

2010

# Involving Education Stakeholders in Trans-Regional Cooperation

## The Challenge of Implementing Lifelong Learning Strategies

Joint Guidelines for Education Stakeholders in Europe



**OBESSU**



THE EUROPEAN  
FEDERATION OF  
EDUCATION  
EMPLOYERS



Education and Culture DG  
Lifelong Learning Programme

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## **ETUCE**

*"Teachers and school staff in Europe, represented by the European Teacher Union Committee for Education, strongly supports the development and implementation of coherent national lifelong learning strategies in the EU. Continuous learning from early childhood and throughout life not only serves the purpose of answering labour market needs or fulfilling individual learning needs. Most importantly it helps to promote social cohesion in our knowledge society and is therefore a smart investment into Europe's future. Advocating the involvement of all actors in education at EU, national and regional/local level in lifelong learning strategies, the ETUCE invited two other major stakeholders representing students and employers to cooperate in this project. The exchange of ideas and best practices has proved an excellent experience. Wishing to provide a reference guide for the ongoing actions for lifelong learning in the EU, this brochure summarises the work achieved and includes the joint guidelines developed by the three stakeholders."*



## EFEE

*"EFEE, representing education employers at national, regional and local levels and in all phases of education, is pleased to have taken part in this project. Not only has the process of finding consensus among representatives of three very different stakeholder groups been stimulating, the project results (the joint guidelines and the brochure) are very well timed. The labour market increasingly demands higher level skills and job-related competences are changing very rapidly: this is why it is so necessary to make a reality of the rhetoric of lifelong learning. Equally, the foundations of lifelong learning are laid in school and pre-school education, the focus of this project. We hope that our collective efforts will help to spread the message about the critical role of schools in engendering the respect for learning that is at the heart of the key competence of "learning to learn"."*



## OBESSU

*"As OBESSU, we are delighted to have taken part in the Co-regional Lifelong Learning project along with ETUCE and EFEE. Although we have a strong working relationship with ETUCE, the co-regional Lifelong Learning project was the first time that we have worked directly in partnership. The two workshops in Malta and Cyprus were well attended by School Student representatives from our Member Organisations and showed that school students are equal experts when it comes to education. These co-regional Lifelong Learning joint guidelines represent what can be achieved when stakeholders in education work together on common issues, and we hope that it is only the first of many projects."*

## 1. Project scope, Purpose and Structure

For more than a decade education stakeholders in Europe have paid considerable attention to Lifelong Learning (LLL) in parallel with new initiatives from the European Commission and the Member States with the aim to improve lifelong learning in the European education systems and to develop explicit lifelong learning strategies. However, the *2008 Joint Council/Commission Report on the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme*<sup>1</sup> concluded that the actual implementation of LLL remains a challenge. As a result, three major stakeholders in Education, the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE) representing the European teachers, the Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions (OBESSU) and the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE), initiated a project in 2009 with the aim to create an overall coherent framework for the implementation of the diverse National Lifelong Learning Strategies (NLLLS) of the Member States. These three major stakeholders represent people with different backgrounds as regards age range and interests. A continuous trans-regional cooperation to work on LLL was suggested to assist a more efficient and sustainable implementation of lifelong learning strategies. Moreover the project aimed to ensure that not only national governments, but also other education stakeholders, such as teachers, students and employers, fully participate in developing the EU and national priorities towards lifelong learning. The CoRegLLL project aimed at promoting ownership of these priorities amongst all stakeholders involved to make them a commitment shared by all.

### Background

With the adoption of the Lisbon Agenda<sup>2</sup> and the Education and Training 2020 programme<sup>3</sup>, lifelong learning has been put on the EU agenda as an essential component. The European Union and its citizens have to meet the new challenges of a rapidly changing and highly interconnected world. A major priority of the EU is therefore to reinforce the contribution of education and training to the goals set out in the EU 2020 strategy, hereunder the 2020 Benchmarks, especially ensuring access to lifelong learning and re-skilling and up-skilling in accordance with the “New skills for new jobs” policy.

Since 2006 lifelong learning has been supported by the European Reference Framework (ERF) on key competences. This framework is designed to help the Member States to prepare all their young people for life in a changing world, and to ensure that all adults are offered the means to up-date their skills and to profit from the social and economic benefits of the knowledge society. The ERF describes the eight key competences as crucial to learn in initial education and training. However, it is recognised that further work is needed for the translation of key competences into practice as well as further development of existing and new key competences.

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<sup>1</sup> Joint Council/Commission Report on the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme, Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation”(2008), [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1532\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc1532_en.htm).

