



EUCIS-LLL

INFORMATION NOTE

«EUROPE 2020» STRATEGY & “EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2020” PROGRAMME

I. [EU2020 Strategy – to be adopted during the European Council, 17 June 2010](#)

a) **Political process**

3 February 2010: adoption of the European Commission Communication "[Europe 2020: a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth](#)". The strategy sets out a vision of Europe's social market economy for the 21st century. It shows how the EU can come out stronger from the crisis and how it can be turned into a smart, sustainable and inclusive economy delivering high levels of employment, productivity and social cohesion.

Following the Commission's Communication and the discussions held in the Council, on the 25-26 March 2010, [the European Council reached an agreement on the new strategy](#), which will be formally adopted in June. In particular, it will be invited to endorse politically the Integrated Guidelines; finalise the headline targets in the fields of education and social inclusion/poverty reduction; assess the work done on the national targets to be set by the Member States; and assess ongoing work on the bottlenecks constraining growth.

Next step: European Council, 17 June 2010

b) **Priorities**

The Commission puts forward three mutually reinforcing priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation.
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more resource efficient, greener and more competitive economy.
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion.

c) **Targets**

The Commission is proposing **five measurable EU targets for 2020** that will steer the process and be translated into national targets: to this end, the Commission proposes the following EU headline targets (*in italic*: Council conclusions of 24/25 March):

- 75 % of the population aged 20-64 should be employed = *also in Council conclusions*
- 3% of the EU's GDP should be invested in R&D = *also in Council conclusions*
- The "20/20/20" climate/energy targets should be met = *also in Council conclusions*
- The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree = *the European Council of June will define the numerical rates*
- 20 million less people should be at risk of poverty = *the European Council of June will decide on appropriate indicators.*

The Commission proposes that EU goals are translated into national targets and trajectories. These priorities are representative and not exhaustive.

d) Flagships

The European Commission is putting forward seven flagship initiatives to catalyse progress under each priority theme. Some initiatives were added in the Commission Work Programme 2010 (WP).

Under Smart Growth:

- “Innovation Union” / becomes “A European plan for research and innovation” in WP (11)
- “Youth on the move (12) + “Youth Employment” added in WP (13)
- “A digital agenda for Europe” (9)

Under Sustainable growth:

- “Resource efficient Europe” ()
- “An industrial policy for the globalisation era” (10)

Under Inclusive growth (appears as “High employment and social inclusion” in the Councils conclusions):

- “An agenda for new skills and jobs” (14)
- “European platform against poverty” (15)

II. Education and Training in the EU2020 Strategy

Education is considered as a crucial element to reach the goals set in the strategy which is “*about more jobs and better lives*”. Two benchmarks are directly linked to education and training “*The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree*” and priorities are set throughout the communication, directly or indirectly.

a) Under Smart Growth

Taking into account that “*A quarter of all pupils have poor reading competences, one in seven young people leave education and training too early. Around 50% reach medium qualifications level but this often fails to match labour market needs. Less than one person in three aged 25-34 has a university degree compared to 40% in the US and over 50% in Japan. According to the Shanghai index, only two European universities are in the world's top 20*”.

The European Commission plans to launch the following initiatives related to E&T:

➤ **Flagship Initiative: "Innovation Union" - abstracts**

At EU level, the Commission will promote knowledge partnerships and strengthen links between education, business, research and innovation, including through the EIT, and to promote entrepreneurship by supporting Young Innovative Companies.

At national level, Member States will need to reinforce cooperation between universities, research and business, ensure a sufficient supply of science, maths and engineering graduates and to focus school curricula on creativity, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

➤ **Flagship initiative: "Youth on the move" - complete abstract**

The aim is to enhance the performance and international attractiveness of Europe's higher education institutions and raise the overall quality of all levels of education and training in the EU, combining both excellence and equity, by promoting student mobility and trainees' mobility, and improve the employment situation of young people. Within the EC work programme 2010, a communication on “**youth employment**” (strategic initiative 13) will complement it.

