



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

from : the General Secretariat of the Council

to : the Council

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Subject : Draft Resolution of the Council and of the representatives of the Member States meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe

Delegations will find enclosed a text of the above Draft Resolution as it results from the discussion of the Permanent Representatives Committee on 14 May 2004. At the end of the meeting the President found that, apart from usual linguistic reservations, there was a unanimous agreement on the text.

Should this agreement be confirmed, the Council and the representatives of the Governments of the Member States meeting within the Council could adopt the enclosed Resolution.

Draft Resolution
of the Council and of the representatives of the Governments of the Member States
meeting within the Council on Strengthening Policies, Systems and Practices
in the field of Guidance throughout life in Europe

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION AND THE REPRESENTATIVES OF THE
GOVERNMENTS OF THE MEMBER STATES MEETING WITHIN THE COUNCIL,

AWARE THAT

1. In the context of lifelong learning, guidance refers to a range of activities¹ that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and interests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.
2. Guidance provision within the education and training system, and especially in schools or at school level, has an essential role to play in ensuring that individuals' educational and career decisions are firmly based, and in assisting them to develop effective self-management of their learning and career paths. It is also a key instrument for education and training institutions to improve the quality and provision of learning.
3. Guidance throughout life contributes to the achievement of the European Union goals of economic development, labour market efficiency and occupational and geographical mobility by enhancing the efficiency of investment in education and vocational training, lifelong learning and human capital and workforce development.

¹ Examples of such activities include information and advice giving, counselling, competence assessment, mentoring, advocacy, teaching decision-making and career management skills. In order to avoid ambiguity, since a variety of terms are used in Member States to describe services engaged in these activities, including educational, vocational or career guidance, guidance and counselling, occupational guidance/counselling services, etc., the term 'guidance' is used throughout this text to identify any or all of these forms of provision and Member States should interpret the term as referring to the appropriate provision in their own countries.

4. Effective guidance provision has a key role to play in promoting social inclusion, social equity, gender equality and active citizenship by encouraging and supporting individuals' participation in education and training and their choice of realistic and meaningful careers.
5. Guidance in the Member States of the European Union is provided through a wide diversity of structures, delivery systems and practices across education, training, employment, unemployment and private and community sectors. Such diversity provides a rich basis for co-operation and mutual learning.
6. Guidance can provide significant support to individuals during their transition between levels and sectors of education and training systems and from school to adult and working life; to young people re-entering education or training after leaving school early; to persons re-entering the labour market after periods of voluntary or involuntary unemployment, or homemaking; to workers where sectoral restructuring requires them to change the nature of their employment; and to older workers and migrants.
7. High quality guidance provision throughout life is a key component of education, training and employability strategies to attain the strategic goal of Europe becoming the world's most dynamic knowledge based society by 2010.

RECALL THAT

1. *The Report on the Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems* endorsed by the Stockholm European Council in 2001 has identified access to guidance services, quality assurance of services, the role of guidance in human resource development, and guidance to facilitate mobility for learning and employment in Europe as priority areas for development in the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

2. The Commission's Communication on lifelong learning (November 2001), *Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality*, highlighted guidance as a transversal theme for developing and implementing lifelong learning strategies at national level and as a priority area for action at European and national levels.
3. The White Paper *A New Impetus for European Youth* (2001) refers to young people's needs for a flexible guidance and counselling system to support on-going access to lifelong and life-wide learning.
4. *The Council Resolution on Lifelong Learning* of June 27 2002 recommended that priority be given by Member States and the Commission to the provision of and access to high quality information, guidance and counselling on education and training opportunities in Europe, targeted at different groups.
5. The Commission Communication *Action Plan for Skills and Mobility* (2002) noted that occupational and geographical mobility in Europe and workforce up-skilling can be enhanced by providing better access for workers and employers to information, guidance and counselling.
6. *The Directive (2002/73/EC) amending Directive (76/207/EEC) on Equal Treatment for Men and Women* concerning access to employment, vocational training, promotion, and working conditions, includes the requirement of access to all types and to all levels of vocational guidance.
7. *The Council Resolution on the Promotion of Enhanced European Co-operation in Vocational Education and Training* of December 19 2002 acknowledged that priority should be given to the strengthening of policies, systems and practices relating to information, guidance and counselling in Member States, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of European citizens.

8. The Commission Communication *Investing Efficiently in Education and Training: an Imperative for Europe* (2003) observed that investment in guidance and counselling services should be seen as providing early prevention strategies capable of significantly reducing mismatches between education and training and the needs of the labour market, increasing completion rates in secondary and higher education and facilitating the transition to work, as well as return to studies.
9. *The European Employment Guidelines* (2003) recommend, as a priority, the provision of early advice and guidance to prevent inflows into unemployment and particularly long-term unemployment.
10. *The Council Conclusions of 25 November 2003 on the development of human capital for social cohesion and competitiveness* stressed the importance of consistency and complementarity between policies in the field of education and training and social and economic strategies.
11. *The Council Resolution of 25 November 2003 on making school an open learning environment to prevent and combat early school leaving and disaffection among young people* recognised the need to strengthen the link and synergy between school and working life and the need to promote social inclusion with the involvement of families as well as youth and voluntary bodies.
12. Finally, the Joint Interim Report (2004) of the Council and the Commission on the Implementation of the Lisbon Strategy, *Education and Training 2010: the Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms*, identified guidance as one of four key actions to create open, attractive and accessible learning environments in order to "... support learning at all ages and in a range of settings, empower citizens to manage their learning and work, particularly making it easier for them to access and progress through diverse learning opportunities and career pathways."

