

Wednesday 8 June 2011

**European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy**

P7\_TA(2011)0263

**European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2011 on European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy (2010/2234(INI))**

(2012/C 380 E/10)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission Communication of 2 July 2008 entitled 'Renewed social agenda: Opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe' (COM (2008)0412),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 9 June 2010 entitled 'A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy' (COM(2010)0296),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 25 November 2009 entitled 'Key competences for a changing world' (COM(2009)0640),
- having regard to the eight key competences listed as a 'European Reference Framework' in Recommendation 2006/962/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to the proposal of 9 April 2008 for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET) (COM(2008)0180),
- having regard to the 10-year 'Education and Training 2010' work programme, and to the subsequent joint reports on progress towards its implementation,
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 27 April 2009 entitled 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing und Empowering' (COM(2009)0200),
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2010 on 'An EU Strategy for Youth – Investing und Empowering' <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 27 November 2009 on a renewed framework for European cooperation in the youth field (2010-2018),
- having regard to its resolution of 6 July 2010 on promoting youth access to the labour market, strengthening trainee, internship and apprenticeship status <sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to the Commission Communication entitled 'Youth on the Move – An initiative to unleash the potential of young people to achieve smart, sustainable and inclusive growth in the European Union' (COM(2010)0477),

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ L 394, 30.12.2006, p. 10.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 21.

<sup>(3)</sup> Texts adopted, P7\_TA(2010)0262.

**Wednesday 8 June 2011**

- having regard to the Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 11 May 2009 on the evaluation of the current framework for European cooperation in the youth field and on future perspectives for the renewed framework (09169/2009),
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 26 August 2010 entitled 'A Digital Agenda for Europe' (COM(2010)0245),
- having regard to the Council Resolution of 15 November 2007 on the new skills for new jobs <sup>(1)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 May 2010 on key competences for a changing world: implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme <sup>(2)</sup>,
- having regard to its resolution of 18 December 2008 on delivering lifelong learning for knowledge, creativity and innovation – implementation of the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme <sup>(3)</sup>,
- having regard to the March 2009 Cedefop study on 'Professionalising career guidance – Practitioner competences and qualification routes in Europe',
- having regard to the May 2009 Cedefop study on 'Skills for Europe's future: anticipating occupational skill needs',
- having regard to the Commission Communication of 3 March 2010 entitled 'EUROPE 2020 – A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth' (COM(2010)2020),
- having regard to the Council conclusions of 11 May 2010 on competences supporting lifelong learning and the 'new skills for new jobs' initiative,
- having regard to the Commission staff working document of 31 October 2006 entitled 'European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) – A system for the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes in Europe' (SEC(2006)1431),
- having regard to the outcome of the Council discussions of 5 December 2008 on the conclusions of the Council and the Representatives of the Governments of the Member States, meeting within the Council, on the future priorities for enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (16459/2008),
- having regard to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) <sup>(4)</sup>,
- having regard to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for Vocational Education and Training <sup>(5)</sup>,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 290, 4.12.2007, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 161 E, 31.5.2011, p. 8.

<sup>(3)</sup> OJ C 45 E, 23.2.2010, p. 33.

<sup>(4)</sup> OJ C 155, 8.7.2009, p. 11.

<sup>(5)</sup> OJ C 155, 8.7.2009, p. 1.

