Basic information

2012/2045(INI) INI - Own-initiative procedure	Procedure completed
Education, training and Europe 2020 **Subject** 4.40.01 European area for education, training and lifelong learning	

Key players

European Parliament

Committee responsible	Rapporteur	Appointed
CULT Culture and Education	HONEYBALL Mary (S&D)	23/01/2012
	Shadow rapporteur ZANICCHI Iva (PPE) TAKKULA Hannu (ALDE) ALFONSI François (Verts /ALE) MIGALSKI Marek Henryk (ECR) VERGIAT Marie-Christine (GUE/NGL)	

Committee for opinion	Rapporteur for opinion	Appointed
BUDG Budgets	The committee decided not to give an opinion.	
EMPL Employment and Social Affairs	LUDVIGSSON Olle (S&D)	15/03/2012

European Commission

Commission DG	Commissioner
Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion	ANDOR László

Key events

Date	Event	Reference	Summary
20/12/2011	Non-legislative basic document published	COM(2011)0902	Summary

15/03/2012	Committee referral announced in Parliament		
10/07/2012	Vote in committee		
19/07/2012	Committee report tabled for plenary	A7-0247/2012	Summary
11/09/2012	Decision by Parliament	T7-0323/2012	Summary
11/09/2012	Results of vote in Parliament		
11/09/2012	End of procedure in Parliament		

Technical information

Procedure reference	2012/2045(INI)
Procedure type	INI - Own-initiative procedure
Procedure subtype	Initiative
Legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 55
Other legal basis	Rules of Procedure EP 165
Stage reached in procedure	Procedure completed
Committee dossier	CULT/7/09067

Documentation gateway

European Parliament

Document type	Committee	Reference	Date	Summary
Committee draft report		PE485.903	27/03/2012	
Amendments tabled in committee		PE488.015	15/05/2012	
Committee opinion	EMPL	PE489.405	06/07/2012	
Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading		A7-0247/2012	19/07/2012	Summary
Text adopted by Parliament, single reading		T7-0323/2012	11/09/2012	Summary

European Commission

Document type	Reference	Date	Summary
Commission document (COM)	COM(2011)0902	20/12/2011	Summary
Commission response to text adopted in plenary	SP(2012)766	19/12/2012	

National parliaments

Document type	Parliament /Chamber	Reference	Date	Summary
Contribution	DE_BUNDESRAT	COM(2011)0902	17/02/2012	
Contribution	PT_PARLIAMENT	COM(2011)0902	13/04/2012	

Education, training and Europe 2020

2012/2045(INI) - 20/12/2011 - Non-legislative basic document

PURPOSE: to present the **draft 2012 Joint Report** of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Strategic Framework for European cooperation in **education and training** (ET2020).

BACKGROUND: in 2009, the Council drew up the Strategic Framework for European Cooperation in education and training ("ET 2020").

Since then, the economic and political context has changed, creating new uncertainties and constraints. The European Union had to take further action to stem the worst financial and economic crisis in its history and, in response, has agreed on a strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth: Europe 2020. Education and training play a crucial role in this strategy.

The 2012 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) stresses that: the focus of Europe 2020 needs to be simultaneously on: reform measures having a short-term growth effect; and on setting the right growth model for the medium-term. **Education and training systems have to be modernised** to reinforce their efficiency and quality and to equip people with the skills and competences they need to succeed on the labour market.

A key instrument to modernise education and training, ET 2020 can make a major contribution to achieving Europe 2020's objectives. But to do this, ET 2020 must be adjusted by updating its working priorities, tools and governance structure. Based on an assessment of progress made in key policy areas in the last three years, this draft Joint Report proposes **new working priorities for the period 2012 – 2014** geared to mobilise education and training to support Europe 2020.

The draft Joint Report also sets out a number of options to adjust the governance of ET 2020 to ensure that it contributes to Europe 2020.

CONTENT: research suggests that improving educational achievements can yield immense long-term returns and generate growth and jobs in the European Union. Reaching the European benchmark of less than 15% low achievers in basic skills by 2020, for example, could generate enormous long-term aggregate economic gains for the European Union.

This contrasts with the fact that — even before the crisis — spending in some Member States was rather low, close to or below 4% of GDP, while the European Union average stood at almost 5% of GDP — below the level of 5.3% in the United States.

