Employment and education issues are also addressed by the eEurope Action Plan, which was endorsed by the Feira European Council in June 2000. The key aims of eEurope in this area are to contribute to filling the Information and Communication Technology (ICT) skills gap, to give workers the skills they need to work and ensure participation for all in the knowledge-based economy.

The follow-up of the implementation of the targets of the eEurope Action Plan is based on the benchmarking of national progress according to a set of indicators, including education related indicators agreed by the Council on 30 November 2000 (1). Indicators related to working and participation in the knowledge-based economy are the percentage of the workforce with (at least) basic Information technology (IT) training; the number of places and graduates in ICT-related third-level education; the percentage of the workforce using telework; and the number of Public Internet Points (PIAPS) per 1 000 inhabitants.

In addition the High level Group on the Employment and Social Dimension of the Information Society — ESDIS — has drawn up a Benchmarking Report following-up the ‘Strategies for jobs in the Information Society’ (2) for which Member State data and a specific Eurobarometer survey on ICT and working (results November 2000) have been used with the view of further assessing impact of the Information Society on jobs, and fulfilling ESDIS mandates under the eEurope action plan.

Moreover a specific Action Plan ‘eLearning: Designing tomorrow’s education’ was adopted on 28 March 2001 by the Commission (3) to ensure that the eEurope Action Plan is taken forward in the field of education and training.

A Memorandum on lifelong learning (4) has launched a consultation involving, both in Member States and at Community level, social partners, public authorities, learning and related service providers and civil society. The results will be used by the Commission for drafting an action plan in the second half of 2001 including the development of indicators and benchmarking.

The new Programme relative to the Community framework strategy on gender equality (2001-2005) has now commenced and the priority theme for 2001/2002 is ‘Equal pay’ (5).


WRITTEN QUESTION E-0737/01
by Roy Perry (PPE-DE) to the Commission
(9 March 2001)

Subject: Mobility of researchers

The 2000 Lisbon European Council called on the Council and the Commission, together with the Member States where appropriate, to ‘take steps to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers in Europe by 2002 and to attract and retain high-quality research talent in Europe.’ What steps have been taken?
Answer given by Mr Busquin on behalf of the Commission

(2 May 2001)

In accordance with conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, the Research Council of 15 June 2000 adopted a Resolution requesting that the Commission and the Member States cooperate fully to remove obstacles to the mobility of researchers by 2002. A panel of high-level national experts was thus set up during the Summer of 2000. Four different types of obstacles were defined, for which concrete measures will be drawn up: legal and administrative obstacles; social and cultural obstacles; career-related obstacles; and obstacles of a cross-sectorial nature. The high-level group held four meetings between October 2000 and March 2001. It sent its report to the Commission on 4 April 2001.

Following the work carried out by the high-level group, the Commission will draw up a communication on the mobility of researchers within the European Research Area by June 2001. In this, the Commission will set out a series of proposals promoting a favourable environment for the mobility of researchers throughout their career.

These actions will be carried out in conjunction with other existing or developing initiatives in the field of mobility, such as the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on mobility within the Community for students, people undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers and trainers; (1) the Mobility Action Plan (2), a High-Level Skills and Mobility Task Force; and the Group of Directors-General responsible for the public sector.