Free movement of persons: mobility for students, persons undergoing training, young volunteers, teachers, trainers

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The Council has reaffirmed its commitment to enhance cooperation in vocational education and training in order to remove obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility and promote access to lifelong learning. The Council acknowledges that priority should be given to the following : - the European dimension : it is necessary to strengthen the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer cooperation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional cooperation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners; - transparency, information and guidance : it is necessary to rationalise information tools and networks, including the integration of existing instruments such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the Common European framework of reference for languages and the EUROPASS into one single framework; - strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning, vocational education and training, and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe; - recognition of competences and qualifications : investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training; - increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, by reinforcing cooperation and co-ordination especially involving the social partners. Several initiatives on a Community, bilateral and multilateral basis, including those already identified in various sectors aiming at mutually recognised qualifications, illustrate this approach; - developing a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels; - quality assurance : promoting cooperation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training; - giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training. The Council invites the Member States and the Commission within the framework of their responsibilities: - to take the appropriate steps to initiate the implementation of the priorities set out in this resolution; - to build on and adapt existing structures and instruments in Europe relevant to the above priorities, and establish, where appropriate, links with work in the context of the Bolognadeclaration; - fully to involve the key players, particularly the social partners, and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training; - to involve, in accordance with existing objectives and agreements, the candidate and EFTA-EEA countries in this process; - to enhance cooperation, where appropriate, with relevant international organisations in particular, the OECD, UNESCO, ILO and the Council of Europe in the development of vocational education and training policies and concrete actions; - to submit a progress report as part of the report on the follow-up of the future objectives of education and training systems as requested by the European Council for its Spring meeting of 2004.