



European Training Foundation

CROSS COUNTRY REPORT

**The consultation on the
Memorandum on Lifelong Learning
in the Candidate Countries**

November 2001

Foreword

The European Commission asked for this paper to be prepared. It analyses reports from candidate countries on the consultation process concerning the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning.

The main paper comprises:

- 1) Key findings arising from the consultation process;
- 2) A summary of the action proposals in the national reports alongside each of the key messages in the Memorandum.

After the main part of the paper, there are two annexes:

- The first comprises 12 documents, one for each country. These assess the organisation of the consultation process. They also analyse the main issues, challenges and proposals presented in the country reports.
- The second annex is an analytical overview of the action proposals together with examples of good practice from the country reports.

Table of contents

Foreword.....	1
Table of contents	2
Introduction.....	3
FIRST PART.....	4
Consultation process on lifelong learning: key findings.....	4
SECOND PART.....	15
Summary of action proposals for each Key Message	15
Key Message 1: New Basic Skills for All	16
Key Message 2: more Investment in Human Resources.....	18
Key Message 3: Innovation in Teaching and Learning	19
Key Message 4: Valuing Learning.....	20
Key Message 5: Rethinking Guidance And Counselling.....	21
Key Message 6: Bringing Learning Closer to Home.....	22

Introduction

The following comments aim to clarify issues arising from the consultation process on the Memorandum for Lifelong Learning in the candidate countries. They also focus on the context in which the process took place.

- The consultation on the Memorandum for Lifelong Learning was proposed to the candidate countries as an optional exercise by the European Commission. Despite this, all the countries involved (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Slovenia, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Malta and Cyprus) carried it out, and submitted a report on time, including the three countries that did not get a grant from the European Commission for this purpose.
- The process was carried out in many ways. In some countries, it was an inter-services consultation at inter-ministerial level; in others, it was a broad, in-depth exercise involving social partners and regions. Thus, social partners and relevant non-governmental organisations were not systematically involved, and the regional dimension was rarely considered. However, in most cases, the Ministries of Education of the countries involved took the consultation very seriously. They set up specific steering committees, placed the Memorandum on the website, and set up a range of workshops, conferences and an Internet forum. The result was an excellent basis for wide and lively national debate.
- In addition to the main ministries and relevant institutions, the process sometimes reached the highest level of the State such as the State Presidency. This confirms the Ministry of Education's intention to use the Memorandum as a way of raising the importance of education and training issues in the country, advance reforms and obtain resources.
- The reports vary widely in quality. While all the countries endorsed the main ideas in the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, they adopted various approaches to them. Some countries took most of the sub-themes linked to each key message very seriously; others simply made general comments on the main points. In general, the level of information and comment reflects the extent to which the candidate countries are aware of lifelong learning issues. The reports also give a good indication of the priority attached to human resources development and to related discussions in the countries concerned. In some countries, the role played by the National Observatories¹ in co-ordinating and/or drafting the reports was particularly worthwhile.
- The different proposals and viewpoints in the reports take the form of "unified national opinions". With very few exceptions, they do not refer to different opinions, which stakeholders may have expressed in discussions. This may be due to the centralised approach that still characterises the national administrations of the candidate countries.
- Only five countries came up with ideas on indicators. That said, many countries suggested prioritising the issue of indicators and benchmarking as areas for future European support and co-operation.

¹ The National Observatories comprises a network of national institutions set up in all candidate countries with the European Training Foundation support. Their main task is to gather, analyse and disseminate information on vocational education and training policies and activities.

FIRST PART

CONSULTATION PROCESS ON LIFELONG LEARNING: KEY FINDINGS

This chapter is based on information provided by the country reports. It also takes into account knowledge acquired by the European Training Foundation concerning recent developments in human resources in candidate countries.

The understanding of lifelong learning relates closely to the ways in which the state must adapt the formal education system - with clear priority going to adult education.

