



**COUNCIL OF  
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

**Brussels, 25 May 2011**

**10697/11**

**EDUC 108  
SOC 443  
STATIS 49**

**COVER NOTE**

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from:	Secretary-General of the European Commission, signed by Mr Jordi AYET PUIGARNAU, Director
date of receipt:	24 May 2011
to:	Mr Pierre de BOISSIEU, Secretary-General of the Council of the European Union

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No Cion doc.:	SEC(2011) 670 final
Subject:	Commission Staff Working Paper on the development of benchmarks on education and training for employability and on learning mobility

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Delegations will find attached Commission document SEC(2011) 670 final.

Encl.: SEC(2011) 670 final



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Brussels, 24.5.2011  
SEC(2011) 670 final

**COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER**

**on the development of benchmarks on education and training for employability and on  
learning mobility**

## I. Introduction

1. Education and training lie at the heart of the EU's Europe 2020 strategy to exit the recession and establish the foundations for future knowledge-based growth and social cohesion. The Europe 2020 headline target - to reduce the rate of early school leavers to less than 10% and to increase the share of 30-34 years old having completed tertiary or equivalent education to at least 40% - provides strategic direction for education and training policies as do the two Europe 2020 flagship actions, Youth on the Move<sup>1</sup> and the Agenda for New Skills and Jobs.<sup>2</sup>
2. Under the umbrella of Europe 2020, the Commission and the Member States engage in joint policy reflection regarding common challenges and good policy approaches for education and training systems within an Open Method of Co-ordination (OMC) framework. Such cooperation has been ongoing since 2002 and the Council in May 2009 agreed on a new framework for updated policy cooperation for the decade until 2020, known as Education and Training 2020 (ET 2020).
3. European benchmarks are used within this framework to drive this voluntary and cooperative policy exchange between Member States and the Commission and to monitor progress on the key policy issues which have been identified.<sup>3</sup> Five European benchmarks which were agreed in the Conclusions of May 2009 to underpin the process to 2020 are listed in Appendix 1 attached.
4. The Council in its conclusions asked the Commission to conduct work on developing possible new benchmarks to cover two policy issues not hitherto covered, namely: the role of education and training in raising people's employability; and learning mobility. This report is a response to this mandate. The development work undertaken has involved extensive consultation with Member States through expert working groups<sup>4</sup> and the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks.<sup>5</sup> The Commission also outlined how the work could form the basis for a possible benchmark to a meeting of the High Level Group on Education and Training<sup>6</sup> in December 2010. The approach, outlined below, to addressing the mandates reflects these discussions with Member States.
5. Adding such benchmarks would have the aim of allowing policy exchanges regarding learning mobility and employability to be taken up within ET 2020; they would help to ensure that such exchanges are strongly evidence-based. This would also signal a strengthening of the EU's determination to tackle the education challenges highlighted within Europe 2020. Helping young Europeans to acquire the

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<sup>1</sup> COM(2010) 477 final

<sup>2</sup> COM(2010) 682 final

<sup>3</sup> See annex 1.

<sup>4</sup> The Commission invited Member States to nominate delegates to two specific Expert Groups - one on education for employability and one on learning mobility. Both expert groups met twice in the spring of 2010. The mobility expert group had an additional meeting in autumn 2010. The two groups also included representatives of different Commission services with an interest in the issue

<sup>5</sup> An expert group on indicators and benchmarks in which all member states and EEA are represented.

<sup>6</sup> The High Level Group on education and training policy is a group of the leading advisors to the national Ministers of Education which meet at least every six months prior to beginning of each Presidency of the European Union to discuss issues of a strategic nature in the European cooperation in education and training.

knowledge, skills, experience and intercultural competences<sup>7</sup> needed to succeed in the EU labour market is more essential than ever as the number of young jobseekers soars and youth unemployment stands at 20.8% (15-24 year olds in 2010). Ensuring that young people leave education with the best possible support to get their first job is critical, especially when the recession risks turning the inevitably difficult task of getting established on the labour market into something more long-term and structural. The potential cost of losing the "crisis" generation is very high both at individual and societal level.

6. The two areas are strongly linked. Indeed, learning mobility is seen as an important way for young people to strengthen their future employability in an increasingly integrated European labour market. Learning mobility by increasing labour market mobility can also help the European labour market overcome the phenomenon of simultaneous labour shortages and surpluses which is evident even during the current recession.
7. The Council conclusions of May 2009 clearly set out the role that benchmarks should play as "reference levels of average European performance:

"They should not be considered as concrete targets for individual countries to reach by 2020. Rather, Member States are invited to consider, on the basis of national priorities and whilst taking account of changing economic circumstances, how and to what extent they can contribute to the collective achievement of the European benchmarks through national actions.

Such benchmarks are reference levels of EU average performance; they are less directive than the headline targets within the overall Europe 2020 strategy which are translated into national targets."

8. This report includes possible approaches to the framing of European benchmarks. It also outlines how it could be possible to make use of existing data. Finally, it acknowledges limitations in the information-base regarding both issues and suggests to enhance data availability in the future, while seeking to minimise administrative burdens by maximising the use of existing surveys.