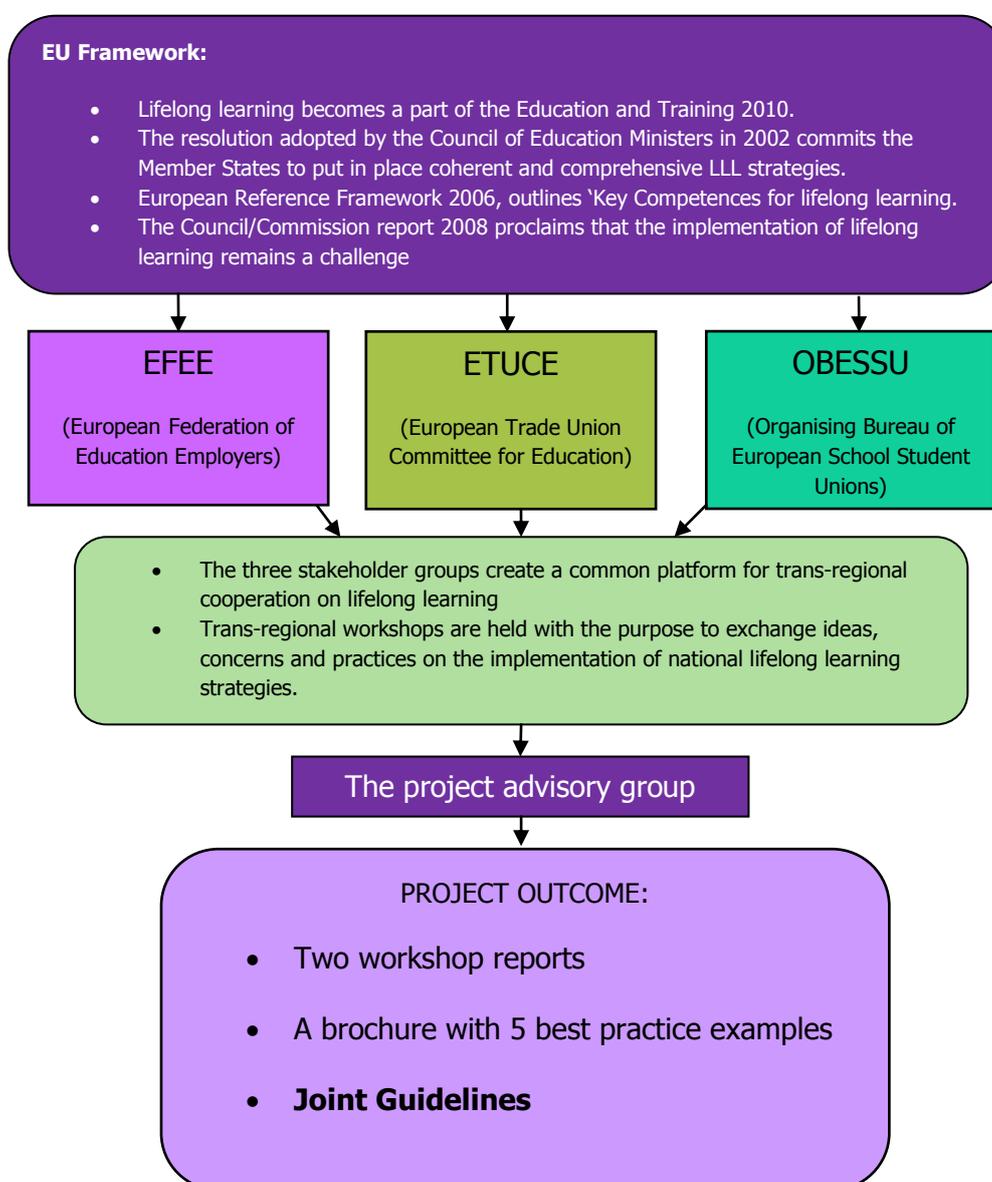
<sup>2</sup> Lisbon European Council Presidency Conclusions, 23-24 March 2000, [http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1\\_en.htm](http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm).

<sup>3</sup> Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020), [http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528\(01\):EN:NOT](http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:52009XG0528(01):EN:NOT).

### Aim:

Regarding the overall EU policy the primary aim of the three stakeholders involved with this particular project has been to create a set of practical joint guidelines. These could be the basis for further trans-regional cooperation in the continuous work of implementing national lifelong learning strategies and the Key Competences for Lifelong Learning as an overall education policy of the EU. The three project partners present the joint guidelines as the outcome of the EU-funded project and aim to identify critical factors for a successful implementation of lifelong-learning strategies, including perspectives on specific initiatives, ideas and recommendations for future development. The joint guidelines are based on the contribution of ETUCE, EFEE and OBESSU members participating in the project workshops and the project advisory group.

