

## Summary of main E.U policy messages on guidance

### **Importance of Guidance confirmed in Maastricht Communiqué**

On 14 December 2004, at a conference in Maastricht, ministers from 32 European countries, together with the European Social Partners and the Commission, agreed on the Maastricht Communiqué. It sets out new priorities and strategies in vocational education and training until the end of 2006. This communiqué updates the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced co-operation in VET which was adopted in 2002.

In addition to noting the Resolution on guidance throughout life adopted by the Council in May 2004, the Maastricht Communiqué includes guidance as a priority at national level and stresses that:

- the common instruments, references and principles developed by the European Commission Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance should be used and efforts made to raise stakeholders awareness of these instruments;
- the development and implementation of open learning approaches, enabling people to define individual pathways should be supported by appropriate guidance and counselling.

To see the full text of the Communiqué go to:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html)

For more information on the European Vocational and Educational Training policy, see [MEMO/04/293](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html):  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/index_en.html)

For more information on the Maastricht conference go to:  
<http://www.vetconference-maastricht2004.nl/>

In the Joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe: ‘*Education and Training 2010 The Success of the Lisbon Strategy Hinges on Urgent Reforms* (2004)’.  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir\\_council\\_final.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/jir_council_final.pdf)

Human resources have been identified as the Union’s main asset ... *it is now acknowledged that investment in this area is a determining factor of growth and productivity, in the same way as investment in capital and equipment.* This document indicates that the five benchmarks adopted by the Education Council in May 2003 will, for the most part, be difficult to achieve by 2010. In particular, it identifies the low level of take-up by Europeans of lifelong learning and the continuing high levels of failure at school and of social exclusion across the Union, both of which have a high individual, social and economic cost. The document identifies guidance as one of four key actions to

create open attractive and accessible learning environments ...*the role, quality and co-ordination of information and guidance services should be strengthened so that they support learning at all ages and in a range of settings, empower citizens to manage their learning and work, particularly making it easier for them to access and progress through divers learning opportunities and career pathways....* In order to achieve this, the report calls for the development of ...*common European references and principles ...* as a matter of priority, to support national policies in a number of areas, including the provision of guidance services.

The **Progress Reports of the Working Groups** (2003) established to follow up the Lisbon Objectives, especially Group G (access, social inclusion, active citizenship) and Group H (making learning attractive, education, work and society) have particularly focussed on guidance, supported by the Commission's Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance. The policy recommendations from the groups relating to guidance have centred on four main themes:

- access to guidance services, including in the workplace.
- quality assurance for guidance delivery, including ICT products and services.
- the role of guidance in human resource development, including promoting the benefits of learning, raising awareness of science and technology opportunities, improving the efficiency (completion rates) of education and training systems.
- guidance for mobility for education, training and employment in Europe.

The report from Group H

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/making-learning-more-attractive\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/making-learning-more-attractive_en.pdf)

stresses the need to:

- develop responsive lifelong guidance provision to encourage, motivate and facilitate learners' progression through the flexible learning systems;
- provide an integrated approach to initiatives to integrate marginalised groups and re-integrate dropouts and early school leavers, comprising systematic detection and follow-up of those at risk.

The report from Group G

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/opening-up-learning-and-citizenship\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/opening-up-learning-and-citizenship_en.pdf)

proposes the development of an '*open model of guidance*', characterised by:

- inclusiveness, open to all people of all ages and reaching out especially to vulnerable and marginalised groups;
- intergenerational approach, including the family context and childcare provision during hours of opening of guidance services, to help overcome social barriers;
- phone-in services, easily accessible to parents and children;
- free internet information and advice, with tutor support in central public offices;
- accessibility at the workplace arranged by co-operation of the social partners and

labour, education and economy ministries, especially for staffs of micro enterprises of less than ten persons;

- partnership, between educational, social and youth services, local enterprises, social partners, NGOs and voluntary services.

Group G also proposes that the guidance needs of second chance learners should be addressed additionally by tutoring services that accompany them if necessary through the courses of their choice. Methods of reaching out to such non-traditional learners include awareness raising and information campaigns such as adult learner weeks and literacy days.

