



# EUROPEAN FILE

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## Education and training in the approach to 1992

**H**ow do we prepare for 1992 and the post-1992 era? The prospect of the large market and the people's Europe make education and training priority concerns for the European Community and its member countries.

- *Free circulation of persons and ideas*, which is one of the basic principles of the Community, will soon be fully realized. Young people and their parents, as well as workers and businesses, therefore expect Europe to be an 'educational area' favourable to mobility and exchanges. Education and training must therefore provide the linguistic and other qualifications which are necessary if one is to take full advantage of this area. Many steps should be taken at national and regional level to achieve this, but they will be all the more effective if they are informed by exchanges of information and experience and supplemented by international networks which enable those interested to know more about each other and to develop more cooperation on the ground.
- Education and training are more crucial than ever to *the future development of the Community*:
  - On them depends the capacity of Europeans to unite in their common values and to affirm their identity in the face of today's challenges.
  - Development of human resources is the key to economic development. Throughout Europe, capacity for innovation, competitiveness, economic progress and job growth are actually a function of the quality of workmanship.
  - The Single Act which supplements the Community Treaties commits the Community to strengthen its economic and social cohesion by stimulating the progress of disadvantaged regions and social groups. Whether for the long-term unemployed or for less-developed regions, any long-term solution must involve higher levels of education and training.
  - Education and training have a role to play in various other Community policies: technological research and development, environmental and health protection, cooperation with other European countries and with the Third World, etc.
- Besides, the approach of a Europe without borders increases the necessity of *better adapting education and training to the needs of the economy and of society*.
  - Development of human resources implies a collective effort of analysis and planning by the competent authorities.
  - Availability of education and training must be increased at all levels.
  - In both initial training and further training, every stage should increasingly prepare for the next; to widen opportunities for participation, pathways of progression must be made clearer and more coherent, with more flexibility of access at all ages.
  - There must be new forms of cooperation and partnership for all those involved: public and private sectors, teaching and research institutions, businesses, local collectives, etc.

- To cope with the uncertainties which lie ahead, education systems must be better integrated so that they develop people's ability to adapt and innovate.
- If all human resources are to be fully availed of, there must be particular measures to benefit certain groups which have difficulties in regard to finding or changing jobs: women and girls, members of certain minorities, under-qualified young people, workers in insecure employment, etc.
- Education and training must be able to react quickly to socio-economic and technological change; they must also be able to support regional and local development.

In accordance with its Treaties, the Community has adopted general principles for the implementation of a common policy on professional training. Many training programmes are also financed by the European Social Fund. In education, Community cooperation has been introduced gradually since 1974. A first action programme was adopted in 1970 by the Council and the Education Ministers of the Community meeting under its aegis. The growth of this cooperation has been spurred by the interventions of the European Parliament and the Heads of State or Government.<sup>1</sup>

To meet the challenge of preparing for 1992, the European Commission decided it was necessary to give a fresh start to these activities and to set out a number of objectives in the field of education and training:

- To develop a Europe of quality, in which people's skills and creativity are encouraged by life-long learning, as well as a Europe of solidarity, based on equality of access to education and training and on a determined effort against school failure and lack of qualifications.
- To promote the improvement of educational systems and better cooperation, by creating a mechanism which allows each Member State to benefit from the others' experience.
- To promote the shared democratic values of the Member States, to increase understanding of the multi-cultural nature of the Community and of the need to prepare young people for a citizenship that has a Community dimension.

In realizing these aims, the European Community intends to bear in mind two principles which are essential for mutual confidence and for the partnership it wants to develop with all parties concerned:

- Respect for the rich diversity of educational traditions in the member countries. There is no question of eliminating this diversity; what is required is rather to create more contact, cooperation and concertation, in order to improve the various systems and avoid unnecessary divergences which impede the free movement of persons and ideas.

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<sup>1</sup> See *European File* No 3/85: 'The European Community and education'.

- Respect for the principle of subsidiarity. The Community can take certain measures by virtue of its own competence, its natural role of catalyst and coordinator and the added value which it can impart to national measures. It will, however, take full account of the competences and responsibilities of the national, regional and local authorities with which it wishes to cooperate.

