

**Bold** and [...] are used to indicate changes to the previous version.

...

The Council conclusions of 12 May 2009 on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'), which provide a means of addressing the challenges involved in fully implementing key competences and of improving the openness and relevance of education and training, including through the definition of priority work areas during the 2009-2011 work cycle and the **possible** development of a **benchmark on employability** [...].

AWARE OF THE FOLLOWING CHALLENGES:

1. **The current economic crisis, together with the rapid pace of social, technological and demographic change, underline the crucial importance of ensuring that - through high-quality lifelong education and training, as well as increased mobility - all individuals, in particular young people, acquire the competences required both to meet the needs of the labour market and to ensure social inclusion and active citizenship.**
2. **Acquiring and further developing competences are crucial to improving employment prospects and contribute to personal fulfilment, social inclusion and active citizenship, since they signal the ability of individuals to act independently – and in a self-organised way – in complex, changing and unpredictable contexts. A competent individual is able to combine knowledge, skills and attitudes, and to apply and make use of prior learning (whether acquired formally, non-formally or informally) in new situations.**
3. The 2010 joint progress report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" work programme recognises that:
  - Many countries are reforming curricula based explicitly on the key competences framework, particularly in the schools sector, but innovative approaches to teaching and learning need to be developed and implemented on a broader basis, in order to ensure that every citizen can have access to high-quality lifelong learning opportunities;

- There is a particular need to strengthen those competences required to engage in further learning and the labour market, which are often closely interrelated. This means further developing the key competences approach beyond the schools sector, into adult learning and into vocational education and training (VET) linked to the Copenhagen process, and ensuring that higher education outcomes are more relevant to the needs of the labour market. It also means developing ways of evaluating and recording transversal competences, skills and attitudes – **such as learning to learn, social and civic competences, initiative-taking and entrepreneurship, cultural awareness and expression** – that are relevant for access to work and further learning.

A "common language" needs to be developed which bridges the worlds of education/training and work, in order to make it easier for citizens and employers to see how [...] competences and learning outcomes are relevant to tasks and occupations. This would further facilitate citizens' occupational and geographical mobility;

- In order to enhance citizens' competences and thus better equip people for the future, education and training systems also need to open up further and become more relevant to the outside world.

#### STRESSING THAT:

- The above challenges call for [...] action at both European and national level, as part of the priority work areas specifically planned for the first 2009-2011 work cycle of ET 2020. The key competences approach needs to be fully implemented in the schools sector, particularly to support the acquisition of key competences **and quality learning outcomes** for those at risk of educational under-achievement and social exclusion. Teaching and assessment methods need to **evolve**, and the continuing professional development of all teachers **and** trainers [...] needs to be supported, in line with the competence-based approach.
- However, there is now also a need to clarify and [...] **to consider developing** the link between the various existing European initiatives aimed at strengthening citizens' **skills and competences and at providing a greater focus on learning outcomes, as well as to ensure** a consistent approach in this field. This should build on the progress made with implementation of **both** the Key Competences Recommendation and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), and should connect these to the acquisition of competences and learning outcomes **in all relevant settings and** at all levels. It should further aim at systematically improving and strengthening the acquisition of competences in education and training, as well as at work.