With regard to quality assurance the Group suggests:

- professional training and certification of guidance practitioners
- employment of staff with a multi-cultural background, to overcome invisible barriers and to build trust and understanding with minority groups or with persons of a different socio-economic status
- on-going training for all staff, especially on multicultural and linguistic issues, and on lifespan issues
- provision of unbiased information on education, training and work opportunities
- quality assurance of guidance services should be undertaken by *independent non-commercial bodies, supported by public finances*.

#### The **Stocktaking Report of the Copenhagen Co-ordination Group**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/ccg\\_report\\_october\\_2003\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/ccg_report_october_2003_final_en.pdf)

highlights, inter alia, the importance of:

- Increased synergy with education and training programmes for the potential development of a European network of stakeholders (policymakers, social partners and other relevant associations) which could be established to *strengthen policies and systems for guidance* in the EU.
- the role of Governments and social partners, in association with career guidance services, in promoting the *attractiveness of VET* learning and career opportunities in order to support workforce development and the needs of businesses.
- the role of Governments and social partners in supporting the *career progression* of the workforce through the development of learning and qualifications pathways for VET participants and graduates over the lifespan.
- the role of Governments and social partners in supporting the development of career guidance provision at the workplace in order to develop the *career management skills of workers*.

To see the recommendations made in the Progress Report by the Commission's Lifelong Guidance Expert Group go to

[http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects\\_Networks/Guidance/expertgroup/progress\\_report.asp](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/Guidance/expertgroup/progress_report.asp)

The **Progress Reports on Implementing lifelong learning strategies** in Europe:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/III\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/III_en.html)

emphasise that, whilst many countries identify information, guidance and counselling, as essential to ensure that rights and opportunities are availed of, especially in a system which places the individual at the centre of the learning process, coherent lifelong guidance systems for those at work as well as those in education are lacking. Some progress is noted in terms of an increased awareness of the fact that guidance must be permanently available, lifelong and lifewide and in the development of new guidance initiatives geared to specific target groups.

*Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* (2000)

<http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/pdf/MemorandumEng.pdf>

*The Memorandum on Lifelong Learning* to stimulate a European-wide debate on a comprehensive strategy for implementing lifelong learning at individual and institutional levels, and in all spheres of public and private life. The content of the *Memorandum* was based on experience gained at European level from Community programmes and the *European Year of Lifelong Learning (1996)*. **Six key messages** were proposed which offered a structured framework for an open debate on putting lifelong learning into practice. These messages concerned :

- How to guarantee universal and continuing **access to learning** for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society ;
- How to raise levels levels of **investment in human resources** in order to place priority on Europe's greatest asset-its people ;
- How to develop **effective teaching and learning methods** and contexts for the continuum of lifelong and lifewide learning ;
- How to improve ways in which **learning participation and outcomes** are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning ;
- How to ensure that everyone can easily access **good quality information and guidance** about learning opportunities throughout Europe and throughout their lives ;
- How to provide lifelong **learning opportunities as close to learners as possible**, in their own communities and supported by ICT-based facilities wherever appropriate.

The **key message on educational and vocational guidance** highlighted the following needs:

- For guidance to be a continuously and locally accessible service for all, with a holistic approach overcoming the distinction between educational, vocational and personal ;
- For guidance services to reach out to people than to wait for them to come, and to follow up client progress ;
- For guidance workers to become « brokers » using a wide range of methods to assist the client ;

- For guidance services to be networked to related personal, social and educational services ;
- For services to use non-formal and informal channels e ;g ; local associations and voluntary groups, particularly to reach disadvantaged groups ;
- For the development of agreed minimum quality service standards and the definition of entitlements ;
- For modernising and improving initial and continuous training of guidance workers.

