

2.5 Getting added value: selection of projects, surveys etc

The selection stage is the second phase in a programme's quality management approach. Improvements have been made in the recent past in devising standard evaluation tools and criteria for project selection. But there is room for further improvement both for centralised and decentralised actions, such as including experts in the field of guidance among the evaluators of proposals. There is also a need for such evaluators to be familiar with policy issues, and for importance to continue being given to the application and monitoring of standards for project selection.

2.6 Getting added value: transferability

In order to get maximum value from available resources the learning created through previous programmes has to be fully tapped. All new programmes and initiatives therefore need to systematically include mechanisms and measures to encourage building on past experience. This has particular importance for working with future Member States.

2.7 Inter-connectivity between EU programmes and initiatives

This area appears to be very underdeveloped. There is little communication either at European or national levels between programmes such as SOCRATES, LEONARDO on

the one hand and the ESF on the other. This often results in duplication and wastage of expertise, experience and effort. This is very evident in relation to actions in the field of guidance, the concerns of which intrinsically cross-sectoral boundaries. But it is also evident in other areas too. Mechanisms for co-operation at EU and national levels need to be strengthened, including the development and dissemination of what has already been learned (see 2.2 above).

A particular priority in this respect is the application of the ESF to the future Member States.

2.8 Innovation and impact

Innovation is vital to all spheres of work activity. The new programmes should therefore continue to encourage the development of innovative approaches. However, there is an equal need to demonstrate that programme actions impact on policies and systems at local, regional and national levels and particularly provide European added value; and that such impact has a life beyond the action itself. The new generation of programmes should therefore also favour actions that have the potential to make such an impact. Otherwise, the risk is that the actions and programmes will benefit only their direct participants rather than the broader European public on whose behalf the programmes are constructed. The criteria for assessing a successful action/project need to reflect this and extend beyond merely meeting accounting requirements.