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GUIDELINES FOR COMMUNITY ACTION

**IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION AND
TRAINING**

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INTRODUCTION

1. The present stage of the different Community action programmes (see Annex I) in the field of education and training comes to a conclusion at the end of 1994. This was a deliberate decision by the Commission so as to permit proper evaluation of the most effective ways of developing action in the next phase. In their new phase, the programmes should of course be related to the implementation of the policy objectives set out in the new Treaty, and also be presented in harmony with the future actions to be developed in the framework of the Structural Policies and Funds and also the Research and Development Framework Programme.
2. The Commission's proposals for the next phase must be presented before the end of 1993 and decided by the Council during 1994, if they are to be operational and sustain the necessary continuity and efficiency at the start of 1995. The timetable for the presentation and negotiation of the new programmes is therefore tight. And it has to be recognised that not all programmes are at the same stage of development because of their different starting dates. As and when the new Treaty is ratified, moreover, account will have to be taken of the new decision-making and consultation procedures involving the European Parliament that will then be introduced : co-decision in respect of education (Article 126) and the cooperation procedure for vocational training (Article 127). With the ratification of the new Treaty, the Committee of the Regions will also have to be consulted.
3. In looking towards the period 1995-1998, the Commission is seeking to consolidate its contribution through catalytic action, leading to innovative development within the Member States. In this perspective, the Commission considers it necessary to streamline and rationalise the existing programmes, reducing their number as necessary, whilst reinforcing those aspects which appear to be most promising in terms of the European added value and stimulus they can offer.
4. Thus, the purpose of this working document is to present the Commission's approach to the elaboration of the new programme proposals. This will permit the Community institutions and all other interested parties to be informed of the Commission's approach and provide the opportunity for them to present their views and to be associated closely with the forthcoming stages of preparation of the proposals.

I SITUATION AND CHALLENGES

5. The Member States of the Community share values (such as human rights, civic responsibilities and openness to the world) which are transmitted to the rising generations through education and training. Furthermore, the widespread consensus about the importance of equality of opportunity in democratic societies has resulted, in the decades after World War II, in a dramatic expansion of education inspired not only by the needs of the economy but also by the conviction that the personal development of all children would benefit society. In the rapidly changing and turbulent world of today, these cultural values of education and training need to be re-affirmed and re-inforced, and provide the basis for the emerging European identity and citizenship.

6. This view of the role of education in European society is being singularly enriched by the growing realisation that education and training is a vital component of economic strength and cultural development. The nations of Europe, with all their political and cultural diversity, have long recognised that their future is dependent on the skills, ingenuity, inventiveness and creativity of people. Industrialisation and the growth of education have gone hand-in-hand. Yet all Member States share concern about their competitive edge and their capacity to generate sustainable economic growth. Over the last few years a growing consensus has emerged throughout the European Community, as in other parts of the world, that so-called "human or intangible capital" is the most vital resource of advanced economies, without which the natural endowments of nations, their financial power and fixed capital will become dwindling resources. This is not only a question of men and women acquiring new skills and knowledge, but also of the vital need to develop the capacity to organise and innovate.

7. The quality of the education and training systems is of paramount importance to the harmonious development of the Member States, both in terms of securing a more vigorous economic performance as well as of promoting their social and cultural development. Severe economic pressures have accentuated the need to find better ways of developing a greater capacity to compete in world markets, and of enabling all citizens to realise their full potential, thus creating the basis for a more prosperous and cohesive society. The contribution of education and training is therefore a decisive factor in the economic and social strategies of Member States, all of which are actively engaged in the reform and adaptation of their systems to ensure a better performance in the coming years.

8. The dramatic unemployment situation within the European Community and the growing threat of unemployment to both skilled and unskilled workers present immense challenges to the education and training systems. The transition of young people from school to adult life is proving more and more difficult, and both the

purposes of basic education and the quality and morale of the teaching profession are the subject of widespread concern. The position of girls and women requires special attention in this overall context, as does that of older workers.

9. With the great economic, social and demographic changes taking place in our societies, more and more importance is being attached to the idea of providing flexible opportunities of lifelong learning to individuals, who are increasingly faced with several career changes during working life and with the growing threat of unemployment. The virtue of the concept of life-long education is that it could provide a new vision and a better framework for welding together in one integrated effort the various components of the education and training arrangements, often separately organised, and thus create much more dynamic and flexible education and training systems for the future. This would make economic, social and cultural sense. Access to education and training over the whole of working life will mean more mastery over time, and opportunities to break out of the rigid education-work-retirement sequence in which people are still trapped. Such a strategy is essential to preserving and enhancing the vitality and originality of the European Community on the world stage.

10. Until fairly recently initial access to education and training determined life-time opportunities and social position. Now it is recognised that the initial investment in qualifications and skills no long lasts over the whole of working life. Moreover, many people never get into the cycle of opportunities because of lack of initial qualifications, whereas others fall out of the system because their skills became obsolete not least because of the increasing rapidity of company and industrial restructuring. This is the inexorable economic and social logic which makes it necessary for individuals, enterprises and society to invest in human capital and develop arrangements which ensure a process of continuing or "life-long" education and training of the adult population.

11. Amongst the different issues of concern in the Member States, particular attention should be paid to the following key points:
 - . clear possibilities for the individual to progress, from vocational and technical studies into higher education;
 - . continuity between initial and adult education and training, through credit transfer and accumulation;
 - . greater parity of treatment between students in technical training and those in general or academic education, and improved possibilities for an attractive career for students who have pursued technical and/or vocational training.

