Record of Meeting

Attendance:
Lise Skanting, Confederation of Danish Employers (UNICE)
Tony Watts, UK, independent expert
Raimo Vuorinen, University of Jyvaskyla, Finland
Peter Plant, Danish University of Education
Helmut Zelloth, ETF, Turin
Bernhard Jenschke, Landesarbeitsamt Berlin-Brandenburg (IAEVG)
Margit Rammo, Foundation for VET Reform, Estonia
Millar MacDonald, Dept. for Education and Skills, UK
Richard Sweet, OECD
Sasa Niclanovic, Employment Services of Slovenia
Tom Visser, CINOP, Netherlands
Karen Schober, Federal Employment Service, Germany
Frederic Company, University of Ramon Llul, Spain
Leigh Henderson, Guidance Council, UK
Torlach O’Connor, Dept of Education and Science, Ireland
Giampiero Alhadjeff, SOLIDAR
Jennifer Wannan, CEDEFOP
Rudi Delarue, DG EMPL
Aristeidis Lavrentzos, DG EAC
Roger O’Keefe, DG EAC
Simon Jones, DG EAC
John McCarthy, DG EAC

Apologies:
Anton Dobart, Ministry of Education, Science and Culture, Austria
Ana Maria Nogueria, Ministry of Employment and Vocational Training, Portugal
Erik Nexelman, Danish Ministry of Education
Kassandra Teliopoulos, IEKEP, Greece
Maria Jose Arias, Ministry of Education, Culture and Sports, Spain
Marina Rozeria, ISFOL, Italy
Hildegard Mackert, BEUC
Roland Sultana, University of Malta, Malta
Mary Killeen, European Parents Association,
Roisin McCabe, European Youth Forum, Brussels
Wojeck Kreft, Polish Association of School and Vocational Counsellors
Hans Schild, DG EAC
Laura Cassio, DG EAC
Monika Oels, DG EAC
Martina Ni Cheallaigh, DG EAC

1. Approval of Minutes and Agenda, Feedback on Action Points
The minutes from the September meeting were approved with one correction (to Mr MacDonald’s name). The agenda was approved with one change – the postponement of the item on indicators to the second day. Clarification was sought on some aspects of the Action Points arising from the last meeting and it was agreed that an e-mail would be sent to remind colleagues of the context in which examples of good practice, definitions of guidance and lists of national guidance associations were being sought. With regard to raising awareness of possibility of funding under the 2004 Joint Actions Programme to support European networks of national
guidance fora it was reported that announcements had been made at the Toronto and Bratislava conferences followed up by a copy of the call for proposals sent by e-mail. A note had also been put on the Guidance Virtual Community. Guidelines for applicants were in preparation and would also be widely disseminated.

2. Development of Policy Recommendations from OECD and CEDEFOP syntheses

The main ideas raised during this discussion item were:

- the policy messages should be packaged in different ways according to the specific audience to which they are addressed;
- a strong message is required concerning the need for strategic leadership and coordination mechanisms to promote the development of coherent lifelong guidance systems;
- the recommendations should make clear what the goals of lifelong guidance systems are; there should be a link between the goals of career guidance systems and people’s entitlements;
- career guidance policy frameworks should be universal but particular services may prioritise specific target groups;
- in addition to a focus on individuals, attention should be given to companies needs and to guidance for skills and competence development;
- the roles of the various stakeholders should be clarified and the role of government in stimulating the private sector to deliver guidance services should be highlighted;
- the need for more evidence-based research should be stressed;
- a link should be made between measuring outcomes/outputs and quality standards to demonstrate the cost-benefit value of investing in quality and the cost effectiveness of various delivery methods;
- the importance of improved training and qualifications for guidance personnel should be highlighted;
- the learning dimension of guidance should be emphasised.

Different views were expressed concerning the desirability of career guidance being delivered by specialised separate structures. The consensus was that, where it is part of integrated provision, care needs to be taken to ensure that distinctive attention is given to career guidance.

Mr McCarthy concluded by inviting colleagues to send any written comments they might have by 6 January 2004.

