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*(Information)***COUNCIL****CONCLUSIONS OF THE COUNCIL (EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE)****on 6 February 2003****Contribution to the European Council on 21 March 2003***(2003/C 77/02)*

The importance of education and training in the knowledge society and economy in Europe and their role in the achievement of the Lisbon strategy have been underlined frequently and firmly since March 2000. This is also recognised in terms of policy and investment priorities in the Commission's Synthesis Report to the 2003 Spring European Council.

The Council draws attention to the action under way to implement the Detailed Work Programme on the Follow-up of the Objectives of Education and Training Systems in Europe, which emphasises employability as well as such other dimensions as social cohesion, citizenship or linguistic diversity, as reaffirmed in the conclusions of the Barcelona European Council (15 and 16 March 2002). The Council reaffirms its commitment to preparing the interim report on this in time for the Spring 2004 European Council.

The Council suggests that the European Council endorses these efforts and in particular:

- explicitly support the current activities aimed at creating sufficient coherence, compatibility and attractiveness in education and training in Europe, in particular through the implementation of the Detailed Work Programme on the Objectives, including the Copenhagen Declaration on vocational education and training and through further encouragement of the Bologna process in higher education,
  - stresses the continued need for resolute steps forward to foster transparency, the recognition of qualifications and quality assurance in the European Union, whilst respecting Member States' responsibilities,
  - underlines the importance of enhancing the promotion of European education and training systems and institutions as worldwide references,
  - stresses the importance of the next generation of Community programmes in the education and training field for the attainment of the Lisbon goals as reflected in the Detailed Work Programme on the Objectives,
  - stresses the importance of efficient and effective investments for the further development of education and training systems.
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