At EU level, the Commission will work:

- To integrate and enhance the EU's mobility, university and researchers' programmes (such as Erasmus, Erasmus Mundus, Tempus and Marie Curie) and link them up with national programmes and resources;
- To step up the modernisation agenda of higher education (curricula, governance and financing) including by benchmarking university performance and educational outcomes in a global context;

- To explore ways of promoting entrepreneurship through mobility programmes for young professionals;
- To promote the recognition of non-formal and informal learning;
- To launch a Youth employment framework outlining policies aimed at reducing youth unemployment rates: this should promote, with Member States and social partners, young people's entry into the labour market through apprenticeships, stages or other work experience, including a scheme ("Your first EURES job") aimed at increasing job opportunities for young people by favouring mobility across the EU.

At national level, Member States will need:

- To ensure efficient investment in education and training systems at all levels (pre-school to tertiary);
- To improve educational outcomes, addressing each segment (pre-school, primary, secondary, vocational and tertiary) within an integrated approach, encompassing key competences and aiming at reducing early school leaving;
- To enhance the openness and relevance of education systems by building national qualification frameworks and better gearing learning outcomes towards labour market needs.

➤ **Flagship Initiative: "A Digital Agenda for Europe" - abstracts**

At EU level, the Commission will work to promote internet access and take-up by all European citizens, especially through actions in support of digital literacy and accessibility.

b) Under Sustainable growth

There is nothing particular on education and training.

c) Under Inclusive growth

"Inclusive growth means empowering people through high levels of employment, investing in skills, fighting poverty and modernising labour markets, training and social protection systems so as to help people anticipate and manage change, and build a cohesive society. It is also essential that the benefits of economic growth spread to all parts of the Union, including its outermost regions, thus strengthening territorial cohesion. It is about ensuring access and opportunities for all throughout the lifecycle. Europe needs to make full use of its labour potential to face the challenges of an ageing population and rising global competition. Policies to promote gender equality will be needed to increase labour force participation thus adding to growth and social cohesion".

Europe must act:

- **Employment:** *Due to demographic change, our workforce is about to shrink (...)*
- **Skills:** *About 80 million people have low or basic skills, but lifelong learning benefits mostly the more educated. By 2020, 16 million more jobs will require high qualifications, while the demand for low skills will drop by 12 million jobs. Achieving longer working lives will also require the possibility to acquire and develop new skills throughout the lifetime.*
- **Fighting poverty:** *(...) Action under this priority will require modernising, strengthening our employment education and training policies and social protection systems by increasing labour participation and reducing structural unemployment, as well as raising corporate social responsibility among the business community. (...) Implementing flexicurity principles and enabling people to acquire new skills to adapt to new conditions and potential career shifts will be key. (...)*

➤ **Flagship Initiative: "An Agenda for new skills and jobs" – complete abstract**

The aim is to create conditions for modernising labour markets with a view to raising employment levels and ensuring the sustainability of our social models. This means empowering people through the acquisition of new skills to enable our current and future workforce to adapt to new conditions and potential career shifts, reduce unemployment and raise labour productivity.

At EU level, the Commission will work:

- To define and implement the second phase of the flexicurity agenda, together with European social partners, to identify ways to better manage economic transitions and to fight unemployment and raise activity rates;
- To adapt the legislative framework, in line with 'smart' regulation principles, to evolving work patterns (e.g. working time, posting of workers) and new risks for health and safety at work;
- To facilitate and promote intra-EU labour mobility and better match labour supply with demand with appropriate financial support from the structural funds, notably the European Social Fund (ESF), and to promote a forward-looking and comprehensive labour migration policy which would respond in a flexible way to the priorities and needs of labour markets;
- To strengthen the capacity of social partners and make full use of the problem-solving potential of social dialogue at all levels (EU, national/regional, sectoral, company), and to promote strengthened cooperation between labour market institutions including the public employment services of the Member States;
- To give a strong impetus to the strategic framework for cooperation in education and training involving all stakeholders. This should notably result in the implementation of life-long learning principles (in cooperation with Member States, social partners, experts) including through flexible learning pathways between different education and training sectors and levels and by reinforcing the attractiveness of vocational education and training. Social partners at European level should be consulted in view of developing an initiative of their own in this area;
- To ensure that the competences required to engage in further learning and the labour market are acquired and recognised throughout general, vocational, higher and adult education and to develop a common language and operational tool for education/training and work: a European Skills, Competences and Occupations framework (ESCO).

