



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**



Council Conclusions on New Skills for New Jobs Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs

*2930th EMPLOYMENT, SOCIAL POLICY, HEALTH AND
CONSUMER AFFAIRS Council meeting*

Brussels, 9 March 2009

The Council adopted the following conclusions:

"THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. Welcoming the Commission's Communication on "New Skills for New Jobs"¹ as a response to the Council's Resolution of 15 November 2007. The Communication focuses on strengthening the Union's capacity for upgrading skills at all levels, for anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs, and for ensuring that the assessment of skills and labour market needs becomes a permanent part of the EU's policies for Employment and Growth;
2. Recalling the Council's Conclusions of 21 November 2008 on the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training adopted within the Copenhagen process;
3. Having in mind that, also in the framework of the European employment support initiative launched by the Commission in its recent European Economic Recovery Plan, continued investment in knowledge, skills and competencies, and measures for retraining and for skills upgrading will be essential to ensure that Europe is able to seize the opportunities that will arise when the upturn comes;

¹ COM(2008) 868 final

P R E S S

4. Responding to the mandate of the European Council of March 2008 which confirmed that investing in people and modernising labour markets is one of the four priority areas of the Lisbon strategy, and invited the Commission "to present a comprehensive assessment of the future skills requirements in Europe up to 2020, taking account of the impacts of technological change and ageing populations, and to propose steps to anticipate future needs";
5. Bearing in mind that situations in Member States and regions differ significantly as regards the skills profile of their population or the sectoral distribution of employment, improving the matching of skills is crucial to addressing both the employment impact of the crisis and the long-term prospects of the EU workforce; also recognising the need to take into account the uncertainties inherent to medium-term labour market forecasts when formulating policy responses;
6. Looking towards a process of careful reflection on the basis of the Communication of the European Commission, with the participation of all relevant stakeholders, namely Member States, the European Commission, the European Parliament, other European institutions, the social partners and other stakeholders;
7. Recalling the European Employment Strategy, in particular the Integrated Guideline No 24 for the Employment Policies of the Members States, inviting Member States to adapt their education and training systems in response to new competence requirements;
8. Recalling in this context the relevance of the "European Reference Framework on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning"² and other initiatives focusing on the importance of lifelong guidance, validation of non-formal education and informal learning, mobility and transparency in vocational education and training; recalling also the existing Lisbon strategy target on the EU average level of participation in lifelong learning (at least 12.5% of the adult working-age population);
9. Taking into consideration the contribution of flexicurity policies within the Growth and Jobs Strategy, in particular the common principles of flexicurity adopted by the Council on 5 December 2007, endorsed by the European Council on 14 December 2007³ and highlighted in the Report of the EU Mission for Flexicurity⁴;
10. CONSIDERS that:
 - there is in the medium and long term a great potential for employment creation in Europe – both for new and replacement jobs; however, net job creation projections show a polarised job expansion among occupations with a greater increase of jobs at the higher skills level;
 - skills, competencies and qualification requirements will increase significantly and across all types and levels of occupation, and will attract the investment necessary for creating new jobs;
 - there is a growing demand from employers for transversal key competencies;

² European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2006/962/EC of 18.12.2006

³ Docs 15497/07 and 16201/07

⁴ Doc. 17047/1/08 REV 1

- there is a need to ensure a better long-term match between skills supply and labour market demand through improved skills and labour market forecasting;
- to achieve such a long-term match all individuals need to be equipped through basic education with the key competences and horizontal skills that are prerequisites for the subsequent adaptation and acquisition of new specific skills which will ensure their lifelong employability;