## **II. Work on a benchmark on education and training for employability**

*Given the importance of enhancing employability through education and training in order to meet current and future labour market challenges, the Commission is invited to submit to the Council a proposal for a possible European benchmark in this area by the end of 2010.*

*Mandate in Council Conclusions of May 2009<sup>8</sup>*

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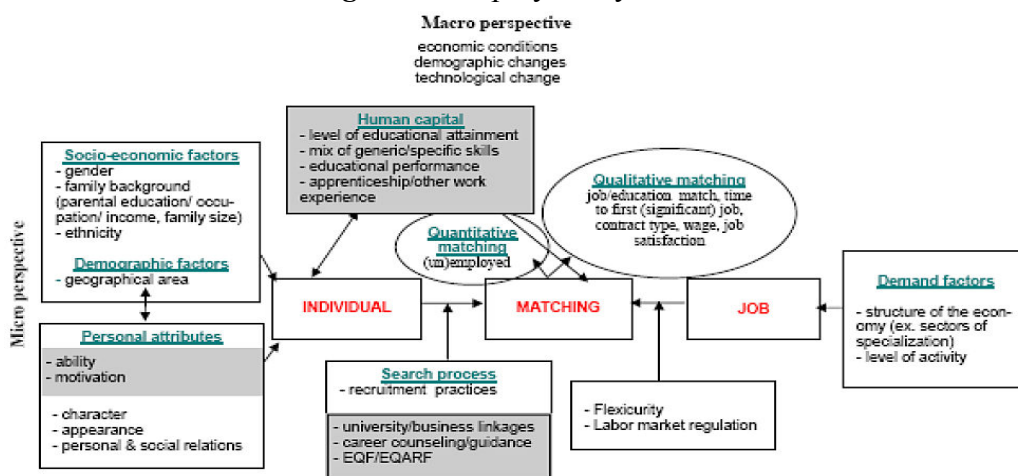
<sup>7</sup> The European framework for key competences for lifelong learning, agreed by the Council and Parliament at the end of 2006, identifies and defines the key abilities and knowledge that everyone needs in order to achieve employment, personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship.  
<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:EN:PDF>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

## II. 1. Education and training for employability – defining the issue<sup>9</sup>

9. Employability has been defined as: “The combination of factors which enable individuals to progress towards or get into employment, to stay in employment and to progress during their career.”<sup>10</sup>
10. The complexity of the employability concept is illustrated by figure 1 below. The grey-shaded areas indicate where education and training (E&T) plays a role. Education and Training – formal, non-formal and informal - is a key determinant of a person's human capital, both initially and, through lifelong learning, in its updating and improvement over the working life. Good education and training should also stimulate motivation, build the skills important for the workplace and facilitate job search.
11. Nevertheless, the figure also illustrates that many employability factors lie beyond the scope of E&T policy. At the individual level, socio-economic determinants and personal attributes play an important role; while at the macro level, labour market regulations, structure of the economy and the overall economic situation constitute important employability conditions.
12. The aim of strengthening employability is, therefore, a policy concern which is shared between the public authorities responsible for education and for employment. In terms of EU policy processes, it is a matter for discussion both within the ET 2020 and European Employment Strategy.

**Figure 1: Employability factors**



Source: CRELL<sup>11</sup>

Note: EQF=European Qualifications Framework; EQARF=European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET.

<sup>9</sup> Background analyses on the definition of the indicator and the methodology for its construction were provided by the Centre for Research on Lifelong Learning (CRELL), Joint Research Centre (Ispra), see: JRC report EUR 24330 EN (2010) "Discussion note on a benchmark on the contribution of education and training to employability"; JRC EUR 24624 EN (2010) "Towards a benchmark on the contribution of Education and Training to Employability: In-depth analysis of key issues" and JRC EUR 24616 EN (2011) "Towards a benchmark on the contribution of Education and Training to Employability: Methodological Note".

<sup>10</sup> Cedefop (2008). Terminology of European education and training policy: a selection of 100 key terms. Luxembourg: Publications Office

<sup>11</sup> CRELL see: JRC report EUR 24330 EN (2010)

13. The specific role of education and training in relation to employability could be summarised as follows: in the context of their wider societal goals, education and training systems should provide the best possible support for the labour market success of citizens. The aim behind the development of a European benchmark on education and training for employability would be to promote debate on and help identify what education and training can do to boost the employability of graduates.
14. Education and training's support for employability can be seen in three distinct phases:
- "preparation for employment" within the continuum of formal education and training. Irrespective of the educational pathway chosen and the level of qualification attained, all young people should leave their initial education equipped with key competences and the necessary motivation and understanding of the labour market to allow them to progress in their future careers, all the while bearing in mind that preparation for employment is not the only purpose of formal education.
  - "transition from education to employment": this refers to the end of the "preparation for employment" phase. During this phase, the contribution of education and training systems could, for instance, occur through career guidance and counselling; and through the development of qualification frameworks which are transparent, comparable and understandable to potential employers.
  - "stay in employment and progress in career": this phase refers to the capacity of education and training systems to update and upgrade continuously the knowledge and skills of workers. It implies an openness and accessibility of E&T systems to all adult learners.
15. The expert group, assisted by research papers produced by CRELL<sup>12</sup>, analysed each of these phases in details to ascertain their role in relation to employability. Moreover, a mapping of relevant policy issues and possible benchmark indicators was undertaken for each phase. On this basis six possible benchmark indicators were identified – one in the phase "preparation for employment", two in the phase "transition from education to employment" and three in the phase "stay in employment and progress in career".
16. However, of these three phases, two were already monitored by an extensive framework. Indeed, "Preparation for employment" is covered by 4 of the 5 benchmarks under the ET 2020 while "Stay in employment and progress in career" is covered by the fifth ET 2020 benchmark on adult participation in lifelong learning.<sup>13</sup> The phase relating to the "transition from education to work" is not yet addressed. This is where a young person's employability will depend most directly on the quality of what he/she has learned in his/her formal education and it's relevance for the labour market. It is therefore the phase upon which the work on a possible benchmark on education for employability has been most heavily focused.

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<sup>12</sup> CRELL see: JRC EUR 24624 EN (2010)

<sup>13</sup> Annex 1 provides an overview of existing benchmarks.