At national level, Member States will need:

- To implement their national pathways for flexicurity, as agreed by the European Council, to reduce labour market segmentation and facilitate transitions as well as facilitating the reconciliation of work and family life;
- To review and regularly monitor the efficiency of tax and benefit systems so to make work pay with a particular focus on the low skilled, whilst removing measures that discourage self-employment;
- To promote new forms of work-life balance and active ageing policies and to increase gender equality;
- Promote and monitor the effective implementation of social dialogue outcomes;
- To give a strong impetus to the implementation of the European Qualifications Framework, through the establishment of national qualification frameworks;
- To ensure that the competences required to engage in further learning and the labour market are acquired and recognised throughout general, vocational, higher and adult education, including non formal and informal learning;
- To develop partnerships between the worlds of education/training and work, in particular by involving social partners in the planning of education and training provision.

➤ **Flagship Initiative: "European Platform against Poverty" (MOC) - abstract**

The aim is to ensure economic, social and territorial cohesion, building on the current European year for combating poverty and social exclusion so as to raise awareness and recognise the fundamental rights of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion, enabling them to live in dignity and take an active part in society.

At EU level, the Commission will work:

- To transform the open method of coordination on social exclusion and social protection into a platform for cooperation, peer-review and exchange of good practice, and into an instrument to foster commitment by public and private players to reduce social exclusion, and take concrete action, including through targeted support from the structural funds, notably the ESF;

- To design and implement programmes to promote social innovation for the most vulnerable, in particular by providing innovative education, training, and employment opportunities for deprived communities, to fight discrimination (e.g. disabled), and to develop a new agenda for migrants' integration to enable them to take full advantage of their potential.

d) On pursuing smart budgetary consolidation for long-term growth

“To support the EU's economic growth potential and the sustainability of our social models, the consolidation of public finances in the context of the Stability and Growth Pact involves setting priorities and making hard choices: coordination at EU can help Member States in this task and help address spill-over effects. In addition, the composition and quality of government expenditure matters: budgetary consolidation programmes should prioritise 'growth-enhancing items' such as education and skills, R&D and innovation and investment in networks, e.g. high-speed internet, energy and transport interconnections – i.e. the key thematic areas of the Europe 2020 strategy.”

e) In the Council Conclusions of 25/25 March 2010:

“Close cooperation will be maintained with the European Parliament and other EU institutions. National parliaments, social partners, regions and other stakeholders will be involved, so as to increase ownership of the strategy” page 6.

III. European Commission Work Programme 2010 “Time to act”

The European Commission adopted its work programme for 2010 [“Time to Act”](#) on 31 March 2010. It sets four main strands for action:

- Tackling the crisis and sustaining Europe’s social market economy.
- Building a citizens’ agenda which puts people at the heart of European action.
- Developing an ambitious and coherent external agenda with global outreach.
- Modernising EU instruments and ways of working.

The focus of this work programme is on delivering strategic initiatives in 2010.

a) Policy agenda of the European Commission in 2010

The work programme lists the policy agenda of the European Commission including (not exhaustive):

- **The flagships initiatives as set in the EU 2020 Communication**
- **Citizens’ agenda: putting people at the heart of European action - The citizen’s rights initiative (abstract)**

A key element of this policy agenda is the Stockholm Programme for "an open and secure Europe serving and protecting the citizen" adopted by the European Council at its December 2009 meeting. The Commission will now present (strategic initiative 20) **a comprehensive Action Plan for its implementation** (2010-2014) with a view to ensuring that the benefits of the area of freedom, security and justice become more tangible to the citizens.

The new Commission has already taken important initiatives under the Treaty of Lisbon: by proposing to put in place a **“citizens’ initiative”** enabling people to call for action by the EU institutions and by paving the way for the EU to join the European Convention of Human Rights, thereby strengthening the enforcement of fundamental rights across Europe.

Moreover, a **Communication on EU fundamental rights policy** will be presented during 2010. A [public consultation](#) “EU Citizens' Rights – The way forward” is open until 14th June.

➤ **Communicating Europe**

This is about making effective use of existing policy instruments and paving the way for their modernisation. *“Communicating Europe in a transparent and accessible manner is a prerequisite for citizens' participation in the democratic life of the Union and for Europeans to be fully aware of the opportunities provided by EU*

policies. This is a shared responsibility of all actors at different levels, with the Commission willingly taking up its part. In addition to general information and communication activities, the Commission will put particular emphasis on three joint communication priorities: driving the economic recovery and mobilising new sources of growth; climate action and energy; making the Lisbon Treaty work for citizens."