(During the discussion mention was made of a Leonardo da Vinci Project Workplace Guidance and the Social Partners. Colleagues who wish to find out more about the project can go to the home page of the project: www.gla.ac.uk/wg)

3. Strategic Statement/Model of Lifelong Guidance in Europe

Mr McCarthy explained that the draft Strategic Statement was a stocktaking exercise, drawing on the results of the career guidance policy review, carried out by the OECD, ETF, CEDEFOP and the World Bank and comparing these to current EU policies for education, training and employment. The Statement also outlined future challenges. The Systems Model is intended as a guide for current and future Member States and describes a common European systems approach to career guidance provision. The Model is deliberately structured on the same lines as the ILO Recommendation 150 (1975) on Human Resource Development concerning Vocational Guidance and Vocational Training on the basis that such an approach to a systems model is clearly acceptable to the Member States since they have all subscribed to Recommendation 150.
Mr McCarthy emphasised that **systems development for career guidance had to be considered in the context of lifelong learning policies** and that policy recommendations would have to be linked to the specific gaps identified in section 3 of the Statement.

The draft Statement and Model were welcomed by the Group. Questions were raised regarding the inter-relationship between the Statement, Model, Policy Recommendations, Policy Handbook and proposed Council Resolution on guidance. There was concern that, if too many documents were issued around the same time, it could not only lead to confusion but the impact of each could be lessened and key messages obscured. It was clarified that the Statement and Model should serve as inputs to the Irish Presidency conference on 28-29 April. The full text of the Policy Handbook would probably not be ready until the end of May but a flyer with some exemplar sections could be available for the conference. There was particular debate about whether the Statement should be a standalone text or accompanied by the Model. It was agreed that:

as regards **process and presentation:**

- the Statement has to be strategic in its focus, short, simple and punchy;
- there is value in having a Systems Model as a concrete reference point for the various stakeholders but the concepts and language need to be reviewed to bring them up-to-date and repetition between the different sections avoided;
- clear links have to be built between the Statement and the Model (e.g. through cross-referencing and incorporating the headings of the Model into the Statement);
- if timing permits the aim should be to incorporate the detail of the Model into the Policy Handbook and then the various elements of the Model could be exemplified through the Handbook;
- there should be a reference in the Council Resolution to the Statement and a reference in the Statement to the Handbook and Model;
- the Policy Recommendations should be incorporated into the Statement;
- the marketing strategy needs to be thought through. The Statement should be an attractive, glossy brochure;
- the Statement should clearly be identified with the Expert Group, perhaps taking the form of an opinion from the Group to the Commission;

as regards the **content** of the Statement:

- **prescriptive Policy Recommendations should be avoided** and instead the challenges to be addressed should be set out and options for consideration identified;
- it should **begin with challenges** and the section on EU policy context should be considerably shortened and possibly put in annex;
- it should **acknowledge progress and good practice** as well as set out a vision and identify challenges and gaps;
- the **benefits and returns** to be gained from developing good quality lifelong guidance systems **need to be clearly spelled out**;
- the **focus needs to be on individuals and their entitlements**, companies and their needs - the demand side - and not just on systems and providers - the supply side;
- attention also needs to be given to **pro-active role of guidance in developing learning and career management skills** and to related process issues including the skills of users and the training requirements of practitioners;
- the definition of career guidance used in the Statement should be exactly the same as the one used in the OECD career guidance policy review.
Mr McCarthy thanked colleagues for their feedback and invited them to provide further comments in writing by 6 January 2004. The revised Statement and Model would be discussed at the March meeting of the Expert Group.

4. **Irish Presidency Conference/Council Resolution on Guidance**

Mr Torloch O’Connor from the Department of Education and Science in Ireland clarified that the Irish Presidency event on guidance would consist of an informal meeting of Education Ministers on 28-29 April followed by a conference. The conference would build on the results of the career guidance policy review and the OECD Toronto ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy – Bridging the Gap’ event. The specific programme of the conference would, to a certain extent, be dictated by progress in the Council Resolution on Career Guidance.

Mr O’Connor outlined the reasons why the Irish Presidency felt there was a need for a Council Resolution and what they hoped would be achieved. He emphasised that the Resolution would ‘plant seeds rather than trees’ by providing general, empowering recommendations and by including some concrete proposals linked to resources to leverage action at national level.

As regards desired outcomes at national level he stressed:

- reasserting the primacy of the individual in the guidance process;
- bringing providers together and the economic benefits which accrue from ‘joined-up’ guidance services within a coherent policy framework;
- promoting quality standards and the training of guidance practitioners;
- sharing good practice;
- setting-up cross-border networks.