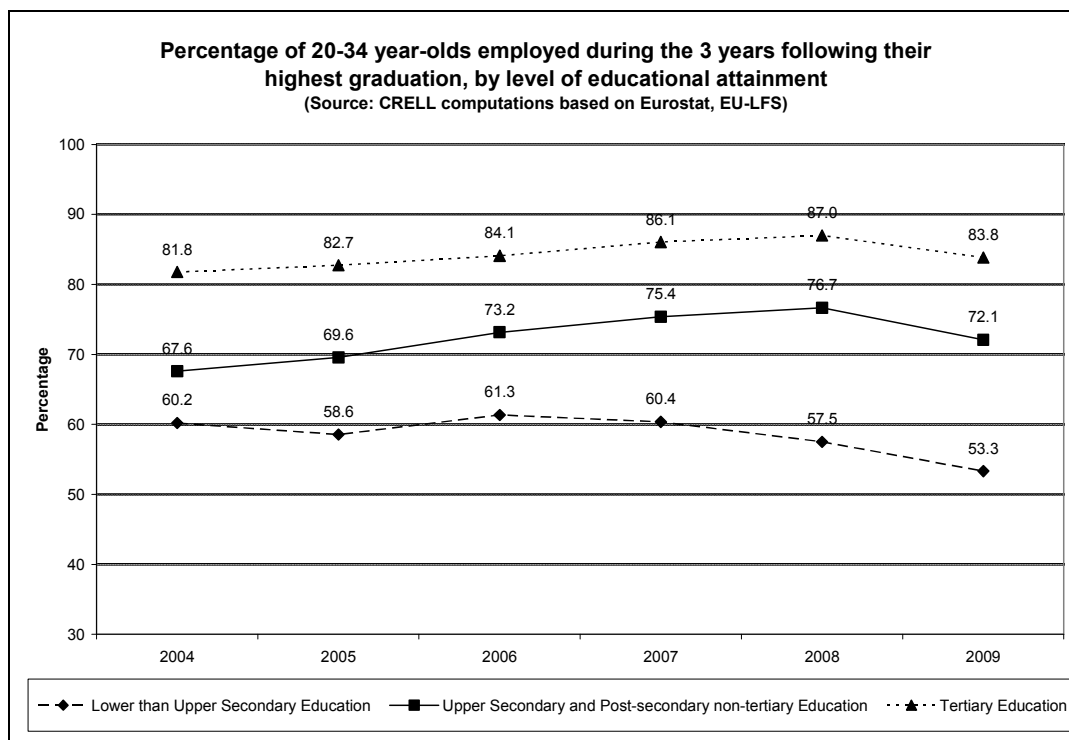
## II. 2. Transition from education and training to work – an essential step in the life of a young person

17. When focusing on the transition from education and training to employment, there are two key aspects to consider – does the young person succeed in getting a first job and how quickly; and, is the quality of the first job commensurate with the education the young person has attained? Both issues have important long-term implications and should, therefore, form part of the framing of a possible benchmark.
18. Success in getting a job and the duration of transition are potentially life-changing issues. Young people who face unemployment or a slow transition may experience long-term adverse effects on personal morale, future labour market success, earnings or family formation. The quality of the first job is also important: mismatches between qualifications attained in education and the skill level of the first job have implications in terms of economic cost and returns to education, labour productivity and the ability of a person to make labour market progress in the future. The recent European Commission Communication "An Agenda for new skills and jobs" underlines that "delivering the right mix of skills is important, but equally important is avoiding the under-utilisation of people's talents and potential".
19. The current economic crisis accentuates the importance of the education to work transition. The potential cost of seeing the group which is currently in transition from education to employment suffer such long-term damage is too high. This is particularly true in view of demographic ageing, which demands that Europe's increasingly scarce young people integrate quickly and effectively into the labour market.
20. The graph below illustrates the challenges of integrating young people during the recession. The share of 20-34 year olds in employment has deteriorated between 2008 and 2009. While for the high educated, the share in employment has decreased by approximately 3 percentage points between 2008 and 2009 (from 87 in 2008 to 83.8%) it has decreased by close to 4.5 percentage points for the medium level educated (from 76.7.6% to 72.1%). Likewise, more than half of the 8 percentage points decrease suffered by the low educated since 2006 (from 61.3% in 2006 to 53.3% in 2009) occurred between 2008 and 2009.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> For an overview of country performance see annex 2, table 1.

**Figure 2**



*Note:* Lower than Upper Secondary Education corresponds to ISCED levels 0-2 (including 3c short); Upper Secondary and Post-secondary non-tertiary Education to ISCED levels 3-4 and Tertiary Education to ISCED levels 5-6.

### II. 3. Possible approach to framing a benchmark on education and training for employability<sup>15</sup>

21. As illustrated by figure 2, the higher the level of educational attainment a young person has, the greater his/hers chance of a successful transition to employment. Any indicator/benchmark on education and training for employability should, therefore, differentiate between employment prospects according to educational attainment and should reflect the objective of raising attainment levels generally. Concerning people with low skills, whose employability has suffered the most during the recession and is likely to further deteriorate in the labour market of the future, the primary aim for education and training systems is to reduce the number falling into this category. Nevertheless, this particular group should leave education and training systems with sufficient key competences to facilitate their successful entrance and later progress in the labour market.
22. Thus a relevant European benchmark could focus on the success of young people's transition from education to employment, as measured by their employment rate during their early years in the labour market. Ideally, it should also take into account the relationship between educational attainment level and the quality of the first job; however, given existing data, it is not yet possible to do so. This will only be possible if there is a better matching of ISCED<sup>16</sup> classifications for educational qualifications

<sup>15</sup> See CRELL: JRC EUR 24616 EN (2011) for details on the methodology adopted.

<sup>16</sup> The International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED) which classifies educational activities in 7 broad levels.



with the ISCO job classification.<sup>17</sup> This would allow analyses of the quality of the first job and development of a benchmark on the "quality of transition" from education to early-stage employment.