Wednesday 8 June 2011

- having regard to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning <sup>(1)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Council conclusions of 21 November 2008 on youth mobility <sup>(2)</sup>,
  - having regard to the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning,
  - having regard to the Commission Communication of 21 February 2007 entitled 'A coherent framework of indicators and benchmarks for monitoring progress towards the Lisbon objectives in education and training' (COM(2007)0061),
  - having regard to the Commission Communication of 8 September 2006 entitled 'Efficiency and equity in European education and training' (COM(2006)0481),
  - having regard to the research paper entitled 'Guiding at-risk youth through learning to work' (Cedefop, Luxembourg, 2010),
  - having regard to the briefing note entitled 'Jobs in Europe to become more knowledge- and skills-intensive' (Cedefop, February 2010),
  - having regard to the briefing note entitled 'Skill mismatch in Europe' (Cedefop, June 2010),
  - having regard to the publication entitled 'Working and ageing' (Cedefop, Luxembourg, 2010),
  - having regard to Articles 165 and 166 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union, relating to education, vocational training, youth, and sport,
  - having regard to Rule 48 of its Rules of Procedure,
  - having regard to the report of the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs and the opinions of the Committee on Culture and Education, the Committee on the Internal Market and Consumer Protection and the Committee on Women's Rights and Gender Equality (A7-0082/2011),
- A. whereas the youth unemployment rate is now 21 %, which is twice as high as the general rate of unemployment at EU level and is one of the most pressing challenges in Europe, and is thus one of the goals being pursued to reduce the school drop-out rate below 10 %; whereas another goal is to increase women's participation in the labour market by 70 % by 2020; and whereas education and training are key factors for successful participation in the labour market and the ability to make life decisions, given a situation where more than 5,5 million young Europeans are without work, are at risk of social exclusion and face poverty and a lack of opportunity after leaving school, and many young people are forced to accept precarious jobs, with low salaries and reduced social insurance cover, which affects their health and safety in the workplace,
- B. whereas while 58,9 % of the university qualifications awarded in the European Union go to women, the corresponding figure at PhD level is just 43 % and it is lower again at full professor level, and whereas only 15 % of Grade A full professors are women,
- C. whereas the Commission's Communication entitled 'A new impetus for European cooperation in Vocational Education and Training to support the Europe 2020 strategy' (COM(2010)0296) failed to take the gender dimension into account,

<sup>(1)</sup> OJ C 111, 6.5.2008, p. 1.

<sup>(2)</sup> OJ C 320, 16.12.2008, p. 6.

Wednesday 8 June 2011

- D. whereas the transition from education to work and between jobs is a structural challenge for workers all over the EU; whereas, therefore, transition security is an essential element to motivate workers for training outside the workplace; whereas quality apprenticeships have a largely positive impact on young people's access to employment,
  - E. whereas early unemployment has lasting ill-effects, including a higher risk of future unemployment and lower lifetime earnings,
  - F. whereas demography and longevity are such that working lives will, as a matter of course, be longer and more varied, and whereas inter alia lifelong learning, education, the new digital economy, the adaptation to new technologies and the implementation of the EU 2020 goals are ways to secure employment and a better standard of living,
  - G. whereas vocational education and training tailored to learners' individual needs is of decisive value, increasing the possibility for individuals to deal with competitive pressures, increasing the standard of living, and achieving socio-economic cohesion and better integration, in particular of specific groups such as migrants, people with disabilities, or early school-leavers and vulnerable women,
  - H. whereas small businesses have created historically more than 50 % of new jobs in Europe – jobs that are self-sustaining and have a multiplier effect,
  - I. whereas the role of the Member States and the Commission should be primarily to help create an environment where enterprises can succeed, develop and grow – to grow they need a reduced tax burden and predictability so they can plan and make investments,
  - J. whereas, in view of the great differences in the levels of participation of pupils in vocational training in Member States, exchanges of best practices are important in order to increase the number and improve the quality of pupils who opt for technical training in Member States, which fares poorly as far as pupil numbers and quality are concerned,
1. Recognises the importance of modernising vocational education and training, given that human capital is crucial for Europe's success;
  2. Recognises the importance of both initial and continuing vocational education and training and maintains that their success hinges on the participation and cooperation of all stakeholders in the design, organisation and financing of strategies to this end; calls on the Member States to make use of the positive experience with the dual system within Vocational Educational and Training (VET) in example countries, where the system has led to the longer-term integration of young workers into the labour market and to higher employment rates for young workers, as well as higher levels of competence which then increase employment prospects at a later age;
  3. Recalls that VET programmes should be extended to comply with the principles of life-long learning and initial and continuing training;
  4. Stresses the importance of encouraging regular further training courses as part of lifelong learning;
  5. Urges the Member States to conclude basic education with a 'career aptitude' assessment;