### Structure of the project:



## **2. Methodology**

The joint guidelines are the result of regional workshops (Malta, 14 June 2010 and Cyprus, 4 October 2010), where members from the ETUCE, the OBESSU and the EFEE discussed the three main project objectives in depth. At the workshops experts within the field of LLL and practitioners presented their experiences and the challenges they face as regards the implementation of LLL strategies. The presentations also included reports from different peer-learning studies on LLL and key competences. The purpose of the workshops was to share ideas and best practices on the topic; most essentially the aim was to establish a basis for future cooperation of stakeholders at trans-regional level. The regional workshop engaged the participants from the ETUCE, the OBESSU and the EFEE to discuss in detail the three objectives mentioned above to establish a joint set of guidelines on the comprehensive and coherent implementation of national LLL strategies. The project implementation and the development of the joint guidelines were guided by an expert panel, the project advisory group, comprising three members of each project partner organisation.

The joint guidelines are published in this project brochure together with five best practice examples on the implementation of national LLL strategies. This brochure aims to facilitate the dissemination of the project outcome to all stakeholders within education at European, national and local level and to enhance the use of the joint guidelines and the implementation of national LLL strategies in Europe.

The joint guidelines address all stakeholders within education who wish to be involved in enhancing the implementation of national lifelong learning strategies within an overall coherent framework of the EU. To achieve this appropriate implementation means need to be found in accordance with the different national education systems.

***The joint guidelines are presented in three sections representing the three objectives of this joint project:***

- 1. The development of trans-regional cooperation and exchange of experiences between teacher unions, school student organisations, employers in education and national governments on the implementation of coherent and comprehensive national LLL strategies.**
- 2. The generation of common understanding of the national LLL strategies among the above mentioned stakeholders and the creation of better coherence and involvement in the implementation of these strategies at national level.**
- 3. The assessment of how general school education contributes to the acquisition of key competences for lifelong learning (as agreed in the European Reference Framework) and the identification of how to improve school education contribution to enhance people's capacity for lifelong learning (acquisition of key competences, flexible learning pathways and lifelong guidance).**

## 3. Joint Guidelines

### 3.1 Objective 1

***Improving the contribution of school education to the achievement of key competences for lifelong learning as defined in the European Reference Framework***

Member States of the EU have agreed on using the *Recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council on 'Key Competences' for Lifelong Learning (2006)*<sup>4</sup> as a framework for their individual systems of education. The eight key competences have the objective to improve the knowledge, skills and attitudes of young and adult learners and to foster personal fulfilment, social inclusion, active citizenship and employment. They are thus defined as multifunctional and transferable prerequisites for a successful life in a knowledge society.

According to the ETUCE, the OBESSU and the EFEE there are some major challenges connected with the improvement of school education's contribution to the achievement of the key competences for lifelong learning. The following outlines are recommendations, based on existing good practice, on how to address these challenges.

1. Continuous work of both practitioners and learners on the definition of lifelong learning and on the adjustment of key competences to the needs in a changing world is important so that these competences do not remain solely abstract definitions but actually become **a tool to upgrade the lifelong learning strategies**;
2. In a rapidly changing world knowledge, skills and attitudes defined as key competences today may not remain the key competences of tomorrow. Therefore, it is **necessary to support a continuous dialogue** on the identification and development of key competences among all education stakeholders;
3. The focus of learning key competences needs to be not only for the purpose of employability in the labour market. Education also has to ensure that all citizens become **full and active members of society** and achieve personal fulfilment in order to promote social cohesion.
4. Key competences require a combination of summative and formative assessment reflected in the school curricula<sup>5</sup> that goes **beyond the traditional assessment methods**.
5. To achieve real change and improvement it is important not to let assessment of key competences limit the potential within teaching and learning. **Learning must not be**

<sup>4</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF>.

<sup>5</sup> E.g. as presented in the Draft Background Paper for the Belgian Presidency meeting for Directors-General for School Education Assessment of Key Competences (8 July 2010).

**restrained for the sake of ranking students and schools.** To achieve real change and improvement education therefore needs to add to subject knowledge to include more innovative measures that add value and motivate to learn.