23. For the purpose of measuring employment performance, it would be advisable, in place of a single point measure of employment participation after leaving education<sup>18</sup>, to use an average measure of employment participation at three points of time namely 1, 2 and 3 years after leaving education. Such a stock measure<sup>19</sup> would help smooth out the possible impact of short periods of unemployment and transition between jobs which are common in the early years on the labour market and ensure sufficient sample sizes at country level (this approach is illustrated in the graph above).
24. As a basis for deciding on a target level of improvement in average employment performance which could be built into a new benchmark, a research study<sup>20</sup> was carried out to analyse different methodologies. The study attempts to forecast employment performance of 20-34 year-olds in 2020 based on different scenarios for their transition from education to employment.<sup>21</sup> These scenario based estimates suggest that an overall improvement of at least 5 percentage points would be an appropriate target level.

*Possible approach to framing a benchmark on education and training for employability*

By 2020, there should be an increase by at least 5 percentage points in the employment rate of graduates (20-34 year olds) having left education, measured as an average of employment rates 1, 2 and 3 years after graduation.<sup>22</sup> (See graphical display and annex 2, table 1, for current figures).

<sup>17</sup> The International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO) is a tool for organizing jobs into a clearly defined set of groups according to the tasks and duties undertaken in the job.

<sup>18</sup> Not in education and training in the last 4 weeks preceding the survey.

<sup>19</sup> Longitudinal data on the transition patterns of youth would – if available – provide a better information source. However, sample sizes within EU-SILC (the only available data source with longitudinal data) are too small to provide reliable indicators at the country level.

<sup>20</sup> See CRELL: JRC EUR 24616 EN (2011) for details on the methodology adopted.

<sup>21</sup> One scenario assumes that the deterioration in employment rates reached at the end of the recession becomes permanent. A second scenario assumes that EU labour markets revert to average historical performance in terms of employment rates before the crisis. A third scenario assumes a strong recovery process which exceeds the average performance in the years preceding the crisis. A fourth scenario disregards the crisis and assumes a constant growth rate defined as the average annual growth rate between 2004 and 2009.

<sup>22</sup> Three categories of graduates are considered, namely graduates from ISCED level 0-2 (including ISCED 3c short), 3-4 (excluding ISCED 3c short) and 5-6 respectively. In figure 2 and table 1 (annex 2), they are respectively referred to as the “low educational attainment”, “medium educational attainment” and “high educational attainment” groups. The lower bound of 20 years was taken to correspond to the new age bracket introduced with the employment rate headline target of the Europe 2020 strategy (i.e. 20-64). The upper bound of 34 years old was in turn chosen in correspondence with the current benchmark on tertiary education attainment which is measured on the 30-34 year-old cohort. Given the lack of longitudinal data to measure precisely the flow of graduates into employment, the average over the three year-end points following graduation is used. This approach helps to smooth out the possible impact of short unemployment periods which are common in the early years of employment and to ensure sufficient sample size necessary to conduct reliable comparisons between countries.

#### Possible future actions to improve data availability

Such a benchmark should allow for a breakdown by specific sub-populations. There should in particular be a disaggregation of data based on ISCED levels and educational orientation which would allow, for example, distinction between the performance of upper secondary graduates as they emerge from Vocational Education and Training (VET) or from general education.

Work undertaken by EUROSTAT and the Member States could allow in time the addition of a measure linked to the analysis of the quality of the first job, based on better matching between the ISCED-measured educational attainment of people and their ISCO-measured job content.

## **II. 4. Possible future use of the benchmark**

25. As outlined earlier, the purpose of a benchmark on education and training for employability is to stimulate policy exchange on what constitutes effective education and training policies to increase employability. Relevant policy steps have already been outlined in "the Framework for Youth Employment" in "Youth on the Move" and within the "Agenda for New Skills and Jobs". These would suggest that education and training systems shall engage in systematic monitoring of the labour market situation of young people and develop better and more responsive education and training policies which reflect labour market realities, including providing the optimal mix of key competences and professional oriented skills that are relevant to the labour market; combating early school leaving; enhancing school-business links; providing transparent information on learning outcomes; aligning the orientation of graduates to future labour market demands; and providing guidance and counselling.

As possible next step in this field, the Commission could:

- working with the Member States, organise policy exchange on how to enhance performance in this field. This could include the establishment of an expert group to exchange information and best practice on education for employability and the organisation of peer learning activities. Given the shared interest of education and employment authorities in strengthening policies for employability, all such work should be undertaken in close cooperation with the Employment Committee;
- undertake further quantitative research with a view to determine the specific contribution of education and training to the Member States' performance on the benchmark indicator.

The Commission is also organizing an academic conference: "Catch the train Skills, Education and Jobs"<sup>23</sup> to further discuss the policy and measurement issues raised in this report.

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<sup>23</sup> See <http://crell.jrc.ec.europa.eu/index.php/conferences-and-events/219>.

### III. Work on a benchmark on learning mobility

*Given the widely acknowledged added value of learning mobility, and with a view to increasing such mobility, the Commission is invited to submit to the Council a proposal for a benchmark in this area by the end of 2010, focusing initially on physical mobility between countries in the field of higher education, taking both quantitative and qualitative aspects into account and reflecting efforts made and the objectives agreed within the Bologna process, as highlighted most recently at the Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve conference. At the same time, the Commission is invited to study the possibility of extending such a benchmark to include vocational education and training and teacher mobility.*

*Mandate in Council Conclusions of May 2009*

26. The invitation from the Council to the Commission quoted above reflects, inter alia, the mobility objectives agreed by Member States within the Bologna process and the Council Conclusions on Youth Mobility of November 2008. Promoting learning mobility for all young people lies at the heart of the Youth on the Move flagship initiative, where it is seen as an important force for increasing employability and flexibility.
27. In January 2011 the Commission undertook a Eurobarometer survey as part of its Youth on the Move flagship action under Europe 2020 which asked a sample of young people (15-34 years old) about learning mobility they have undertaken. The initial results are referred to below to provide evidence about the extent and nature of current learning mobility practices in different educational sectors.
28. As with employability, the work undertaken focused both on how best to make use of data already available, while recognising that there are important limitations to current data. Accordingly future work on data development to allow creation of a more fully developed benchmark– which should be undertaken in close cooperation with Member States - should be envisaged.

