

**DRAFT JOINT REPORT “EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010”****UNICE POSITION PAPER****Summary**

1. UNICE has noted the communication of the Commission entitled “Education and Training 2010”<sup>1</sup>. Based on this communication, the Education Council will adopt at the end of February 2004 a joint Council and Commission report on the results achieved through the open method of coordination in the field of education and training. This joint report will then be presented to the European Council in March 2004.
2. In the communication, the Commission rings the alarm. The measures taken in Member States seem insufficient to meet the Lisbon goal of turning Europe into the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.
3. It is only two years since the EU cooperation process on education and training was launched and this is too short a period to measure the results of the reform process. However, UNICE welcomes the attempt to assess the current status of the reforms.
4. UNICE broadly shares the overall assessment of the current situation set out in the Commission communication and makes some comments on the actions proposed to accelerate developments towards the Lisbon targets.
5. To accelerate progress towards that goal, UNICE believes that:
  - the call for more efficiency and streamlining in the education and training cooperation process should be translated into more concrete action points;
  - concrete steps should be taken to ensure synergy between the cooperation process on education and training and the Bologna process;
  - the reporting exercise requested of Member States on the implementation of lifelong learning strategies should be focused and leave sufficient room for reflection and analysis. The national reports should be drafted in consultation with social partners.
6. European employers hope that these comments will be taken into account in the joint report of the Council and the Commission “Education and Training 2010”.

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<sup>1</sup> Com (2003)685 final of 11.11.2003

**DRAFT JOINT REPORT “EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010”****UNICE POSITION PAPER****Introduction**

1. UNICE has noted the communication of the Commission entitled “Education and Training 2010”<sup>2</sup>.
2. Based on this communication, the Education Council will adopt at the end of February 2004 a joint Council and Commission report on the results achieved through the open method of coordination in the field of education and training. This joint report will then be presented to the European Council in March 2004.
3. In the communication, the Commission rings the alarm. The measures taken in Member States seem insufficient to meet the Lisbon goal of turning Europe into the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010.
4. The Commission identifies the main weaknesses of the on-going reforms and proposes four priority levers for further action at national and EU levels. In terms of procedure, the Commission suggests:
  - rationalising the existing cooperation process at EU level and focusing further work on a limited number of areas;
  - developing synergies between the cooperation process on education and training and the Bologna process for higher education;
  - asking Member states to submit consolidated reports on actions taken in the field of education and training to reach the Lisbon goals, taking as an example the European Employment Strategy.

**General comments**

5. UNICE believes that education and training policies have a crucial role to play in reaching the Lisbon goal of turning Europe into the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world. More specific challenges are to provide the basis for innovation and world-class research and development in Europe, and to cope with qualification and knowledge needs.
6. It is only two years since the EU cooperation process on education and training was launched and this is too short a period to measure the results of the reform

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process. However, UNICE welcomes the attempt to assess the current status of the reforms.

7. UNICE broadly shares the overall assessment of the current reforms but has a few nuances to express regarding the analysis made by the Commission:

- Concerning higher education, UNICE finds it striking - apart from the fact that participation in higher education is much lower in the EU than in the US (approx. 22% of the population between 25 and 64 years old has a tertiary education degree in Europe compared with 37% in the US)<sup>3</sup> - that the EU has fewer science graduates than the US (860 per 100,000 population in the EU compared with 936 in the US) and that fewer of those work in business (23 per 10,000 in the EU compared with 59 in the US).

Moreover, a significant number of European science graduates choose to work in the US. In its document entitled “Lisbon strategy status 2004 - Release companies’ potential”<sup>4</sup>, UNICE therefore makes some recommendations for changing the brain drain into a brain gain in Europe.

Employers are also deeply concerned by the fact that there are fewer Masters of Business Administration (MBAs) in Europe than in the US (25,000 new MBAs in Europe per year compared with 100,000 more in the US). This element is missing from the analysis made by the Commission and should be addressed in the joint report “Education and Training 2010”.

- Concerning investment<sup>5</sup>, with 4.9% of GDP investment in human resources in 2000 (compared with 4.8% in the US), the EU has not so much a problem of level of investment but more one of quality of investment. This should be fully reflected in the Commission report. Lifelong learning should be approached more from the angle of investment in human resources and policy-makers should also look into the return on investment in terms of increased competitiveness.

Moreover, while it is true that private investment is key, existing figures only refer to formal training activities and indicators of perception (surveys asking people if they have participated in learning activities) are also biased towards formal training. Therefore only part of the investment and efforts made by companies for learning activities is reflected.

Nevertheless, UNICE welcomes the fact that instruments, such as incentive measures for companies to invest in learning activities, are highlighted by the Commission<sup>6</sup>. This also corresponds to a proposal made by the European social partners in their joint framework for actions finalised in 2002<sup>7</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” section 1.2 page 9

<sup>4</sup> Document to be found under [www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)

<sup>5</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” section 1.2 page 9

<sup>6</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.1.2 page 13

<sup>7</sup> “Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications” signed in March 2002 by ETUC, UNICE/UEAPME and CEEP to be found under [www.unice.org](http://www.unice.org)

- The Commission rightly highlights the importance of developing teachers and trainers' competences. However, the approach taken by the Commission concerning this issue, i.e. to organise teachers learning according to a national plan and during working hours, is not the right one<sup>8</sup>.