Ne investments and reforms are needed:

- **Early School Leaving (ESL)**: youth unemployment has risen from 15.5 % in 2008 to 20.9 % in 2010, while the share of 15 to 24 year olds neither in education, employment or training rose by two percentage points. 53 % of early school leavers were unemployed. Against this backdrop, the Europe 2020 target to reduce the share of 18 – 24 year olds having left education and training prematurely to **less than 10% by 2020** becomes particularly critical. If current trends continue, this target will not be reached. As Europe is not on track to achieve the headline target, there is an urgent need to strengthen the policy approach. In the next years, work on ESL needs to be one of the top priorities under ET 2020;
- **tertiary education attainment**: to emerge stronger from the crisis, Europe needs to generate economic growth based on knowledge and innovation. Higher education can be a powerful driver in this respect. It provides the highly-qualified scientific workforce that Europe needs to advance research and development and equips people with the skills and qualifications they need in the knowledge-intensive economy. Europe 2020 set the Headline Target to increase the share of 30-34 year olds with a tertiary or equivalent degree to 40 % by 2020. In 2010, the average level of tertiary education attainment of this age group was 33.6 %. To reach the target, Member States should continue their reform efforts. Reforms should address the challenge of increasing the number of successful graduates, while maintaining and enhancing the quality of education and research. Modernising higher education will contribute significantly to achieving the objectives of Europe 2020;
- **lifelong learning strategies**: for the majority of Europeans, lifelong learning (LLL) is not a reality. Recent data on the number of adults aged 25 – 64 participation in LLL show a slight downwards trend. The current level of 9.1 % (2010) is far below the ET 2020 benchmark of 15% to be reached by 2020. This weak performance is especially serious given the crisis. Unemployed young people and low-skilled adults need to be able to rely on education and training to give them a better chance in the labour market. Member States must improve their systems as regards the detection of obstacles to life long learning, putting in place global strategies, etc;
- **learning mobility**: mobility strengthens Europe's foundation for future knowledge-based growth and ability to innovate and compete at international level10. It strengthens peoples' employability and personal development and is valued by employers. Education institutions, education and training systems and businesses equally benefit from the learning experience, personal contacts and networks that result from mobility. Promoting transnational learning mobility is an excellent example of European added value. However, current levels of mobility do not reflect its value. Roughly 10% — 15% of higher education graduates spend a proportion of their studies abroad, where the added value of mobility is most widely acknowledged; but only about 3% of graduates from initial VET do so. European funding programmes have a key role to play. As part of the new Multiannual Financial Framework for 2014 – 2020, the Commission has proposed to nearly double the number of beneficiaries in the future 'Erasmus for all' programme, from 400 000 to almost 700 000 per year. However, financial programmes need to go hand in hand with policy reforms;
- **new skills and jobs**: the crisis has spurred changes in the demand for skills. Demand for jobs requiring low qualifications is decreasing, and tomorrow's knowledge-based industries require increasing levels of qualification. A recent forecast expects the share of highly qualified jobs to increase by almost 16 million, from 29 % (2010) to 35 % of all jobs in 2020. Conversely, the share of jobs demanding a low level of skills is expected to fall by around 12 million, from 20 % to less than 15%. ET 2020 must support the implementation of the Flagship Initiative 'Agenda for new skills and jobs'. The Commission will present in 2012 a Communication on rethinking skills, proposing action to improve key competences and to promote closer links between education and the labour market.
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- **ET 2020'S contribution to Europe 2020**: the communication underscores the urgent need to invest in reformed education and training so that it supports sustainable growth and jobs. On the basis of the Commission's assessment and the consultation of Member States and European stakeholder organisations, the Commission confirms that the four ET 2020 strategic objectives set in 2009 remain valid. It proposes replacing the list of mid-term priority areas agreed in 2009 by a **new one that is geared to mobilise education and training** to support growth and jobs. In addition, the Commission suggests reviewing the working arrangements under ET 2020 that were devised before Europe 2020 and the European Semester were agreed. To increase the contribution of ET 2020 to Europe 2020, the **governance** of ET 2020 and its working tools could be adjusted to coincide with the framework established by the European Semester. Moreover, to strengthen the link between Europe 2020 and ET 2020, the Commission could organise every year an exchange of views between stakeholders in the field of education and training. This new Education and Training Forum could in early October discuss progress in modernising education and training systems drawing on the discussion of education issues in the European Semester. Lastly, all instruments need to be mobilised to achieve the objectives set under Europe 2020 and ET 2020, including the Lifelong Learning Programme, the future Erasmus for all Programme, structural funds and Horizon 2020.

Annex: it should be noted that the Annex of the Communication proposes **new priority areas** for European cooperation in education and training in 2012-14:

(**1) Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality**: the main measures include: (i)improving European reference tools; (ii) to promote learning mobility at all levels; (iii) the development of comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies.

(2) Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training : (i) to improve basic skills (literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology), languages; (ii) to modernise higher education and increasing tertiary attainment levels ; (iii) to attract and promote the relevance of VET; (iii) to provide efficient funding and evaluation.

(3) Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship: (i) to prevent early school leaving; (ii) to promote early childhood education and care (ECEC) ; (iii) to reinforce mutual learning on effective ways to raise educational achievement in an increasingly diverse society.