- Generally speaking, people have yet to appreciate learning as a lifelong process. Most countries see formal education as the foundation for a lifelong learning strategy. Hence, the need to tackle the inadequacies of the existing education system before putting the principle of lifelong learning into practice. In most cases, specific stress is put on adult education and the need for formal education to enable people to generate professional skills or search for personal development. However, little attention is paid to ways of acquiring job skills and informal forms of learning. Up to a point, the priority given to formal and adult education also reflects the way in which some countries set up the consultation process.
- The principle of key actors - in particular, the state, companies, and individuals - is generally accepted. However, it is usually largely up to the state to create appropriate conditions for promoting lifelong learning. In a few countries, social partners have traditionally been committed to developing human resources. The potential role of enterprises, individuals or other actors in promoting action under the six messages is generally underexploited and not sufficiently highlighted in most reports. Here there is a difference between Malta and Cyprus and the other countries as the former have a longer tradition of social partners involvement in human resources development and can build on it more sophisticated strategies.
- Most reports stress the importance of the eLearning and information and communication technology. They also analyse these factors in relation to the six key messages, and highlight recent key initiatives as undertaken by most of the countries.

There is a significant lack of coherent and integrated lifelong learning strategies. While the consultation process has served as a stimulus, the support of the European Union is needed to develop the strategies properly.

- The organisation of the consultation process has often prompted separate discussions on each key message. Everyone endorses the need to develop an inclusive framework, involving all those concerned and taking account of the results of the separate discussions.
- Despite the requests emanating from the Feira European Council, the countries lack coherent strategies and practical measures to foster lifelong learning for everyone. Nevertheless, these reports refer to on-going debates in the candidate countries on some key issues related to lifelong learning and they often provide interesting inputs for further development of relevant strategies.
- Most countries have completed or are completing various policy papers on lifelong learning priorities and perspectives. These include national action plans for employment, joint assessment papers for employment policy, some education acts for children and adults, draft laws and specific white papers. However, some countries have identified the need to develop specific Lifelong Learning strategies and action plans, and have used the consultation process to prepare accordingly.
- In effect, the consultation process has made an impact on the debates about education issues and the impetus originally generated by the Ministries of Education. The process may well help to speed reforms especially within adult education. Some countries celebrated the Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996 and used it to launch the debate and initiate actions. Moreover, the 2001 process spurred on reforms. The Memorandum was disseminated and discussions between various participants set up.

Along with inherited cultural patterns, systematic difficulties at both social and economic levels in most countries slow down the development of human resources and the preparation for the knowledge society. Economic restructuring has yet to take place, administrative co-ordination needs improving and the idea of a 'partnership culture' has to be promoted. The lack of motivation is a major problem. Appropriate lifelong learning strategies must deal with these transversal challenges which cut across the key messages of the Memorandum.

- The reports stress the lack of information throughout the countries on the main messages and challenges concerning lifelong learning, the knowledge economy and society - and also on examples of good practices available in the European Union.
- There is also a general lack of motivation. This is particularly damaging when it encompasses teachers, employers, administrators, and, even worse, learners. In most countries, individuals tend to adopt a passive approach. They still fail to grasp that learning can help them to develop their careers and possibly raise their incomes. They find it even harder to appreciate the fact that learning can prevent social marginalisation or exclusion.
- The administrative structures and culture of co-operation are not well advanced. Vertical (or sectoral) ways of distributing responsibilities still prevail, hampering the implementation of integrated strategies. Inter-ministerial co-ordination is poor, in particular between the Ministries of Education and Labour. Decentralisation is at a very early stage in most countries - indeed, it is sometimes still in draft form - and regional/local participants are only now starting to assume their new responsibilities. Their capacity to involve relevant partners, co-ordinate efforts and design and implement lifelong learning initiatives, is still very limited. This is evident from the lack of proposals for action at regional/local level in most reports.
- Furthermore, with a few exceptions, the partnership culture is insufficiently developed. Hence, the limited involvement of social partners in the development of human resources - and employers giving scant attention to the training needs of employees and to education issues in general.
- Many reports stress the lack of overall legislation to help develop continuing vocational and training. Provision of such training does not fulfil the needs of companies and individuals. In most countries, responsibility for adult education goes to the Ministry of Education; and this serves to reinforce the focus on the formal system.
- The formal system is still rigid. Despite many projects and programmes initiated by the European Union and other donors, curricula are not in modules, and there is little interplay between paths of learning. Participation in higher education is often low, a factor that contradicts the aims of lifelong learning.
- The status and training of teachers have yet to adapt to changes as requested by the learner-centred approach. In most countries, their social status is now low compared to those from other employment categories, or compared to the situation in the European Union. The best-qualified teachers often leave the profession for better-paid work in private companies or abroad. In addition, in contrast to the European Union, there is a shortage of the newly qualified intermediary professionals for training throughout schools, universities, non-governmental organisations and companies. This applies to people such as training designers, counsellors, managers, evaluators and mentors.
- In general, the lack of resources at state level and inefficient use of existing resources combine to hamper the development of appropriate initiatives. On the one hand, secondary schools often lack the modern equipment necessary to equip students with skills vital to

industrial development, whilst companies are not prepared to invest in new apprenticeship schemes. In some countries, economic difficulties are affecting or postponing the implementation of important measures to further the aims of lifelong learning.