UNICE would like to stress that competence development is a shared responsibility between employers and employees, be they in the public or the private sector. It is therefore important when learning activities are organised to start from the needs identified in each school and for each teacher. Moreover, it is also crucial to alleviate obstacles to co-investment by both the employer and the teacher or trainer in terms of money, time, etc. as much as for any other employee.

Eight UNICE member federations have released a report entitled "Empowering the teaching profession and modernizing school management – the employers' perspective"<sup>9</sup> which concludes that professional careers for teachers and trainers should be diversified and that more responsibility and autonomy should be given to school managers and teachers.

### Specific comments

8. European employers welcome the fact that the need for structural reforms in the field of education and training and their urgency are underlined (see wake-up call in the section of the Communication on the four levers of success<sup>10</sup>).
9. Similarly, it is very positive to refer not only to the goal and calendar of the Lisbon strategy, but also insists on the need to ensure real synergy between its different strands and in particular with the European Employment Strategy. However, UNICE believes that the process of cooperation is still too complex and pursues too many goals at the same time.
10. UNICE notes the Commission's plea to focus efforts on a limited number of key areas<sup>11</sup> but believes that this streamlining should be reflected in the reporting exercise requested of Member States (i.e. around a few strategic guidelines) and in the work at EU level (i.e. fewer and more efficient working groups with adequate working methods). The cooperation process should be made less bureaucratic.
11. In any case, UNICE sees no need to create a new high-level group to define the most urgent areas for cooperation<sup>12</sup>.
12. Much work has been done to develop common indicators in order to benchmark national policies on education and training. However, it is essential that all indicators proposed are relevant, meaningful and shared by all stakeholders.

<sup>8</sup> Commission communication "Education and Training 2010" Section 2.1.3 page 14

<sup>9</sup> [Report "Empowering the teaching profession" in pdf](#) finalised in July 2003

<sup>10</sup> Commission communication "Education and Training 2010" from page 11 onwards

<sup>11</sup> Commission communication "Education and Training 2010" Section 2.1 page 12

<sup>12</sup> Commission communication "Education and Training 2010" Section 2.1 page 12

This concern should be reflected when new indicators at EU level are established and when they are renewed<sup>13</sup>.

13. Concerning the key areas for further work, UNICE would like to make the following remarks:

- UNICE shares the concern that vocational education and training in Europe should be of a high quality and that it should be made as attractive for pupils/students as general education<sup>14</sup>.
- The report does not sufficiently insist on the need to promote the mobility not only of students but also of trainees and pupils across Europe. Indeed, it highlights the insufficient level of mobility in education and training<sup>15</sup>, but does not refer to mobility as a crucial tool to “establish a Europe of education and training”<sup>16</sup>.
- In order to consolidate the European dimension of education, it is proposed that a Community reference regarding a profile of European knowledge and competences to be acquired by pupils is defined by 2005. Employers wish to stress that such a common reference should not conflict with national attempts to give individual schools more autonomy.
- Finally, employers believe that more emphasis should be given to the need to develop the “spirit of enterprise” in education and training systems at all levels. This is a prerequisite if education and training systems are to contribute to making Europe the most competitive knowledge-based economy in the world.

14. The aim of enhancing the efficiency in cooperation processes should also be reflected at the national level. Further efforts should be made to ensure that relevant stakeholders actively take part in the discussion and reporting exercises. The joint Commission-Council report should echo the call by the Commission<sup>17</sup> for concrete implementation action plans established by 2006 in consultation with all relevant stakeholders, including social partners.

15. Concerning the proposals for the organisation of further work, UNICE regrets that the Commission gives only sketchy ideas on how better to coordinate work on education and training at EU level and the Bologna process<sup>18</sup> and hopes that the Council will enrich the reflections on this point.

16. Concerning the reporting by Member States on the Lifelong Learning Strategies, UNICE believes that this will be a good opportunity to benchmark national policies and reforms<sup>19</sup>. However, these should be focused on a limited number of key areas (i.e. guidelines).

<sup>13</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.4.2 page 16

<sup>14</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.3.1 page 15

<sup>15</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 1.1.5 page 8

<sup>16</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.3.2 page 15

<sup>17</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.2.1 page 14

<sup>18</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Section 2.4.2 page 16

<sup>19</sup> Commission communication “Education and Training 2010” Conclusion page 17

17. Moreover, the timetable for reporting should leave sufficient room for reflection and analysis. Therefore, UNICE would find it more appropriate that Member States are asked to submit consolidated reports no more frequently than every two years.

## **Conclusion**

18. UNICE welcomes the attempt to assess the current status of the reforms and broadly shares its overall assessment in the Commission communication. It also welcomes the fact that the need for structural reforms and their urgency are underlined.

19. Concerning the actions to be taken to accelerate developments towards the Lisbon targets, UNICE believes that:

- the call for more efficiency and streamlining in the education and training cooperation process should be translated into more concrete action points;
- concrete steps should be taken to ensure synergy between the cooperation process on education and training and the Bologna process;
- the reporting exercise requested to Member States on the implementation of lifelong learning strategies should be focused and leave sufficient room for reflection and analysis. It should be ensured that these national reports are drafted in consultation with social partners.

20. European employers hope that their comments will be fully taken into account in the future joint report of the Council and the Commission “Education and Training 2010”.

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