12. For these reasons, the early 1990s constitute a turning point. The priority given to education in public policy is now seen as the basis of a "qualifications for all" policy objective. The notion of a skills "gap" as a critical challenge clearly emerges from a wide range of reports from the European Community, the Member States and the social partners. Business leaders have begun to talk of a "qualifications society". The European Round Table of Industrialists, for example, has made a plea for education and training to be considered as one of the main pillars of the future development of the European Community; and the European social partners - employers and trade unions - have placed the question of skill and qualification needs as one of the highest priorities on the agenda of the social dialogue at European level.

13. During the past year, the Commission issued three memoranda : vocational training for the 1990s, higher education for the year 2000 and the potential of open and distance education. These 3 memoranda have stimulated a wide-ranging debate in all Member States on the strategy to be pursued at Community level in the years ahead. The majority of responses received so far - and taken into account in these guidelines - underline the vital need to strike a balance between the cultural, social and economic importance of education to the development of our societies.

14. The completion of the Internal Market, the commitment to European Political Union and the growing significance of the European Community on the world stage, all have a profound influence on the lives of everyone in the Community, perhaps most especially on young people. Indeed, there are signs that many young people are already demonstrating their wish to make their careers and plan their education and training in a European context. The question of the quality and standards of the education and training systems in Europe, and the importance of building much closer relations between them, are therefore widely recognised as an important priority for the Community, a key to enhanced competitiveness but also to greater cohesion, solidarity and mutual trust within the Community.

15. More specifically, the Internal Market will only deliver maximum potential if the skills and versatility of the present and future workforce is treated as a top priority, and if every effort is made to encourage cooperation between the workforces in all sectors through cooperative training efforts and comparability of qualifications. This is all the more true given the growing interpenetration of industrial and commercial cooperation and exchange, bringing in its train new patterns of voluntary (often short-term) mobility, especially for the highly skilled and qualified. Many firms are already giving a new European profile to their recruitment policies. Professionals and workers of all kinds who wish to move within the Community must have confidence that they can do so without difficulties arising from the particular qualifications they may have acquired in individual Member States. This is vital for business, commerce and trade,

and especially important for young people eager to exploit the opportunities opened up by the completion of the internal market, and of course in the educational field for teachers and trainers. Transparency is therefore required to facilitate the comprehension and comparison of vocational qualifications, certificates and diplomas. This is essential both for the individuals concerned and for companies seeking to recruit persons with good skills from other Member States.

16. Young people especially hold the key to the future of Europe. They need to be equipped to play their part in building their Europe. Many young people already have an international and European outlook as well as a commitment to their own local, regional, and national identity. The demand from young people to be involved in joint European projects on a practical basis is massive - an unexpectedly significant source of pressure on systems to become more Europeanised, and thus to make greater commitment to the internationalisation of studies.
17. To seize these opportunities, partnership between the Member States is vital in many sectors. This depends heavily on the capacity of the education and training systems to integrate a European dimension which would prepare young and older citizens and workers for a shared European future and for working together on collaborative projects, overcoming the linguistic and cultural barriers which often arise. The long-term, continuing responsibility for the process of changing attitudes must lie primarily with the different education and training systems in the Community working together in partnership in practical ways at all levels, and building on the strengths of their diversity. The major action programmes of the European Community launched since 1987 (Annex 1) may be looked upon as providing basic European infrastructures to assist the Member States of the Community to make more rapid progress in this direction.
18. The external role of the Community is very much dependent on its internal strengths and capacities. This is self-evident with reference to the Single Market which, because of the Community economic power it brings, makes the Community a necessary partner in trade and other economic negotiations. But it is also true that strong education and training systems in the Member States, helping them to be leaders in culture, science and modern economic capacities, will strengthen the Community's external role. Higher education in particular, and especially the universities, play a role at the frontier of culture and science, provide the highly qualified manpower to sustain Europe's growing role in world affairs, and the capacity to succeed in the service and manufacturing markets which are part of the global economy.
19. In this context it is equally important to take into account the growing opening of the Community towards the outside world in particular through the development of cooperation with and

assistance to third countries. So far as EFTA is concerned, it has been agreed that those who are members of the European Economic Area will be able to participate in all Community actions in this field as from January 1995.

II THE CONTRIBUTION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITY

A. EXPERIENCE OF THE PROGRAMMES TO DATE

20. Since their launching in 1987, several Community programmes, most notably the trio of programmes - ERASMUS, COMETT and LINGUA - have developed inter-university and higher education cooperation in Europe on a much larger scale than any previous international venture. The more than 1 billion ECU agreed by the Council for these 3 schemes and TEMPUS (higher education reform and cooperation in Central and Eastern Europe) over the last period complements the substantial training resources available through the European Structural Funds (the European Social Fund in particular). The Community R & D programme, now also moving into its next phase, also recognises the importance of the mobility of young researchers and of the need for further research in the area of education and training.
21. By virtue of its catalytic action, the Community has helped Member States to move towards the target of enabling 10% of the student population to enjoy a recognised period of study in another Member State. This year, through the Community programmes, around 100,000 students will be exchanged and well over half the universities and higher education institutions in the Community are involved in developing joint programmes.
22. Moreover the Community programmes, notably ERASMUS, have fuelled a fresh approach to international academic cooperation in Europe. New international or European relations offices in universities provide widespread evidence of institutional commitment by universities and other institutions of higher education to a process of Europeanisation of their studies and teaching programmes. Better academic recognition arrangements, improved welfare services and increased cooperation in less internationally oriented disciplines are all signs of the new sense of priority assigned to European cooperation.
23. Academic cooperation, promoted by ERASMUS, is now increasingly involving the Member States and regions which previously had little involvement in this way. For example, ten times more students will move from and to Portugal in 1992/93 than in the first year of the Programme. Broader geographical activity has led many institutions to overhaul their provision for foreign language learning, often in the lesser-used EC languages. A further significant indication of Community added-value is that