- The emergence or development of some new sectors, especially the information and communication technology sector, demonstrates a continuing surge of modernisation. Despite this, it should be noted that the switch to a fully-fledged market economy and/or restructured industrial economy - for example, closing and/or redeveloping mining and heavy industries - is still incomplete and, in some cases, has barely started. It follows that messages about the knowledge economy and society are harder to put across.

A range of good practices already exists in relation to every key message, particularly in the most advanced countries.

- The reports mention many actions or projects that relate to the key messages of the Memorandum. However, these are usually isolated and small scale. They are also sometimes funded through European Union programmes with little reference to sustainability, and have limited impact. They also tend to relate to only one aspect of the Memorandum, and are not properly integrated with overall Lifelong Learning.
- Nevertheless, there are some relevant and interesting practices in many of the more advanced countries. These relate to the six Key Messages as follows:
 - * **Key message 1: “second chance” training initiatives for school leavers and drop-outs** in Cyprus and Slovenia; national programme for **social and economic integration of the Roma population**, which includes basic skills, in Bulgaria; the Lithuanian Junior Achievement programme dealing with **entrepreneurship training for secondary school students**; the “Tiger Leap” project in Estonia that **equipped schools with a new information and communication technology infrastructure**;
 - * **Key Message 2: support for in-company training** from the Vocational Training Fund in Hungary; the **setting up of a human resources development agency** in Cyprus (since 1979);
 - * **Key Message 3: modularisation of curricula** for adults in formal education according to the new Polish law; development of **schools as open training centres** in Malta;
 - * **Key Message 4: promotion of systems for accreditation of prior learning** in Slovenia;
 - * **Key Message 5: development of network of diagnostic centres** in Czech Republic;
 - * **Key Message 6: development of self-directed learning centres** in Slovenia; **Adult Education Centre** established in the Pedagogical Academy in Latvia.
- In addition, some reports contain references to laws in preparation or some projects already proposed for Phare financing. These are more ambitious, and try to cover Lifelong Learning challenges in a more integrated, strategic way.
- There are also some interesting initiatives developed at University level. These focus on eLearning and open and distance learning.

Most of the proposals cover the first, third and fifth key messages, as they refer to continuing reforms of the formal system - with priority going to adult education and a major role for the state. In most cases, these represent general ideas or priorities to be tackled rather than concrete proposals for action. Development of basic skills including the traditional ones, innovation in teaching and learning mainly through eLearning developments, rethinking of counselling and guidance and opening up of schools to wider publics are very well accepted. Reflections on the rights and responsibilities of individuals, involvement of businesses, supporting measures for training in small and medium-sized enterprises, and the assessment of non-formal and informal learning are still at an early stage.

- The first message “new basic skills for all”, the third message “innovation in teaching and learning” and the fifth message “rethinking counselling and guidance” have been analysed in more depth, and have attracted the most specific proposals. This assumes that the main focus is on the formal system when dealing with adult education as expressed above. It also assumes experience acquired through a number of activities undertaken in the fields of reforming curricula. These activities include the introduction of new skills, modernising teacher training, and developing counselling and guidance in all countries. Usually, these have the support of Phare, the World Bank or other donors through pilot activities without proper dissemination.

* As regards Key Message 1:

- Priority goes to overall reforms in the formal system, by promoting the development of learner-oriented approaches, promoting flexible curricula, including basic skills in the curricula, adapting the preparation of teachers, administrators and other principals. Many countries stress that specific standards for basic skills should be refined.
- General support goes to widening the role of schools and/or developing new forms of schools or lifelong learning centres that can embrace new target groups. This is often a sound way to deal with needs in the countryside.
- On the other hand, few people like the idea of sharing responsibilities in the delivery of basic skills with the likes of businesses, non-governmental organisations, families and individuals. Also, only three reports deal with the issue of an individual right for all citizens to Lifelong Learning.
- The development of specific actions to prevent or address the “digital divide” commands high priority in many countries. The main proposals relate to: exploiting the role of libraries to promote computer literacy; access to the Internet through schools and open public places; raising the motivation of older people to use new learning technologies.