As regards desired outcomes at E.U level he underlined:

- promoting debate;
- mobilising the Commission including through making provision for guidance in E.U funded programmes;
- underpinning the continuation of international co-operation;
- developing the role of guidance in supporting mobility;
- possible establishment of an observatory/database of good practice.

In terms of timing Mr O’Connor clarified that discussion would begin with the Council’s Education Committee at its meeting on 15-16 January 2004. By the end of April the Resolution should be nearing finalisation with a view to its being endorsed at the Presidency Conference and formally adopted by the Council on May 27.

As regards the role of the Lifelong Guidance Expert Group, Mr O’Connor said that in addition to working together to ensure coherence between the Resolution and the Strategic Statement etc, the Group could act as a source of background illustrative material for the interministerial conference. If the Resolution is adopted, the Group should include the follow-up of the Resolution as a key element of its future Work-Programme.

The Group were concerned with ensuring the **maximum long-term impact of the Resolution and of maintaining momentum once the Resolution was adopted**. The main additional messages that the Group suggested could be reflected in the Resolution were:
the importance of a continuing co-ordination mechanism for career guidance at
European level. Consideration could be given to the merging of existing Expert Groups to
form a new platform at European level to keep guidance on the agenda. Ideally this should be
located within the Future Objectives for Education and Training (including lifelong learning)
and the Copenhagen process;

the need to build in some practical follow-up of the Resolution, for example by inviting
Member States to review how well their current career guidance policies and mechanisms
reflect the needs of individuals, of companies and of the labour market more generally.

The idea of an observatory/database was welcomed as a way to provide structured support and
couragement for exchange of views and practice. The need to ensure synergy between the
Expert Group, observatory/database and European networks of national guidance fora was
stressed.

In conclusion it was agreed that Mr McCarthy would liaise with Mr O’ Connor in the preparation
of the Resolution and conference. An update would be provided at the March meeting of the
Expert Group.

5. Quality criteria
Representatives of the contractors engaged by Cedefop to carry out the quality criteria study - Mr
Leigh Henderson of the Guidance Council and Mr Peter Plant, in his capacity as a NICEC
Overseas Fellow, outlined progress to date. They recalled that the study was intended to:

- provide an overview of: existing quality guidelines and criteria for guidance services and
  products in the Member States; of the principles and assumptions underlying the approaches,
  and of the challenges of their implementation, within and across sectors;
- capture good examples of policy and practice, particularly of citizen/user involvement;
- identify options for approaches that could be adopted at European level to assure quality
  guidance provision. Particular attention should be given to how such criteria could be
designed to be citizen-friendly and to take account of the diversity in guidance settings and
systems among current and future Member States.

Mr Henderson explained the methodology of the study, informed the Group that a draft interim
report had been prepared and presented some preliminary conclusions (for details see the full text
of the presentation and draft Interim Report on:

The study had revealed that although some countries had developed quality assurance
mechanisms, the situation was very diverse and patchy and there was often a reliance on
professional competence to quality assure guidance. Monitoring processes tended to be based on
quantitative measures and targets; few countries had separate bodies to inspect guidance
provision; there were few examples of systematic approaches to evaluation or of self-assessment;
and accreditation processes against sets of standards were very rare. Although codes of ethics of
professional guidance associations often exist there is little evidence of how adherence to these
codes is monitored. There were few examples of evaluation of user satisfaction and little
involvement of service users and stakeholders in service design and planning. There was a
growing trend to use ICT for guidance and data collection/monitoring.

As regards quality guidelines at European level, Mr Henderson explained that the contractors
proposed to adopt a similar approach to that of the Technical Working Group on Quality and to
develop a voluntary ‘meta-quality-assurance’ system that models quality assurance systems at national level. The main element of this system would be ‘meta-criteria’. These criteria would be broad enough to relate to a wide range of approaches to guidance and to quality, yet, at the same time, be defined tightly enough to help all the Member States reach an acceptable minimum and continue to improve. A draft list of 13 ‘meta-criteria’ (covering: citizen/user involvement; professional development; quality assurance and quality improvement; coherence; and non-State funded career guidance) was presented to the Group by Mr Plant for consideration.

A long discussion ensued. The Group endorsed the basic approach, especially the development of criteria rather than ‘standards’, but raised some concerns in particular regarding to whom the meta-criteria were intended to be addressed and who would be responsible for applying them. Mr McCarthy clarified that the target audiences for the criteria were European policy makers and European citizens/users.