6. Learning to learn is one of the most essential competences to facilitate and secure a **lifelong positive attitude towards learning**. This includes learning what lifelong learning is about and why it is important to develop these competences. This will help to ensure students develop the skills they need to become independent learners.
7. Learning key competences must be **accessible to all**. According to the European Commission, inclusive high quality education starting from early childhood education is especially beneficial “Initial education and training should support the development of the[se] key competences to a level that equips all young people – including the disadvantaged – for further learning and working life”.<sup>6</sup>
8. High quality education requires high quality teacher education. Hence systematic and structured teacher training and continuous professional development at all education levels is needed to equip teachers with the necessary skills and competences to be able to treat every student on a personalised basis. Curricula and teacher training therefore need to make sure that **the individual learner is addressed at all levels of the education system**. However, teachers alone cannot face the challenge. To achieve this inclusive discourse teachers have to be supported inside schools and by the whole society.
9. **Education is an investment for the future**. Therefore in times of economic downturn, coherent and comprehensive implementation programmes to develop and support the contribution of school education to the achievement of key competences for lifelong learning are relevant. To accomplish this and to ensure further positive development of national lifelong learning strategies, appropriate resources and funding need to be allocated to the education sector<sup>7</sup>.

### 3.2 Objective 2

***Including the needs and demands of learners and education practitioners in the National Lifelong Learning Strategies***

European citizens of today live in an increasingly complex social and political world. Lifelong learning is a continuous process and should continually facilitate new learning for young and adult learners. Giving people the appropriate tools allows them not only to adapt to the ever

<sup>6</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *Key competences for a changing world*, COM(2009)640 final.

<sup>7</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: *Youth on the Move. An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union*. Published: 15 September 2010.

changing labour market but also to find their own personal way in society, and thereby ensure both personal fulfilment and greater social cohesion.

1. Since high quality education at all levels is one of the central elements of a strong knowledge based economy, the EU and those concerned with the provision of education need to take **changing circumstances** into account. Up-to-date and relevant competences need to be developed at all stages of education.
2. **Flexible pathways**, i.e. enabling effective transitions between the different levels of education, are most relevant for future education systems. This concerns two transition directions: going from vocational training to higher education and/or from the educational system to the labour market and back again.
3. To ensure that education meets each individual's needs, **effective guidance and counselling are required** to allow each citizen to have the best overview of his/her studies, career pathways and transition possibilities to and within the education system.
4. The recognition and validation of **informal and non-formal education** enables people to access wider education opportunities. This can be particularly beneficial to early school leavers and to those who are disadvantaged or to hard-to-reach groups.
5. To ensure high quality education and thus the pursuit of lifelong learning it is important to consider the education practitioners' needs and experience. Existing curricula, teaching material and teaching methods may need to be revised and adapted to the **new requirements in lifelong learning**.
6. A positive learning environment is important to encourage learners at all ages to continue to learn throughout their lives. Therefore education practitioners - teachers and school leaders in equal measure – need to be systematically **supported and continuously trained and equipped with appropriate and updated material** to provide them with the necessary skills to teach LLL key competences. As the European Commission remarks in its Communication on Youth on the Move, "the quality of teaching is the single most important within-school factor explaining students' performance".<sup>8</sup>
7. Offering learners opportunities to enhance their practical experience and take initiatives through activities linked to the world of work, volunteering, sport and culture allows them to better understand **the link between formal education and wider society**. Most importantly, these occasions help learners to acquire social and civic competences that are relevant in terms of their personal development and active citizenship. Therefore more such opportunities need to be provided to learners and foreseen in curricula and assessment methods.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

8. Digital competence is one of the competences young people increasingly obtain informally. As the use of **information and communication technology** (ICT) increasingly influences people's lives, aspects like critical thinking in the use of new media, risk awareness and ethical and legal considerations need to be introduced into teaching and learning<sup>9</sup> if full use of the potential of new technologies for enhancing innovation and creativity is to be ensured.

### 3.3 Objective 3

***Successfully involving all stakeholders in the implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategies***

The Draft 2010 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme on Key Competences for a Changing World<sup>10</sup> states that there is still much to be done to support teachers' competence development, to update assessment methods and to introduce new ways of organising learning.<sup>11</sup> The Communication points to the major challenge of ensuring that all learners benefit from innovative methodologies, including the disadvantaged and those in VET and adult learning. Working towards the successful implementation of national lifelong learning strategies requires the involvement of all stakeholders concerned in the process. The support and feeling of ownership of all those actors concerned will facilitate and promote the accomplishment of this target. This equally implies mutual respect amongst the various stakeholder groups involved.