(4) Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training: (i) to promote partnerships with business, research, civil society; (ii) to support networks for schools, universities and other education and training providers to promote new methods of organising learning (including Open Educational Resources); (iii) to work together to promote the acquisition of the key competences identified in the 2006 Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, including digital competences and how ICT and entrepreneurship can enhance innovation in education and training.

Education, training and Europe 2020

2012/2045(INI) - 19/07/2012 - Committee report tabled for plenary, single reading

The Committee on Culture and Education adopted the own-initiative report by Mary HONEYBALL (S&D, UK) on Education, Training and Europe 2020 in response to the Commission Communication entitled 'Education and Training in smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe'. The committee notes that despite some improvement in education and training, for the majority of the EU population lifelong learning (LLL) is still not a reality, and **certain indicators are, in fact, worrying**. However, economic growth must be based, as a matter of priority, on education, knowledge, innovation and appropriate social policies to make the EU emerge out of the current crises, and it is important to implement the policies in this sphere withinthe EU 2020 strategy framework properly to get through this crucial period.

Investment in education: Members point out that some Member States have pursued budget cuts in education and training in light of the current economic situation. They believe, however, that those investments with the greatest strategic value should be safeguarded and even increased. They emphasise that the Union's multiannual financial framework anticipates that **education and related sectors will obtain the biggest percentage increase** under the EU's long-term budget, which must be approved. Member States are asked to adopt their national LLL strategies, with suitable amounts of financial resources as the best possible tool available for reaching the objectives outlined in the ET 2020 strategy. The committee also highlights the fact that the economic costs of the consequences of educational underperformance, including school dropout and social inequalities within education and training systems and their impact on the development of the Member States, are **significantly higher than the costs of the financial crisis**, and Member States are already paying the price year after year.

The committee requests that Member States **target a total investment of at least 2% of GDP in higher education**, as recommended by the Commission in the Annual Growth and Employment Survey, being the minimum required for knowledge-based economies. It recalls that, in order to be competitive in the future with the new global powers, Members States are required to achieve the basic Europe 2020 objectives which, in the field of education, can be expressed as reaching 3% in investments for research, increasing to 40 % the number of young people with a university education, and reducing early school leaving to below 10%. The report proposes that Member States deduct investments in education and training from the national deficit calculation of the fiscal compact.

Young people: Members feel that a **special focus should be given to young people**, bearing in mind that the EU unemployment rate has increased to over 20%, with peaks in excess of 50% in some Member States or some regions. They highlight, in particular, the **detrimental effects of austerity programmes on youth unemployment in certain EU States**, especially those in southern Europe, leading to a significant brain drain to other countries, including countries outside the EU; recalls also that one out of seven of today's pupils (14.4%) leaves the education system with no more than a lower secondary education and does not participate in any further education or training.

In this regard, the Commission and Member States are asked to:

- make further efforts to elaborate clearer and more targeted youth policies at EU level which are tailored to meet society's new challenges;

- implement measures targeted at young people likely to leave school early or who are not in education, training or employment, so that they can gain the skills and experience they need to enter employment;
- give special attention to vocational education and training in tertiary education, taking into account the diversity of national education systems;
- step up their efforts to ensure that young people can gain real work experience and quickly enter the job market;
- monitor how quickly young graduates obtain employment appropriate to their education and knowledge after they complete their education, make an assessment, on the basis of this information, of the quality of education and training systems and of the need and possibility to make adjustments;
- work consistently on the introduction, implementation and further development of the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, Europass and the European Qualifications Framework;
- provide support, including financial support, for informal and non-formal education within the framework of the new programmes for education and youth, as well as for citizenship.

The role of universities: Members go on to call on **universities to widen access** to learning, and to modernise their curricula to address the new challenges, in order to upgrade the skills of the European population. They encourage dialogue between private stakeholders, particularly SMEs and local and regional authorities, civil society stakeholders and higher-education institutes/universities in order **to promote the acquisition by students of knowledge and skills to facilitate their entry into the labour market**.

Other priorities: the report moves on to stress (i) the decisive importance of facilitating access for persons with disabilities to LLL, through disability mainstreaming in all programmes intended for the general public; (ii) the need to give workers proper credit for in-service training; (iii) the need to address the disparity between men and women graduating with degrees in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), as exemplified by the fact that only 20 % of engineering graduates are female; (iv) the need to increase investments in sports, and to promote sports activities in schools; (v) opportunities for LLL for older people.

Mobility: with regard to mobility, Members note that, although a European area of education and training is emerging, **the objective of removing obstacles to mobility has not been achieved yet**, and the mobility of learners in VET remains low. They believe that it is vital to promote mobility through ambitious community programmes for education and culture, in particular through exchanges of teachers, students and pupils, and especially in the language field. Members highlight the need for everyone to acquire **excellent language skills** from a very early age, as this will enable people to be more mobile, giving them greater access to the labour market and significantly increased opportunities for study, while serving to promote intercultural exchanges and greater European cohesion.