***Communication on Lifelong Learning (2001): Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/communication/com\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/communication/com_en.pdf)

Member States took responsibility for leading the debate on the *Memorandum* within their own countries. The consultation on the *Memorandum* also took place in the candidate countries, EEA, , among the social partners and civil society organisations during 2001. Based on the reports from the consultation and taking into account the open method of co-ordination, the Commission drew up a strategy paper « *Communication on Lifelong Learning* » which outlined the way forward at European and Member State level. The strategic building blocks for policy development and implementation were defined as :

- Partnership working across the learning spectrum
- Creating a learning culture
- Striving for excellence
- Insight into the demand for learning
- Facilitating access to learning opportunities
- Adequate resourcing

The **consequences/implications** for lifelong guidance in several of these blocks were identified :

- Partnership working : « *local level partnerships should include local authorities, schools, universities, other learning providers and related services such as information, guidance and counselling.....* »
- Creating a learning culture : « *promoting the role of information, guidance and counselling providers working directly with voluntary/community organisations to raise awareness of the individual/social/economic benefits of learning, and to encourage diversification of studies and non-traditional career/learning choices.* »
- Insight into the demand for learning : « *addressing the impact of lifelong learning on learning facilitators such as teachers, adult educators and guidance workers. Strategies and partnerships must address their role and support their adaptation* »....  
....« *understanding (potential) learners' interests, reflected in surveys, evaluations, feedback from guidance surveys and consultations.....* »
- Facilitating access to learning opportunities : « *recognising information, guidance and counselling services as a key interface between learning needs and the learning on offer. They are also crucial in helping learners find their place in increasingly complex learning systems.* »

Based on feedback from the consultation, results and evaluation of existing policies and instruments at European level and the Commission's own policy analysis, six « **priorities for action** » were designated in the Communication :

- Valuing learning
- Information, guidance and counselling
- Investing time and money in learning
- Bringing together learners and learning opportunities
- Basic skills
- Innovative pedagogy.

The European dimension of guidance was reflected in the « Valuing Learning » priority action through the development of the European CV format, the portfolio system, and the role of the Euroguidance network as a source of information on professional and general recognition of qualifications.

The resource implications for guidance and counselling of facilitating access to individual pathways of learning was highlighted in the « Investing Time and Money in Learning » priority for action. The use of the ESF to train teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators such as guidance workers was suggested.

The role of local guidance services in bringing learning and (potential)learners together through open and flexible local education and training provision was emphasised in the priority for action « Bringing together Learners and Learning Opportunities » . The social partners were invited to raise awareness about the importance of learning and encourage and train employees and managerial staff to act as learning facilitators(guidance workers) or mentors to others.

The traditional roles of teachers, trainers and other learning facilitators (guidance workers) are being challenged by new teaching and learning methods. The « Innovative Pedagogy » priority for action stressed the need to develop their training, including in multi-cultural competences, to ensure they are ready and motivated to face the new challenges, and therefore to promote tolerance and democratic values.

The following were emphasised in feedback from the Consultation:

- *The crucial role of guidance in facilitating access to learning and in motivating potential learners*
- *The role of guidance in promoting equal opportunities and social inclusion, personal fulfillment, meeting labour market needs and those of the wider community*
- *Guidance systems should have the qualities of being coherent, cohesive, transparent, impartial, high quality, locally accessible, flexible, adaptable to the changing needs of the individual learner*
- *The evaluation of existing resources/systems to ensure transparency and coherence of provision*
- *The development of networks of services to overcome existing boundaries*

- *European partnership to improve the exchange of ideas and good practice in this field*
- *The need for counsellors to be able to deal with other countries' education, training and guidance systems, labour market systems and programmes.*

**Information, guidance and counselling was identified as a priority area for action** in the *Communication*. In Section (3.2), the Commission proposed the following actions commencing in 2002 to **strengthen the European dimension of information, guidance and counselling in consultation with the Member States** :

- *Establishment of a European Guidance Forum of policy-makers and social partners to develop common policy approaches in the field of guidance through the « open co-ordination » approach. Issues such as concepts and principles, methods, quality and consumer interest, training, targeting will form part of the agenda of the Forum.*
- *Establishment of an Internet Portal of Learning Opportunities, providing information on lifelong learning in Member States and candidate countries.*
- *Evaluation of existing European networks and structures in the field of information, guidance and counselling for both education and training to establish a coherent and cross-sectoral lifelong learning framework for the scope and activities of those networks.*

In the Glossary of key terms used in the *Communication* the following are provided :

- *Guidance : a range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives(educational, vocational, personal) and to implement those decisions*
- *Learning Facilitator : Anyone who facilitates the acquisition of knowledge and competences by establishing a favourable learning environment, including those exercising a teaching, training or guidance function.*