1. To implement national lifelong learning strategies **all those involved in education** (policy makers at European, national and local level, schools and education institutions, employers, teachers, learners and parents) need to understand the concept of lifelong learning, the aim of the national LLL strategy and the national LLL strategy itself. Therefore **access to information on national LLL strategies** needs to be enhanced.
2. **More and better cooperation** amongst all education stakeholders at national and European level will be beneficial for the development of effective coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategies. At national level consultation processes that involve all those engaged in education and lifelong learning should be launched to develop and decide jointly on **concrete and comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies** that are supported by all actors in this field. The national social dialogue systems and collective bargaining process could be a possible forum for discussion at national level. At European level, engaging representatives from all education stakeholders in Working Groups dealing with this policy initiative would provide further support and facilitate the realisation of the target aimed for.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2009:0640:FIN:EN:PDF>.

<sup>11</sup> Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions: *Youth on the Move. An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union*. Published: 15 September 2010.

3. Compulsory education should propagate active participation of learners through the **democratic involvement** of young people in policy and strategic decision-making as full and equal partners when teachers, parents and other stakeholders are involved. The aim is to ensure that all young people leave formal education having had hands-on experience of active citizenship and with both enthusiasm and the expectation to learn throughout their lives.
4. To appropriately address the **specific needs and challenges** of different learner groups, e.g. school students, early school leavers, people in VET, adult learners, different programmes targeting their specific needs have to be put in place.
5. To obtain the highest impact possible, the project partners underline the importance of **promoting the concept of lifelong learning in partnership programmes and networks** that include education policy makers at European, national and local level, education institutions, school leaders, teachers and learners.

### ***Actions and Follow-up:***

- 1. The ETUCE, EFEE and OBESSU and their member organisations will disseminate and promote the joint guidelines amongst the relevant European, national, regional and local stakeholders through hard copies of the document and/or the respective organisations' websites and newsletters. The joint guidelines will be useful for presentations in meetings at European, national, regional and local level.**
- 2. The project partners will review their joint guidelines within two years after their publication with the aim to evaluate their impact on teachers, education employers and learners.**
- 3. The project partners will take account of the joint guidelines in their individual structured work programme.**
- 4. To further support the implementation of the joint guidelines and to ensure the sustainability of the CoRegLLL project and its results, the project partners will examine the possibility of continuing the dialogue on lifelong learning among education stakeholders.**

## 4. Five Best Practice Examples

### 4.1 Inclusion of Teachers when developing LLL Implementation Strategies in Slovakia

In Slovakia the professional organisations of employers and employees, non-governmental organisations and other specialised institutions in education are considered as very important when implementing national lifelong learning strategies. Involving all stakeholders in the preparation and design of models and methods is crucial for the success of the implementation process, when the aim is to ensure a broad coherence in the education system from pre-primary education to high schools and universities.

Participation of employers, regional governments and parents in the development of specific education strategies guarantees a model which suits the local circumstances and needs. However, in Slovakia teacher expertise is particularly valued and included in the process of developing lifelong learning strategies. The teachers throughout the lifelong learning have a direct participation in the higher quality of their work in the school together with their higher personal expertise. This is also reflected in higher pay.

*In Slovakia teacher expertise is particularly valued and included in the process of developing lifelong learning strategies*

Teachers have a professional knowledge and competence to evaluate the specific situation and context concerning the possible learning outcome for their students. To prepare individuals for a life of consistent learning processes takes pedagogical expertise and psychological insight and can not only be facilitated through curricular development. This is important to acknowledge and the experience in Slovakia is that the direct involvement of teachers has had a positive impact on the development of coherent lifelong learning strategies. Furthermore, this recognition of teachers supports a greater belief in the profession and stimulates a more profound engagement in the work of teachers. As a consequence permanent enhancement of initial teacher education and opportunities for continuous professional development to facilitate innovation in teaching methods, positive class management and upgrading of content knowledge is important.

*The recognition of teachers, supports a greater belief in the profession and stimulates a more profound engagement in the work of teachers*

The inclusion of teachers when developing lifelong learning strategies is thus essential in Slovakia. Nevertheless, the need to have a broader and independent expert commission, which can ensure a balanced development of the content and form of education, should also be considered. It seems that there is a risk in Slovakia that school development becomes too much focused on language and IT improvement, and this could have a limiting impact on lessons in art, music and physical training, technical lessons etc. Hence, to ensure a balanced educational outcome which embraces all eight key competences and enables both personal fulfilment and responds to labour market needs, consistent cooperation amongst stakeholders and experts is necessary.

*(Example provided by Ingrid Haasova, EFEE)*

## 4.2 Establishing Lifelong Learning Pathways through Vocational Education and Training (VET) Programmes in Austria

Vocational education and training plays a prominent role in the Austrian educational system as the VET system offers many different programmes and progress routes for students. This means that the attractiveness of VET is remarkably high, with about 80% of all students in the upper secondary level entering a vocationally-oriented pathway after finishing compulsory education. During such an upper secondary VET programme, which last from three to five years, the students can achieve both a VET diploma and an access diploma to enter university. Actually, all VET paths that are longer than two years provide general access to higher education either directly by taking corresponding final exams or indirectly by taking additional exams.