#### III. 1. Learning mobility - defining the issue

29. Learning mobility contributes to the development of the skills and the employability of young people and it furthermore supports the opening up and modernisation of education systems at various levels. In this way it contributes to the goal of achieving smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in Europe. The promotion of learning mobility has therefore been a key feature of recent European policy initiatives in the field of education.
30. In November 2008 the Council Conclusions on Youth mobility, taking into account the work of the High Level Expert Forum on Mobility<sup>24</sup> proposed that "Every young person should have the opportunity to take part in some form of mobility, whether this be during their studies or training, in the form of a work placement, or in the context of voluntary activities."<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/doc/2008/mobilityreport_en.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:C:2008:320:0006:0009:EN:PDF>

31. Within the Bologna process for European higher education, the mobility of students, early stage researchers and staff is promoted to support the quality of programmes and excellence in research, to strengthen academic and cultural internationalization in European higher education and to contribute to personal development and employability. Therefore, within Bologna, in April 2009 a mobility goal was set for higher education graduates: in 2020 at least 20% of those graduating in the European Higher Education Area should have had a study or training period abroad.<sup>26</sup>
32. The Copenhagen process launched in 2002, which supports Member States in modernising vocational education and training, has also sought to promote mobility in VET. The Bruges Communiqué<sup>27</sup> on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training of 7 December 2010 lists internationalisation and the promotion of mobility among its 11 strategic objectives.
33. The European reference Framework on key Competences for Lifelong Learning<sup>28</sup> lists among its 8 key competences several that are directly fostered by learning mobility: communication in foreign languages; digital competence; social and civic competences; and cultural awareness and expression. In an increasingly global economy and multicultural society these skills, both fostered by mobility, are increasingly sought for by employers. The promotion of learning mobility in informal contexts such as volunteering is also an objective of the EU Youth Strategy.<sup>29</sup>
34. Youth on the Move is the EU's flagship initiative within the Europe 2020 Strategy that responds to the particular challenges young people face and that helps them to succeed in the knowledge economy. Supporting the learning mobility of young people is one main line of action. Youth on the Move re-iterates the aspiration that by 2020 all young people in Europe should have the possibility to spend part of their educational pathway abroad.

### **III. 2. Possible approach to framing a learning mobility benchmark**

35. Any mobility benchmark must take account of a number of factors:
  - data availability limitations<sup>30</sup>;
  - variability in quality of data between higher education and other educational sectors, which makes it difficult to propose a single benchmark across the board;
  - the policy as stated above, that learning mobility opportunities should be widened for *all* young people.

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<sup>26</sup> See Communiqué of the Conference of European Ministers responsible for Higher Education, Leuven and Louvain-la-Neuve, 28-29 April 2009

<sup>27</sup> [http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc/vocational/bruges_en.pdf)

<sup>28</sup> 'European reference Framework on key Competences for Lifelong Learning, European Parliament and Council Recommendation 2006/962/EC of 18.12.2006

<sup>29</sup> COM(2009) 200 final

<sup>30</sup> For learning mobility outside higher education very little statistical information is available. In the field of higher education, data available, including administrative data derived from the Erasmus programme, are better but still incomplete and make it difficult to estimate the overall incidence of mobility. Fernandez-Zubieta and Guy (2010) and Moguerou and Di Pietrogiamomo (2008) present a comprehensive overview of the evidence on learning and non-learning mobility at European level.

- the specific characteristics of learning mobility at various levels, which suggest that there should be flexibility when defining, for example, minimum duration of mobility;
  - the existence of the Bologna 20% higher education mobility target
  - the aim of improving possibilities for learning mobility in the vocational sector
  - promoting mobility and exchange among teachers, trainers and educational staff and youth workers
36. These factors would suggest that, in place of a single benchmark for young people, it would be preferable to outline a differentiated strategy recognising the different starting points, circumstances and the different data situation of higher education, VET, teacher mobility and for youth mobility more generally.
37. In the field of higher education, it would seem most appropriate to align an EU benchmark with the existing Bologna benchmark agreed in 2009, namely that by 2020, 20% of EU tertiary graduates should have had a study or training period abroad. Estimates of current learning mobility among tertiary level students have tended to point to a rate of at least 10%<sup>31</sup>. The Eurobarometer of January 2011<sup>32</sup> gives an estimate of study and training periods spent abroad by 15-35 year olds. It showed that 9.9% of EU27 tertiary graduates up to the age of 35 had a higher education related learning mobility experience of a minimum duration of at least 3 months. In addition 4.3% of EU27 tertiary graduates had a cross-border traineeship in a company or similar organisation as part of their higher education of at least three months.<sup>33</sup>

*Possible approach to framing a benchmark on Learning Mobility for tertiary students*

*Confirming the target established within the Bologna process in 2009, a benchmark could envisage that by 2020, at least 20% of EU graduates from higher education should have had a study or training period abroad.*

*Learning mobility should be defined as physical mobility<sup>34</sup>. Worldwide mobility of EU graduates would be taken into account and it would include both short term (credit and non-credit) and long term (degree) mobility in all tertiary cycles.*

*The minimum duration should be in line with the Erasmus definition of mobility i.e. minimum of 3 months (2 months minimum for placements organised by so-called short cycle higher education institutions) or alternatively mobility resulting in at least 15 ECTS credits.*

<sup>31</sup> Erasmus mobility currently enables mobility per year for 0.9% of EU students. During an average study of about 5 years this accumulates to a probability to go on Erasmus mobility of between 4 and 5%. In addition more than 3% of EU students are on long term mobility abroad. Moreover, there are bilateral mobility programmes and free movers. Short and long stays abroad combined, it is estimated that currently slightly more than 10% of students at the end of their study have had a study or training period abroad.