➤ **Adapting the EU financial framework to serve policy priorities – “Budget review”**

The budget of the EU must serve to address the main challenges facing Europe and provide real value added in promoting the Union's key policy objectives. As part of its broader political vision, the Commission will put forward a **Budget Review** this year (strategic initiative 32) to look at how changes in the balance of the budget, its priorities and its procedures can secure the best return for European taxpayers and shape the process leading up to the next Multiannual Financial Framework.

Within the overall context of the preparation for the next multi-annual financial framework, the Commission will be holding **in depth consultations with stakeholders during 2010** on the future direction of key EU spending policies, such as the common agricultural policy, cohesion policy and research policy.

b) Strategic initiatives scheduled for adoption in 2010 (9 months: April – December).

➤ **Advancing the "Europe 2020" flagship initiatives**

12. “Youth on the Move” initiative (3rd quarter)	Non-legislative	The Communication will set out a strategy to integrate EU and national mobility, university and researchers programmes, to modernise higher education, to promote entrepreneurship through mobility of young professionals, and to promote the recognition of informal learning. It will announce further initiatives, covering both policy and programme related elements, which will be brought forward in coming years. This framework will include a European entrepreneur exchange programme - "ERASMUS for young entrepreneurs".
13. Communication on Youth Employment (4th quarter)	Non-legislative	The Communication will look at ways of strengthening policy to overcome the impact of the crisis on young people. It will explore how to ease transitions from education and training work. The document will also address how to ensure a better link between policy priorities and EU funds, especially the European Social Fund. The Communication will announce a set of new initiatives including the promotion of youth geographical mobility (EURES), a mobilisation of the business sector to recruit youth, and announce increased direct support to innovative projects through PROGRESS, the Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes.
14. Agenda for New skills and jobs (3rd quarter)	Non-legislative	The purpose is to identify ways to better manage economic transitions and raise activity rates, to facilitate intra-EU labour mobility and better match skills and labour supply with demand with appropriate financial support from the structural funds, to strengthen the capacity of social partners, to strengthen cooperation in education and training, aimed at raising skill levels, and ensuring that competences are acquired and recognised throughout general, vocational, higher and adult education: a European Skills, Competences and Occupations framework (ESCO).
15. Communication on the platform against poverty (4th quarter)	Non-legislative	The aim is to put forward proposals for a platform against poverty and announce changes to the Social OMC to help deliver this. The Communication will look at progress in the social domain and push forward an agenda to generate greater political commitment and visibility, and a stronger

		positive interaction with other policies. Particular focus will be on active inclusion and child poverty.
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c) Indicative list of possible strategic and priority initiatives under consideration

Under each policy area, the initiatives listed in **bold** are potential strategic initiatives. The initiatives listed cover 2010 and beyond.

➤ **For Education, Culture, Youth, the following initiatives could be of interest to EUCIS-LLL:**

Council Recommendation on Early School Leaving	Legislative	Early school leaving is one of the key targets under Europe 2020 strategy. The Recommendation would provide Member States with a “policy toolbox” which could be used to tackle the issue and accelerate the rate of improvement in the EU.
Proposal for an integrated Youth on the Move programme 2014 – 2020 (Phase II)	Legislative	In line with the initiative Youth on the Move, the programme will draw together the existing programmes 'Lifelong Learning' and 'Youth in Action' as well as external actions to create and integrate programme support for the objectives of Youth on the Move.
Communication on a new impetus for European Vocational Education and Training cooperation: 2010 -20	Non-legislative	This Communication will propose a set of orientations to support the modernisation of VET policies. It is an input to the Bruges Ministerial meeting planned for late 2010.
Proposal for a Recommendation of the Council on Promoting Learning Mobility of Young People	Legislative	Part of the Youth on the Move initiative, the Recommendation will propose actions by the Member States to increase opportunities for learning mobility and to tackle barriers to mobility.
Communication on the initiative for new European competences	Non-legislative	The Communication seeks to develop the key competences approach in the fields of vocational training, adult learning and higher education, building on the 2006 Key Competences Recommendation and will include a proposal for a European Skills Passport.
Commission Communication: Proposal for benchmarks on mobility and on employability	Non-legislative	The Commission has been requested to make proposals for new European benchmarks in the fields of mobility and employability relating to how well different parts and levels of education and training prepare people for the labour market.
Commission Communication on Early Childhood Education	Non-legislative	The Communication will marshal the substantial evidence that currently exists (e.g. via OECD, UNICEF, etc) and set out an agenda for work under the Open Method of Coordination.
Commission Proposal for a Council Recommendation on informal and nonformal learning	Legislative	Part of the Youth on the Move initiative. It will map out a policy toolbox for promoting and securing better recognition of informal and non-formal learning.
Communication on the modernisation of higher education	Non-legislative	The purpose is to revise and propose new objectives for the future of this policy agenda. This may include possible proposals for a transparency and ranking system for higher education institutions.