***The European Report on Quality Indicators of Lifelong Learning (2002)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/15indicators\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/life/15indicators_en.pdf)

This report identified 15 quality indicators grouped into four main areas: Skills, Competencies and Attitudes; Access and Participation; Resources on Lifelong Learning; and Strategies and Systems Development. Guidance and counselling were considered under the Strategies and Systems Development area. This area is concerned with political decisions that seek ways to turn the components of lifelong learning into an integrated and coherent system. Within such a framework it was considered possible to assess the outcomes (quality assurance) e.g. an individual drawing the maximum benefit from his/her learning which would be accredited and certified and for which they would have received appropriate guidance. The Report points out :

*« Quality indicators for the "counselling and guidance" domain remain to be developed. While a few countries have some information on counselling and guidance activities, it quickly becomes apparent that a common understanding of what should be included in*

*counselling and guidance is lacking. The same is true when comparing the number and the type of counselling centres. If there is no consensus on how broad the concept of counselling and guidance should be, it will be difficult to develop indicators that guarantee comparability across Europe.*

*In the field of guidance and counselling the following indicators should be considered:*

- *Target group coverage of guidance and counselling*
- *Social, economic and learning benefits from counselling and guidance*
- *Qualifications of guidance and counselling practitioners*
- *Frequency of in-service training of practitioners.*

*Coherence between the services of information, guidance and counselling services and the availability and quality of adequate training in the field are major challenges for countries and institutions. In order support these central aspects of a lifelong learning strategy the European Commission has proposed to set up a “European Guidance Forum” in co-operation with the Member States. »*

### **3.4 Future Concrete Objectives for Education and Training Systems in Europe (2001)**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/concrete-future-objectives\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/doc/concrete-future-objectives_en.pdf)

Three strategic objectives were identified for education and training systems :

- Improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems
- Facilitating the access of all to education and training
- Opening up education and training systems to the wider world.

These strategic objectives were developed into operational objectives and activities. Guidance is particularly referenced in Objective 2.1 *as assisting in broadening access to lifelong learning and in Objective 1.4 increasing recruitment to scientific and technical studies*. It is implicit in Objective 2.2 - *motivating young people and adults to participate and to continue in learning*.

### **Action Plan for Skills and Mobility (2002)**

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2002/feb/ap\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/feb/ap_en.pdf)

Three main challenges were identified to ensuring that European labour markets are open to all : inadequate occupational mobility, low geographical mobility, and fragmentation of information and lack of transparency of job opportunities. The report noted that occupation mobility and workforce upskilling can be enhanced by better access for workers and employers to information, guidance and counselling services, and that such services to date have tended to be disparate within and across education, training and employment sectors in most countries, and largely absent from the workplace itself. Urgent action is needed to address a number of objectives :

- To address existing and prospective skills shortages in industry, manufacturing and ICT related sectors and to stimulate a greater interest in the take up of science,

mathematics and technology : *Member States and social partners should cooperate to improve the quality of careers information in these fields made available by public and private careers information and guidance providers.*

- To make educational institutions and learning providers more open and responsive to the needs of learners and the labour markets, they should develop closer links and partnerships with business, the wider labour market, and information and guidance services : *Member States should evaluate their policies and practices with respect to the provision of information, guidance and counselling services in order to ensure transparency and coherence of provision.*
- To introduce and consolidate effective competence development strategies for workers, use should be made of existing information, guidance and counselling services in education, training and employment sectors to provide workplace guidance to support the competence development plans of enterprises and workers : *Member States should promote access to local guidance networks, and ICT based learning and guidance services to support both individual competence plans and corporate strategies. Such support would be based on the understanding that these benefits are of wider interest and benefit to society and may entail a reallocation of public funds in favour of this area.*
- To improve information and transparency of job opportunities, a One stop European Mobility Site should be established as part of a wider European network to provide comprehensive and easily accessible information to citizens on key aspects of jobs, mobility, learning opportunities, and the transparency of qualifications in Europe .
- EURES should be modernised, reinforced and integrated into the Member States employment services.
- An EU-wide mobility information campaign should be launched targeted at employers and workers on the key dimensions, opportunities and possibilities provided by the Internal Market and the European labour markets for skills. More sectorally focused information campaigns should be launched to help update and improve the image of some occupational sectors and aim to bring more skilled women into such sectors.

