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(Resolutions, recommendations and opinions)

RESOLUTIONS

COUNCIL

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

of 15 November 2007

on the new skills for new jobs

(2007/C 290/01)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

RECALLING in particular:

- (1) The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 which launched a strategy aimed at sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, with long term employment targets.
- (2) The Integrated Guidelines for growth and jobs (2005-2008) ⁽¹⁾, in particular those addressing the need to improve matching of labour market needs, to expand and improve investment in human capital, to adapt education and training systems in response to new competence requirements, and to ensure adequate human resources for Research & Development (R&D) and innovation.
- (3) The Conclusions of the Council and of the Representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council of 14-15 November 2005 on the role of the development of skills and competences in taking forward the Lisbon goals ⁽²⁾.
- (4) The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning (2006/962/EC) ⁽³⁾.

- (5) The proposed Recommendation establishing the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning which is close to being adopted by the European Parliament and the Council.

- (6) The Commission Communication 'E-Skills for the 21st century: fostering competitiveness, growth and jobs' of 7 September 2007 ⁽⁴⁾.

AWARE that:

- (1) Education and training, in the context of a lifelong learning perspective, are an indispensable means for promoting adaptability and employability, active citizenship, personal and professional fulfilment. They facilitate free mobility for European citizens and contribute to the achievement of the goals and aspirations of the European Union, as it seeks to respond to the challenges posed by globalisation and an ageing population. They should enable all citizens to acquire the necessary knowledge to take an active part in the knowledge society and the labour market.
- (2) The objectives of full employment, job quality, labour productivity and social cohesion can better be reached if they are reflected in clear priorities: to attract and retain more people in employment, to increase labour supply; to improve the adaptability of workers and enterprises; and to increase investment in human capital through better education, and the development of skills and competences.

⁽¹⁾ Council Decision 2005/600/EC of 12 July 2005 on Guidelines for the employment policies of the Member States and Council Recommendation 2005/601/EC of 12 July 2005 on the broad guidelines for the economic policies of the Member States and the Community (2005 to 2008) (OJ L 205, 6.8.2005, p. 21).

⁽²⁾ OJ C 292, 24.11.2005, p. 3.

⁽³⁾ OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.

⁽⁴⁾ COM(2007) 496 final.

STRESSES the need:

- (1) To provide all European citizens with new opportunities to improve their knowledge, skills and competence levels, to adapt to new requirements and to move to new and better jobs, by combining the instruments which already exist at European and national level.
- (2) To anticipate the skills needs — and also the skills gaps — which are emerging in the European labour markets.
- (3) To improve the matching of knowledge, skills and competences with the needs of society and the economy as a means to increased competitiveness and growth, as well as to greater social cohesion, in Europe.

THEREFORE INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

(1) Equip people for new jobs within the knowledge society, in particular through:

- (a) the raising of overall skills levels, giving priority to the education and training of those with low skills and other people most at risk of economic and social exclusion including early school leavers and young people with low levels of educational attainment, older workers, long term unemployed, women trying to return to the labour market, migrants and people with disabilities;
- (b) providing and encouraging initial and continuing education and training for skills and competences of the highest quality, even excellence, in order to maintain and strengthen their capacity for innovation and utilisation of research, which is required for greater competitiveness, growth and employment;
- (c) the promotion of excellence as regards skills in R&D and innovation, through inter alia the development of innovation clusters, involving enterprises as well as education and training and research institutions, and the Euroskills 2008 initiative;
- (d) the implementation of measures which aim at matching identified skills needs and filling potential gaps;
- (e) supporting jobseekers by providing them with vocational guidance and a personal training plan, which should identify the competence modules required to move to new jobs where there are skills gaps;

- (f) disseminating information on the skills and competences needed for new jobs through EURES, the national employment services and the European and national networks on guidance.

(2) Continue work on the validation of learning outcomes and the transparency of qualifications, in particular by:

- (a) developing the validation of learning outcomes acquired through formal, non-formal and informal learning at the national level in line with the Council conclusions of May 2004 ⁽¹⁾, the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and the existing or future European systems for credit transfer and accumulation in higher education and vocational education and training;
- (b) further developing Europass as an instrument for the implementation of the EQF and taking into account progress made in the setting up of national systems for the validation of non-formal and informal learning.

(3) Address funding and quality issues through:

- (a) the use of structural funds in support of this initiative, as well the Lifelong Learning Programme, the Competitiveness and Innovation Framework Programme and the Seventh Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development;
- (b) the improvement of the quality and relevance of vocational education and training at all levels through the implementation of the quality assurance principles set out in European reference tools and the involvement of social partners.

THEREFORE INVITES THE COMMISSION TO:

- (1) Analyse, in the context of the Copenhagen process and cooperation in higher education, the need for added-value advisory mechanisms to strengthen the identification of new types of jobs and skill needs at the European level, making use of existing sectoral skills activities and projects under lifelong learning, enterprise and social dialogue policies. These mechanisms should aim to develop regular foresight of medium-term skills needs and identify short term skills gaps, defined in terms of occupational functions, reference levels (EQF) and key competences.

⁽¹⁾ Conclusions of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on Common European Principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning (adopted on 28 May 2004), doc. 9600/04.

The mechanisms should build on:

- expertise from *inter alia* enterprises, education and training institutions, employment services and researchers, and
 - existing labour market forecasts and the results of sectoral skills strategies at regional, national and European level, as well as of major studies launched on future skills needs at the national and European level;
- (2) Strengthen the European network for the early identification and forecast of skills needs (Cedefop's Skillsnet) and the European forecasting system on employment trends.
 - (3) Report on the follow-up to this Resolution at the European and national levels in the framework of the Education and Training Work Programme, taking into account Member States' biennial national reports.
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