the majority of ERASMUS activities involve close cooperation between universities from several Member States. In sum, there has been an unquestionable enrichment of the whole European intellectual community.

24. These programmes have contributed directly and indirectly to the fostering of contacts and interaction between policy-makers at different levels in the Member States. There has been growing interest in understanding and comparing the functioning of the education and training systems of the Member States. The Commission has supported a wide variety of complementary measures, such as comparative studies and support for the work of European associations in the field of education and training. These actions have contributed, through such exchange of experience and opinion-building, an informed and sensitive basis for Community action in education and training, building on the rich diversity of experience and know-how available in the different regions.
25. The success of the ERASMUS and other schemes lies especially in the fact that they were designed to unleash initiatives from the 'bottom up' on an entirely voluntary and decentralised basis. They place the power of initiative firmly in the hands of the universities to seek and develop partners abroad. They involve the forging of joint agreements at an institutional 'grass-roots' level so as to seek a lasting impact and a 'good return' for the Community's investment. They are increasingly linked with cross-border and inter-regional projects of cooperation which have multiplied swiftly throughout the Community as 1993 approached.
26. European cooperation in the field of vocational training, though less widely known and less easy to map, is now on a comparable scale. This is primarily company-driven as new networks and alliances are created across national frontiers between employers, trade unions and company directors responsible for human resources - often linking up regions or specific sectors (construction, textiles, technologies, telecommunications, bankers and financial services, etc.) and often arising on the back of collaborative European efforts in R & D and technology transfer. Even many of the smaller companies are building new partnerships in Europe as essential to their economic survival (e.g. Europartenariats).
27. It was undoubtedly the stimulus of the ERASMUS model that led last year to the setting up of a large-scale initial vocational training exchange programme (age-group 16-20) - called PETRA - which offers exchange opportunities to young trainees and apprentices (e.g. in the hotel and catering industry) to build in a European dimension to their learning experience. 100,000 youth training exchanges will be promoted over the next period. The Community's Structural Policies have had their impact too in this respect. The transfer of training know-how between the North and South of Europe (in particular the Objective 1 regions) is becoming big business.

28. The FORCE, EUROTECNET and COMETT Programmes, complemented more recently by the Community Initiatives (EUROFORM) have initiated many new transnational partnerships to explore more effective ways of analysing skill and training needs, most especially in relation to the challenges faced by small and medium sized companies. They have also enabled specialists from all Member States to analyse the impact of technological change on qualifications and the training systems. The networks of partnerships thus created involve almost all regions, many sectors and the active engagement of the social partners. The experience of this IRIS network, moreover, has been invaluable in pinpointing good practices designed to promote equal opportunities for women and men in training.

29. This pattern is developing spontaneously under the impact of the Internal Market: customs officials, police authorities, lawyers and judges, and many other sectoral groupings are getting together increasingly to train and be retrained and to learn each other's languages. This in turn is leading to the creation of jointly awarded training courses on a European basis, the emergence of many new European umbrella organisations in the different disciplines and sectors, and an even wider interest in the idea of credit transfer and comparability of qualifications across national frontiers.

30. In these activities, the Commission has sought to encourage a bottom-up approach, based on Community supporting policies and programmes for the individual and institutional actors, so essential to the emergence of what can best be called a European training and qualifications market in which the individual citizen is free to develop his or her qualifications in the wider European context and to move across frontiers without difficulty.

31. Evaluations of the efforts made at Community level over the last few years to establish a system for the comparability of vocational qualifications, developed with the assistance of the CEDEFOP, have demonstrated that a more flexible, step-by-step approach is necessary given the great variety of arrangements in the Member States. The expertise acquired in this field can nevertheless be further exploited by building close links across the Community between all the agencies responsible for the validation and certification of qualifications, complementing what has been achieved in the higher education field. Easy access to authoritative information on the value of qualifications remains a necessary requirement if the free movement of persons is to occur without impediment.

B. MAIN GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Subsidiarity

32. The new Treaty of Maastricht defines clearly the primary responsibility of the Member States for the organisation and content of the education and training systems. Articles 126 and 127 (see Annex 2) refer specifically to the exclusion of any possibility of harmonisation of the systems. The role of the Community is complementary to that of the Member States, which themselves have different internal arrangements for policy making, notably in respect of the assignment of policy responsibilities to the regional level. Under the terms of the new Treaty, the Community would have the responsibility to contribute to improving the quality of education (Article 126) through promoting cooperation, and to developing a vocational training policy (Article 127).