Wednesday 8 June 2011

6. Warns that young Europeans may become a lost generation in the absence of practical support to find a job and continue their studies, at a time when worsening poverty is leading to a rise in school absenteeism;
7. Welcomes the Commission measures aimed at breaking down barriers, increasing transparency, and making for ease of comparison for the purposes of recognition within and between education systems;
8. Calls on the Member States to ensure that vocational training and life-long-learning are geared more closely to the needs of the labour market and allow for entry into and mobility within it; stresses, moreover, the need for better and greater interaction between the world of education, work, vocational education and training as a vital link between the world of education and that of work; calls, therefore, on the Member States to foster the individual's continuing need for qualifications, development and lifelong learning;
9. Points out that the link between education and training, particularly the pathway from vocational to higher education, demands that the opportunities for link-ups between vocational training and university education be expanded, with special emphasis on integrating them into mechanisms for the provision of career information, guidance and counselling; also takes the view that switching between training and employment ensures that recipients of vocational training acquire the skills in demand on the labour market;
10. Emphasises the importance, at local and regional level, of fostering effective synergies and reliable forms of cooperation between schools, training agencies, research centres and firms, in order to overcome the inward-looking nature of education systems and the mismatch between knowledge and skills and the needs of the labour market and to make young people, in particular women, more employable, with specific reference to vocational further education qualifications;
11. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to render the ESF management more flexible bearing in mind the changing nature of the labour market;
12. Welcomes the greater emphasis on a results-oriented learning approach and the fact that skills acquired informally or non-formally are to be recognised more widely;
13. Stresses the importance of initial training for teachers, as the quality of teachers and educators is reflected in the quality of teaching programmes and education as whole;
14. Calls on Member States and the Commission to further improve the recognition of informal and non-formal learning; points to best practices in this field, especially with ESF-funding, which prove that the recognition of skills, wherever they are learned, leads to more successful integration into the labour market;

***Vocational education***

15. Calls on the Member States to offer a qualitatively high standard of vocational education, oriented towards work-based learning and the individual needs of the people concerned; believes, at the same time, that high-quality vocational education and training are fundamental to enabling Europe to establish itself as a knowledge society and to compete effectively in the globalised economy;
16. Notes that there is also an internal market in professional training, and calls on the Member States to establish more advice centres on training opportunities and professional mobility in their own country and in other Member States;

**Wednesday 8 June 2011**

17. Is of the opinion that, in order to fully realise the EU 2020 flagship initiative 'An Agenda for new skills and jobs', the EU Institutions should embark on a more pragmatic, comprehensive and wide-ranging initiative supported by all Member States which should focus on connecting the areas of vocational education, professional qualifications, lifelong learning and apprenticeship to the labour market, so as to ensure that each Member State will truly take ownership of the goals set out in the strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training (ET 2020);

18. Calls on the Member States to ensure that vocational education and training are geared more closely to the needs of the labour market;

19. Calls for training by means of apprenticeships to be assigned priority over any other type of training, e.g. traineeships; encourages Member States not to plan any university courses of a vocational nature which are not accompanied by an apprenticeship contract;

20. Calls on the Member States to open routes for lower-ability students to return to general education either at secondary or tertiary level;

21. Encourages Member States, with the active participation of the social partners, to help modernise vocational programmes and the know-how provided, by jointly designing the vocational templates which will form the basis for educational curricula and be renewed every two to three years according to scientific and technological developments in each area;

22. Emphasises the need for greater compatibility and synergy between the education systems of the various Member States, with a focus on language learning and curricula adapted to the goals of Innovation Union; stresses the need to remove all legal and administrative obstacles to the development of a European framework ensuring a broad range of high-quality traineeships across the EU;

23. Calls for greater balance in girls' and boys' career choices, to prevent the segregation of job markets by gender and better prepare for meeting the future targets of higher and more balanced employment across the EU, by putting forward initiatives that will help women to choose careers that traditionally have been male-dominated and vice versa; calls, therefore, on the Member States to offer a qualitatively high standard of advice in relation to career choices and to enable greater balance in girls' and boys' career choices, taking into account the stereotypes that still exist and influence their choice of job orientations;

24. Notes that high-standard vocational training is founded on sound, gender-neutral general education, and urges Member States to ensure that teaching materials do not contain gender-specific career models, so as to ensure that boys' and girls' interest in all career possibilities is awakened from the outset;

