



The Bordeaux Communiqué

Accompanying note

18 November 2008

The next Ministerial meeting on the review of the priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET) will be held in Bordeaux on 25 and 26 November 2008. Since the launch of the Copenhagen process in 2002, this review is conducted every two years. The previous reviews were carried out in Maastricht (2004) and Helsinki (2006). During the meeting in Bordeaux a new Communiqué on the Copenhagen process will be adopted.

The main steps

In February 2008, the French ministry of Education addressed a questionnaire to the Directors-General in charge of vocational training (DGVT) as well as to the European social partners, in order to ascertain their priorities both at national and European levels.

The aim was to involve them in the drawing up of a background document on the future priorities for enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This short questionnaire was not intended to replace the more comprehensive and thorough survey carried out by Cedefop.

We received numerous replies with very useful and mostly convergent views on the future. We are grateful to the DGVT members and the Social partners for their constructive input.

The results of this questionnaire were presented at the DGVT Brdo meeting in Slovenia, in March 2008. These, together with the results from the Cedefop survey, and the many discussions conducted during the year with the European Commission and the Social Partners, allowed us to draft the Background document, which was then used as a basis for the Council Conclusions and the Bordeaux Communiqué.

The Background document was then discussed at the Education Committee in July 2008 and at the Advisory Committee on vocational training in September 2008.

The Council Conclusions

Based on the background document and comments made by the various stakeholders, we drafted the Council Conclusions that set the political framework for enhanced European cooperation in VET.

The draft proposal was thoroughly discussed during the three meetings of the Education Committee in September. At its meeting on 24 September 2008, the Education Committee reached unanimous agreement on the text. The Permanent Representatives Committee was then invited to confirm this agreement and to forward the text to the Council for adoption on November 20-21.

The draft Council Conclusions that were transmitted to the COREPER in October are attached to this note.

The Bordeaux Communiqué

The Council Conclusions constitute the political framework of the Communiqué.

While the Council Conclusions are the legal text, the Communiqué is more operational. It is aimed at a broader audience, such as training centres, teachers, trainers, and the social partners.

The Communiqué was drafted on the basis of the background document and of the Council Conclusions. The proposal was discussed at the DGVT meeting held in Amiens from 19 to 22 October 2008.

In view of the very useful comments and suggestions of the DGVT members, a new Communiqué was drafted. This document was once again discussed with the European Commission, the social partners, the Swedish and the Belgian authorities, during a working group meeting held in Brussels on 10 November.

The attached version of the Bordeaux Communiqué is the result of these extensive discussions.

Structure of the Communiqué

The Communiqué is structured in four parts:

- Part I** Presents an overview of the Copenhagen process achievements;
- Part II** Defines the role of VET in responding to the challenges of globalisation;
- Part III** Proposes four priorities for action. These priorities coincide with those defined in the Council Conclusions. Examples and suggestions for action are included in *italic*;
- Part IV** Outlines implementation and reporting principles.

The DGVT meeting on 25 November 2008

The Ministerial meeting on the review of the priorities for enhanced European cooperation in VET, will be preceded by a preparatory DGVT meeting on 25 November 2008 in Bordeaux.

The main purpose of this DGVT meeting is to finalise the Bordeaux Communiqué so that it can be adopted at the Ministerial meeting taking place the day after.

The Communiqué is already the result of thorough discussions with the DGVT and the Social Partners. In particular, the Social partners have been closely involved in all the steps of the process including in the many working group meetings conducted in Paris and Brussels over the last 12 months.

Therefore, the DGVT are not expected to propose major changes of substance, but there is scope for improving the key messages in Parts I and II, as well as linguistic details to improve the quality and clarity of the text. However, considering the general consensus reached in recent meetings, the final version of the Communiqué should be agreed by the DGVT members without major difficulties.