European area of education and lifelong learning: strategy and priorities

2002/2073(COS) - 05/09/2002 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted the Commission's initiative in the area of Lifelong Learning. (Please refer to the summary dated 04/06/02). The Plenary considers that the socially disadvantaged and other excluded groups should be the target for lifelong learning policies because of the difficulties they often face due to poor literacy/numeracy and ICT skills and their alienation from education and training systems. It calls for measures to provide incentives and opportunities specifically designed for such groups, at the same time, calls on further training establishments to cooperate to increase the supply of further training in the Member States. The Commission is called upon to develop a European framework of basic skills to be acquired by all pupils before they leave compulsory school education. On the otherhand, public authorities are called upon to develop programmes to facilitate access to and improve the quality of training by developing local learning centres, based in schools and other locations. The Parliament calls for the competent public authorities and the Commission to devise common guidelines for skills plans and validation systems which can be used to facilitate mutual recognition of certificates, diplomas and degrees. Member States are urged to take the necessary measures to promote the identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal and informal learning to boost the exchnage of information and experience about 'examples of good practice' at European level and to assist the Commission to draw up an inventory of national practices in this area and a framework for the exchange of experience. Member States are urged to agree on a specific target for annual expenditure on lifelong learning and to provide fiscal and other incentives to encourage investment in lifelong learning by employers and individual citizens. Lastly, the Commission is called upon to ensure that each Member State takes the legal steps necessary to offer and provide access to lifelong learning for all employees or jobseekers.