It follows therefore that the European Commission is particularly concerned to ensure the smooth operation of a well-established consultation and concertation procedure. The main elements of this procedure are:

- The Education Committee, in which representatives of the Commission and the Member States examine proposals, promote exchanges of information and study all possibilities for increasing cooperation.
- The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, presided over by the Commission and composed of representatives of governments, workers and employers. It assists the Commission in the implementation of common policy on vocational training.
- Numerous working groups, which assist the Commission in the implementation of its various programmes. A body to examine the problems posed by medium-term programming of educational policy is also to be set up.
- The dialogue carried on by the social partners at European level, particularly the special working group set up in this context to examine questions of education and training.

As the Community is intent on being open to the world, the Commission is building up its contacts with partners outside the Member States. Among these are the members of the European Free Trade Association (EFTA), who are (or soon will be) associated with certain programmes, and countries such as Poland and Hungary.

In order to concentrate its efforts on aims of fundamental long-term importance, to avoid these efforts being fragmented and give all interested parties an overall view of Community education and training activities, and to assist the development of these activities and their interaction with national policies, the European Commission has set out seven guidelines for the period 1989-92. These guidelines were approved by the Community's Education Ministers, during their meeting of 6 October 1989. They are described briefly below.

### **Free movement and the recognition of qualifications**

The Europe without frontiers of 1992 implies first of all the free movement of persons between Community countries. With regard to education and training, progress is needed on three fronts.

- The recognition of professional diplomas and vocational qualifications, so that Community citizens are able to practise their profession in the Member State of

their choice, even though they may not possess a diploma from that Member State. Some 60 Community directives have already liberalized access to a range of regulated professions and the Commission has also started to establish comparability of vocational qualifications with the technical assistance of Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. Even so, progress has been too slow, so the Community has adopted a Directive to implement a complementary general system for the recognition of diplomas. This Directive was based not on harmonization, as earlier ones were, but on mutual trust, with levels of training being presumed comparable and additional requirements being imposed if necessary in the form of professional experience, a training course or an aptitude test. This system, which applies to higher-education diplomas awarded for courses of at least three years, will enter into force from 1991. A similar mechanism, for shorter training periods, and including the secondary education sector, is the subject of a proposal which the European Commission submitted in 1989. Further measures should improve mutual information on qualifications obtained in the different member countries.

- Academic recognition of diplomas and study periods in higher education, to enable students to continue their training wherever they wish. Within the framework of the Erasmus programme — which promotes student mobility, the European Commission has just launched an experimental system of course credits, which are transferable to educational establishments in other member countries. The Comett programme provides for the academic recognition of industrial training periods undergone in another country as an integral part of certain courses of study. In addition, having drawn up a directive to facilitate the right of residence of students, the Commission is preparing comparative analyses of conditions for access to higher education and a proposal on their mutual recognition. The question of living conditions of students who have moved to another member country will also be examined.
- Recognition of the right of teachers to practise their profession in all member countries. The Commission has already reiterated that national discrimination in recruitment in this field is no longer acceptable. It will continue with its efforts to increase awareness: publication of a report on public-sector employment, information on national systems of recruitment, etc.

### **Initial and continuing vocational training**

Guidelines on vocational training, recently drawn up, should enable the Community principles adopted on this matter in 1963 to be revised. At the same time, in the framework of the recent reform of the Community's structural Funds, the European Social Fund will provide more money towards public and private training programmes in the member countries.

- Training for young people: the preparation of young people for working life and for adult responsibilities is a priority objective in the establishment of the single market of 1992. In this spirit, the Petra programme is directed towards providing all young people who so desire, at the end of their compulsory education, with one or, if possible, two or more years of vocational training. The programme has three

separate and complementary parts: a European network of training initiatives, to link up certain activities and give a European dimension to training measures taken by the Member States — this would be done by facilitating the creation of transnational cooperation partnerships; support for projects initiated by young people themselves whose creativity and sense of responsibility are thereby encouraged; cooperation in the research field. The Petra programme especially supports efforts to improve the quality of training and to adapt training to young people's standard of education and to economic, social and technological changes; it supplements European Social Fund support for the employment of young people.