* As regards Key Message 2:

- The importance of the public budget as a source of financial contributions/incentives to promote investment is still dominant. In addition, many countries give priority to ensuring the efficient use of resources through adequate monitoring. On the other hand, the role of social partners and their co-operation with the state in creating an appropriate framework of incentives attracts scant attention. However, some reports refer to the reluctance of employers to develop human resources, and insist on the need to devise flexible arrangements to raise the interest of workers in Lifelong Learning.

- Much support goes to individually oriented approaches (individual learning accounts, purpose-linked subsidies, financial loans, etc.) instead of more traditional Fund-type approaches. However, we have no significant experience of this so far; and stress the need for better information and more expertise.
 - Some reports stress the importance of developing in-service training in companies together with adequate support.
- * As regards Key Message 3:
- The reports show strong adherence to the wider objectives of this Key Message. Most countries place more stress on developing new ways to accommodate adults and to prepare for self-learning.
 - There is great emphasis on the role of learning and distance learning in this respect. Candidate countries have recently developed many activities in these fields, mainly in higher education institutions. Some countries raise the issue of quality assurance arrangements as regards materials and processes.
- * As regards Key Message 4:
- The state of reflections in this area is at an early stage. In particular, they refer to which diplomas or qualifications are relevant when assessing competencies or skills developed in the non-formal or informal sectors. Most countries prefer to rely on qualifications from the Ministry of Education, and to develop modularised curricula accordingly. However, other countries are considering more specific and diversified approaches. Here again, the countries must increase their know-how.
- * As regards Key Message 5:
- There is marked agreement amongst the countries here. They believe that related developments in this field help individuals to understand the challenges they face, prompting thoughts on career development and also reducing social exclusion and marginalisation. Of course, this entails co-ordination between various participants and institutions; likewise, the establishment of appropriate databases and other tools.
- * As regards Key Message 6:
- The reports mostly agree on the sixth message. This stresses the need to optimise existing resources before trying to find additional funding. This should be done by mobilising schools, universities and other training institutions. It should also channel museums, libraries and cultural centres into an integrated approach towards human resources development at regional level and through appropriate partnerships. It must also exploit information and communication technology-based learning tools. To achieve these ends, the institutions concerned must develop their staff accordingly.

The European Union is expected to support the development of concrete lifelong learning strategies and actions in the candidate countries. To this end, it must open structural funds for them; invite them to join existing committees and networks; launch new initiatives, and set up the proper dissemination of good practices.

There is a variety of proposals or expectations expressed towards the European Union. The following have to be mentioned in particular:

- to make the **best use of it's the EU programmes** in developing lifelong learning approaches;
- to enable the countries concerned to benefit as soon as possible from structural funds, especially those from the European Social Fund and to train administrative staff; to help develop national strategies by regularly pooling the experiences of experts, managers, teachers, trainers and others concerning lifelong learning at European level; to promote comparative analysis and/or research on different approaches to lifelong learning within the European Union, in the candidate countries and beyond; to benefit from the dissemination of this information through publications, statistics, databases, workshops and conferences. Issues include motivation measures for lifelong learning, evaluation of quality in adult training, evaluation of assessment and recognition instruments;
- to support the establishment of a European database on employment and learning opportunities; and to benefit from rules and guidelines to develop the database at national level;
- to get European Union support for training staff involved in institutions that provide adult training and counselling;
- to develop standards for "new basic skills", for quality guidelines for non-formal/adult education, and for monitoring the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information and communication technology-based teaching; to see the Commission's new initiatives as a way of promoting the development of "social and active citizenship", of evaluating the quality of training, of setting up an "adult portfolio", or opening an European Union education portal on Internet ;
- to participate in the proposed working groups or specific European Union committees that aim to monitor developments in lifelong learning ;
- to develop, in close co-operation with the Commission, Joint Assessment Papers on lifelong learning , along the lines of the Joint Assessment Papers on Employment Policy ;
- to gain support from the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) and the European Training Foundation as noted in some reports.

Several reports criticise various issues on the grounds that they have not been sufficiently covered by the Memorandum or require a different approach.