NOTE:

- That the transition to a knowledge-based economy and society creates new challenges for policy makers in the areas of human resource development and of guidance policies, systems and practices.
- That the emergence of a knowledge-based society and the need for lifelong learning requires an intensive focus on guidance policy at national, sectoral, regional and local levels. Services need to be available at times and in forms which will encourage all citizens to continue to develop their skills and competences throughout their lives, linked to changing needs in the labour market. Such services need to be viewed as an active tool, and individuals should be positively encouraged to use them.
- That increased co-operation in guidance at all levels should be pursued within a lifelong learning perspective in order to make full use of the diversity of systems currently to be found in the Member States of the European Union and to overcome fragmentation between different forms of provision.
- The relevant activities already underway in Europe, especially the work of the Lisbon Objectives follow-up groups on the development of common concepts and principles for guidance throughout life; activities supported by EU education, training and employment programmes and the European Social Fund (ESF), and the need for co-ordination and complementarity between all of these activities.
- The results of reviews of policies for guidance in European countries jointly undertaken by the European Commission (through the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) and the European Training Foundation (ETF)) and the OECD, in association with the World Bank, which show that, in many countries, policies, systems and practices for guidance in Europe do not match the demands of knowledge-based economies and societies and call for a reform of policies and a rethinking of practices in this area.

- The *Framework of Actions for the Lifelong Development of Competences and Qualifications* agreed by the European social partners in the context of the European Social Dialogue underlines the necessity for employees and enterprises to have access to information, guidance and counselling services in order to pursue a strategy for developing the competences of individual workers.

STRESS:

- That, as appropriate and given local circumstances, all European citizens should have access to guidance services at all life stages, with particular attention being paid to individuals and groups at risk.
- The preventive role of guidance services in encouraging school completion and their contribution to the empowerment of individuals to manage their own learning and careers and to the re-integration of early school leavers in appropriate education and training programmes.
- The importance of guidance in promoting the social and economic integration of citizens through supporting access by all to education, training and work opportunities, enhancing completion rates at all levels of education and training, including further and higher education and adult education and training and facilitating the occupational and geographical mobility of learners and workers in Europe .
- The need for flexibility and diversity of guidance provision including the use of innovative methodologies and technologies, outreach and related services to increase access to such services, especially in respect of provision for hard-to-reach young persons and adults and to overcome economic and geographical disadvantage.
- The centrality of the beneficiaries of guidance in both the design and evaluation of guidance provision for both young people and adults.

- The involvement of all relevant actors, including the social partners, in line with national practice, in the guidance process, both in ensuring workers' access to guidance services, and in supporting education and training providers and guidance services through, e.g. providing work experience and work shadowing placements, promoting entrepreneurship and a spirit of enterprise and facilitating employees' access to guidance services.

REAFFIRM AS PRIORITIES

- Their commitment to the development of high quality guidance provision for all European citizens, accessible at all stages of their lives to enable them to manage their learning and work pathways and the transitions therein.
- The need for further co-operation in the area of guidance through actions and policies developed primarily in the context of the follow-up to the Lisbon Strategy in the field of education and training, *Education and Training 2010* and also taking into account the European Employment Strategy, the Framework Strategy and Gender Equality and European policies for Social Inclusion, Mobility, and Services of General Interest.
- The importance of refocusing guidance provision, where appropriate, in order to develop citizens' lifelong and lifewide learning and management skills as an integral part of education and training programmes.
- The development at national, regional and local levels, where appropriate, of better quality assurance mechanisms for guidance services, information and products (including on-line services), particularly from a citizen/consumer perspective.
- The need to strengthen structures for policy and systems development at national and regional levels by involving the appropriate key players (such as ministries, social partners, employment services, service providers, guidance practitioners, education and training institutions, consumers, parents and youth).

- The need to follow-up guidance policy issues within the Education and Training 2010 work programme.

INVITE THE COMMISSION:

- To enhance co-operation at international level with relevant organisations, for example the OECD, ILO, UNESCO, in the development of policies and concrete actions for guidance throughout life;

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES

- To examine, where appropriate, existing national guidance provision in the education and training and the employment sectors, in the context of the findings of the Commission, OECD and World Bank reviews of policies for guidance;
- To seek to ensure effective co-operation and co-ordination between providers of guidance at national, regional and local levels in the provision of guidance services, in order to widen access and to ensure the coherence of provision, especially to groups at risk;
- To encourage schools, institutes of further and higher education, training providers to promote reflective learning techniques and autonomous learning, in order to enable young people and adults to self-manage their learning and career paths effectively;

INVITE THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION WITHIN THEIR RESPECTIVE COMPETENCIES

- To build on and adapt existing European structures and activities (networks, work groups, programmes) related to the implementation of the above priorities.

- To identify, together with all relevant actors, including the social partners, areas where co-operation and support at European level can enhance national developments in the area of guidance;
- To ensure maximum return in terms of impact on policies, systems and practices at Community and national levels from collaborative activities with the Member States in the field of guidance throughout life, funded by existing and future education and training instruments and the European Social Fund;
- To ensure the integration of a gender perspective in all policies and practice relating to guidance provision;
- To encourage and support providers of initial and continuing education of guidance practitioners to reflect current best practice across the Union in their training programmes;
- To cooperate in the improvement of the quality of information relating to international and national best practice available to policy makers;
- To include a consideration of guidance policies, as appropriate, in future reports on the follow-up of the Education and Training 2010 programme.