- Adults: as well as wishing to introduce a proper strategy for the development of continuing vocational training, the Community is concerned to help the fight against unemployment, particularly long-term unemployment, which is a priority objective of the Social Fund. Continuing training is an investment for the future. In the interest of society, firms and workers, new qualitative and quantitative efforts must be made which measure up to the major challenges of our time: competitiveness of firms, technological innovation, demographic developments, changes in work, etc. Recently the Community Charter of basic social rights solemnly proclaimed the right to vocational training. Paying particular attention to the opinions expressed on this subject in the European social dialogue, the Commission has submitted an action programme designed to include all the parties concerned (firms, training bodies, social partners, public authorities) and to unite their efforts so that every Community worker has access to vocational training and can benefit from it throughout his working life. Adequate provision for permanent and continuing training should allow everyone to retrain, have further training and acquire new knowledge. The proposed programme has two aspects. First, a common framework of general principles must encourage the convergence of Member States' activities and commit them to improve access to continuing training for all workers, to strengthen provisions for existing training, to guarantee equal treatment as regards access to training and to ensure that less qualified workers have access. In addition to these principles, a number of transnational measures are proposed for implementation at Community level in order to reinforce and supplement national efforts. These are designed to promote innovative partnerships so as to encourage investment in training; to support, through projects and exchanges, innovation in continuing training and its transferability; and to ensure that the development of provisions for training and qualifications is followed up and analysed. Other Community initiatives complement these: for example, the IRIS programme, which supports innovative projects for the training of women, and an experimental training programme for the managers of small and medium-sized enterprises in preparation for 1992.

### **Erasmus and the development of higher education**

The Community's Erasmus programme fosters inter-university cooperation and exchanges of teachers and students who are thereby brought face to face with the real situation in member countries and are better prepared to work in the single market of the future. A parallel programme called Science encourages the mobility of research workers. First results from these programmes are significant, but the experience must

be developed on a larger scale: while the Commission would like 10 % of students to have a period of study in another Member State before 1993, less than 45 000 students benefited from mobility grants during the first three-year phase of Erasmus. This is the reason why the Council of Ministers more than doubled the funds allocated to Erasmus for the first three years of its second phase (1990-94).

Programmes such as Erasmus and Science encourage meetings and voluntary cooperation between those responsible for education, who are wondering about the repercussions of the large market. At the same time, the European dimension of many fields of study is growing. The European Commission wants to respond to these spontaneous developments. It is preparing a student's manual on the future labour market and the new opportunities which will be opened up after 1992. It proposes the establishment of a European pool of professorships which would stimulate the interdisciplinary study of Community questions. Finally, it intends to submit a Green Paper on higher education, with particular attention to social and demographic developments and the imminence of the large market.

### **Technological change, education and training: Comett and Erasmus**

Increased mastery of technological change implies a coherent vision of the introduction of new technologies at all stages of the training process: schools, universities, industry. To this end, the Community has introduced several programmes.

- The principal objective of the Comett programme is to stimulate and strengthen cooperation between universities (including all post-secondary training establishments) and industry, in order to develop initial and continuing training in technology and to respond to the needs of industry for qualified workers. Comett supports university-industry partnerships which should foster dialogue and identify real training needs, the transnational placing of students in companies, and joint projects to improve high-level training in new technologies. Following a three-year pilot phase (1987-89), the programme's second phase (1990-94) has been allocated significantly increased funds. Comett II, which is open to EFTA countries, will complete the network of university-industry partnerships and take more account of the needs of industry (particularly small and medium-sized enterprises), as well as the demands of regional development and the transfer of technology.
- The Eurotecnet programme encourages exchange and dissemination of experiences, creation of European networks of demonstration projects and coordination of research on vocational training for new technologies. The programme's second phase (1990-94) should help progress to be made in identifying the most appropriate ways to train and motivate workers affected by technological change, particularly in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) whose situation will be specifically evaluated.
- In addition, a Community action programme on the use of new technology in schools has pinpointed several issues: the necessity not to confine the use of new technology to science and mathematics, and the need to avoid an elitist approach and to guarantee equal qualifications for girls and boys.

The European Commission wants to increase the number of bridges between, on the one hand, its educational and training activities and, on the other hand, scientific and technological development. It has therefore revised its framework programme of research and technological development; under the Delta programme it has promoted the design of computerized teaching equipment; it has supported training projects in the multimedia field and has looked into the development of a 'European network of open universities' based on the existing network and in particular on EADTU (the European Association of Distance-Teaching Universities). The second phase of Comett will take account broadly of the interaction between teaching and technology. In this context, the Commission will organize a European conference on the links between education and training on the one hand and science, research and technological development, on the other.

### **Improving the quality of education systems through cooperation**

Eurydice, the European information network on education, is a veritable databank for those who want to know about teaching systems in other Member States and Community activities in this area. In addition, the Arion programme finances study visits which help education authorities to improve their understanding of different national systems. Finally, conferences organized by the European Commission stimulate exchanges between the different groups affected by the development of education policy: parents, teachers, trade unionists, employers.