Here are the main critical points:

- A serious reserve is expressed as regards the limitations of the “new basic skills” definition and a proposal is made to adopt a more comprehensive definition by continuing to pay due attention to traditional basic skills.
- Appropriate stress should go to the effectiveness and efficiency of education and training in terms of financing and results; More stress should go to learning as a social act. Individuals taking charge of their own learning must not mean that the State is no longer responsible for the quality of both initial and adult education.
- There must be a balance between the personal/ social and the industrial/vocational aspects of lifelong learning, given the worldwide social changes that affect most central European countries.
- Stress on computer technology should avoid making learning an isolated, individual activity. The interaction between teacher and learner is the key to dynamic learning whereby knowledge is constantly created and recreated.
- Increasing the motivation for learning is the task of education and employment policy and of wider social policy measures.
- More priority must go to problems and measures concerning disabled/disadvantaged people.
- The juxtaposition between formal/non-formal and informal learning processes is questionable as it does not concede that these are often integrated within a single process (e.g. informal learning takes place in tandem with formal education within one education institution).

General conclusions

- The consultation process on the Memorandum on Lifelong Learning has, through the country reports, revealed the extent to which various actors are involved and the results of their discussions. It has contributed usefully to the continuing national debates on the shift towards the knowledge economy and society and the need to put more stress on human resources.
- The results are consistent with the issues analysed and the priorities for reform in the vocational education and training systems as identified by the European Training Foundation in the different reports sent to the European Commission: Continuing training has not been given proper consideration until now; Institution development is still an important issue at national and, even more, at regional and local level; Social partners' involvement in vocational education and training issues is still very weak in almost all countries.
- Nevertheless, the consultation process revealed an awareness of the main challenges and obstacles on the part of stakeholders, social partners, regional bodies and others. It also revealed a shift towards more active policies in the form of new laws, white papers on lifelong learning and the implementation of significant initiatives. While adult education is a more limited concept than lifelong learning), the former can still be seen as an interesting starting point as it allows to enlarge the perspective to issues of non-formal and informal education. It also shows that social partners and the individuals should take more responsibility.
- Candidate countries in Central and Eastern Europe need lifelong learning; and, in particular, an integrated approach to it. That said, an awareness of the significant differences between them and the European Union countries is necessary. The former are still evolving into a modern market economy and/or developing their economy; at the same time they still have to cope with important cultural and social challenges, often inherited from the past. While some segments of the economy are very well developed, the conditions under which they will develop lifelong learning policies are very different from those in European Union countries; and they will be harder to implement.
- We must now continue the debate and prepare policies for each country. Interesting proposals emerged during the consultation process, some at national level, some at European Union level. Most of them were fairly general, and need further refinement at both country and cross-country levels. We can then integrate them into national action plans. In this respect, the Communication on Lifelong Learning prepared by the European Community would be an important breakthrough for the candidate countries and they must now stay closely associated with the next steps of this European Union process. In addition, the Joint Assessment Papers of employment policy, as jointly prepared and monitored by the European Commission and the country representatives, can also further lifelong learning in candidate countries over the coming months.

SECOND PART

SUMMARY OF ACTION PROPOSALS FOR EACH KEY MESSAGE

KEY MESSAGE 1: NEW BASIC SKILLS FOR ALL

Proposals for action at national level:

- The most specific proposals concern reforming the learning approaches in formal education, adapting teachers and trainers to their new tasks, extending the schools' role, and preventing or addressing the digital divide. In this sense, the cross-references to the issues raised and the proposals under Key Message 3 are numerous.
- Several countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia, Slovenia) link the delivery of basic skills to the development of new learner-oriented systems. The core of their proposals regard: the flexibility/openness of curricula; adapting content and methods to specific situations and the needs of target groups; identifying and building on the learners' existing knowledge and skills; stimulating self-directed types of learning.
- Almost half of the countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Malta, Slovenia) underline the importance of preparing teachers and trainers for the delivery of basic skills. They also stressed the importance of basic skills when training the teachers and administrators themselves as well as retraining them to teach adults. Two reports proposed that retired teachers be recalled to provide training on basic skills.
- Some countries (Cyprus, Hungary, Latvia) refer to developing national programmes or standards for basic skills (with specific curricula, materials, evaluation arrangements);
- The importance of widening the schools' role or developing new forms of them often appears (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Malta) through proposals to: let everyone have access to schools in formal education; develop lifelong learning centres; create special types of schools (residential schools) for socially disadvantaged students;
- The development of specific actions to prevent or address the "digital divide" scores high priority in many countries (Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Lithuania, and Slovakia). The main proposals relate to: exploiting the role of libraries to promote computer literacy, enabling access to the Internet through schools and open public places; raising the motivation of older people to use new learning technologies.
- A significant number of countries (Cyprus, Hungary, Lithuania, Malta, Slovakia) stress that basic skills be defined as comprehensively as possible. On the other hand, this definition should also reflect the countries' cultural and socio-economic differences. Two countries (Cyprus, Estonia) explicitly refer to the shared responsibility of the public, private and third sector (Government, non-governmental organisations, families, individuals) when promoting the teaching of basic skills.
- Addressing regional disparities in accessing learning gets priority only twice (Estonia, Romania). This also goes for proposals that businesses should promote training in basic skills (Hungary, Romania).
- The right of every citizen to lifelong learning also appears in only a few reports (Hungary, Malta, Slovakia).

