



Lifelong Learning Strategies in the new EU Member States and Candidate Countries: Issues and Challenges

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Education and training systems in the new EU Member States and Candidate Countries

Three key messages

- Gaps and disparities between countries, topics, regions and publics
- Gap between policy framework and concrete implementation
- Still considerable work to meet Lisbon objectives

Good results in general education and higher education

- **Progress in participation** in upper secondary and tertiary education; positive attitude towards education
- **Diversification of the education and training providers**; emerging non-formal sector; diversification of educational and training pathways
- **Modernisation of curricula**; increasing educational attainment of the population; improved results in international assessments
- **Early school leavers rates lower than in the EU** in most countries and decreasing
- **Development of new legislative and policy framework** in line with EU developments

Low performance and gaps particularly in Vocational Education and Training (1)

- **Qualification level of the population still inadequate**
- **Key competencies for KBE still lacking**
- **Insufficient participation in scientific studies in HE, as well as poor R&D**
- **Limited public investment in education in most countries with low priority for VET**
- **Low status of teachers** and inadequate teacher training
- **Outdated technical equipments** in VET schools
- **High unemployment rate of school leavers** with medium or low qualifications

Low performance and gaps particularly in Vocational Education and Training (2)

- **Limited developments in CVT (except SL, LV)**
- **Insufficient funding for labour market training (except H, SL);** Public and private employment services not well prepared
- **Slow progress in CVT initiated by companies (except CZ)**
- Slow development of competence based qualification systems
- Recognition of prior learning at the start
- **Quality assurance issues** particularly in the non-formal training sector
- **Weaknesses of social partnership** in education and training

The 5 EU benchmarks for education and training 2010

| | EU 15 | Austria | New 10 | RO/BUL | EU bench |
|---|-------|---------|------------------------------|--------|----------|
| Early school leavers | 18.5 | 9.5 | 8.4 | 22.1 | 10 |
| % of 22 having at least ISCED 3 | 76.0 | 86.5 | 90.1 | 71 | 85 |
| % of tertiary educ students in science | 11.8 | 11.6 | 6.1 | 5 | |
| % of pupils with reading literacy lev 1 | 17.2 | 14.6 | CZ 18; HU 23 PL 23; LV 25 | 40.8 | 13.7 |
| % of 25-64 in ed and tr in 4 weeks before | 8.5 | 7.5 | 5 | 1.2 | 12.5 |

The context of LLL strategies

- **Marked imbalance between education and adult training systems**
- **Imbalance between HE and VET in education**
- **Imbalance between Adult educ, CVT in Cies, LM training**
- **Employment more concentrated in micro-companies** than in the EU 15 (40% versus 34%)
- **Employment and activity rates below EU 15 levels**, far from the EU benchmarks for 2010
- **Youth employment very low;**
- **Unemployment very high** in some countries, particularly for youth
- **High economic growth** and increasing FDI
- **Industrial and agricultural restructuring on-going**
- **Social cohesion lower** than in the EU 15

Progress reports on Lifelong learning

- **Limited progress** but comprehensive strategies in preparation
- **Predominance of the formal system**; many initiatives to developing access; partnerships at local and regional level
- **Progress on development of core skills, ICT** (public/private partnerships)
- **Little attention on non-formal and informal learning**; little progress on learning at the workplace
- **Funding issues**; few initiatives in redirecting funding
- **Coordination issues**; social partnership



EC Communication on Lifelong Learning

- 6 Building blocks:

Building partnerships; Creating a learning culture; Striving for excellence; Insight into demand for learning; Facilitating access to learning opportunities; Adequate resourcing

- 6 Priorities for actions:

Valuing learning; Information, guidance and counselling; Investing time and money in learning; Bringing together learners and learning opportunities; Basic skills; Innovative pedagogy

Some recommendations

- **To bear in mind that LLL is not an objective per se, but serves employment and employability; social inclusion, active citizenship, personal development,**
- **To consider the heavy disparities in access to education, training and employment; LLL is for all**
- **To focus on the learner; to retrain teachers**
- **To ensure comprehensiveness : the quality of the chain determined by the quality of the weakest link**
- **To make clear who are the main actors and their roles, and to involve them on an agreed concept and partnership; to take time**
- **To set up priorities; To start with systemic aspects (C&G, NQF, recognition and validation of NF/Inf learning, links formal/non-formal learning)**
- **To increase but also to redirect funding**
- **To ensure coherence of national strategies with EU processes (Lisbon, Copenhagen, Bologna, Objectives 2010)**

Thank you for your attention