The main points stressed by the Group were the need to:

- ensure a **stronger focus on the user/citizen perspective**. The situation on training and qualifications is so diverse that it is more feasible to try and drive up quality at national level through user demand. The citizen/user should be able to see what they are entitled to expect in terms of levels of quality of provision (service itself, service delivery and products);
- **establish key benchmarks and enable comparison of outcomes** in terms of the experience of the users of guidance services and products across the E.U, even if the ways in which those outcomes are achieved vary considerably;
- **take account of contextual differences in informal guidance provision** including in the workplace;
- **take account of the roles of all the various stakeholders in assuring quality** (perhaps exemplifying what policy makers, practitioners and users could do);
- **build in flexibility** so that the system can evolve to changing situations;
- **include accreditation within the meta-criteria**, failure to meet the criteria should have consequences;
- **avoid confusion between criteria to assure quality and the broader issue of how to ensure that quality assurance leads to real improvements**.

During the discussion Mr MacDonald informed the Group that the UK would shortly publish a National Policy Framework and Action Plan on information, advice and guidance for adults. This would define at a national level the basic information and advice services which adults should be entitled to expect and the standards to which those services should be delivered. They have also included an Action Plan that sets out how they will deliver consistent, high quality and accessible IAG services for adults. The document can be downloaded from the V.C (http://cedefop.communityzero.com/lifelong_guidance?go=33 4310)

Mr McCarthy concluded the discussion by asking the contractors to take account of the comments made by the Group. The draft final report on the study will be presented by the contractors to the Expert Group at its meeting in March.


Mr Roger O’Keefe, DG EAC, presented the draft Interim Report and Staff Working Paper. He began by recalling the context, process and reporting requirements. He clarified that the Interim Report and Working Paper were intended to provide an integrated overview of progress achieved
towards the education and training aspects of the Lisbon strategy through a range of processes and drew on the work of all the Technical, Working and Expert Groups including the Standing Group on Indicators.

Mr O’Keefe explained that the key message of the draft Interim Report was that too little is being done and progress is too slow and therefore reforms are needed urgently. Three areas in particular are highlighted where progress is substantially below the targets set: investment in HRD; educational attainment levels & adult participation levels in education and training. There is also a serious risk of a shortage of teachers. In order to remedy this situation the Report identifies 4 priorities: concentrating reforms and investment on the key areas; making lifelong learning a concrete reality; establishing a Europe of education and training; according “Education & Training 2010” its rightful place. The report also proposes an annual reporting procedure from 2006 onwards in order to strengthen co-operation and monitoring and maintain peer pressure.

Although there were many references to guidance in the Working Paper, the Group expressed its strong disappointment that the transversal role of guidance and its importance in promoting participation in education and training and in improving retention and attainment levels had not been acknowledged in the Interim Report itself. The Group also expressed their opposition to the idea of annual reporting, characterising it as additional bureaucracy and not an effective way to make progress. Lastly, the Group raised the issue of sustainability of the work on guidance and where it would fit in the next phase of work on the education and training aspects of the Lisbon Strategy.

Mr O’Keefe reminded colleagues that the Interim Report was still a draft and changes could be introduced before the final version was jointly agreed with the Council in February. As regards future work on guidance, his view was that it fits logically within the lifelong learning context and that it would make sense to retain that focus.

In conclusion it was agreed that Mr McCarthy would communicate the views of the Group on the Interim Report to the Commission services and simultaneously at national level Expert Group members would contact their Education Council representatives to push for the inclusion of guidance in the Interim Report.

A request was also made for the Secretariat to provide a simple overview of the various processes, showing how they relate to one another and where guidance fits.