Proposals for action at European level:

- Development of a European initiative to promote the development of social and active citizenship skills (Lithuania);
- Setting up a working group to help develop a way to define new basic skills (Bulgaria).

Indicators:

Five countries (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, and Lithuania) present long lists in which most of the proposed indicators relate to Key Message 1.

KEY MESSAGE 2: MORE INVESTMENT IN HUMAN RESOURCES

Proposals for action at national level:

- The principle of spreading the responsibility amongst the State, businesses and individuals for increasing the investment in human resources is generally acknowledged. However, in practice, the public budget is still seen as a central source of financial contributions and incentives to promote investment.
- There is a general tendency to favour individual-oriented measures (individual learning accounts, purpose-linked subsidies, financial loans, etc.) instead of the more traditional Fund-type approaches. Some countries (Cyprus, Estonia, Lithuania, Slovakia) mooted the creation of specific financial budgets that would make learning activities accessible to target groups at risk (e.g. people of low education, the elderly or those lacking the necessary resources for training).
- A number of countries (Estonia, Czech Republic, Slovakia) give priority to ensuring the efficient use of resources through monitoring mechanisms, setting up partnerships at local level, and improved co-ordination between different line Ministries.
- Several countries (Estonia, Latvia, Poland) acknowledge the need to reinforce in-company training or related forms of professional development. Here, the stress is on categories that will initiate, implement or monitor training activities (managers, instructors and mentors). The issue of specific support measures towards the employees in small and medium-sized businesses crops up in one report (Hungary).
- There are only a few references to developing an information policy or practices to encourage investment in learning (Latvia, Poland and Slovakia).
- Little attention goes to the role of social partners and their cooperation with the State in creating incentives to promote lifelong learning. Some reports (Bulgaria, Cyprus, Estonia, Hungary, Malta) reveal an awareness of the need to simulate the workers' interest in lifelong learning (flexible working time, status more closely linked to his/her qualifications).

Proposals for action at European level:

Many countries recognise the relevance of the European level to promote comparative studies on various topics (motivation measures for lifelong learning, evaluation of the quality of learning), as well as further conceptual or statistical work (Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia and Malta).

There are equally concrete proposals for European initiatives (European competition on best practices of investment in human resources (Lithuania): scheme of exchange learning and teaching credits (Malta).

Finally, two countries (Poland, Slovakia) state they need help to prepare for future participation in the Structural Funds.

Indicators:

Proposals presented by the five aforementioned countries under Key Message 1.

KEY MESSAGE 3: INNOVATION IN TEACHING AND LEARNING

Proposals for action at national level

- The reports show the countries adhere to the wider objectives of this Key Message.
- Shifting from traditional learning approaches to a learning approach based on interaction and stimulating participation and self-instruction is a shared priority.
- Significantly, most countries place more emphasis on developing innovative methods and the context for adult learning. One country (Lithuania) stresses the contribution of applied educational research in this process.
- The core issues that appear most often in the proposals of several countries (Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, Slovakia) are: the promotion of modular training; the development of self-assisted/self-managed forms of learning; and the role of eLearning and distance learning in this respect. Special attention also goes to quality assurance arrangements as regards information and communication technology-based educational materials and processes (Czech Republic).
- Preparing teachers and trainers to play radically different roles (facilitator, advisor, “researcher-practitioner”) in the context of lifelong learning is the key issue across most of the countries. In addition to the suggestions made in Key Message 1, reports focus on the particular need to improve/adapt the qualifications of adult trainers, school leaders and all educators in the broad sense subsequently variously engaged in lifelong learning.
- In this chapter, the more focused proposals include: co-ordinated training of information and communication technology specialists and adult teachers; learning at work for both students and educators; preparatory and in-service courses for adult trainers/educators that teach pedagogical skills appropriate for adult learners and the management of schools as community learning centres.
- Setting up procedures to monitor/control the quality of adult education is also a key priority for some countries (Poland, Slovakia).

