



Background paper for the conference working groups

The Commission has pointed out its concern on forecasting labour market trends. The goal is to reach more transparent information on labour market between the Member States. It is hoped that in the future bottlenecks can be partly offset by increased labour mobility. Occupational, sector and geographical mobility is needed to increase. On the Commission draft paper it is highlighted the importance of more effective and efficient job search. This requires enhanced coordination between different policy areas and labour market institutions (also public and private Employment Services and social security systems.).

European grid for recognition of professional qualifications - easing mobility

For EUROCADRES, the concept of qualifications also comprise competences and skills acquired through informal channels such as life-long learning or training as well as language skills, social experiences etc.

It is said in the Commission draft paper that qualified labour force not only contributes to productivity but also investments in well-designed systems for lifelong learning can largely offset the invisible economic cost of skills shortages and skills gaps. Firstly, skills, competencies and qualification requirements will increase significantly in the EU across all types of occupation. Secondly, there is a crucial need to ensure a better long-term match between skills supply and labour market demand.

Implementation of EQF

With the project "Skills and Competences for Mobility in a Competitive Europe" EUROCADRES wants to raise awareness on the EQF in order to increase the level of knowledge and also to investigate if there could be a need for a more harmonized approach.

In order to make such cross border mobility a reality the Commission and the Member States' governments are needed to strive for better harmonisation of the social security, health and tax systems in the EU. A broad agreement on these areas which enables the Member States to offer understandable information on institutional rules as well as on language courses, local facilities, housing, schools, cultural specificities and traditions of the different countries is of utmost importance for true progress. This point is also agreed in the Commission draft paper.

Also the European Parliament draft agrees that a strong pressure should be made by the Commission and presents in a draft paper that everything should be done to encourage all initiatives that aim to facilitate cross border mobility. Facilitating geographic and occupational mobility by enhancing the transparency, recognition and comparability of qualifications should be underlined by the European Union. The European Parliament draft also stresses the need for a coordinated approach by the Commission between current initiatives that aim to facilitate and stimulate the mobility of professionals between Member States, such as EUROPASS (European CV), EURES (job mobility portal) and the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Directive 2005/36/EC urges the Member States to strive for more harmonised approach to the recognition of qualifications and competences, to simplify the administrative processes involved and to reduce the costs incurred by professionals.

In the European Parliament draft it is also mentioned that it is not just in a context of the EU policy but cooperation of civil society (employers, unions and professional organisations) is also needed to ease and improve mobility within the Internal Market.

The Commission states the fact that while Member States are developing policy tools to address challenges on integrating labour market, there is an urgent need to pool efforts. At the European Union level different instruments must be brought together.

Standards of Conduct for Fair Mobility- focus on quality of Mobility

EUROCADRES' opinion is that mobility should be encouraged through national employment strategies and lifelong learning schemes developing vocational and language skills. Concerted action with social partners, local and regional authorities, learning and training centres and civil society should be organised in order to address practical and psychological obstacles to mobility, to promote the concept of "fair mobility" and ensure the respect of labour standards and legal requirements by all people involved in the mobility process. The fact is that a large amount of the professionals in EU that endeavour into a mobility experience do it by force, involuntary.

EUROCADRES' approach is to contribute to a better organised mobility with a true and transparent concept of the recognition of professional qualifications that in the future can attract people to see mobility as a career opportunity and advantage as well as personal enrichment. EUROCADRES

strongly believe that the flow of the people cross- or within borders needs to be under fair conditions.

Valuing "On the job training"- making all experiences count

In an era of flexicurity the professionals are more and more expected to constantly upgrade their skills and competences in order to prepare moves between jobs, companies, sectors and countries. This is possible only if the lifelong learning efforts are recognised and transferable to other environments. One starting point for such a strategy might be a further development of career guidance initiatives at a sectoral level or economy wide level.

European Professional Cards

European Professional Cards is discussed in the European Parliament draft paper. It says the added value of a European Professional Cards, in addition to existing measures which aim to facilitate and stimulate mobility, needs to be established for most professions. However, European Professional Cards seem difficult to introduce since regulation varies from Member State to Member State. For some partly regulated and harmonised professions, such as lawyers, engineers and health professionals, European Professional Cards are already currently in development. Regulations by European Commission have to lead to administrative simplification and accelerate procedures used by national administrations and regulatory authorities.

It is urged that a European Professional Card should not have a negative effect on cross border mobility, and should only be used as proof of the right to move without being a condition for such movement and emphasises that specific groups should not be excluded from offering their services in other Member States. Also information on a European Professional Card should be reliable and validated by the competent national authorities.

EUROCADRES has shared views with MEP Mrs Cedeschiöld on a meeting held in October 2008. ENGCARD project was introduced in a meeting and Mrs Cedeschiöld strongly shared the opinion that delivering the European Professional Cards shouldn't put up barriers for those applying and this way creating yet another obstacles.

New Skills for New Jobs

The Commission is launching a new programme to promote more comprehensive information on the Union's future skills and job requirements, and to facilitate anticipation and matching. The programme is called New Skills for New Jobs and it's fully within the scope of the European Social Fund. New programme is mainly organised under four strands: *strengthening the Union's capacity for forecasting and anticipation, addressing mismatches, deepening international cooperation and mobilising Community instruments.*

Even though most Member States have already developed forecasting tools, these initiatives vary significantly in scope and methodology. The EU can add value by developing common methodologies, providing comparable information across Member States, raising awareness and promoting exchange of best practises. Also the expertise and resources of Cedefop and Eurofund must be harnessed. The Commission will also promote dialogue between business and universities and support the establishment of partnerships.

The Commission will organise an annual event, "Partnership for Skills and Employment". It will analyse the skills and labour market needs of key sectors. It will also better discuss with stakeholders, in particular the existing sector social dialogue committees, possibly establish "Sector Councils on employment and skills" at European level, collect information available in Member States and disseminate recommendations drawn from exchange between stakeholders and from education and training systems.

In order to draw on the expertise of Member States, education and training providers, business and social partners, academics and international institutions, the Commission will establish a small group of experts in support of the new programme New Skills for New Jobs.

The Commission aims to develop as of 2009 a standard multilingual dictionary of occupations and skills, to enhance the quality and transparency of vacancy information to improve matching between job seekers and vacancies. In 2009 one goal is also to create "Match and Map", a user-friendly, transparent online service for citizens, providing qualitative information on occupations, skills, learning and training opportunities across the EU.

Co-operation with organisations like OECD and ILO should be deepened. Also bilateral dialogues and developing policy dialogues with neighbourhood countries are continued.

The implementation of EQF should increase the transparency of qualifications and facilitate access to further learning. Also Copenhagen process on cooperation on European vocational education and training (VET) will include a new priority to improve the links with the labour market.

It is noted in the Commission paper that European social dialogue is a key instrument for mobilising social partners to invest in the right skills through education and lifelong learning. The Commission will invite social partners to develop joint initiatives to promote skills forecasting and upgrading, and to accompany short-term restructuring.