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European Conference, Cedefop, Thessaloniki, 27-28 September 2007

“Rhetoric or reality: The shift towards learning outcomes in European education and training policies and practises”

European countries are increasingly referring to learning outcomes when setting overall objectives for their education and training systems and when defining and describing qualifications. Instead of focusing on input factors like the duration, location and particular pedagogical method underpinning a qualification, attention is directed towards what a learner knows and is able to do at the end of a learning process. Considerable experiences have been made in European countries in this field. An increasing number of countries are furthermore setting up National Qualifications Frameworks based on learning outcomes, other countries are considering moving in this direction. The launching of a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and a European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) – both based on learning outcomes - have increased the attention to learning outcomes and may be seen as catalysts for national reforms in this field. The expectations to the learning outcomes approach are thus higher than ever before. Many see this shift as an opportunity to tailor education and training to individual needs, to improve the links to the labor market and to improve the way non-formally and informally acquired learning outcomes are recognized. Others, however, see these expectations as unrealistic and exaggerated. To address these questions in a systematic way, Cedefop invites practitioners, researchers and policy makers to take part in the European conference on:

*‘Rhetoric or reality: The shift towards learning outcomes in
European education and training policies and practices*

The discussions in the conference will be supported by the preliminary findings of the ongoing Cedefop comparative study (in 32 European countries) on the shift towards learning outcomes.

As the number of participants is limited, and the interest in the event is high, we ask you already now to signal by e-mail (yvonne.noutsia@cedefop.europa.eu) whether you are interested in participating in this conference (please use the attached form). The Conference agenda and documentation, the invitation letters including information on administrative issues will be distributed end of May 2007.

We look forward to welcoming you in Thessaloniki.



Aviana Bulgarelli
Director