### ***3.6 Increasing Labour Force Participation and Promoting Active Ageing (2002)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/news/2002/feb/com\\_2002\\_9\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2002/feb/com_2002_9_en.pdf)

This report takes a lifecycle approach to labour market participation to identify underlying trends and develop policy responses that may influence these trends. It points to the need for a comprehensive strategy to maximise each individual's capacity to participate in the workforce over his/her whole lifecycle and to the need for access for all to continuing education and training. The role of Public Employment Service (PES) needs to be strengthened particularly with respect to job information and job matching activities and for adapting its methods and procedures to the needs and circumstances of target groups of the inactive and unemployed, thus assisting in the creation of a supportive environment to enable them to integrate into the work force. While the role of guidance services to assist in supporting the participation of older workers in the labour force is not explicitly stated in the report, the range of issues and concerns raised have significant implications for guidance provision for this target group.

### ***3.7 European Employment Guidelines (2003)***

[http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/l\\_197/l\\_19720030805en00130021.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/pri/en/oj/dat/2003/l_197/l_19720030805en00130021.pdf)

The Employment Guidelines (2003) call for the Member States to develop active and preventative measures to prevent inflow into long-term unemployment, and to promote the sustainable integration into employment of unemployed and inactive people. In particular Member States should ensure that, at an early stage of their unemployment spell, all jobseekers benefit from an early identification of their needs and from services such as advice and guidance, job search assistance and personalised action plans.

The *Joint Employment Report (2003)* states that Member States have made progress in ensuring that every unemployed person benefits from *individual job search and guidance services at an early stage of their unemployment spell* but the Employment Taskforce emphasises the increased importance of actions to tap the potential of the workforce in a period of economic downturn and for regions and sectors experiencing restructuring. Member States are urged to:

- offer personalised services to all unemployed jobseekers at an early stage, in the form of guidance, training or new job opportunities;
- improve the efficiency of activation programmes by identifying real needs of job seekers and giving preference to tailor-made measures over general large-scale programmes;
- develop rapid response schemes in the event of plant closures or large scale company restructuring;
- equip employment services with sufficient capacity (in terms of staff and resources) to deliver such tailor-made services, and strengthen local employment partnerships;
- address the specific needs of the most vulnerable, including disadvantaged younger people and people with disabilities.

In the context of facilitating access to lifelong learning the Joint Report also calls on Member States to improve the identification of individual needs and access to training

and suggests that this could be achieved by making training a central element of contractual relationships, improving advice and guidance in creating personal development plans and enhancing the recognition and validation of competences and qualifications.

The importance of personalised advice and guidance is also mentioned in the context of supporting mobility and combating discrimination and promoting the increased participation of disadvantaged people.

***Modernising Public Employment Services to Support the European Employment Strategy (1998)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/employment\\_strategy/pdf/COM\\_641-1998-EN.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/employment_strategy/pdf/COM_641-1998-EN.pdf)

This Communication identified three traditional core functions of the PES in the labour market : information, brokerage, and market adjustment. The PES were recognised as offering a unique and nationwide service as providers of labour market information ; undertaking extensive and varied brokerage activities between jobseekers and employers ; and implementing labour market policies through active employment programmes such as improving worker's employability *through early intervention with the unemployed that may take the form of individual vocational guidance*. The Communication highlights the need to exploit the opportunities offered by European cooperation and calls for the fuller integration of EURES into the PESs *bringing a greater European dimension to their information, counselling and brokerage services to jobseekers and employers*.

***3.9 Joint Statements of the European Public Employment Services (PES) on their Role in the Labour Market (2001)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment\\_social/publications/2001/ke4001400\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/publications/2001/ke4001400_en.pdf)

This document contains three key policy statements approved in 2000 by the Heads of Public Employment Services (PES) that define the future responsibilities and challenges of the PES arising from economic, social and technological changes. The first concerns the future of the PES, the second concerns the role of the PES in preventing and reducing long term unemployment, and the third deals with the role of the PES in supporting the labour market and mobility in Europe.