Despite undeniable progress, much remains to be done to develop, while still respecting everyone's independence, a more concerted approach to the design of various educational systems. These are still frequently the subject of reforms which take into account neither the implications at European level nor the frequently relevant experience of other member countries. The European Commission wants to strengthen existing cooperation procedures. To that end it will assess work already carried out, it will pursue the publication of monographs and comparative analyses of national systems and with the Member States it will identify long-term concerns and future prospects which justify research cooperation. Problems of common interest must be made the subject of exchanges between senior national officials while the views and European experience of transnational teams of specialists could be of great benefit for the design of proposed reforms in member countries.

### **Foreign-language training and intercultural communication**

The prospect of a Europe without frontiers renders more necessary than ever the learning of foreign languages and the promotion of a European dimension in education.

- The education of the children of migrant workers has been the subject of a European directive and several pilot projects. The evaluation of these activities should lead to broader-based educational practices. The European Commission is particularly aware of the problems posed by failure at school and by the vocational training needs of migrants in the context of 1992.



- The Community's Lingua programme, which starts in 1990, will contribute to the financing of scholarships, exchanges and teaching materials in order to promote the training of teachers in foreign languages as well as the learning of languages in higher education, vocational training and industry.
- A programme of cooperation for less widely used languages and cultures centres on educational exchanges, research cooperation, the organization of joint seminars and support for pilot projects.

Language learning is both an instrument for, and a component of, the skills necessary for intercultural living and communication. Other measures to achieve this include exchanges for young people (see below), projects and educational materials which provide for a better understanding of the reality of other nations and regions, and the adaptation of certain subjects (history, social studies, etc.) so as to include a European dimension focused on mutual understanding and the common democratic values of European civilization. The experience of the European Schools, established to serve the institutions of the European Community, is relevant here.

### **Promotion of youth exchanges**

Numerous national programmes have been launched in this area but the needs are such that Community support is required more and more.

- A Community programme for exchanges of young workers has developed gradually since 1964. It responds well to the needs of young workers, but the numbers involved — some few thousands per year — remain too small due to the lack of adequate resources. None the less, this programme has made it possible to develop a more broadly-based system of exchanges and it was opened up recently to young people seeking employment.
- A new programme, called 'Youth for Europe', was launched in 1988 and should encourage an increase in the number of exchanges of young people from all backgrounds. 80 000 exchanges are forecast for the period 1989 to 1991. Special attention is paid to those who, because of their nationality, language or personal situation, are less likely to benefit from traditional programmes. Priority is also given to exchanges organized by young people themselves.

For the sake of the people's Europe, as well as the large market, more must be done. The European Commission wants to extend these activities, while combining them to greater advantage. It intends to make specific the recent commitment made by the Education Ministers in favour of European coordination of 'youth cards'. It also wants to supplement the Lingua programme with school exchanges ('Classes 1992') to allow secondary-school teachers and students to spend a short period of study at a partner establishment in another member country. The town-twinning network might make a useful contribution to the success of this venture.

As the Ministers emphasized in October 1989, the Community must promote a multi-cultural Europe, characterized by mobility and training for all, a Community of skills, open to the world. Education and training will play a decisive role in the success of the large market and in the emergence of a true 'people's Europe'<sup>1</sup> ■

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<sup>1</sup> Manuscript completed in January 1990.

## European Community exchange programmes

Programme	People involved	For further information please contact:
Erasmus	Students in higher education	Erasmus Office 15 rue d'Arlon B-1050 Brussels
Comett	Students in higher education and staff of businesses	Comett Office 71 avenue de Cortenberg B-1040 Brussels
Petra	Young people in initial training and training personnel	Petra Support Office Ifaplan 32 Square Ambiorix B-1040 Brussels
Lingua	Pupils and teachers in secondary education; staff of businesses	Lingua Assistance Team 2-3 Place du Luxembourg B-1040 Brussels
Youth for Europe	Young people aged 15 to 25	} Office for Exchanges of Young People in the European Community 2-3 Place du Luxembourg B-1040 Brussels
Exchanges of Young Workers	Young workers and persons seeking employment aged 18 to 28	
Arion	Education policy-makers and experts	Arion Assistance Team Pädagogischer Austauschdienst Nassestraße 8 D-5300 Bonn 1
Cedefop	Specialists in vocational training	Cedefop Bundesallee 22 D-1000 Berlin 15

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