11. SUPPORTS the following key policy messages:

- a) upgrading skills at all levels and providing quality education for all is critically important for Europe's short-term recovery and longer-term growth and competitiveness, as well as for equity and social cohesion, by improving the capacity of jobs and people to adapt to change;
- b) ensuring a better long-term matching between the supply of skills and labour market demands is just as necessary, for rising unemployment calls for a better monitoring and matching of skills with available jobs, particularly through the development of concrete tools for citizens. In order to better match the skills of European citizens and the demands of the EU labour markets, the promotion of occupational, sectoral, geographical and social mobility and, in accordance with the Treaties, the removal of obstacles to the free movement of workers, are necessary;
- c) the current economic crisis, global competition, technological changes towards the low-carbon economy and an ageing population have accelerated the pace of change in labour market and skills requirements in the EU. The EU will improve its competitiveness and attract new investments and create jobs with new skills and competences. An improvement of Member States' cooperation and an advancement in the Member States' and the Union's methodological, analytical and mutual learning capacities for jobs and skills anticipation are therefore needed. These learning capacities can play a key role within the Growth and Jobs Strategy in the success of integrated flexicurity policies in the context of the European Employment Strategy;
- d) it is of great importance to support the Member States in anticipating future skills needs for workers and employers in the EU through regularly updated projections of labour market trends in local, regional, national and European labour markets and in the analysis of skills needs by sector, as well as in developing tools and services to address skills mismatches and help workers move between jobs as well as between regions and countries. It is essential to improve the Union's understanding of global opportunities related to skills and jobs, by cooperating on the skills assessments with countries outside the EU, and international organisations. It is also important to mobilise all existing EU policies and funds for this purpose;
- e) the development of a coherent and comprehensive national lifelong learning strategy, including investment in education and training, is key for building future capacities. Investment in education and training is key for building future capacities and meeting economic and social targets. This includes the closing of skills gaps in the longer term to achieve social cohesion. All citizens should be equipped with the key competences necessary to adapt and respond to changing labour market demands.

The Council takes note of the Commission's analysis and of concrete tools that the Commission proposes for reaching the key objective of a substantial improvement in the Member States' and the Union's capacity to forecast, anticipate and match future skills and labour market needs, in particular the proposed "Match and Map" service for citizens, the proposed "European Labour Market Monitor" and the proposed ad-hoc early-warnings of potential labour market imbalances. The Council will examine the suggested tools inter alia in order to ensure that there is no duplication of existing tools. The Member States can draw on EU-level and other good practices and retain autonomy in the design, development and application of their own tools.

12. ANTICIPATES with interest the outcome of the Commission's intention to:

- a) assess regularly long-term supply and demand in EU labour markets up to 2020, broken down by sectors, occupations, levels of qualification and countries. Updated projections will be published every two years starting in 2010;
- b) increase the EU's methodological, analytical and mutual learning capacities for skills and jobs anticipation;
- c) increase the EU's capacity for assessing employment effects in the context of sustainable development, including in the context of energy and climate change policies;

and requests the Commission to keep the Council informed of all these initiatives and of the tools which will be at the citizens' disposal.

13. THEREFORE INVITES THE MEMBER STATES AND THE COMMISSION TO:

- a) Develop the policies and services to address skills needs and labour market mismatches, including better information on skills needs in the EU in the medium and long term, regularly updating projections of future macroeconomic, demographic and labour markets trends at the local, regional, national and European levels, where appropriate, and the analysis of skills needs by sector, taking into account business needs;
- b) Develop forecasting methodologies and analytical capacities related to skills needs;
- c) Cooperate on existing Community policies, instruments and processes;
- d) Participate fully in related international initiatives, for example those developed by the OECD and the ILO (the right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured);
- e) Promote cross-sectoral cooperation and develop synergies between education and training, and employment policies;
- f) Promote dialogue between the social partners, as well as between enterprises, education and training providers, public employment services and other relevant stakeholders in order to establish various forms of partnerships and to share the existing information in the Member States on employment and skills needs;

14. THEREFORE INVITES THE COMMISSION TO

Develop the New Skills for New Jobs initiative in accordance with its Communication aimed at:

- a) Improving the monitoring of trends on the European labour markets, developing tools and services to promote job guidance and mobility and to address skills mismatches;
- b) Establishing a regular assessment of long-term supply and skills needs, by harnessing existing resources and, in particular, Cedefop, Eurofound and European Training Foundation expertise;
- c) Improving understanding of global challenges related to skills and jobs through cooperation with the OECD and the ILO, strengthened bilateral cooperation with third countries and stimulated political dialogue with the neighbourhood countries (the right of participation of all Member States in this work should be ensured);
- d) Supporting Member States involved in skills upgrading and matching by mobilising existing Community policies and European funds, including the initiatives developed under the updated strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training;
- e) Mobilising Community instruments through concerted efforts to promote cooperation between Member States."