Proposals for action at European level:

Some countries needed European support for:

- developing quality guidelines and benchmarks for the non-formal/adult education sector (Bulgaria, Estonia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia); setting up monitoring for the collection, evaluation and dissemination of information and communication technology-based pedagogies (Hungary).
- the continuing education of staff in institutions that provide adult training and counselling – this should be one of the priorities of European programmes (Czechoslovakia, Estonia).

Indicators:

As with the previous Key Message, the same five countries propose a number of indicators also in this area.

KEY MESSAGE 4: VALUING LEARNING

Proposals for actions at national level

Numerous projects are under way in Slovakia. Otherwise, the reports show that consideration of this issue is still at an early stage. While there are no concrete proposals, there are some principles and general orientations for future work at national level. The most frequently mentioned relate to:

- close links between the launch of modular training approaches and the development of innovative practices to value non-formal and informal learning (Bulgaria);
- the importance of building mutual trust through the involvement of all key participants in recognising learning outcomes (Estonia, Slovakia); links between the introduction of dynamic innovative styles of teaching and learning and changes in approaches to assessment (Malta);
- the need to boost know-how concerning the development of new ways to allow for the accreditation of prior and experiential learning (Latvia).

Proposals for action at European level:

Several countries would welcome European initiatives to:

- facilitate the exchange and sharing of experiences in this area;
- disseminate research in the evaluation of instruments for assessment and recognition;
- develop a tool/ framework/code of good practice for assessing skills and knowledge acquired through non-formal and informal learning.

Indicators:

Only one country (Cyprus) proposes indicators in this field.

KEY MESSAGE 5: RETHINKING GUIDANCE AND COUNSELLING

Proposals for action at national level

Significantly, the countries agree on several key action points to be pursued at national level. These concern:

- The development of on-line career guidance services for all, supported by appropriate databases on learning and employment opportunities extending access to these databases with to information sources to other European countries;
- The co-ordination of career selection and career orientation activities taking place at schools and on the labour market;
- The networking of national and local counselling centres;
- The incorporation of the “career guidance and counselling” subject in the curriculum at all levels of education;
- The working out of quality standards for guidance and counselling;
- The improvement of counsellors’ qualifications and skills by reinforcing their initial and in-service training on issues such as: the management and analysis of information; foreign languages; information and communication technology and interpersonal skills; ability to influence growth of positive attitudes on the labour market.

Proposals for action at European level:

- Setting up a European database on employment and learning opportunities (Estonia, Latvia); Setting guidelines and rules for developing related databases at national level (type, scope of information, collection methods) (Poland);
- Setting up a European Education Portal equipped with thematically classified information on educational materials, including up-to-date information on media education programmes, and other current high quality media products. To complement this, there should be an open network of specialists and support for setting up national education Portals (Slovakia).

Indicators:

A single proposal from Cyprus.

KEY MESSAGE 6: BRINGING LEARNING CLOSER TO HOME

Proposals for action at national level:

The reports show the countries mostly agree on the priorities for action and measures at national level:

- Mobilising all available educational and cultural resources (training institutions, libraries, museums, cultural centres, youth organisations, etc.) at local/regional levels for the purposes of lifelong learning;
- Developing an integrated way of using these resources (through suitable electronic connections, networking and co-ordination arrangements) to optimise their learning services;
- Developing information and communication technology-based learning tools and materials to reinforce/expand the function of these resources as learning centres. At the same time, the centres must support more flexible (individual and self-directed) learning processes;
- Providing adequate staff development actions in the institutions and agencies to enable staff to fulfil their new more explicit learning-oriented tasks;
- Developing (or making better use of existing) co-operation platforms to unite all those involved at regional/local level. Aim: to enhance communication between the education and work environments.

Proposals for action at European level:

This Key Message does not make any explicit proposals for action addressed to the European level.

Indicators:

One country (Cyprus) produced one proposal.