7. Copenhagen Process

Mr Simon Jones, DG EAC, presented the Copenhagen Co-ordination Group Stocktaking Report and outlined the response of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Education and Training (ACVT) and the Copenhagen Co-ordination Group to the Interim Report and Working Paper. Overall the texts had received a positive response and there was broad agreement on the priorities for action. However, both the ACVT and the Co-ordination Group had made a number of comments that would be transmitted to the Commission and to the Council. Like the Guidance Expert Group, they had also deplored the lack of a reference to guidance in the Interim Report. More generally they felt that VET aspects were not sufficiently prominent, that the tone of the Report was overly negative and that more account should be taken of achievements in VET and examples of good practice. They felt that an annual reporting process would not accurately reflect progress made and that a reporting frequency of every 2 or 3 years would be more meaningful,

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1 Concrete Objectives for future Education and Training; Enhanced Co-operation in VET – Copenhagen process; Higher Education – Bologna process, follow-up to the Commission’s Lifelong Learning Communication.
perhaps with a focus on specific indicators rather than more comprehensive reporting. The ACVT and the Co-ordination Group also called for faster and lighter working methods at European level. In particular they proposed that the follow-up of the Objectives process be taken forward on similar lines to the Copenhagen process through small, technical/expert groups with precise mandates. They also suggested making more use of peer review.

In response to the question of where guidance would fit in the next stage of the VET process, Mr Jones explained that there could be a move towards more integrated approaches and the promotion of greater synergy between expert groups but that there would be need for continuing work on specific issues. He expected that, if the Council adopted a Resolution on Career Guidance it would become a higher priority issue than before. He informed colleagues that the Copenhagen process priorities would be reviewed and a new Work Programme formulated in December 2004 at a Ministerial conference to be held in Maastricht under the Dutch Presidency.

Mr McCarthy concluded that in order to ensure that adequate attention continued to be given to guidance it would be important to build in a specific reference to it in the new Copenhagen Process Work Programme.

8. Implementation of Lifelong Learning Strategies
Mr Roger O’Keefe, DG EAC presented a report on progress in the implementation of LLL strategies within the EU. The report is part of an iterative process and draws on the responses of the national LLL co-ordinators to a questionnaire designed by DG EAC. From the very varied input received, the report aims to identify trends at European level. Mr O’Keefe emphasised that although the concept of LLL is growing in importance the tendency to mainstream it with other policies has resulted in less visibility.

The questionnaire included a specific question on information, advice and guidance. A number of the responses highlighted the importance of guidance and there was generally a clear recognition that it was a key building block within LLL but there was no evidence of articulated guidance policies. It was often mentioned as a pivotal element of facilitating access to diverse and flexible learning pathways and of validation of non-formal learning. But guidance was still usually predominantly linked to school or unemployment services. Although there was a growing trend to develop coaching and guiding skills of education/training staff to promote self-directed learning, little attention was given to early childhood learning and there was insufficient recognition of basic schooling as a place where the LLL ethos needs to be developed. Equally the potential of the workplace as a learning environment was underestimated.

Mr Helmut Zelloth of the European Training Foundation presented a report on progress in the implementation of LLL strategies within the accession and candidate countries (ACCs). Many of the trends identified in the report are similar to those for the current Member States. Mr Zelloth underlined that not only did the ACCs have a more difficult starting point than the E.U 15 but that there were great disparities between the ACCs. Although many LLL initiatives had been undertaken, the predominant focus was on formal systems and there was weak co-ordination between formal and non-formal systems. There was little involvement of the Social Partners and generally few incentives to encourage companies to train. A lot of work had been done on sectoral strategies but no country had yet implemented a comprehensive LLL strategy, although a few countries had reached the planning and consultation phase. Work on legislation was developing and partnerships were beginning to build up. A lot of attention was being given to basic skills and to ICT.
Mr Zelloth also reported that an ETF conference to discuss the results of the career guidance policy review in the ACCs took place in Bratislava on 5-6 December 2003. As a follow-up to the conference country teams comprising representatives from Education and Labour Ministries and the Social Partners, were in the process of developing national action plans for career guidance. The ACCs had also been requested to submit examples of interesting policies and practice. The action plans and examples of practice will be placed on the Guidance Virtual Community when they are available. In 2004 the ETF plans to extend the career guidance policy review to the non-Mediterranean candidate countries.

Mr McCarthy thanked Mr O’Keefe and Mr Zelloth for their excellent presentations. He congratulated Mr Zelloth on all the work done on guidance with the ACCs and noted that it would be important to ensure this momentum continued to be built on once the acceding countries were Member States. In this context he stressed the need for the Council Resolution on Career Guidance to be meaningful and relevant to the situation of the future Member States as well as the current EU 15.

It was suggested that consideration be given to bringing country teams from the Member States together every 2 years to report on progress and share experience. It was noted that the European networks of national guidance fora to be supported under the guidance strand of the Joint Actions Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth Programmes 2004 would be key participants for such gatherings.