### *The success of dual apprenticeship-school programmes*

Roughly 40% of the students in upper secondary school select a dual apprenticeship-school programme. This programme includes part time training in a company and part-time vocational school and imparts a number of professionally relevant skills via the combination of an

*A well developed apprenticeship system is developed to ensure the best possible outcome of a dual school-company programme*

apprenticeship system with a comprehensive school-based VET system, integrating learning in schools and workplace training. A well developed apprenticeship system is created to ensure the best possible outcome of this dual school–company process. The concrete contents of company-based training are regulated for every apprenticeship in a training regulation (*Ausbildungsordnung*), which includes the in-company curriculum – a curriculum for the company-based part of apprenticeship training. Also included in the training regulation are provisions concerning the apprenticeship-leave examination. Finally, apprentices sign a contract and earn a salary that increases each year reaching roughly 80% of a starting wage in the final year.

Socially disadvantaged or academically weak students can also choose to take part in integrative vocational education and training. They can either extend the normal education period or complete only parts of the training but still receive a professional diploma. This implies that many more disadvantaged students have a chance to succeed as lifelong learners in the Austrian educational system.

Altogether, the VET oriented programmes, such as the Dual apprenticeship-school programme are very successful in Austria and the completion rates in upper secondary

The completion rates in upper secondary education are in general high by international standards

education are in general high by international standards (OECD). The success of the Austrian VET system is

also reflected in the low youth unemployment rate, as well as an international recognition of Austrian skilled workers (CEDEFOP).

*(Example provided by Roland Gangl, ETUCE and Country reports from OECD and CEDEFOP)*

### 4.3 Expanding Access to Adult Education in Portugal

To promote lifelong learning in Portugal, attempts to expand the access to adult education have been made with the objective to create new possibilities for active inclusion and enhanced social participation of low-skilled adults, unemployed, elderly, migrants and adults with special needs. According to a study<sup>12</sup> made by the UTAD (University of Trás-os-Montes e Alto Douro, Portugal) in 2008, the development of a programme for adult education in the rural areas of Portugal has been particularly successful in targeting and motivating especially middle-aged/elderly, low skilled women.

Adult education from this perspective is not necessarily a concept which will bring the participants in closer relation with the labour market. However, a process which will enable a new culture for lifelong learning, and permit the participants to feel acknowledged as active and valuable citizens in society.

Such a process is supposed to make adults who perhaps have

The programme permits the participants to feel acknowledged as active and valuable citizens in society

felt marginalised in the democratic system become aware of their rights and their possible pathways, politically, professionally and personally.

#### *An affirmative educational experience*

Generally, trainees participating in adult education programmes in the rural areas of Portugal are primarily-middle aged or retired women, with a low literacy level, a low income, and usually occupied with the care of elderly people and children in the area. The study made by UTAD especially refers to a very positive evaluation made by such particular participants of adult education programmes. The study shows that the acquired knowledge

*The acquired knowledge has had a very positive impact on the self-esteem, as well as the social and personal development of the participants*

and competences have had a very positive impact on the self-esteem, as well as the social and personal development of the participants. The participants expressed that they

have not had the possibility to access the education system at an earlier stage of their lives. Only now did they realise what benefits and opportunities lifelong learning could give them, in spite of the fact that most of them had turned fifty or more. Some of the female participants conveyed that such an affirmative educational experience even had a positive influence on their family relations, and that they now were able to understand, share and support the educational experiences of their children and grand children. The teachers involved in this education programme, also reported a very positive experience, feedback and outcome.

*(Example provided by Maria Braganza, ETUCE)*

<sup>12</sup> BAPTISTA, Albert, KOEHNEN, Timothy, SILVA, Vilma, HERCULANO, Daniela, PINHAL, Luisa, BRÁS, José, " ESTUDO PARA UMA FORMAÇÃO ESPECÍFICA EM MEIO RURAL: Dar Vez e Voz aos Actores e Actrizes do Território", in " Práticas de Animação", Ano 2, Nº1, Outubro de 2008

#### 4.4 Policy Strategies for Lifelong Learning in the UK

The United Kingdom<sup>13</sup> has taken an active and innovative approach to lifelong learning policy in the ten years since the adoption of the Lisbon Agenda in 2000. Although there have been changes of ministers and governments, there has been consistency in developing national standards, quality assurance, funding systems and the governance of Colleges.

