

COUNCIL CONCLUSIONS**of 13 July 2001****on the follow-up of the report on concrete future objectives of education and training systems**

(2001/C 204/03)

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

1. RECALLS that the Council (Education) adopted the report on the concrete future objectives of education and training systems on 12 February 2001 for transmission to the Stockholm European Council, following the mandate given by the Lisbon European Council in March 2000, with a very clear message to all those involved in its follow-up that there should be rapid progress in working out how to take its implementation forward, and in selecting priorities.

2. RECALLS that the Stockholm European Council underlined that the joint report, which the Council and the Commission will present to the European Council in Barcelona in spring 2002, should contain 'a detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems, including an assessment of their achievement in the framework of the open method of coordination and in a worldwide perspective'.

3. AGREES that the main objectives of the follow-up of the Objectives Report of 12 February 2001 will be to:

— assess the achievement of the objectives stated in the report so that the Council (Education) can report back to the European Council whenever this is seemed appropriate,

— provide support for the improvement of education and training policy design and implementation at all levels,

— promote further development of cooperation and exchange of good practice between Member States, thus enhancing efficiency and effectiveness of this work.

As stated in the objectives report consideration will have to be given throughout the follow-up process to other processes at European level affecting the work of the Council (Education). Similarly, account should be taken within those processes of the follow-up work on the objectives of education and training systems.

4. AGREES upon the following milestones leading up to the Barcelona European Council:

— a draft work programme, including a further elaborated methodology, to be discussed by the Council at its meeting on 29 November 2001,

— a joint report by the Commission and the Council containing a detailed work programme to be adopted at the Council meeting on 14 February 2002 and transmitted to the Barcelona European Council.

5. EMPHASISES that the work programme should cover in sufficient detail the period up to 2004, the aim being that work should have started by then in all areas contained in the Objectives Report, and also cover in broad terms developments foreseen up to 2010. Similarly, this work programme should aim at a strong general education in order to strengthen lifelong learning in accordance with a permanently evolving society.

6. FURTHER AGREES that work will start in the following three areas which were also highlighted in the conclusions of the Stockholm European Council:

— basic skills,

— information and communications technology (ICT),

— mathematics, science and technology.

7. UNDERLINES that work should start without delay in all three agreed areas so that progress could be accounted for in the joint report by the Council and the Commission to Barcelona.

8. STRESSES that indicators, although, only one element of the follow-up progress, represent an important tool for measuring and comparing performance, and that if the process is to be successful and credible, the indicators need to be underpinned by clearly defined, comparable and, above all, policy-relevant data.

9. REAFFIRMS that the objectives of the follow-up process can only be achieved with active involvement and contribution from Member States, *inter alia*, through:

— provision of the necessary support to the national statistical offices,

- provision of up-to-date data and, when available, their national forecasts and objectives,
- information on relevant changes in national policies and instruments, influencing the education and training systems,
- contribution to all other aspects of the following work, e.g. provision of qualitative information, involvement

in studies and nomination of experts to working groups.

10. RECALLS moreover that the Commission will be fully involved in all phases of the work. The Commission should therefore take the necessary initiatives to support the process.