<sup>32</sup> The Flash Eurobarometer survey "Youth on the Move" which was carried out in January 2011 was based on telephone interviews with over 30 000 young people in EU 27, Croatia, Iceland, Norway and Turkey. The results were published in May 2011.

<sup>33</sup> The total is somewhat less than the sum of both figures since a small number of graduates have participated both in higher education learning related mobility and in traineeships.

<sup>34</sup> Distance learning will not be included in the core indicator. However, virtual mobility and the use of ICT for learning to participate in online learning that is cross-border as well as the use of ICT to prepare

38. Good comparable data on learning mobility levels in vocational training are missing. It is clear that levels are generally lower than in higher education. The January 2011 Eurobarometer, however, suggests that learning mobility in VET may be more extensive and more generalised across Member States than previously thought. The survey showed that 4.3% of VET graduates<sup>35</sup> up to 35 years had a VET related study mobility experience with a duration of at least 3 weeks (average of EU 27). Furthermore, 2.9 % of VET graduates had a cross-border traineeship in a company or similar organisation as part of their vocational education and training.<sup>36</sup> Further evidence comes from national estimations of mobility within VET – Finnish estimates point to learning mobility of about 5%; a German study suggests levels of about 3%.
39. The Education Council has stressed its commitment to ensuring that "opportunities for mobility in the context of vocational education and training should increase significantly". A benchmark level for vocational education and training which is distinct from higher education would seem to be most appropriate, while at the same time having regard to the Council's commitment to increase opportunities in the sector significantly.<sup>37</sup> The nature and minimum period of mobility would also be defined separately, with a shorter minimum period than in the tertiary area: a threshold level of 3 weeks could be the most appropriate.

Possible approach to framing a benchmark on the learning mobility in vocational education and training

*Taking into account the commitment of the Education Council that opportunities for mobility in VET should increase significantly, a benchmark could envisage that by 2020, at least 10% of EU graduates from initial vocational education and training should have had a study or training period abroad.*

*Worldwide mobility would be taken into account and mobility would include both short term and long term mobility. A minimum duration of a 3 week stay abroad would apply.*

40. As regards learning mobility for the youth population in general, once again good quality statistical data to clearly estimate current mobility levels do not exist. Initial estimations emerging from the Flash Eurobarometer of January 2011 suggest that in the EU currently between 13 and 14 % of young people (15-35 year olds) report that they have had a learning related mobility experience at some point in their formal education; in addition, 2% report having undertaken cross-border mobility in the context of voluntary service. There is clearly some overlapping between the two

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for physical mobility and to maintain contacts and networks afterwards are becoming increasingly important and maybe considered as supplementary information in future developments of the benchmark

<sup>35</sup> Persons who completed VET at upper secondary level, incl. apprenticeships

<sup>36</sup> The total is less than the sum of both figures since some VET graduates have participated both in study related mobility and in traineeships.

<sup>37</sup> Currently per year 0.55% of students in initial vocational training participates in Leonardo supported mobility. This implies that, assuming an average duration of IVET of 3 years, a graduate from such programmes has a probability of about 1.7% to have participated in Leonardo supported learning mobility. However, there are in addition bilateral and regional programmes and free movers and there is also degree mobility in VET.

groups. In addition, it is clear that some of mobility within formal education is likely to be of very short duration. Nevertheless, with future work to refine these estimations, it would be possible to envisage setting a target to double by 2020 current learning mobility levels in all formal and non-formal contexts – a target of 25-30% by 2020 would seem to be possible. A possible target could be to double current mobility levels by 2020. A minimum duration of a 3 week stay abroad for the purposes of a structured activity within either formal or non-formal learning could be proposed.

*Possible approach to framing a benchmark on the mobility of the youth population in general*

*A future benchmark, to be set following further exploration of the data, could envisage that by 2020, the share of young people aged 15-34 with learning mobility experience could double to reach 25 to 30%.*

*A minimum duration of a 3 week stay abroad would apply.*

41. The Council Conclusions on learning mobility of November 2008 sought to promote mobility among teachers and trainers. Statistical data are not available which would currently allow estimations of learning mobility among teachers and trainers, nor for other target groups of interest such as education staff and youth workers mobility levels to be estimated (they were not covered by the January 2011 Eurobarometer). Data are, however, available for the numbers in these groups undertaking mobility periods abroad under the EU Lifelong Learning and Youth in Action Programmes. In 2008/09 approximately 55 000 school teachers and managers undertook different forms of cross-border mobility within the Comenius programme; 36 000 higher education teachers and staff within Erasmus programme mobility; 12 000 VET trainers and teachers in Leonardo da Vinci; over 10 000 teachers and trainers in adult education within the Grundtvig programme; and about 17 000 youth workers under the Youth in Action Programme<sup>38</sup>. All in all, the EU Programmes are supporting a significant volume of learning mobility; however, as with other groups, mobility outside the Programmes undoubtedly also takes place and, in the absence of any data on this, there is currently no basis to establish a benchmark in respect of such groups.

### **III. 3. Improving data availability**

42. Improving the availability of data is key for establishing where Europe stands on learning mobility and for monitoring progress and performance in the future, in all areas but especially outside higher education. Activities currently planned or having recently started include the following

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<sup>38</sup> Some of the mobility moves counted here are of very short duration. In addition, some teachers and trainers may undertake multiple mobility moves in the context of an ongoing educational partnership.