Commission Communication: Proposal for a new benchmark on language skills	Non-legislative	The Commission will present a proposal for a new European benchmark in the field of language skills. It is to be seen in the context of the existing set of indicators and benchmarks for education and training and seeks to increase the European transparency on language learning in view of boosting language skills, flexibility and mobility of the EU workforce.
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➤ **On Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion:**

Communication on an EU disability strategy 2010-2020	Non-legislative	Elimination of discrimination on the grounds of disability, securing full enjoyment of fundamental rights and fundamental freedoms of persons with disabilities.
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➤ **On Justice, Fundamental Rights and Citizenship:**

Communication on the Social and Economic Integration of the Roma in Europe	Non-legislative	The aim is to indicate how, on the basis of the progress achieved, the EU can develop further its contribution to the full social and economic integration of Roma. It outlines a concept to embed specific and effective approaches into relevant mainstream policies.
Communication on a Gender Equality Strategy (2010-2015)	Non-legislative	Following on the Gender Equality Roadmap (2006-2010), the new Strategy will convert the recently adopted Women's Charter into concrete actions.
Communication on the Fundamental Rights policy	Non-legislative	This Communication will set out the EU system of protection of fundamental rights and present the Commission's approach to ensure the effectiveness of the Charter for Fundamental Rights across EU policies.
Communication on the fight against racism, and xenophobia	Non-legislative	The Communication will present a common approach to better mobilise and maximize the existing legal and financial instruments in order to tackle racism, xenophobia and discrimination.

➤ **On Services of General Interest:**

Communication on a quality framework for services of general interest	Non-legislative	This initiative will build on the Protocol annexed to the Lisbon Treaty Revision of 2005
Services of General Interest Package	Non-Legislative	The framework text expires in November 2011. The objective of the revision will be to adjust the rules in the light of the evaluation report to be completed in 2010. Such an initiative is to be seen in the context of establishing a quality framework for public and social services as set out in the political guidelines of the President
Evaluation report on the 2005 Services of General Interest Package	Non-legislative	This report should be prepared on the basis of a public consultation to be launched in the coming weeks. Initiatives that relate to services of general economic interest are to be seen in the context of establishing a quality framework for public and social services.

IV. Education and Training Work Programme 2020 (ET2020)

In the [Council conclusions](#) of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), most of the Commission's proposals were adopted.

In the period up to 2020, the primary goal of European cooperation should be to support the further development of education and training systems in the Member States which are aimed at ensuring:

- **the personal, social and professional fulfilment of all citizens;**
- **sustainable economic prosperity and employability, whilst promoting democratic values, social cohesion, active citizenship, and intercultural dialogue.**

Such aims should be viewed in a worldwide perspective (...)

"Lifelong learning should be regarded as a fundamental principle underpinning the entire framework, which is designed to cover learning in all contexts — whether formal, non-formal or informal — and at all levels: from early childhood education and schools through to higher education, vocational education and training and adult learning".