9. Revision of ILO Standard 142 and Recommendation 150
Mr McCarthy informed colleagues that he had incorporated the comments he had received on the draft text to update the guidance aspects of the ILO provisions on human resource development and had sent the text to Mr Rudi Delarue from the DG Employment Unit responsible for liaison with the ILO. Mr Delarue reported that the text had been passed informally to the ILO who had received it with interest. However, since the Commission is not officially consulted, formal proposals for amendments can only be proposed by the ILO Member States and by the Social Partners at the ILO annual conference in June 2004.

It was agreed that the possibility of the amendment being raised by the Social Partners would be explored. Expert Group members would also liaise with their national ILO contact person (usually located within the international section of the Ministry of Labour) to lobby support for the amendment. The IAEVG would support it as a non-governmental organisation.

Mr McCarthy thanked Mr Delarue for his co-operation and requested that he keep the Expert Group informed of any relevant developments.

10. Follow-up to the OECD Career Guidance Policy Review
Mr Richard Sweet, OECD, reported that the review process had helped to mobilise action at national level. The October conference – ‘Career Guidance and Public Policy – Bridging the Gap’ held in Toronto had been very successful. Not only had the results of the review been widely disseminated and reflection advanced but some concrete commitments had been made which would ensure that work on career guidance continued to be taken forward work. Most notably at the end of the conference in Toronto, Mr John Dennehy, Secretary General of the Dept. of Education and Science in Ireland, announced that Ireland would propose a Council Resolution on
Career Guidance and would second an expert for 3 years to work on the initial development and co-ordination of an International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP).

The OECD final synthesis of the career guidance policy review will be published in February 2004. Continuing the exemplary co-operation between the OECD and the Commission, the Guidance Handbook for Policy Makers will be a joint Commission/OECD publication and is expected to be available at the end of May/beginning of June 2004. Otherwise, the OECD itself does not plan to continue to work directly on career guidance in the coming period. Logistics precluded the inclusion of guidance in the 2006 round of PISA but it is possible that it may be included in the 2009 round. At the OECD Education Committee meeting in October 2003, Mr Dennehy (who is chair of the Committee) called on other countries to support the ICCDPP.

11. **International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP)**

Mr Tony Watts briefly informed colleagues of the genesis and rationale behind creating an ICCDPP. Since 1999 a series of international symposia on career development and public policy have been held where the idea of establishing an international guidance centre linking career development and public policy has been discussed. The aims of the centre would be to promote policies, methods, and resources for evidence-based policy-making in the field of career development through international collaboration and to promote and support international transfer of knowledge and best practice in order to strengthen public policies, systems and services for career development. The idea has been received favourably in a number of countries including Finland, Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Canada and Ireland.

Different options are being explored regarding a host organisation for the centre until it is fully established. Work is underway to clarify the centre’s terms of reference. During the preparatory phase (from Autumn 2004) the centre would operate 'virtually'. In addition to the secondment of an expert from Ireland to ensure the initial development and co-ordination of the centre, other tangible contributions to taking the work forward include the allocation of a half-time staff member in Finland (through resources provided by its central Government to the University of Jyväskyla) to establish a communication strategy and virtual facilities. Australia is exploring how it might secure funding for a follow-up International Symposium in 2005.

The Expert Group responded positively to the creation of such a centre although some concerns were raised about the need to ensure that the ICCP would add value to, and not duplicate, work at national level, particularly as regards research. The importance of ensuring synergy between the ICCDPP and co-ordination mechanisms at European level (Expert Group, European networks of national fora) was also emphasised.

12. **Building European Networks**

At the September meeting of the Expert Group the issue of effective networking was raised in two contexts: firstly as regards how to ensure a real two-way flow of information from the LGEG to national networks and associations and vice versa and secondly as regards the European networks of national guidance fora to be supported under the guidance strand of the 2004 Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth Joint Actions Programme. In order to stimulate reflection within the Expert Group Mr McCarthy had invited Mr Giampiero Alhadeff from the non-governmental organisation SOLIDAR2, and ex-President of the European Platform of Social NGOs, to give a presentation on critical success factors in networks.