*Planned and recently started actions to improve data availability*

***Improving the collection of administrative data on short and long term mobility***

- *Eurostat has started to work with a Task Force with Member States to improve the collection, availability and quality of data on degree and credit mobility in higher education and in VET. Eurostat will also integrate EU programme mobility data in its learning mobility statistics to cover better short term mobility in all education and youth fields.<sup>39</sup>*

***Improving the collection of learning mobility data via existing European survey vehicles***

- *Eurostat will work on assessing the feasibility of including specific mobility-related questions in existing household survey instruments. This could for example, include an analysis of the feasibility of the quarterly Labour Force Survey and the 5-yearly Adult Education Survey as possible survey vehicles.*

***Improving the collection of mobility data on teachers, education staff, trainers and youth workers***

- *The Commission will work on improving the availability of mobility data for such groups in international surveys and in data collection by Eurostat and the Member States. This includes examining the feasibility to include questions on teacher mobility in surveys like TALIS<sup>40</sup> and improving data collection from administrative sources.*

***Improving the availability of learning mobility data from different sources***

- *The Commission will carry out a study on mobility in vocational education and training to collect more information on national mobility schemes and on the availability of data from such sources. The Commission will undertake a repeat of the Eurobarometer survey carried out in January 2011 in order to determine trends and in order to refine the understanding of learning mobility patterns<sup>41</sup>.*

### **III. 4. Possible future use of the benchmark**

43. The Youth on the Move initiative of September 2010 has proposed, inter alia, a Council Recommendation setting out the concerted action needed to promote learning mobility, to be monitored by a Mobility Scoreboard focusing in particular on eliminating identified barriers to mobility; a Youth on the Move card; a European Skills passport; the full implementation of European instruments and tools to facilitate mobility like the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation system (ECTS), the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and Europass; improvement of the efficiency and functioning of existing European mobility programmes and more integrated information sources on mobility opportunities.

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<sup>39</sup> EU programme mobility data will be used until more comprehensive credit mobility data become available from national statistical authorities

<sup>40</sup> OECD's Teaching and Learning International Survey.

<sup>41</sup> When it comes to research-related education levels the Commission will in addition further develop ongoing data collection activities in the field of doctoral candidates and early-stage researchers.



## **Annex 1**

### **Five EU benchmarks for 2020 adopted by the Council in May 2009**

- § *at least 95% of children between 4 years old and the age for starting compulsory primary education should participate in early childhood education*
- § *the share of early leavers from education and training should be less than 10%*
- § *the share of low-achieving 15-years olds in reading, mathematics and science should be less than 15%.*
- § *the share of 30-34 year olds with tertiary educational attainment should be at least 40%*
- § *an average of at least 15 % of adults should participate in lifelong learning*

## Annex 2

**Table 1: Employment rate among young graduates (20-34 year olds)**  
measured as an average of employment rates 1, 2 and -3 years after highest graduation

	Lower than Upper Secondary Education						Upper Secondary and Post-secondary non-tertiary Education						Tertiary Education					
	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
<b>EU27</b>	60.2	58.6	61.3	60.4	57.5	53.3	67.6	69.6	73.2	75.4	76.7	72.1	81.8	82.7	84.1	86.1	87.0	83.8
<b>AT</b>	64.0	44.7	65.0	69.6	73.0	m	75.9	82.9	85.5	85.9	86.5	83.8	90.0	88.3	89.9	91.7	94.1	90.8
<b>BE</b>	63.6	58.6	60.2	68.1	59.8	52.3	79.8	68.1	72.0	73.2	73.6	71.9	88.3	87.2	87.5	88.5	90.8	87.8
<b>BG</b>	m	m	m	m	m	m	54.1	55.4	54.4	60.0	74.1	63.7	76.6	81.1	81.8	85.0	87.2	85.2
<b>CY</b>	81.7	65.8	89.2	75.5	78.7	m	49.7	49.6	59.6	59.9	67.7	61.8	84.7	84.2	82.3	84.6	85.8	82.5
<b>CZ</b>	m	m	m	42.7	21.0	m	m	m	80.9	86.1	87.6	81.7	m	m	87.5	91.2	88.5	89.0
<b>DE</b>	42.9	40.6	48.5	47.7	41.3	43.1	72.5	74.1	76.7	79.2	81.8	79.3	90.6	89.3	91.1	92.1	93.8	93.4
<b>DK</b>	96.5	76.6	73.9	68.4	64.1	m	83.3	84.1	88.5	89.0	89.3	83.1	81.3	88.5	88.7	93.5	89.8	90.4
<b>EE(a)</b>	23.6	31.0	46.2	56.2	69.4	m	77.2	65.5	77.1	78.8	77.7	60.9(a)	63.4	80.7	90.1	90.6	82.4	70.9(a)
<b>ES</b>	71.4	72.6	80.9	79.0	60.3	55.9	73.9	71.9	77.7	81.7	74.5	63.8	78.9	79.9	84.0	87.4	85.1	76.1
<b>FI</b>	m	m	m	m	m	m	64.9	69.7	68.6	77.1	73.6	69.1	83.0	84.7	87.4	85.1	87.5	84.1
<b>FR</b>	58.8	60.5	54.7	59.2	58.9	52.5	74.0	73.8	72.0	73.2	75.3	69.4	79.3	82.8	82.2	84.6	88.5	83.1
<b>GR</b>	80.8	60.3	62.8	64.5	60.4	61.4(a)	59.7	53.7	62.6	64.2	62.9	60.1	67.4	65.3	69.2	69.9	70.8	67.7
<b>HU</b>	22.7	32.7	21.7	25.2	51.1	m	76.0	62.1	71.8	72.9	71.7	66.4	86.0	88.4	87.7	86.9	87.4	84.7
<b>IE</b>	57.1	20.1	46.5	57.5	60.5	m	74.2	77.9	82.0	81.2	79.2	60.8	91.5	89.0	91.4	90.4	88.7	82.8
<b>IT</b>	47.5	53.2	53.9	52.4	45.7	m	58.4	59.5	63.7	62.6	60.5	56.0	67.2	62.6	69.0	70.0	70.5	66.1
<b>LT</b>	m	61.7	50.0	71.8	55.8	m	62.3	67.8	74.7	72.8	67.8	56.9	78.7	87.6	90.4	92.5	87.6	84.6
<b>LU</b>	75.1	74.7	71.4	71.0	61.8	m	87.2	87.6	86.5	87.7	80.1	79.3	92.3	92.9	95.8	88.3	92.9	90.4
<b>LV</b>	28.3	62.8	79.9	77.3	57.8	m	66.7	75.0	73.1	77.9	77.7	59.2	82.8	87.8	85.0	86.5	87.7	82.1
<b>MT(a)</b>	81.5	91.4	65.0	72.8	85.9	m	91.2	91.6	87.0	89.9	93.2	88.1(a)	94.4	93.5	94.2	96.5	95.3	97.8(a)
<b>NL</b>	90.3	64.4	60.6	62.4	64.5	62.8	88.6	89.3	90.7	91.9	91.4	91.3	93.8	95.0	94.5	96.6	95.4	94.2
<b>PL</b>	22.1	17.5	35.9	36.2	44.9	m	50.3	54.4	60.7	64.9	70.1	68.8	80.7	80.9	81.6	84.4	87.0	85.7
<b>PT</b>	79.0	77.1	79.8	78.5	74.0	76.8	77.8	80.4	80.7	79.7	81.9	79.9	85.2	84.7	84.3	82.0	83.2	84.2
<b>RO</b>	49.0	68.8	71.3	62.6	84.5	m	58.9	59.0	62.0	70.7	77.1	69.1	83.3	84.1	86.2	89.0	92.9	85.8
<b>SE</b>	100.0	59.8	63.6	62.6	57.5	55.6(a)	75.5	73.6	77.6	80.2	80.4	74.0	86.5	85.4	88.2	89.9	90.7	89.9
<b>SI(a)</b>	m	m	76.9	m	40.1	42.8	69.9	72.3	77.4	78.0	79.8	73.3(a)	78.3	86.7	84.5	84.9	86.7	88.7(a)
<b>SK</b>	m	m	m	m	m	m	59.1	66.0	71.7	77.8	79.5	67.9	74.6	84.5	87.9	86.4	84.3	83.5
<b>UK</b>	72.7	45.1	60.7	53.7	56.5	49.6	83.9	83.7	84.6	82.1	79.5	74.9	91.0	90.1	87.8	89.3	87.3	84.0