Since the 1990s, the government has required that public funds are only used for courses leading to approved qualifications for lifelong learners. These qualifications are designed to

*The national standards for lifelong learners have been developed to ensure relevance to the labour market through Sector Skills*

national standards with common requirements, including relevance to the

labour market and credit transfer. Since 2000, there has been an increasing emphasis on making sure that such qualifications contributed to national education targets with a particular emphasis on lower levels of education. This meant in particular that 6 million adult learners took more than 12 million courses in literacy and numeracy.

The national standards for lifelong learners have been developed to ensure relevance to the labour market through the involvement of Sector Skills Councils representing employers in particular sectors.

#### *Quality improvement and the benefit of self-governance*

In the UK the approach to quality improvement has included organisational self-improvement, the publication of performance data and independent inspection. In addition the funding system rewards education and training organisations for their results in terms of enrolments, attendance and achievements and has been used to stimulate quality improvement and competition. Public accountability is provided by the independent, national inspectorate, OFSTED, which carries out inspections of Colleges within an agreed framework. The OFSTED inspection reports are published on the internet, and judgements in such reports are frequently used to disseminate good practice and secure improvements.

*Judgements published in inspection reports have frequently been used to disseminate good practice and promote improvements*

Competition between educational institutions has been further developed through new national vocational education and training schemes, the use of public procurement through competitive tendering and the development of different measures of performance.

These quality improvement measures have created a self-critical culture in Colleges, which because their autonomous status has allowed them to formulate their own responses to policies. In recent years the need for external inspection has decreased and there has been an increase in the quality and reliability of self-assessment.

*(Example provided by Nick Lewis, EFEE)*

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<sup>13</sup> Education and training are devolved areas in the United Kingdom which means that the approach taken in the four countries of the UK (England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland) varies. This note focuses mainly on the approach taken in England.

#### 4.5 School Student Involvement and Participation in Norway

In Norway, student participation and involvement is considered vital in order to stimulate democratic decision-making processes and promote social commitment, both nationally and internationally. This way, students succeed to develop profound knowledge on democratic principles and institutions in an early age. Furthermore they gain experience through different types of participation and empowerment in democratic processes in their daily activities and through participation in representative bodies. The concept evolves from an endorsement that higher levels of ownership amongst learners can increase motivation and identification with education goals.

##### *Obligatory Student Councils*

Norwegian schools are required to have a student council to specifically ensure active participation and involvement in the decision making on students learning circumstances. The council is elected by the students. The general aim is to enable and motivate the students to become part of school improvement through the establishment of social, cultural and extracurricular events both inside the schools and in the local community. This kind of inclusive learning environment has a positive impact on the development of social relations and motivation at all education stages.

*In Norway all schools are required to have a student council to ensure the active participation and involvement of students*

Student participation can also be a beneficial method to engage student in their own lifelong learning, make them more aware of their own needs and individual processes and ensure a more profound subject knowledge accumulated by their own self initiative. When the students participate in the planning, implementation and assessment of their education

The opportunities to have a direct impact on their learning processes and outcomes also make the students consider their own abilities and interests

within the framework of national regulations and curriculum, they are on the pathway to become

democratic citizens who have the competence and interest in taking active participation in society throughout their lives. The opportunities to have a direct impact on their learning processes and outcomes also make the students consider their own abilities and interests, an advantage which can become even more explicit through apprenticeship programmes, where they experience real work life and thus the eventual consequences of their educational choice.

The extent of student participation varies according to students' age and development levels, and for the students to make informed choices about their own lifelong learning pathways require an extensive overview of their rights, their opportunities and the possible consequences of the choices they make. Such a foundation entails an implementation of student counselling or teaching tailored to the practical use of democratic tools and processes.

*(Example provided by OBESSU)*

## 5. Participating Stakeholder Groups

The ETUCE, the EFEE and the OBESSU were jointly in charge of selecting and ensuring the participation of their national organisations members to the regional workshops and were responsible for the development of the joint guidelines on how to improve school education contribution to LLL participation. The ETUCE, the



EFEE and the OBESSU have former experience of cooperation, including joint statements development on various topics, joint seminars and joint external interventions. Additionally, the ETUCE and the EFEE have been working closely in the Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education. This cooperation between the three organisations and the coordination of the project planning and design facilitated the implementation of Co-Reg-LLL and engaged all three organisations in a joint quality assurance process throughout the whole project period.

### 5.1 EFEE: The European Federation of Education Employers



EFEE was established in 2009, and has members in 17 countries. The overall objective of EFEE is to represent the interests of education providers of all levels as employers at European level, and thereby contribute to the improvement of education in the member states of the EU.