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2 SOLIDAR is an international alliance of NGOs linked to labour, Trade Unions, and the Workers’ Educational Association.
Mr Alhadheff explained that NGOs take part in a structured, organised dialogue with the Commission and the European Parliament and they are systematically involved in the policy development process in a range of key fields (e.g. social affairs, development, trade). They have achieved this position because NGOs are considered to be able to feed in the views of the grassroots level which policy makers and politicians are interested in.

He emphasised the importance of:

- **clear focused objectives** - so both your members and target audience know what you are trying to achieve and what you stand for;
- **forward planning** - in order to influence policy the network has to work at the political level, has to keep abreast of developments, think strategically, identify priorities and appropriate tactics;
- **mutual benefit** - the added-value which the network provides has to be visible to both members and target audience. Also the role of the network and its members have to be clear;
- **two-pronged approach** - often a European base is insufficient unless there is also pressure from the national level;
- **communication** - using clear simple language and sending regular targeted information to keep members informed of developments and to raise awareness of priority issues amongst policy makers. SOLIDAR have web-pages but they have found that e-mailing one page of key information works best.

Mr Alhadeff informed colleagues that NGOs were launching a **new platform on lifelong learning** and there could be opportunities for future co-operation between this platform and the Guidance Expert Group.

In response the Group underlined the **important role of NGOs in guidance delivery and support** and the need for the Expert Group and the ICCDPP to take advantage of opportunities for collaboration.

Mr McCarthy concluded by thanking Mr Alhadeff for his interesting and lively presentation and requested that contact be maintained and opportunities for co-operation actively explored including further advice and input to the development of the European networks of national guidance fora.

13. **Indicators for Career Guidance**

Ms Wannan presented a preliminary note, tabled during the meeting, on the state of play and next steps for the collection of data on career guidance. The mandate of the Commission’s Expert Group on Lifelong Guidance foresees that as part of its working methods it will: ‘**contribute to recommendations on priorities for indicators and benchmarks**’. CEDEFOP has earmarked some resources to carry out a study but first further clarification is needed on the specific purposes for which the Group wants statistical data.

At various times the Expert Group had expressed the need for:

- evidence of the impact of guidance and the benefits which can accrue to individuals, society and the economy through the contribution it makes to public policy goals;
- descriptive data on take-up of and access to guidance; nature of guidance provided; setting it was provided in; by whom etc;
- data on guidance outputs and outcomes – at various points of time immediately after the intervention, in the medium-term and in the longer-term;
• data to evaluate the effectiveness of the guidance provided in terms of satisfying the needs of its users;
• financial data on public and private investment in guidance;
• feedback data e.g. on unmet needs.

The Group could also consider whether as part of Strategic Statement or the possible Council resolution on lifelong guidance one or more quantitative targets/benchmarks should be set to give more of a directional impetus to improve provision, and, if so, in relation to which specific aspects of guidance?

Ms Wannan recalled that at European level indicators need to be based on reliable, comparable data, which is collected regularly to ensure continuity. She emphasised that the aspects which lend themselves to measurement are not necessarily the most meaningful. She outlined some constraints affecting work on indicators (e.g. methodological difficulties of isolating the contribution of guidance; widely differing interpretations of what guidance means; who provides it and how and where it is provided). She then indicated possible partial responses to the information gaps (e.g. the results of the recent career guidance review and recent papers presenting evidence on the economic, social and educational impact of guidance) and possible future sources of data (e.g. Adult Education Survey; DG Employment’s Labour Market Policy database; new work by the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks breakdown etc). Reflection is needed both on what should be done at European level and what should be done at national level.

The note was welcomed by the Group. Different points of view were expressed but there seemed to be a degree of consensus that the most important need was to be able to provide evidence regarding the positive impact of guidance at macro level. Some doubt was expressed regarding the utility of gathering input data. The majority view was that, even if the focus was on finding ways to measure the effectiveness of guidance (especially in terms of its contribution to participation in learning and the labour market, retention rates, and progression in learning) input data would still be useful. The following specific points were made:

- a ‘balance scorecard’ approach (taking account of outcomes, outputs and inputs) could be adopted;
- the contract should be for a feasibility study aiming to gather ‘ammunition’ to justify the inclusion of questions on guidance in various data collection sets;
- the possibility of including a question in PISA should be explored;
- the possibility of scaling up from national surveys/data collection exercises should be examined.

Colleagues mentioned work going on in Germany and in Finland and offered to share relevant papers.