*The Joint Mission Statement of the PES in Europe (EU/EEA) defined the future role of the PES including acting as an expert service provider (I) for all employed and all forms of gainful employment, and (ii) for enterprises, including their need for new forms of personnel administration. Among the services provided to job seekers and employed are qualified and comprehensive counselling and assistance. The Statement notes that « if required, the PES will assist an individual throughout his or her working life in order to promote occupational mobility and flexibility for the employed ». The PES' services for enterprises will include counselling on human resources, training and qualifications – in particular SMEs. The importance for the PES to work in partnership with all actors in the*

market is highlighted, including with *vocational guidance* services, is stressed. Pro-active strategies are to have equal importance with re-active strategies when combining information, counselling and placement services. Future cooperation among PESs in Europe should include exchange of best practices e.g. . *for processes in support of lifelong learning*.

*The Joint Statement of European Employment Services concerning their role in preventing and reducing long-term unemployment* highlighted the need for a culture change and for new methodologies in the PES, for example in the early identification of needs.

Assisting the most difficult to place persons has implications for the way in which PESs have to allocate their resources e.g. *the provision of more intensive counselling*, and for the way their performance is measured.

Finally the *Joint Declaration by the Heads of Public Employment Services in the European Economic Area on the role of the PES in supporting the Labour Market and Mobility in Europe* addressed the European dimension of the labour market. It noted the human resources (Euroadvisers) made available by the PESs to support European mobility through the provision of *information and guidance to jobseekers and employers on mobility related issues*. Attention was drawn to the development of the EURES (European Employment Services) website to provide wider access to such information which will include *information on skills surpluses and shortages per country and per region as well as information on learning opportunities*. The Heads of Service committed themselves to the continuing *development of the professional competencies of staff in international mobility issues, to integrating the European dimension in all customer-oriented services, and to set up evaluation processes to ensure the quality of the services provided*.

#### ***New Impetus for European Youth (2001)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/download/whitepaper\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/youth/whitepaper/download/whitepaper_en.pdf)

The White Paper provided a detailed account of youth concerns as obtained through a very comprehensive Europe-wide consultation process. In terms of guaranteeing open and on-going access to lifelong and life-wide learning, young people needed flexible guidance and counselling systems using a personalised approach, as well as appropriate information systems. With respect to integration into the world of work, *access to education and vocational training and to information and guidance constituted the central prerequisite, not only for finding a job and avoiding unemployment, but also for finding a good and satisfying job*. Several proposals were made around this issue :

- Improving labour market information and counselling :
  - *Develop user friendly information and counselling services geared to the needs of young people*
  - *Include decision-makers and employers at local level in information and counselling services for young people*

- *Develop concrete information resources for young people on job vacancies, working conditions, social protection etc. at national , regional and local levels*
  - *Circulate information in places where young people spend most of their time, such as schools, universities/colleges, employment agencies, clubs, youth centres etc.*
  - *Develop specific youth information units within existing information services and guidance systems, geared to local specificities and personal action plans*
  - *Urge trade unions to become more attractive to young people*
  - *Encourage employers to assist in career planning.*
  - *Provide information on job/training opportunities and on occupations and professions which are recognised throughout Europe*
- **Developing preventive approaches to address causes of the social exclusion of young people at a very early stage :**
    - *Focus on individual needs through a people-centred approach*
    - *Give special attention to the needs of young people at local and regional levels in terms of health centres, guidance/counselling, cultural activities etc. especially for those who are socially excluded or face the risk of social exclusion (such as young single parents).*

***Science and Society Action Plan (2002)***

[http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/pdf/ss\\_ap\\_en.pdf](http://europa.eu.int/comm/research/science-society/pdf/ss_ap_en.pdf)

The Action Plan addressed the promotion of scientific education and culture in Europe. Apart from the general scientific knowledge that citizens require as part of their basic skills, the Plan noted Europe's need to have a pool of scientists to ensure socio-economic development. To meet such a need , *both young people and adult learners should be encouraged and motivated to embark on a scientific career.* Increased recruitment to scientific and technical disciplines was seen as a priority as was the need to obtain comparable data on the scientific and technical content of study courses and on science and technology careers as they exist in the Member States.