25. Acknowledges the significant role played by gender stereotypes in our educational practices, and emphasises, therefore, the importance of drawing up strategies designed to lead to the establishment of gender-neutral education, which would help to bring about, for example, equal access for women and men to VET and employment;

26. Calls on the Member States and the social partners to provide for facilitating the combination of VET, learning and family life, in terms of available childcare and practical lesson times compatible with children's school times;

Wednesday 8 June 2011

27. Calls for all stakeholders, especially educational institutions, employers, employees and unions, to engage in formal dialogue with a view to ensuring that vocational education is of high quality and geared to the current needs of the labour market;
28. Calls for support to be given to cross-border links and communication platforms between educational institutions and employers for the purpose of exchanging best practices;
29. Calls on all labour market players, including those from the professional sectors, businesses, trade unions, ministries and public employment services, to engage in a structured social dialogue on how to better guarantee the professional integration of young people and promote lifelong learning and formal/informal training;
30. Welcomes the aim of the Europe 2020 strategy whereby vocational education systems are to be strengthened, and calls on the Member States to gear those systems towards broad-based qualifications, participation and the humanisation of work;
31. Recommends boosting creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship at all levels of education including vocational training, and recognising skills obtained through any form of learning, including non-formal and informal learning; also recommends encouraging projects that sustain the transmission of knowledge and skills from generation to generation;
32. Maintains that education for entrepreneurship should form an important part of VET, with a view to making it more attractive to all students and enhancing entrepreneurship in accordance with the provisions of the Europe 2020 Strategy;
33. Recalls the goals set out in the Europe 2020 Strategy earlier this year, which emphasise the need for a highly skilled and educated European labour force in order to achieve strong and sustainable growth and reach the employment goals set out in the Strategy; highlights the important role that affordable and accessible VET plays in the process of educating and upskilling the European labour force;
34. Stresses the importance of strengthening the procedure for identifying needs at local, national and European level so as to achieve the closest possible match between the skills offered and labour market requirements;
35. Calls on the Member States to deliver work-oriented skills and in that way prepare for the longer and more discontinuous working lives of the future;
36. Emphasises the need for the VET to provide workers with the skills needed to take up new, sustainable jobs that will arise in the future sustainable economy;
37. Calls on the Member States to monitor action to facilitate the transition from school to working life by developing integrated careers guidance and advice programmes;
38. Notes that the dual system (practical and scholastic education) is proving successful in certain Member States thanks to companies' cooperation and interaction in the provision of career-related training;
39. Calls on undertakings to make increased use of joint training schemes so that specific training targets that are in demand on the labour market can be better achieved;



Wednesday 8 June 2011

40. Calls on the Member States, given the reorientation towards a sustainable economy and sustainable growth, to strengthen the institution of vocational education and training since it has the potential to become a means of addressing the social consequences of corporate restructuring for workers, by increasing their employability;

41. Emphasises the importance of social and inclusive economy models for this new enterprise culture, and points out that it is vital that institutions providing vocational education and training, including higher education, should equip their students with a detailed knowledge of all forms of entrepreneurship, including in the social and inclusive economy, and of responsible and ethical management principles;

42. Emphasises the need to establish an inventory of those areas in which the European Union holds, or could hold, a comparative advantage worldwide, and for which further training strategies should be developed;

#### ***Vocational training***

43. Calls on the Member States to allow for the growing need for upskilling by setting up advice centres to help workers plan the necessary vocational training; calls on employers to offer opportunities for upskilling to all employees;

44. Recommends that incentives be provided to employers to encourage their employees to take part in training programmes;

45. Calls on the Member States to develop incentives for employers to facilitate the provision in micro- and small enterprises of cost-effective and flexible training adapted to the needs of women; urges the Commission and all the Member States to make determined efforts to combat wage inequalities between men and women, with a view to eliminating the current 18 % gender-based wage differential by 2020;

46. Calls on the Member States, with the assistance of the Commission, to promote, through the relevant university programmes, models for managing and exploiting human resources based on the recognition of vocational education and training, within the framework of lifelong learning, as an added value and competitive advantage for enterprises;

47. Recommends that the autonomy of VET centres be promoted in the areas of planning, financing, managing and assessing activities, and that more dynamic forms of cooperation be introduced between VET centres and enterprises;