Source: CRELL computations based on Eurostat, EU-LFS.

Notes: m = missing or inconsistent data; (a) = Provisional estimates, i.e. low reliability due to small sample size.

**Table 2: Mobility of Erasmus students, 2008/09**

	Students sent	Students received	Per 100 students 2007/08	
	2008/09	2008/09	Students sent	Students received
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>168193</b>	<b>168193</b>	<b>0,8</b>	<b>0,8</b>
Belgium	5041	5283	1.3	1.3
Bulgaria	1283	393	0.5	0.1
Czech Rep.	5440	3764	1.4	1.0
Denmark	1648	5273	0.7	2.3
Germany	23407	17722	1.0	0.8
Estonia	551	591	0.8	0.9
Ireland	1421	4061	0.8	2.3
Greece	2737	1946	0.5	0.3
Spain	24399	28175	1.4	1.6
France	23560	20955	1.1	1.0
Italy	17754	15530	0.9	0.8
Cyprus	144	234	0.6	0.9
Latvia	1104	401	0.9	0.3
Lithuania	2425	1117	1.2	0.5
Luxembourg	426	53	14.1	1.8
Hungary	3518	2205	0.9	0.5
Malta	142	355	1.5	3.7
Netherlands	4902	6894	0.8	1.1
Austria	4053	4039	1.4	1.4
Poland	11784	4528	0.5	0.2
Portugal	4834	5732	1.3	1.5
Romania	3064	990	0.3	0.1
Slovenia	1132	991	1.0	0.9
Slovakia	1703	787	0.7	0.3
Finland	3436	6115	1.1	2.0
Sweden	2413	8206	0.6	2.0
United Kingdom	7429	16065	0.3	0.7

Source: European Commission, DG Education and Culture

Note: in addition there are over 20 000 placements in enterprises abroad, bringing the total annual Erasmus supported student mobility to 0.9/1000 students

**Table 3: Percentage of all tertiary students (ISCED levels 5 and 6) enrolled outside their country of origin**

	Students (ISCED levels 5 and 6) studying in another EU-27, EEA or Candidate country - as % of all students		
	2000	2007	2008
<b>EU-27</b>	<b>2.1</b>	<b>2.8</b>	<b>2.8</b>
Belgium	2.4	2.6	2.9
Bulgaria	3.2	8.3	7.9
Czech Republic	1.3	2.1	2.6
Denmark	2.7	2.5	2.4
Germany	1.8	3.1	3.5
Estonia	2.5	4.5	4.9
Ireland	9.4	14.2	17.7
Greece	12.4	5.8	5.2
Spain	1.1	1.4	1.2
France	1.8	2.5	2.3
Italy	1.7	1.8	1.8
Cyprus	46.5	56.9	58.4
Latvia	1.3	2.5	2.9
Lithuania	1.8	3.3	3.6
Luxembourg	74.5	-	80.2
Hungary	1.7	1.8	1.8
Malta	8.2	9.9	10.9
Netherlands	1.9	2.1	2.3
Austria	3.8	4.7	4.3
Poland	0.9	1.8	1.8
Portugal	2.3	4.0	4.0
Romania	1.5	2.2	2.0
Slovenia	2.2	2.1	2.1
Slovakia	3	10.2	10.7
Finland	3.2	2.9	2.7
Sweden	2.7	3.0	3.0
United Kingdom	0.6	0.7	0.6

Source: Eurostat (UOE)

Note: DE, SI: Students in advanced research programmes (ISCED level 6) in these countries are excluded