

## COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS OF 12 MAY 2009 ON A STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK FOR EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING

Council and European Commission, 2009. Available at

<http://register.consilium.europa.eu/doc/srv?l=EN&t=PDF&gc=true&sc=false&f=ST%2016743%202011%20INIT>

### Rationale of the strategy

In 2009, the Council drew up the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in Education and Training. Since then, the economic and political context has changed, creating new uncertainties and constraints. The European Union had to take further action to stem the worst financial and economic crisis in its history and, in response, has agreed on a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: Europe 2020. Education and training play a crucial role in this strategy. This draft joint report proposes new working priorities for the period 2012–2014 that are geared towards mobilizing education and training in order to support Europe 2020. It also sets out a number of options to adjust the governance of education and training so that they contribute to Europe 2020.

### Concept of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is a continuous process that can last throughout a person's entire life, from quality early childhood education to post-working age. Moreover, learning also takes place outside formal learning contexts, particularly in the workplace.

### Main challenges

- **Investment and reforms in education and training:** all areas of public budgets are under scrutiny, including education and training; most member states have difficulties in maintaining current levels of expenditure, let alone increasing it
- **Early school leaving:** increasing share of 15- to 24-year-olds not in education, employment or training; high number of unemployed early school leavers
- **Tertiary or equivalent education attainment:** need to generate economic growth based on knowledge and innovation; need to advance research and development
- **Lifelong learning strategies:** for the majority of Europeans, lifelong learning is not a reality; obstacles include limited learning opportunities inadequately tailored to the needs of different target groups, a lack of accessible information and support systems, and insufficiently flexible learning pathways
- **Learning mobility:** current levels of mobility do not reflect its value; need to promote mobility in vocational education and training; obstacles include limited financial resources and inadequate language knowledge as well as a lack of information on available opportunities
- **New skills and jobs:** decreasing demand for jobs requiring low qualifications; increasing need for higher levels of qualifications in knowledge-based industries

### Main targets and measures

With a view to achieving the four strategic objectives under the Education and Training 2020 framework, the following priority areas have been defined to improve the efficiency of European cooperation in education and training and to reflect the individual needs of Member States:

- **Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality**
  - Lifelong learning strategies: work together to complete the development of comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies

- European reference tools: work together to link national qualifications frameworks to the European Qualifications Framework; establish comprehensive national arrangements to validate learning outcomes and create links between qualification frameworks
- Learning mobility: promote learning mobility for all learners, within Europe and worldwide
- **Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training**
  - Basic skills and languages: capitalize on evidence on reading literacy; tackle low performance in mathematics and science at school; improve language competences
  - Professional development of teachers, trainers and school leaders: improve the quality of teaching staff, developing teacher competences and reinforcing school leadership
  - Modernizing higher education and increasing tertiary attainment levels: work together to increase the number of graduates, including extending alternative pathways and developing tertiary vocational education and training
  - Attractiveness and relevance of vocational education and training: work together on promoting excellence and the labour market relevance of vocational education and training
  - Efficient funding and evaluation: examine funding mechanisms and evaluation systems
- **Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship**
  - Early school leaving: help Member States implement their national strategies on early school leaving and the 2011 Council Recommendation on policies to reduce early school leaving
  - Early childhood education and care: work together to provide widespread equitable access to early childhood education and care while raising the quality of provision
  - Equity and diversity: reinforce mutual learning on effective ways to raise educational achievement in an increasingly diverse society
- **Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training**
  - Partnerships with business, research, civil society: develop effective and innovative forms of networking, cooperation and partnership between education and training providers and a broad range of other stakeholders
  - Transversal key competences, entrepreneurship education, e-literacy, media literacy, innovative learning environments: work together to promote the acquisition of key competences such as digital competences and using ICT and entrepreneurship to enhance innovation in education and training

*Relevant documents that the strategy refers to:*

- European Union. 2009. [Strategic Framework for European cooperation in education and training](#)
- European Commission. 2010. [Europe 2020: a European strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth](#)
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*Stakeholders involved in the development of the strategy:*

- [European Council](#)
- [European Commission](#)

*Further readings and web links:*

- [European Qualifications Framework](#)
- [A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning](#)