48. Recalls that investing in education and training is essential for a better future for Europeans; takes the view that key competences and new skills, in particular those required by jobs in strategic growth sectors, provide people with new opportunities and, moreover, lay the basis for long-term sustainable economic and social development; considers it important, in this connection, that the Member States and all actors involved ensure that workers acquire the basic competences they need;

49. Calls on the Commission to devise instruments such as lifelong learning evaluation schemes to encourage and support workers in systematically pursuing lifelong learning/vocational education and training on their own initiative, paying special attention to those who need to reconcile family and working life, and also in regularly reviewing what skills are needed to continue to operate successfully on the labour market, so as to upgrade their skills and provide job mobility;



Wednesday 8 June 2011

50. Calls on the Member States, with a view to reconciling family life and careers and assisting women in rural areas, to offer further training in computer technology so as to give female employees the possibility of working from home;

51. Urges governments to promote flexible VET, geared to the specific needs of organisations and enterprises, that enables all the training accomplished to be turned to good account, the reconciliation of that training with private life and other professional activities, and the boosting of European mobility, with particular emphasis on facilitating access to VET for organisations at risk of marginalisation, so as to prolong their training;

52. Points out that lifelong learning will be crucial if unemployment is to be prevented and due account taken of diverse employment biographies; considers, with that aim in view, that workers must be made more aware of the need for constant further training;

53. Calls on the Commission to draw up a study on the consequences of participating in vocational education and training, both for the productivity of workers and for the competitiveness of enterprises and the quality of the work;

54. Points out that readily accessible, flexible, and individually tailored vocational training is important to people at different times of life, facilitating and improving professional participation in the labour market; considers that vocational and educational training should be accessible, available and affordable at all stages of people's lives, regardless of their status on the labour market or income, and with a view not only to promoting lifelong learning, but also to contributing to the evolution of existing professions and the creation of new ones, based on society's actual needs; considers, furthermore, that it should be regarded as an important instrument for prolonging the whole working life of individuals;

55. Calls on the Member States to develop high-quality, wide-ranging, flexible and affordable access for women to VET, along with specific lifelong guidance and career counselling about qualifications in all types of occupation, addressing women from diverse backgrounds with a view to integrating them effectively into good-quality jobs with decent wages, and tackling their multi-dimensional training needs such as:

- customised VET to support career development,
- accessible pathways from informal to formal learning,
- responsiveness to different learning styles,
- access to role models and mentors,
- the development of programmes adapted to flexible working arrangements and part-time contracts,
- tailored online learning options;

56. Points out that rising population ageing rates in Europe are increasing the importance of lifelong learning and education programmes and making it necessary to provide support for them;

57. Emphasises the need to boost efforts, both at European and at national level, to increase the participation of SMEs in professional training and lifelong learning and to increase the participation of low-skilled workers whose registered participation is particularly low;

**Wednesday 8 June 2011**

58. Emphasises that, as part of efforts to attain the objective of flexibility with security, it is urgently necessary effectively to increase the participation of workers involved in flexible forms of employment in vocational training; calls, therefore, on the Member States to take the relevant initiatives;

59. Calls on the Member States to make greater use of online vocational training and lifelong learning programmes so as to enable families to reconcile family and working life;

60. Underlines the role of the local governments, entrepreneurs, partnerships and educational institutions in shaping vocational training in line with actual needs on the labour market;

61. Takes the view that regional and local authorities play an essential role in cooperating with VET centres and the business world and in helping VET providers to develop a friendly environment facilitating the successful entry of VET students into the labour market;

62. Calls for apprenticeship contracts, while protecting the apprentice and providing for a certain flexibility and flexible measures for their application, to permit termination of the contract if the person concerned proves unsuited to his employment or is guilty of serious misconduct;

63. Calls on the Member States – in line with the Europe 2020 objectives and flagship initiatives – to improve links between vocational training and labour market needs, for example by improving academic and careers guidance services and encouraging traineeships and apprenticeship contracts for women, and also to create new opportunities for training, including in scientific, mathematical and technological fields, in order to increase women's employability in technical and scientific sectors, non-traditional jobs and the low-carbon and high-tech sectors of the economy, creating permanent jobs with decent wages;