### 5.2 OBESSU: The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions

The Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions is a platform for cooperation between the national school student unions active in general secondary and secondary vocational education in Europe. It was founded in April 1975 in Dublin, Ireland and brings together member and observer organisations from more than 25 European countries. All member organisations are independent, national, representative and democratic school student organisations.



### 5.3 ETUCE: The European Trade Union Committee for Education



The European Trade Union Committee for Education is the European Region of Education International. It represents 135 teacher unions in Europe and 12.8 million teachers from all levels of the education sector (primary and secondary, VET and higher education). The ETUCE is a Social Partner in education at EU level and an Industry Federation within the ETUC, the European Trade Union Confederation, as such it is the representative voice of Teacher Unions in the EU. The ETUCE is also a member of the

Education and Training Coordination Group and of the six thematic working groups of the Commission.

## 6. Contacts

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<b>EFEE</b> (European Federation of Education Employers)	26, rue des deux églises, 1000 Brussels, Belgium  <a href="http://www.educationemployers.eu/contact">http://www.educationemployers.eu/contact</a>  <a href="http://www.educationemployers.eu">www.educationemployers.eu</a>	
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## **7. Acronyms**

CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
Co-Reg-LLL	Trans-Regional Cooperation in LLL among Education Stakeholders
EFTA	European Free Trade Association
EFEE	European Federation of Employers in Education
ETUCE	European Trade Union Committee for Education
ERF	European Reference Framework
E&T2010	Education and Training 2010 Programme
EU	European Union
EU2020	Europe 2020 Strategy
LLL	Lifelong Learning
NLLS	National Lifelong Learning Strategies
OBESSU	Organising Bureau of European School Student Unions
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFSTED(UK)	The Office for Standards in Education, children services and skills.
VET	Vocational Education and Training

## 8. Annex

The annex to the 2006 *Recommendations of the European Parliament and of the Council on 'Key Competences' for Lifelong Learning* sets out the eight key competences for lifelong learning, which constitutes the European Reference Framework<sup>14</sup>, namely:

- **Communication in the mother tongue** is significant to enable students to express themselves and to interpret concepts, thoughts, feelings, facts and opinions, and thereby facilitate a full membership of and an active participation in the society.
- **Communication in foreign languages** is a necessity to ensure social and economic cohesion in a world of mobility, where borders are becoming more fluent and people migrate from country to country either as employees, entrepreneurs, students or jobseekers.
- **Mathematical competence** and basic competences in science and technology: The effective use and practice of basic mathematical principles and processes are becoming more and more essential in both labour-market relations but also in everyday contexts.
- **Digital competence:** ICT technology skills are regarded as crucial as all aspects of life are becoming more and more dominated by ICT technology, which means that the lack of the ability to use these technologies can result in a marginalisation not only in the labour market, but also in the civic society as a whole.
- **Learning to learn** is one of the most crucial competences in a knowledge based economy, as this competence creates a base for continuous learning and upgrading of skills both within and outside the formal education system.
- **Social and civic competences** comprehend the awareness of basic concepts relating to individuals, groups, work organisations, gender equality and non-discrimination, society and culture, mobility, and the promotion of mutual understanding and tolerance.
- **Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:** the knowledge society needs individuals with creative minds and the willingness and skills to take new initiatives and create new business.
- **Cultural awareness and expression** is another aspect of ensuring not only economic sustainability but also social cohesion and social fulfilment through the understanding and use of various cultural expressions.

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<sup>14</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf)

## 9. Publications and Reports

- Education and Training 2020 programme:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc36\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc36_en.htm)
- EU 2020 strategy:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm)
- European Reference Framework (ERF) on key competences:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/publ/pdf/ll-learning/keycomp_en.pdf)
- The 2008 Joint Council/Commission Report on the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme, "Delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation": [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/nationalreport08/council\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/nationalreport08/council_en.pdf)
- Co-Reg-LLL Malta report:  
[http://etuce.homestead.com/publications2010/05.2010\\_Report\\_CoRegLLL\\_Malta\\_EN\\_G.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/publications2010/05.2010_Report_CoRegLLL_Malta_EN_G.pdf)
- Co-Reg-LLL Cyprus Report:  
[http://etuce.homestead.com/publications2010/07\\_2010\\_Report\\_CoRegLLL\\_Cyprus\\_ENG.pdf](http://etuce.homestead.com/publications2010/07_2010_Report_CoRegLLL_Cyprus_ENG.pdf)
- Learning for Jobs - OECD Reviews of Vocational Education and Training, Austria 2010, By Kathrin Hoeckel: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/29/33/45407970.pdf>

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