Specifically, the framework should address the following **four strategic objectives**:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

The periodic monitoring of progress towards a set objective provides an essential contribution towards evidence-based policy making. The strategic objectives outlined above should accordingly be accompanied during the period 2010- 2020 by indicators and by reference levels for European average performance ('European benchmarks').

a) Strategic objectives

➤ Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

The challenges posed by demographic change and the regular need to update and develop skills in line with changing economic and social circumstances call for a **lifelong approach to learning** and for education and training **systems which are more responsive to change and more open to the wider world**. While new initiatives in the field of lifelong learning may be developed to reflect future challenges, further progress with ongoing initiatives is still required, **especially in implementing coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies**. In particular, work is needed to ensure the development of **national qualifications frameworks** based on relevant learning outcomes and their link to the European Qualifications Framework, the establishment of **more flexible learning pathways** — including better transitions between the various education and training sectors, **greater openness towards non-formal and informal learning**, and increased transparency and recognition of learning outcomes. Further efforts are also required to promote **adult learning**, to increase the **quality of guidance systems**, and to make **learning more attractive in general** - including through the development of new forms of learning and the use of new teaching and learning technologies.

As an essential element of lifelong learning and an important means of enhancing people's employability and adaptability, **mobility for learners, teachers and teacher trainers** should be gradually expanded with a view to making periods of learning abroad — both within Europe and the wider world — the rule rather than the exception. In so doing, the principles laid down in the European Quality Charter for Mobility should be applied. To achieve this will require renewed efforts on the part of all concerned, for instance with regard to securing adequate funding.

➤ Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training

High quality education and training systems which are both efficient and equitable are crucial for Europe's success and for enhancing employability. The major challenge is to ensure the acquisition of **key competences**

by everyone, while developing the **excellence and attractiveness at all levels** of education and training that will allow Europe to retain a strong global role. To achieve this on a sustainable basis, greater attention needs to be paid to **raising the level of basic skills** such as literacy and numeracy, making mathematics, science and technology more attractive and to strengthening linguistic competences. At the same time, there is a need to ensure **high quality teaching**, to provide adequate initial teacher education, continuous professional development for teachers and trainers, and to make teaching an attractive career-choice. It is also important to improve the **governance and leadership** of education and training institutions, and to develop effective **quality assurance systems**. High quality will only be achieved through the efficient and sustainable use of resources — both public and private, as appropriate - and through the promotion of evidence-based policy and practice in education and training.

➤ **Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship**

Education and training policy should enable all citizens, irrespective of their personal, social or economic circumstances, to acquire, update and develop over a lifetime both **job-specific skills** and the **key competences** needed for their employability and to foster further learning, active citizenship and intercultural dialogue. **Educational disadvantage should be addressed by providing high quality early childhood education and targeted support, and by promoting inclusive education.** Education and training systems should aim to ensure that all learners — including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, those with special needs and migrants — complete their education, including, where appropriate, through second-chance education and the provision of more personalised learning. Education should promote intercultural competences, democratic values and respect for fundamental rights and the environment, as well as combat all forms of discrimination, equipping all young people to interact positively with their peers from diverse backgrounds.

➤ **Strategic objective 4: Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training**

As well as engendering personal fulfillment, **creativity** constitutes a prime source of innovation, which in turn is acknowledged as one of the key drivers of sustainable economic development. Creativity and innovation are crucial to enterprise development and to Europe's ability to compete internationally. A first challenge is to promote the acquisition by all citizens of **transversal key competences** such as digital competence, learning to learn, a sense of initiative and entrepreneurship, and cultural awareness. A second challenge is to ensure a **fully functioning knowledge triangle of education-research-innovation. Partnership between the world of enterprise and different levels and sectors of education, training and research** can help to ensure a better focus on the skills and competences required in the labour market and on fostering innovation and entrepreneurship in all forms of learning. **Broader learning communities**, involving representatives of civil society and other stakeholders, should be promoted with a view to creating a climate conducive to creativity and better reconciling professional and social needs, as well as individual well-being.

b) Reference levels of European average performance - 'European benchmarks'

As a means of monitoring progress and identifying challenges, as well as contributing to evidence-based policy making, a series of reference levels of European average performance ('European benchmarks') should support the strategic objectives outlined in the above conclusions for the period 2010-2020.

The Member States agreed to the following five benchmarks:

- **Adult participation in lifelong learning:** by 2020, an average of at least 15 % of adults should participate in lifelong learning
- **Low achievers in basic skills:** by 2020, the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15 %.
- **Tertiary level attainment:** by 2020, the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40 %.*
- **Early leavers from education and training:** by 2020, the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10 %*.
- **Early childhood education:** by 2020, at least 95 % of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education.