64. Believes that existing European vocational training programmes are effective and should be given more support in future;

***Quality and efficiency in vocational education and training***

65. Asks the Member States to create better training opportunities for trainers and lay the foundations for a facilitative learning partnership, particularly at regional and local level, with a view to securing the effectiveness of vocational education and training systems, as well as the efficient and successful passing down of knowledge;

66. Emphasises that a highly skilled and educated labour force is one of the driving forces of innovation and constitutes a significant competitive advantage for the Union; stresses that high-quality vocational education and training contribute fundamentally to sustainable development and to the creation of a functioning single market, and should be constantly adapted to the needs and developments in the European labour market through an extensive dialogue among all interested parties;

67. Points out that in the new digital economy, creativity and ICTs are building a new business culture that can facilitate cooperation and exchanges of good practice among Member States with a view to improving the quality of VET, and that it is therefore time to put VET at the centre of the agenda, especially in order to face the challenges posed by the 2020 strategy, such as the EU headline target of 40 % of 30- to 34-year-olds completing tertiary or equivalent education;

Wednesday 8 June 2011

68. Calls on the Member States to establish and implement quality assurance systems at national level and develop a competence framework for teachers and trainers;

69. Calls on the Commission to provide information regarding the expected changes on labour markets within the EU, and on the Member States to incorporate this information in their educational strategies and programmes;

70. Calls on the Member States to encourage synergies at local level between the social partners, local professional associations, universities, school management bodies and educational units in order, through scientific studies and systematic consultations, to draw up a medium-term plan for future skill requirements and to calculate the number of pupils needed per area, which would increase the effectiveness of vocational training in effecting a direct and durable transition to the labour market;

71. Encourages the Commission to develop and update regularly a chart giving a region-by-region picture of training qualifications and demand;

72. Notes that vocational education and training are focused on key competences, including entrepreneurship, which must be fostered from the onset of children's education; considers that this process must continue alongside work-based learning;

73. Calls for support at national and European level by creating a common basis of action regarding vocational education and training, with a view to delivering the aims of efficiency, labour mobility and job creation within the European Union;

74. Calls on the Member States to actively involve private higher education institutions, as well as public institutions such as universities, in the upgrading and expansion of vocational skill development, especially for the MINT professions (mathematics, informatics, natural sciences, and technology);

75. Calls for a specific EU initiative to attract girls to the MINT professions and to combat the stereotypes that still dominate these professions; stresses that the media and education play key roles in combating such stereotypes;

76. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to promote the full transposition, implementation and enforcement of EU legislation by supporting training programmes aimed at ensuring that stakeholders acquire an adequate understanding of the legislation in force and of their corresponding rights and responsibilities;

77. Calls on the Member States to support innovative activities and doctoral and post-doctoral programmes that will underpin competitiveness and sustainable economic growth;

#### ***Offerings for specific groups***

78. Asks the Member States, as far as vocational education and training are concerned, to take into consideration the individual needs of low-skilled workers, migrant learners, people belonging to an ethnic minority, vulnerable women, the unemployed, people with disabilities and single mothers; recommends at the same time that particular attention be paid to the Roma minority, since attending school and integration at work are key elements in facilitating the social integration of Roma;

**Wednesday 8 June 2011**

79. Calls on the Member States to create pathways for young people with no educational qualifications or qualified at a low level so as to enable them to enter employment, whereby it should also be possible to continue to promote and recognise partial qualifications; calls, given the explosive nature of the problem, for a comprehensive strategy to combat youth and women's unemployment and help Member States establish networks on the ground linking schools, industry, youth services, and young people;

80. Points to the obstacles to integration which third-country nationals face when their qualifications are not recognised; calls on the Commission to assess the impact of the European Qualifications Framework on recognition of the qualifications of third-country nationals;

81. Calls on the Member States, in cooperation with the social partners, to adopt initiatives to effectively assist elderly workers in lifelong learning and vocational training;

82. Sees the opportunity for mobility as an important part of VET, and consequently recommends upgrading the Leonardo da Vinci programme;