Mr McCarthy concluded that the study should examine developments nationally and internationally, should identify the different data required, propose possible indicators and benchmarks and make suggestions concerning options for mining data and regular sources of data collection. Mr McCarthy asked Ms Wannan to take on board the comments of the Group and to draft a call for tender accordingly.

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14. **Planning of future meetings**
Mr McCarthy informed colleagues that the dates of the first two meetings in 2004 had to be changed. The new dates agreed were: 17-18 March and 21-22 June. The meeting on 17-18 March would include items on: the revised Strategic Statement and Systems Model; the Handbook for Policy Makers, the draft final report on the study on quality guidelines and criteria, a progress report on the Irish Presidency Inter Ministerial conference and Council Resolution; the future Work Programme of the Expert Group.

15. **Close of meeting**
Owing to a lack of time, two items (the Adult Education Survey and the review of the working of the Expert Group) had to be postponed to a future meeting. Mr McCarthy summarised the main action points arising from the meetings (see annex attached) and thanked all the participants of the Expert Group, especially those working in a language not their own.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Responsible</th>
<th>Deadline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Concrete Objectives, Copenhagen &amp; LLL follow-up</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Send note from LGEG to Commission, Presidency and Copenhagen Coordination Group</strong> regretting the absence of guidance from the Interim Report &amp; requesting that proper attention be given to it in the final version;</td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>Early January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Via national contacts request Presidency and Education Ministers to push for changes during discussion of the I.R in - Ed Comm</strong></td>
<td>All Group members</td>
<td>December-January</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>In response to the request from Objectives Working Group H provide good examples of policies</strong></td>
<td>All Group members</td>
<td>By mid February 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Connect with co-ordinators of Objectives, Copenhagen and LLL processes to place guidance in the next stage of work.</strong></td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>December onwards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ <strong>Prepare explanation chart on policy contexts for LLG</strong></td>
<td>Secretariat</td>
<td>January</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **Strategic influence**                                                                                                                                                                                |                              |                               |
| ➢ **Encourage, Social Partner representatives, national delegations & Presidency to introduce & support amendments reflecting LGEG’s informal proposals for revision of ILO standard 142 and Recommendation 150** | Secretariat & all Group members | December -June                |
| ➢ **Read & comment on draft strategic statement and model for guidance**                                                                                                                             | All Group members            | By 6 January 2004             |
| ➢ **Produce revised version of statement & model and circulate for written comment with a view to having a final agreed version ready in time for Irish Presidency event on guidance in April** | Secretariat                  | By end January 2004           |
| ➢ **Support the preparation of the Irish Presidency guidance**                                                                                                                                      | Secretariat                  | Ongoing from December to April |
| Event & Feed into Drafting of Possible Council Resolution on Guidance |
|---|---|---|
| Write to Council of Europe proposing Social Charter be updated | Secretariat | By end February |
| Contribute events/milestones to add to the Road-Map | Secretariat/All Group members | On-going basis |
| Send Secretariat, or put on the V.C, definitions of guidance | Group members who have not already done so | End February |
| Promote a two-way flow of information from the LGEG to national networks and associations and vice versa | Secretariat and all Group members | On-going basis |
| Check list of associations circulated by Secretariat & add any not included in list | Secretariat and all Group members | By end February 2004 |
| Raise awareness of possibility offered by Joint Actions Programme 2004 to establish European networks of national fora for guidance | Secretariat and all Group members | Prior to deadline for submission of applications on 12 March 2004 |

| Work Programme |
|---|---|---|
| Proceed with external contract for preparation of handbook for policy makers | Secretariat | Progress report at March meeting |
| Launch external contract for feasibility study on indicators | Secretariat | Progress report at March meeting |
| Complete study on quality criteria | External contractors (Guidance Council & NICEC) | Final report for discussion at March meeting |
| Review feasibility of launching external contracts for impact study and convergence of European level guidance networks and structures | Secretariat | Bring to the attention of the Commission with a view to launching calls for tender during 1st half of 2004 |

| Electronic Media |
|---|---|---|
| Proceed with external contract for animator for lifelong guidance web-pages & Virtual Community | Cedefop | Progress report at March meeting |
| Continue to develop use of the V.C as a communication tool. Draft specific targeted questions with deadlines for responses. | Secretariat/animator | Progress report at March meeting |

- Participate actively in discussions & encourage broader participation at national level.

- All Group members | On-going basis |