Early childhood education: the committee stresses the importance of **early childhood education**, and regrets that the Commission does not give adequate coverage to the issue of early school development, particularly its linguistic dimension, despite the fact that it comprises a basic objective of the Europe 2020 strategy. It strongly believes that investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC) brings greater returns than investing in any other stage of education.

Small grants: lastly, the committee encourages Member States to consider **the possibility of introducing a wider system of small grants**, with a minimum of red tape, for pre-university students facing financial difficulties, so as to encourage them to stay in education.

Education, training and Europe 2020

2012/2045(INI) - 11/09/2012 - Text adopted by Parliament, single reading

The European Parliament adopted a resolution on Education, Training and Europe 2020 in response to the Commission Communication entitled ‘Education and Training in smart, sustainable and inclusive Europe’. It notes that despite some improvement in education and training, for the majority of the EU population lifelong learning (LLL) is still not a reality, and **certain indicators are, in fact, worrying**. However, economic growth must be based, as a matter of priority, on education, knowledge, innovation and appropriate social policies to make the EU emerge out of the current crises, and it is important to implement the policies in this sphere within the EU 2020 strategy framework properly to get through this crucial period.

Investment in education: Members point out that some Member States have pursued budget cuts in education and training in light of the current economic situation. They believe, however, that **those investments with the greatest strategic value should be safeguarded and even increased**. They emphasise that the Union’s multiannual financial framework anticipates that **education and related sectors will obtain the biggest percentage increase** under the EU’s long-term budget, which must be approved. Member States are asked to adopt their national LLL strategies, with suitable amounts of financial resources as the best possible tool available for reaching the objectives outlined in the ET 2020 strategy. Parliament also highlights the fact that the economic costs of the consequences of educational underperformance, including school dropout and social inequalities within education and training systems and their impact on the development of the Member States, are **significantly higher than the costs of the financial crisis**, and Member States are already paying the price year after year.

Parliament wants Member States to **target a total investment of at least 2% of GDP in higher education**, as recommended by the Commission in the Annual Growth and Employment Survey, being the minimum required for knowledge-based economies. It recalls that, in order to be competitive in the future with the new global powers, Members States are required to achieve the basic Europe 2020 objectives which, in the field of education, can be expressed as reaching 3% in investments for research, increasing to 40% the number of young people with a university education, and reducing early school leaving to below 10%. Parliament proposes that **Member States deduct investments in education and training from the national deficit calculation of the fiscal compact**.

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In this regard, the Commission and Member States are asked to:

- make further efforts to elaborate clearer and more targeted youth policies at EU level which are tailored to meet society's new challenges;
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Universities: Members go on to call on **universities to widen access to learning**, and to modernise their curricula to address the new challenges, in order to upgrade the skills of the European population. They encourage dialogue between private stakeholders, particularly SMEs and local and regional authorities, civil society stakeholders and higher-education institutes/universities in order to **promote the acquisition by students of knowledge and skills to facilitate their entry into the labour market**.

Other priorities: Parliament moves on to stress (i) the decisive importance of facilitating access for persons with disabilities to LLL, through disability mainstreaming in all programmes intended for the general public; (ii) the need to give workers proper credit for in-service training; (iii) the need to address the disparity between men and women graduating with degrees in STEM subjects (science, technology, engineering and mathematics), as exemplified by the fact that only 20% of engineering graduates are female; (iv) the need to increase investments in sports, and to promote sports activities in schools; (v) opportunities for LLL for older people.

Education from an early age: with regard to mobility, Members note that, although a European area of education and training is emerging, **the objective of removing obstacles to mobility has not been achieved yet**, and the mobility of learners in VET remains low. They believe that it is vital to promote mobility through ambitious community programmes for education and culture, in particular through exchanges of teachers, students and pupils, and especially in the language field. Members highlight the need for everyone to acquire **excellent language skills** from a very early age, as this will enable people to be more mobile, giving them greater access to the labour market. Parliament stresses the importance of **early childhood education**, and regrets that the Commission does not give adequate coverage to the issue of early school development, particularly its linguistic dimension, despite the fact that it comprises a basic objective of the Europe 2020 strategy. It strongly believes that investing in early childhood education and care (ECEC) brings greater returns than investing in any other stage of education.

Small grants: Parliament encourages Member States to **consider the possibility of introducing a wider system of small grants**, with a minimum of red tape, for pre-university students facing financial difficulties, so as to encourage them to stay in education.

External dimension of education: lastly, Parliament calls for the external dimension of education to be enhanced through an intensified policy dialogue and through cooperation on education and training between the Union and its international partners and neighbouring countries.