* These two benchmarks are mentioned as one of the targets of the EU2020

In addition, the Council invites the Commission to work further in the following areas:

➤ **Mobility**

The Commission is invited to submit to the Council a proposal for a benchmark in this area by the end 2010, focusing initially on physical mobility between countries in the field of higher education, taking both quantitative and qualitative aspects into account and reflecting the efforts made and the objectives agreed within the Bologna process, as highlighted most recently at the Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve conference. At the same time, the Commission is invited to study the possibility of extending such a benchmark to include vocational education and training and teacher mobility.

➤ **Employability**

Given the importance of enhancing employability through education and training in order to meet current and future labour market challenges, the Commission is invited to submit to the Council a proposal for a possible European benchmark in this area by the end of 2010.

➤ **Language learning**

In view of the importance of learning two foreign languages from an early age, as highlighted in the March 2002 Barcelona European Council conclusions, the Commission is invited to submit to the Council — by the end of 2012 - a proposal for a possible benchmark in this area, based on the ongoing work on language competences.

c) Priority areas for European Cooperation in E&T in 2009-2011

With a view to achieving the four strategic objectives under the 'ET 2020' framework, the identification of priority areas for a specific work cycle should improve the efficiency of European cooperation in education and training, as well as reflect the individual needs of Member States, especially as new circumstances and challenges arise.

➤ **Strategic objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality**

Pursue work on:

— *Lifelong learning strategies*: Complete the process of implementation of national lifelong learning strategies, paying particular attention to the validation of non-formal and informal learning and guidance.

— *European Qualifications Framework*: In accordance with the April 2008 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, relate all national qualifications systems to the EQF by 2010, and support the use of an approach based on learning outcomes for standards and qualifications, assessment and validation procedures, credit transfer, curricula and quality assurance.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Expanding learning mobility*: Work together to gradually eliminate barriers and to expand opportunities for learning mobility within Europe and worldwide, both for higher and other levels of education, including new objectives and financing instruments, and whilst taking into consideration the particular needs of disadvantaged persons.

➤ **Strategic objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training**

Pursue work on:

— *Language learning*: To enable citizens to communicate in two languages in addition to their mother tongue, promote language teaching, where relevant, in VET and for adult learners, and provide migrants with opportunities to learn the language of the host country.

— *Professional development of teachers and trainers*: Focus on the quality of initial education and early career support for new teachers and on raising the quality of continuing professional development opportunities for teachers, trainers and other educational staff (e.g. those involved in leadership or guidance activities).

— *Governance and funding*: Promote the modernisation agenda for higher education (including curricula) and the quality assurance framework for VET, and develop the quality of provision, including staffing, in the adult learning sector. Promote evidence-based policy and practice, placing particular emphasis on establishing the case for sustainability of public and, where appropriate, private investment.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Basic skills in reading, mathematics and science*: Investigate and disseminate existing good practice and research findings on reading performance among school pupils and draw conclusions on ways of improving literacy levels across the EU. Intensify existing cooperation to improve the take-up of maths and science at higher levels of education and training, and to strengthen science teaching. Concrete action is needed to improve the level of basic skills, including those of adults.

— *'New Skills for New Jobs'*: Ensure that the assessment of future skill requirements and the matching of labour market needs are adequately taken on board in education and training planning processes.

➤ **Strategic objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship**

Pursue work on:

— *Early leavers from education and training*: Strengthen preventive approaches, build closer cooperation between general and vocational education sectors and remove barriers for drop-outs to return to education and training.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Pre-primary education*: Promote generalised equitable access and reinforce the quality of provision and teacher support.

— *Migrants*: Develop mutual learning on best practices for the education of learners from migrant backgrounds.

— *Learners with special needs*: Promote inclusive education and personalised learning through timely support, the early identification of special needs and well-coordinated services. Integrate services within mainstream schooling and ensure pathways to further education and training.

➤ **Strategic objective 4: Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training**

Pursue work on:

— *Transversal key competences*: In accordance with the December 2006 Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council, take greater account of transversal key competences in curricula, assessment and qualifications.

Develop cooperation on:

— *Innovation-friendly institutions*: Promote creativity and innovation by developing specific teaching and learning methods (including the use of new ICT tools and teacher training). — *Partnership*: Develop partnerships between education and training providers and businesses, research institutions, cultural actors and creative industries, and promote a well-functioning knowledge triangle.