Cooperation and European added value

33. Respecting subsidiarity, Community action is developing and should continue to develop at 3 levels :
- . the encouragement of well-structured cooperation between the education and training systems
 - . the promotion of quality through innovation by exchanges of information and experience; and
 - . the launching of specific direct actions on a Community-wide basis, where there is a clear advantage over action only at national level.
34. The Community has already played an important catalytic role in developing, over the last 10 years especially, an increasingly strong process of cooperation in these fields between the Member States. This has been achieved notably through the range of Community action programmes (see Annex 1) as well as through the contribution made to improvement of the training systems from the Structural Funds. Cooperation should be designed to promote ever closer relations between the different systems so that the planning of future reforms in individual Member States is illuminated by a comparative understanding of developments throughout the Community, as well as ensuring the necessary adaptation of national systems to contribute to the purposes and functioning of the European Community. This in turn should help the Commission to contribute especially to the organised transfer of new ideas and methods of education and training to the priority regions in the Community.

35. Community action should seek to give a strong multiplier effect to the promotion of innovations which aim to improve the quality of education and training and set higher standards or new targets. These actions should focus on problems of common concern identified in collaboration with the Member States and exploit the new technologies wherever possible to produce the greatest possible impact. The potential of open and distance learning offers important new opportunities to achieve both economies of scale and greater impact in this respect, and the experience of the DELTA project can be exploited in this context.

Need for specific direct actions

36. With the relatively limited financial resources available in this field, rigorous selectivity in terms of the areas targeted for Community support has had to be applied. This will continue in the future. The launching of a number of specific direct actions by the Community itself should permit the Community to provide added value to the individual efforts of Member States, to achieve economies of scale through pooling of effort, or provide a new dynamic to introduce actions which could not be achieved without such a Community stimulus. By virtue of their scale and the European networking involved, the Community could thus assist in speeding up the process of adaptation and help identify ways in which the Member States could then themselves sustain such initiatives subsequently. Here, a special effort would be made to link such innovatory Community action to the Community's 'cohesion' policies, so as to secure a more significant impact on the mainstream of education and training policies and practices in the different regions of the Community.

Inter-action with Structural Policies

37. Synergy between the different financial instruments at the disposal of the Community will be a sine qua non for this development. Steps are being taken by the Commission to ensure that all these different resources are harnessed and coordinated to best effect. The Structural Funds have already contributed substantially to vocational education and training operations in the Member States, notably in the Objectives 1 and 2 Regions. The Commission considers that it is essential to identify and assess more clearly in future the additional and complementary effects of its contributions in increasing the quality of education and training in this field and the extent to which national policies and practices have been influenced by Community support.

In this perspective, the synergy between Community vocational training policies and the Structural Funds needs to be reinforced, with special attention given to the future articulation of the Community's financial instruments with the policy objectives set out in Articles 126 and 127 of the new Treaty. This interaction needs to be established at both policy and operational level, so as to ensure the most effective impact possible on the mainstream

of national policies and practices. Specifically, efforts should be made to eliminate any possible duplication of effort, maximise the complementarity of the different actions and ensure real synergy and mutual reinforcement between them.

Participation of all the parties concerned

38. Because of the different levels at which responsibility for education and training policy is vested in the Member States, the emphasis on subsidiarity will give rise to an increasing demand, over and above the formal consultation of the new Committee of the Regions, for participation in decision-making and action by the different education and training partners. This involves regional, local and institutional authorities for education, and employers and trade union organisations at all levels for vocational training, including Chambers of Commerce and trade organisations, as well as the teaching professions and many voluntary bodies active in this field.
39. This active participation of the many parties concerned at different levels will also assist in ensuring that they are then in a position to participate actively in Community action and in building the partnership arrangements which will ensure the success of the joint ventures to be launched at Community level. Careful attention will therefore be paid by the Commission to the design of its consultation procedures in this field, building on the wide set of contacts already in place.

C. METHODS AND OPTIONS

40. In the design of all the Community programmes, the catalytic role of Community action to enhance competitiveness, greater cohesion as well as solidarity and mutual trust has been fostered by using three principal methods :
- firstly, networking, i.e. the creation of transnational networks of partner organisations and institutions facing similar problems and similar issues so as to promote the organised exchange of ideas and dissemination of good practice. This is essential to building a strong, lasting multiplier capacity in the different systems;
 - secondly, mobility and exchange, i.e. the active encouragement of staff and students to gain direct experience in another Member State and also to promote long term collaboration between the education and training institutions involved. Reconnoitring grants for staff are specially important to help locate partners and create the basis for joint projects;
 - thirdly, the mounting of joint transnational projects, i.e. projects between partners in different Member States which are committed to the organised transfer of innovative approaches to

education and training problems in a European framework and the introduction of a European dimension to the content of training, whatever the discipline or area of study.

41. These three methods have been underpinned by a growing effort by the Commission, in collaboration with the Member States, to produce comparative analyses and data so as to inform policy makers in the different Member States and illuminate national policy-making by relevant, comparative European experience. These methods need to be tuned to serve the objectives of Community actions set out earlier in this document, especially paragraphs 18 to 21.

