

SELECTED MILESTONES IN THE EVOLUTION OF THE EUROPEAN AREA OF LIFELONG LEARNING

1995

[Towards the learning society](#)

The Commission's White Paper on *teaching and learning: towards the learning society* promoted the development of lifelong learning.

1996

[The European Year of Lifelong Learning](#)

The idea for a European Year on lifelong learning was launched in the [European Commission's White Paper on "Growth, Competitiveness, Employment"](#). The objective was to create awareness and public debate on how education and training systems in Europe needed to adapt to meet the challenges of the 21st Century.
Council Conclusions on a strategy for lifelong learning, 20.12.1996 (97/C7/02)

1999

[The Bologna Declaration](#)

Education ministers from 30 European countries agreed in a joint declaration ([the Bologna Declaration](#)) to establish a European area of higher education by 2010. The aim of the process is to make the higher education systems in Europe converge towards a more transparent system by adopting a common framework based on three cycles: Bachelor, Master and Doctorate degrees.

Follow-up meetings Prague 2001, [Berlin 2003](#), [Bergen 2005](#), [London 2007](#)

2000

[Lisbon European Council](#)

The EU set the *strategic goal for 2010: to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth*

with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The Council concluded that education and training systems needed to adapt to the demands of the knowledge society and offer learning and training opportunities tailored to target groups at different stages of their lives.

Feira European Council 2000

The Council concluded that lifelong learning was essential for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment and that a concerted effort should be made to identify coherent strategies and practical measures to foster access to lifelong learning for all.

The **European Social Fund** (ESF) earmarked for the period 2000-06, at least €12 billion for lifelong learning.

Lifelong learning is the guiding principle underpinning the Community action programmes: **Socrates**, **Leonardo da Vinci** and **Youth** (2000-2006).

A Communication issued from the Commission: **A Memorandum on lifelong learning**. This formed the basis for a European-wide consultation process on lifelong learning.

2001

European Employment Strategy

A horizontal objective on lifelong learning was introduced into the employment strategy and specific guidelines that focused on the employment and labour market aspects of lifelong learning.

Report on the future objectives of education and training systems

Ministers of Education adopted the report and agreed on a range of shared objectives to be achieved by 2010 to ensure their contribution to the Lisbon strategy.

Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality.

This Communication from the Commission identified coherent strategies and practical measures with a view to fostering lifelong learning for all. The Communication was based on the results of the consultation on the Memorandum on lifelong learning.

Indicators on lifelong learning

The Commission established a working committee to develop new indicators on lifelong learning in order to increase comparability between systems and thus facilitate the exchange of ideas and good practice. The [Task Force on Measuring Lifelong Learning](#) produced its report.

2002

European Employment Strategy

A guideline for lifelong learning was included for Member States' employment strategies. Member States were requested to implement coherent and comprehensive strategies, set targets, improve the quality and efficiency of education and training systems, and public and private investment in human resources.

Social Partners Framework of actions

The central EU-level social partners agreed a '[framework of actions](#)' for the lifelong development of competencies and qualifications ([EU0204210F](#)).

The 6th Research Framework Programme (2002-2006)

Provided new opportunities to reinforce research in the area of lifelong learning.

10 year work programme

The Education Council and the Commission endorsed the work programme on the follow up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe, which was to be implemented through the open method of coordination. The work programme constituted the new and coherent Community strategic framework of co-operation in the fields of education and training.

Council Resolution on lifelong learning

The Resolution supported the implementation of the Commission's 2001 Communication on lifelong learning

[Copenhagen Declaration](#) and the [Council Resolution on the promotion of enhanced co-operation in VET](#)

The Declaration and Resolution aimed to create a shared vision of how Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Europe needed to be adapted and improved, if the EU goals were to be achieved.

[5 Benchmarks for education and Training](#)

In its Communication the European Commission proposed 5 European benchmarks for education and training systems in Europe. Lifelong learning was re-affirmed as the overarching objective for all actions in the field of education and training and one of the benchmarks set was that by 2010, *the EU-average level of participation in lifelong learning should be at least 15% of the adult working age population (25-64 age group)*

2003

[R3L Initiative](#) (April)

An initiative to support linkages between 120 learning regions to promote lifelong learning

[Berlin 2003](#) The biennial meeting of European Ministers to progress the Bologna process

2004

[Joint Interim report-Education and Training 2010](#)

The Education Council and the Commission presented the interim report of the *work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of Education and Training systems in Europe* to the 2004 Spring European Council

[The new Integrated Action Programme in the field of lifelong learning](#)

The Commission adopted the proposal for the new programme (2007-2013), which aims to foster interaction, co-operation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, so that they become a world quality reference.

[Council Resolution on lifelong guidance](#)

[Council Conclusions on the validation of non formal and informal learning](#)

[Maastricht Communiqué](#)

The Maastricht Communiqué updates the Copenhagen declaration, reports on progress made since November 2002, and sets new priorities and strategies for the coming two years.

2005

[Bergen 2005](#) The biennial meeting of European Ministers to progress the Bologna process

[Commission's consultation on the European Qualifications Framework \(EQF\)](#)

The 6-month EU consultation was launched in July. The objective of the planned EQF is to create a European framework, which will enable qualifications systems at the national and sectoral levels to relate to each other. This reference structure will be used on a voluntary basis and will facilitate the transfer and recognition of qualifications held by individual citizens.

[Joint progress report-Education and Training 2010](#)

The Commission proposes the 2006 Joint Council/Commission progress report on the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme: *"Modernising education and training: a vital contribution to prosperity and social cohesion in Europe"*

[Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning-2005](#)

To support the implementation of the Education & Training 2010 work programme.