***Flexibility and mobility***

83. Welcomes the idea of making cross-border mobility an optional component of vocational education and training and developing the potential of a cross-border labour market for those involved, as is being done with the Leonardo da Vinci Programme; strongly urges stakeholders to increase awareness of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and other relevant programmes; calls, therefore, for greater promotion of mobility in order to make it easier for young people to gain experience abroad;

84. Calls on the Commission, the Member States and the European Parliament to support and broaden European programmes for the mobility of learners, in particular the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, with a view to promoting greater mobility of trainees in the single market;

85. Believes that vocational education and training should create the conditions for labour mobility, both in the course of initial studies and in the framework of the lifelong learning process;

86. Believes that cross-border mobility in the area of vocational education and training is as important as mobility in the area of general education, and believes that more effort should be put into developing such mobility;

87. Takes the view that better cooperation among the Member States' different education systems – bridging those differences and ensuring mutual recognition of certificates and diplomas among the Member States – should be emphasised in order to heighten cross-border collaboration and aid mobility;

88. Calls on the Member States to facilitate the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and encourage the exchange of work experience, in order to obtain the most from labour mobility and knowledge-sharing, so as to allow greater leeway for individual learning paths;

89. Notes that it is of major importance to facilitate labour mobility within the internal market; welcomes and fully supports the Commission's initiative to review the current system for the recognition of professional qualifications; believes that a meaningful assessment of the Professional Qualifications Directive in its present form should feature in the Commission's review exercise of the Directive; takes the view that the mutual recognition of professional qualifications across Member States must remain a top priority for the Commission;

Wednesday 8 June 2011

90. Suggests that setting up a new language-learning strategy to improve general knowledge in specific skill areas will facilitate the mobility of teachers and students; points out that, in addition, the guarantee of a smooth transition from vocational education to higher education will help to make vocational training courses more attractive;

91. Calls on the Member States, with the assistance of the Commission, and in cooperation with the social partners, to improve and monitor systems for certifying vocational qualifications within the framework of lifelong learning and professional training;

92. Welcomes the Commission proposal to organise education and training offerings in modular form; calls, however, for the integral nature of a broad vocational qualification to be preserved as an absolute priority and for the individual modules to be clearly defined and provision made for the necessary means of comparison;

93. Emphasises the role of teachers and trainers in fostering the gender perspective in VET, and calls for the development of mobility programmes, such as the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and the project for apprentices, with specific actions addressing women, in order to facilitate the lifelong acquisition of skills relevant for integration or reintegration into the labour market;

94. Is convinced that stakeholder vocational education and training partnerships, as proposed in the Europe 2020 strategy, are a prerequisite for efficiency and relevance to the labour market, and that they should take the form of long-term skills councils geared to the labour market;

95. Calls on the Member States to put an emphasis on the acquisition of foreign-language skills in vocational education and training with a focus on small and medium-sized enterprises, thereby creating the conditions for increasing their competitiveness as part of the single market;

96. Stresses the major importance of acquiring and improving multilingual proficiency as a means of enhancing self-confidence, adaptability and intercultural skills;

97. Emphasises that enabling young people to spend a period of education or training abroad is essential for the acquisition of new skills, including language skills, and hence increases their opportunities for integration into the labour market; welcomes, therefore, the Commission's intention to develop a 'Youth on the move' card which will help all young people to move to another Member State to study, as well as the creation of European student mobility loans to give more young Europeans, in particular the most disadvantaged among them, the opportunity to experience a period of study, training or job placement in another country;

#### ***European and international cooperation in vocational education and training***

98. Welcomes the common reference tools being promoted by the Copenhagen Process (Europass, the European Qualifications Framework, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training, and the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for vocational education and training), and maintains that single-minded energy should be applied to bringing these tools into use and developing them further;

**Wednesday 8 June 2011**

99. Calls on the Commission to examine the interaction – and establish closer synergies – between Directive 2005/36/EC on the recognition of professional qualifications, the Bologna Process on higher education and the Copenhagen process on vocational education and training, with improved use of the European Qualifications Framework, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and Europass; maintains that Member States should retain competence in the organisation of their educational systems in accordance with their particular societal and cultural conditions;