42. The catalytic action of the Community in this field has been widely welcomed by all Member States. At the same time, experience has shown that the existence of a range of Community programmes, sometimes targetting the same milieux even if the problems addressed differ, has given rise to some problems which need to be carefully examined in designing the next configuration of programmes. In particular, it will be essential to :
 - . avoid any impression of fragmentation of effort, by giving even clearer visibility to Community action so that the interested publics in the Member States can easily indentify the opportunities available at Community level;
 - . produce even better value for money by regrouping related activities so as to secure greater impact and economy of scale;
 - . streamline the machinery introduced at national level to act as interfaces with the Community programmes, so as to guarantee better articulation with national measures and as far as possible, decentralise the management of appropriate actions to the Member States;
 - . provide a clearer focus to the necessary accompanying evaluation arrangements, which should in turn reinforce the coherence and pertinence of Community action.

43. Since 1987 the Commission has paid careful attention to the need to secure a balanced participation of all Member States in the development of the Community action programmes. This has been especially important in view of the markedly different traditions and experience of Member States in these fields, and has also required a special information effort by the Commission in some Member States, most notably in the South. This principle should also guide future action and a vigorous policy of positive action should be defined in favour of those regions or Member States which experience difficulty, while maintaining the overall quality of the programmes.

44. It will be essential to build on the existing information efforts of the Commission to give even more visibility to future Community action. Since the Community action programmes in the field of education and training are among those having the most direct impact and visibility for Community citizens of all Community activities, it will be important that conditions ensuring the following be defined or adequately stressed already at the level of these guidelines : effective information of eligible beneficiaries, transparency, proximity to the citizen in the relevant procedures as well as considerations of fairness in respect of access to the benefits secured by participation. The issuing of Green papers by the Commission, underpinned by regular reviews of the programmes, can be seen as giving expression to that concern.

PROPOSED ACTION LINES

45. The two main action lines suggested below for the next phase of development seek to build on the achievements of the different programmes to date and to develop a new approach in line with the approach set out earlier in this document. It is intended that the specific programme proposals to be tabled later this year by the Commission will be based on this new approach.

The Commission also considers it necessary to ensure a coherent approach between the Action lines developed below, and developing Community effort in the education and training field with respect to third countries. This relates especially to activities in Central and Eastern Europe within the PHARE and TACIS programmes, but also applies more widely e.g. the MEDCAMPUS project.

A: Actions relating to universities/higher education and schools

B: Actions relating to training and qualifications.

ACTION LINE A:

46. Aim: To encourage innovation and improve quality of education through strengthening cooperation at Community level involving the active participation of universities and other higher education institutions. The action programme would provide for the exchange of persons, ideas, know-how and experience, strengthen links between research and higher education and training, and develop a European dimension to education, more particularly by promoting foreign-language teaching, cooperation in teacher training and the encouragement of exchange schemes for young people and schools and classes.

47. At the university and higher education level, ERASMUS and COMETT have been widely recognised as two successful flagship Community programmes. They have already contributed substantially to the aim of developing student and teacher exchanges between the Member States and of initiating voluntary cooperation schemes and projects. This action needs to be consolidated and reinforced. The Commission intends to continue to stimulate such action, building on the rich diversity of experience and voluntary participation of universities in the scheme. It will concentrate its efforts in the next phase on the following key points :

- (i) securing a commitment from Member States to the provision of additional resources to support large-scale student exchange to which Community funds are complementary. Community action must work progressively towards a situation where the Member States themselves are in a position to take over the continuing costs involved.
- (ii) strengthening the European network of inter-university partnerships so as to help to institutionalise the European dimension to teaching and studies in the different higher education systems;
- (iii) promoting a special effort through open and distance learning to deliver a European dimension to the teaching of those who are unable to have the opportunity to spend a period of study abroad and who, as "non-mobile" students, also need a European dimension to their studies;
- (iv) increasing the range of agreements for the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study.

48. In considering the options for the next stage of development, which will be presented by the Commission later this year, it will be essential to tune the Community measures with the different national arrangements for financing of students for which Member States have the responsibility. Here, it will also be essential to explore ways to ensure at Community level the effective right of students to carry their grant or subsidy with them wherever they wish to study in the Community, and for many more students to secure the complementary finances necessary to pay the additional costs of travel and study abroad. The Community financial contribution is serving as a catalyst - it cannot and should not be the total funding source.

49. The Commission considers that this reinforcement of Community actions could be best achieved in the next phase by regrouping some of the current activities in existing action programmes in a single coherent framework. This new framework could include the following components:

the ERASMUS inter-university cooperation and exchange programmes (ICPs) ; the ERASMUS course credit transfer system (ECTS) ; the LINGUA university-level language-learning actions ; student placement in industry with a special focus on SMEs (COMETT);

cooperation in the field of teacher training ; open and distance learning for the 'non-mobile' students ; and the development of the European dimension to teaching and studies, in particular by the creation of European "chairs".(1)

In the next phase, it will also be necessary to strengthen the links with the Research and Development Framework programme, particularly for the mobility of researchers, so that the teaching and research programmes of universities are enriched through well-coordinated Community action in these related fields of interest.(2)

50. This regrouping of higher education activities in a single framework could usefully be accompanied by streamlining the Commission's consultation procedures with the establishment of a single committee covering all activities concerning universities and non-university higher education. This would also provide a valuable forum for discussion and reflection on higher education trends and developments in the Community, and as an instrument to review the progressive development of a European dimension to higher education. This committee could be invited to discuss matters of common interest to Member States affecting the development of universities, drawing on Member States' reactions to the Memorandum on higher education (e.g. access arrangements, numerus clausus, quality assessment, etc.).

