

Lifelong education and training. Memorandum

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PURPOSE : to establish a Memorandum on Education and life long learning with the aim of opening a debate and laying the foundations for a lifelong learning strategy. **CONTENT** : the Commission presented this Memorandum in response to the Lisbon European Council in March 2000 and its conclusions concerning a Europe of knowledge, which have inevitable repercussions in the field of education and training. It is also a response to the mandate given by the Lisbon and Feira European Councils, i.e. to make lifelong learning available to everyone. The aim of the Memorandum is to initiate a debate at European level and in the Member States, the countries of the European Economic Area (EEA) and the applicant countries, on a global strategy to reach this goal. The two objectives of equal importance for lifelong learning are the promotion of active citizenship and the promotion of vocational skills in order to adapt to the demands of the new knowledge-based society and to allow full participation in social and economic life. Lifelong learning is designed to provide the people of Europe with the essential tools they require for self-development and in order to play an active part in modern society, including the skills needed in the field of new technologies. This Memorandum contains six key messages highlighting the principal elements recommended for a coherent future strategy: - to allow people to acquire or refresh the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge-based society; - to visibly raise levels of investment in human resources in order to give priority to Europe's most important asset - its people; - to introduce innovations in education and learning by developing effective methods for the continuum of lifelong learning; - to enhance the status of education by improving the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning; - to ensure that everyone can easily access good-quality information and advice about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout their lives; - to match lifelong learning opportunities as closely as possible to the needs of the people. Lifelong learning will be put into practice on the basis of shared responsibility and a partnership between the Member States and the European Commission, between the social partners, between firms and educational and training establishments, and between various fields in education and training. The aim of this process is to begin a debate that is as broad and varied as possible. By mid-2001, consultation at European level will be taking place in parallel with consultations closer to the people. The purpose of consultation is to involve the key actors in each Member State and in the EEA countries and the applicant countries. The Commission will present an action plan towards the end of 2001 which will set specific objectives and define concrete areas for action. In the meantime, work to develop indicators and benchmarks, and to identify best practice, will continue.