100. Calls on the Commission to continue to support and consistently implement quality certification that gives a fundamental boost to innovation processes in terms of action, efficiency and effectiveness, such as those recommended in the European Quality Assurance in VET Network (EQAVET) and the instruments developed through the Copenhagen process, such as the Europass and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF); calls on the Member States to simplify the procedures for recognising foreign professional qualifications so as to ensure that job skills can be demonstrated not just on the strength of formal qualifications, but also by means of probationary periods, theoretical and practical examinations, and expert assessments;

101. Takes the view that the challenges posed by the Copenhagen process and the EU 2020 strategy call for the provision of adequate financial resources, inter alia through the Structural Funds, in particular the ESF, and for fuller involvement in promoting high-quality VET through concrete action and the inclusion of new models and methods of training, such as giving visibility to student success stories in the labour market, advertising the prestige attached to VET in major companies and providing fuller information and guidelines on VET matters prior to the completion of mandatory schooling; notes that encouraging exchanges of experience regarding support programmes and periods spent abroad, such as participation in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, would be of great value;

102. Calls on the Member States to simplify the procedures for recognising foreign professional qualifications so as to ensure that job skills can be demonstrated not just on the strength of formal qualifications, but also by means of probation, theoretical and practical examinations, and expert assessment;

103. Calls for the promotion of transnational cooperation, both among EU Member States and third countries, in order to establish programmes for the exchange of best practices in the field of vocational education and training;

104. Calls on the Commission to implement the training effectiveness assessment system in order to achieve and maintain a high employment rate;

105. Calls on the Commission and the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) to include the gender dimension in the follow-up to the Bruges Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training for the period 2011-2020, especially in terms of access to lifelong learning, so that women and men have opportunities to learn at any stage in life, and also by making routes into education and training more open and flexible;

### **Funding**

106. Requests the Commission to make the necessary adjustments to the European Social Fund, the Lifelong Learning Programme as a whole, and Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs in order to ensure that funding for specific education and training projects, projects to tackle youth unemployment, and training schemes for older people can be allocated and made more readily accessible in all parts of the EU; calls on the Commission to support Community programmes to help young people to acquire the knowledge, skills and experience which they need in order to find their first job;

Wednesday 8 June 2011

107. Calls on the Commission and the Member States to ensure optimal use of the Structural Funds, including the European Social Fund, for specific programmes that promote lifelong learning, encourage more women to participate in it and aim to increase the rate of female participation in the VET system, not least by means of suitably funded measures specifically designed to achieve this; calls for the development of specific actions under the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs pilot project to encourage entrepreneurship among women;

108. Reiterates its criticism of the cuts made by the Council of Ministers in the 2011 budget as regards funding for the main EU programmes in the education sphere (the Lifelong Learning programme and the People programme – cuts of EUR 25 million and EUR 100 million respectively); observes that the ambitious Europe 2020 strategy is thus clearly out of step with the reality of budgetary constraints;

109. Calls on the Member States to consider as one option a training voucher scheme to secure for people with a low income the possibility of participating in training; if necessary, invites Member States to apply for funding for such training voucher schemes under the ESF;

\*

\*       \*

110. Instructs its President to forward this resolution to the Council and the Commission.

## **GDP and beyond - Measuring progress in a changing world**

P7\_TA(2011)0264

### **European Parliament resolution of 8 June 2011 on GDP and beyond – Measuring progress in a changing world (2010/2088(INI))**

(2012/C 380 E/11)

*The European Parliament,*

- having regard to the Commission Communication of 20 August 2009 on GDP and Beyond – Measuring progress in a changing world (COM(2009)0433),
- having regard to the ‘Beyond GDP Conference’ organised by Parliament, the Commission, the Club of Rome, the WWF and the OECD in November 2007 in Brussels,
- having regard to the report by the Commission on the Measurement of Economic Performance and Social Progress (Stiglitz Report), presented on 14 September 2009,
- having regard to the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity (TEEB) global initiative endorsed by G8+5 leaders in June 2007 and its results published in 2009 and 2010,
- having regard to the Stern Review on the Economics of Climate Change published on 30 October 2006,
- having regard to the Istanbul Declaration signed during the 2nd OECD World Forum on Statistics, Knowledge and Policy on 30 June 2007,
- having regard to the conclusions of the European Council of 10 and 11 December 2009, 25 and 26 March 2010 and 17 June 2010,