51. At the level of school education, once the Treaty has been ratified, the Commission intends to produce a Green Paper setting out suggestions as to the most effective ways and means of creating the necessary partnership arrangements in this field with national, regional and local authorities in the form of a wide-ranging cooperation scheme, building on the cultural and linguistic diversity of Member States. The purpose of the Green Paper will be to help identify the most appropriate catalytic role for Community actions and the key priority objectives and specific actions to be pursued at European level.

52. The LINGUA Programme, launched in 1989, has already initiated cooperation between the Member States so as to strengthen their foreign-language teaching arrangements, in particular to encourage the teaching of all Community languages. Whereas some aspects of the present programme could be linked directly in future with the higher education framework set out above, action directed at schools and the training of teachers could be linked with other measures designed to promote a European dimension to education in the school systems, to be formulated in the light of

(1) In this respect the Jean Monnet action represents a direct information effort and a provision of knowledge on European integration for universities, young people and citizens.

(2) For further information : 2nd Commission Working Paper on RDT policy in the Community and the 4th Framework Programme (1994-1998) on Community RDT Action. COM(93)158 final.

the reactions to the above-mentioned Green Paper. In this context, account will need to be taken of the forthcoming report to be issued by the Commission on the education of migrant children, and on the importance of measures to combat racism and xenophobia - measures called for at the European Council in Edinburgh in December 92 and in the recent Resolution of the European Parliament.

53. While it is clear that Article 126 of the new Treaty stipulates that "the Community shall contribute to the development of quality education", Member States have responsibility for education policy and for the organisation of their systems. Member States themselves have firmly recognised the need for comparative analysis of policy issues of common concern and pooling of research and for the more systematic transfer of information and experience (e.g. school failure, the problems of unqualified school-leavers, the initial and in-service training of teachers).
54. The Council has invited the Commission to propose ways of consolidating the existing information network (EURYDICE), which maintains links between all the national education authorities and the Commission, and provides the necessary underpinning to promote ever closer links between the national education systems. The Commission will present its proposals later this year on the basis of the guidelines laid down by the Education Council. Moreover, under the terms of the Research and Development Framework Programme, a new, specific effort will be made to support concerted research on key issues concerning the future of education and training, with a view to strengthening the Member States combined research potential in the education and training fields and for the more effective dissemination and exploitation of research results. Special attention will be given - again in line with guidelines set by the Education Council - to comparative criteria and methods regarding the evaluation of universities teaching performance. In this context, EUROSTAT is expected to play a key role in the development of appropriate educational indicators.
55. The Community is already working with the Member States to ensure that young people are involved in the process of building Europe, encouraging active participation by young people in their out-of-school activities, and creating opportunities for cooperation between young "leaders", young workers and young volunteers. The current "Youth for Europe II" programme provides a sound basis for this work, with the active participation of national youth agencies from all Member States, and has created a working infrastructure for youth exchanges and collaborative projects.
56. This specific action cannot be combined with the actions targeted at the school systems, since neither the target groups nor the objectives nor the authorities responsible are the same. Responsibility in this field is with national Ministries for youth and/or culture and a range of voluntary and youth organisations. For these reasons, it will be essential to maintain a separate

effort in this field. The Commission therefore envisages to develop the next phase in the light of the new provisions of Article 126 of the new Treaty, thus giving a positive signal and fresh impetus to the efforts made by Member States to prepare young people for their future as citizens in the European Community. A specific communication will be presented on youth questions.

ACTION LINE B

57. Aim : the Community's vocational training policy should be designed to support and complement measures developed by and in the Member States, with a view to setting higher training standards and also creating a transparent European area so far as skills and qualifications are concerned, thus permitting the effective application of the right to free movement of persons. To this end, Community action will fully respect the Member States' responsibility for the organisation and content of vocational training. The Community should devise a coherent framework to help implement its vocational training policy and at the same time give a European dimension to the arrangements made by the Member States.

In practical terms, the Community's policy must be properly anchored in a single Community vocational training programme. The Community vocational training programme would include two complementary parts, which respect the principle of subsidiarity, as follows :

- (a) a common framework of objectives, designed to support and complement the policies and measures adopted by the Member States, bearing in mind the responsibilities of the parties concerned under national law, with a view to promoting the coherent development of vocational training among the Member States and the progressive convergence of their initiatives ;
- (b) a number of supporting measures implemented at Community level, designed to support and complement activities developed by and in the Member States.
58. The current programmes in the vocational training field are based on Council Decisions which contain a framework of policy objectives in relation to their different fields of action. The regrouping of vocational training policy guidelines in one common framework of objectives would promote a new quality in the partnership between the Community and the Member States which would aim at realizing common objectives relating to the different parts of the vocational training systems and arrangements, eg. improving the quality of initial and continuing training, giving all young school leavers a recognized qualification, facilitating access to training, promoting investment in training as an essential part of companies' corporate strategy, developing a

European market of qualifications and strengthening the role of training in technological transfer and in adaptation to industrial changes and the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men.

59. The Community programme should be closely aligned with two other Community instruments :

- the Structural Funds, particularly the Social Fund, which support the policy of cohesion through the CSFs and Community initiatives. Vocational training policy should therefore have maximum synergy with the policy of cohesion so as to enable, where possible and appropriate, the extension and multiplication of action under the Community Programme referred to above and achieve enhanced participation of all concerned ;
- the Research and Development Framework Programme, which should be strengthened by developing measures aimed at continuing training to ensure that innovation and the results of research are transferred and fully exploited, especially by small and medium-sized businesses, by means of well-targeted continuing training arrangements.

The supporting Community measures would comprise three complementary and integrated parts, based on the achievements of the current programmes :

Strand A : Networks of Resource Centres

Strand B : Support for Innovation : Transnational projects and joint products

Strand C : Analysis and Research.

STRAND A : Networks of Resource Centres

60. These "Networks" at national, regional and sectoral level would be concerned with activities covering all forms of vocational training (initial, continuing and advanced) and would seek to develop a more effective interplay between Community action and the policies and practices of the Member States. They would also represent the support structure for the development of measures to improve the matching of qualifications supply with labour market demand in relation to technological change as well as for promoting trans-national training partnerships.

The main tasks of this network would be :

- the monitoring and comparative analysis of the programme's impact at national level, including in particular the mainstreaming of actions promoting equal opportunities for

women and men; the setting up and monitoring of projects; the development of arrangements for the exchange of information and know how and its diffusion.

- at regional and sectoral level: the analysis of training and qualification needs ; the provision of training audits for SMEs; the transfer of innovation in technology and learning methods, particularly to SMEs ; the encouragement of the geographical mobility and exchange of young people and trainers and the strengthening of arrangements for guidance and counselling.

The networks could be organised in collaboration with national co-ordinating and evaluation units, which could merge the national units for the current programmes (COMETT, FORCE, PETRA, EUROTECNET and IRIS). It would of course be for the Member States to determine the appropriate location of such coordinating and facilitating mechanisms.

They would also involve the networking the regional or sectoral consortia on a transnational basis. These consortia could be based on the University Enterprise Training Partnerships (COMETT UETPs) which would need to consolidate their partnership arrangements with regional authorities, the social partners, companies and other training agencies in the regions concerned.

61. The regional and sectoral consortia could also act as resource-centres for supporting Community action, by offering a framework to encourage the mobility and exchange of young workers and young people in training, building on exchange arrangements developed under the PETRA programme. These consortia could also be usefully involved in assisting the implementation of other Community policies through developing appropriate training measures - e.g. environment, SMEs and R&D. The Community-wide coverage of the existing COMETT partnerships constitutes a rich asset and should be consolidated in this perspective.

STRAND B : Support for innovation : transnational projects and joint products.

62. This Strand would be focused on the identification, pooling and dissemination of training innovations. It would primarily be aimed at those responsible for training at the local and regional level, mainly companies and training providers. It would endeavour to bring them together in transnational partnerships in which they would pool their expertise in projects on common priorities.
63. It would also support the design and development of transnational training projects. These would have a common content and would provide innovative solutions to common training issues. They should lead to the development of high quality transferable

products to be disseminated through the European network to all interested companies and training providers. The products should be highly innovative, based on jointly formulated methods, modules and materials and should have a clear demonstration value.

64. In developing this Strand the European network would draw on a pool of Community expertise to :
- * help training providers and companies in the different Member States to set up and run transnational partnerships and to develop the training projects ;
 - * help national co-ordination and evaluation units to assess and monitor projects.
 - * help disseminate good practices with regard to the promotion of equal opportunities for women and men - so as to produce a better impact on the mainstream of national systems.

STRAND C : Analysis - Research

65. The purpose would be to improve mutual understanding of vocational training systems and mechanisms. It would promote their quality and efficiency by means of well-structured arrangements for exchange of information and analysis. This would help achieve comparable information and data, common understanding of concepts and indicators and develop - in close cooperation with Member States - research and analytical tools on central issues for the training systems and mechanisms. In this context, the experience of EUROSTAT will be exploited to further develop aspects of methodology and comparability of statistics to support of the Community's vocational training programme.
66. This would help decision makers to place their national systems and practices in a European perspective, and facilitate transfer of know-how, particularly to the countries which are currently restructuring their training and qualification arrangements. It would be of special value for the Objective 1 regions of the Community.
67. The work carried out under Strand C would yield important material for the European Forum on vocational training to be organised in future on a regular basis by the Commission. It could also contribute to the production of a periodic European report on the vocational training situation in the European Community - a complement to the Commission's regular Employment Report.
68. In this context, the CEDEFOP should be called upon to play a more pivotal role in assisting the Commission to compare and disseminate research findings in the training field, focussing especially on the need to give a European dimension to the training of trainers and on the publication of authoritative, up

to date comparative material on the organisation and functioning of the different training and qualification systems. CEDEFOP would serve as a platform for exchange of experience between practitioners.

69. This vocational training programme could make use of telematic connections between the national, regional and sectoral units to increase information exchange. The programme might also give a major boost to the development and dissemination of open and distance learning methods and materials, giving the network and the joint projects a completely new scale and sense of innovative dynamism. It would also give tangible form to the idea of an open training and qualifications area in the Community.

70. The Commission's Advisory Committee on Vocational Training would advise on the development of the Community's training policy and be in a position to overview the Community's vocational training programme and its coherence with structural policy at Community level. The coordination structures established in the Member States should facilitate follow-up to the Community programme and its links with other Community interventions, particularly the European Social Fund. They could assist in giving more attention to the necessary co-responsibility for the evaluation and monitoring of Community action.

CONCLUSION

71. The two main axes of action set out above correspond closely to the spirit and terms of Articles 126 and 127 respectively of the new Treaty. As soon as the Treaty is ratified, the Commission's aim is to present a Communication to the Council concerning the implementation of Articles 126 and 127, in a coherent framework. This Communication will complement the programme proposals which the Commission has to present before the end of the year.

ACTION PROGRAMMES IN THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING FIELD

A range of specific action programmes have been launched at Community level from 1987 onwards:

· **COMETT** (Programme on cooperation between universities and industry regarding training in the field of the technology), launched in 1986, was conceived as an education and training counterpart to the ESPRIT R+D programme and aimed to create greater synergy between university and industry to improve the quality of training for technological change.

· The **ERASMUS** programme (European Community action scheme for the Mobility of University Students), set up in 1987, aimed at promoting cooperation between universities in order to bring about greater mutual recognition of qualifications as well as to encourage much greater mobility of students and staff between institutions throughout the Community. The Commission set a target of 10% for mobility of students within the EC.

· **EUROTECNET** (Action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change in the European Community) had its origins in the 1983 Council Resolution setting training policies for the 1980s and, building on a 3-year preparatory phase, became formalised from 1990 as a programme addressing the impact of technological change on qualification systems and on training methodologies.

· From 1988, **PETRA** (Action Programme for the vocational training of youth people and their preparation for adult and working life) grew directly out of the previous Community Action Programme on the transition of young people from school to adult and working life, and was designed to take account in particular of concerns arising from high young unemployment by setting new standards for initial vocational training in the Community.

· **Youth for Europe** (Action programme for the promotion of youth exchanges in the Community) was formalised in 1988 as a focus for a range of initiatives designed to give an impulse for out-of-school exchanges of young people and had its origins in the Adonino Report on a People's Europe adopted by the European Council in 1985.

· **IRIS** (European Network of Vocational Training Projects for Women), launched in 1988, grew out of the 1987 Council Recommendation on access by women to vocational training by creating a European network to support innovation in vocational training directed at the more effective participation of women.

LINGUA (Action Programme to promote foreign language competence in the European Community), launched in 1990, focused on the growing concern about the Achilles heel of so many Community efforts, namely the need for more citizens to be able to communicate through at least two languages other than their own.

In 1990, the Community also launched the **TEMPUS** scheme (Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies) designed to support the transformation of the higher education systems in central and Eastern European countries. This scheme is an integral part of the **PHARE** Programme set up by the Community to provide assistance in the economic and social restructuring of Central and Eastern European countries.

In 1991, **FORCE** (Action Programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community) was launched, focusing on policy development, innovation and exchange of experience regarding continuing vocational training.

A comparatively recent development has been the opening of **COMETT** (since 1990) and **ERASMUS** (since 1992) to the participation of the EFTA countries, thereby enhancing the truly trans-European nature of these programmes. The European Economic Area agreement, once it has entered into force, will entail opening all EC education and training programmes to EFTA participation from 1 January 1995.

EC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES

TABLE 1 : EC EDUCATION AND TRAINING PROGRAMMES			
Short title	Full title	Duration	Budget execution up to 1992 (MECU)
COMETT	Programme on cooperation between universities and industry regarding training in the field of technology	1986-94	206,6
ERASMUS	European Community action scheme for the Mobility of University Students	1987-	307,5
PETRA	Action Programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life	1988-94	79,7
YOUTH FOR EUROPE	Action programme for the promotion of youth exchanges in the Community - "Youth for Europe" programme	1988-1994	32,2
IRIS	European Network of Vocational Training Projects for Women	1988-93	0,75
EUROTECNET	Action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change in the European Community	1990-94	7,0
LINGUA	Action Programme to promote foreign language competence in the European Community	1990-94	68,8
TEMPUS	Trans-European Mobility Scheme for University Studies	1990-94	194
FORCE	Action Programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community	1991-94	31,3

TREATY ON EUROPEAN UNION

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CHAPTER 3

Education, vocational training and youth

Article 126

1. The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education by encouraging cooperation between Member States and, if necessary, by supporting and supplementing their action, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content of teaching and the organization of education systems and their cultural and linguistic diversity.
2. Community action shall be aimed at :
 - developing the European dimension in education, particularly through the teaching and dissemination of the languages of the Member States;
 - encouraging mobility of students and teachers, inter alia by encouraging the academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study;
 - promoting cooperation between educational establishments;
 - developing exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the education systems of the Member States;
 - encouraging the development of youth exchanges and of exchanges of socio-educational instructors;
 - encouraging the development of distance education.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the field of education, in particular the Council of Europe.
4. In order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, the Council :
 - acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189b, after consulting the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, shall adopt incentive measures, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States;
 - acting by a qualified majority on a proposal from the Commission, shall adopt recommendations.

Article 127

1. The Community shall implement a vocational training policy which shall support and supplement the action of the Member States, while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organization of vocational training.
2. Community action shall aim to :
 - facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retraining;
 - improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market;
 - facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;
 - stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms;
 - develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.
3. The Community and the Member States shall foster cooperation with third countries and the competent international organizations in the sphere of vocational training.
4. The Council, acting in accordance with the procedure referred to in Article 189c and after consulting the Economic and Social Committee, shall adopt measures to contribute to the achievement of the objectives referred to in this Article, excluding any harmonization of the laws and regulations of the Member States.

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