



CONFERENZA EUROPEA  
EUROPEAN CONFERENCE



**I GOVERNI REGIONALI E L'ATTUAZIONE DELLA STRATEGIA DI LISBONA  
NEL CAMPO DELL'EDUCAZIONE E DELLA FORMAZIONE**  
**REGIONAL GOVERNMENTS AND THE PROGRESS TOWARDS  
LISBON OBJECTIVES IN EDUCATION AND TRAINING**



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## Foreword

The central objective of the Livorno Conference has been to approve the six policy paper here presented and to draw up guidelines for an effective cooperation of Regional Governments in the implementation of the European strategies for education and training. The new Lifelong Learning Programme as well as the new European Social Fund programmes can strengthen the efficiency of the regional plans in this field.

In the coming years, thanks to the new programmes, there will be good opportunities to increase the collaboration among Regional Governments in Europe with the aim to increase the quality of education and training/lifelong learning in general, as well as in the specific fields of: mobility of young students and workers, dissemination and exploitation of results of the investment in education and training, *e*-learning and new technologies, education and training for the promotion of entrepreneurship and research & innovation.

As a consequence, it is necessary for Regional Governments to develop the interregional cooperation in a structured and permanent way. That is why the second objective of the conference has been to make Regional Governments committed to the new model of a soft open method of coordination supporting the process of policy learning and policy transfer. The method has been developed and applied in the cooperation within EARLALL with the support of the European Commission's General Directorate for Education and Culture within the EU-funded project PREVALET.

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# **1. Regional Governments and Progress towards the Lisbon goals in the field of Education, Training and Labour policies**

## **Introduction**

Europe is facing the challenges and opportunities presented by intensified globalisation. Competition on a global level could threaten the quality of life in many of the EU's member states, while we still have a long way to travel along the road to guarantee our citizens equal opportunities at work, equal access to services and balanced and sustainable development.

In Lisbon, Europe said that the challenge of globalisation could only be overcome with a firm commitment to build "a highly competitive society, based on knowledge, with the creation of better and more jobs, that are economically stable, qualified and safeguarded in a setting of strong social cohesion and environmental sustainability over the long term".

In the light of the Kok report the Lisbon objectives seem a long way off for many of the Union's regional and national governments. In particular, only a few regions, (most of which are in the North of Europe), have developed robust policies and strategies to foster innovation. There are still many difficulties in the quality of employment in some sections of the labour market in promoting social inclusion, with the situation of immigrant and ethnic minority communities needing particular attention and in tackling demographic change.

Regions do not however intend to abandon the roadmap and its objectives as laid down in the Lisbon agenda, which remain the focal point for European regional development. To fulfill the Lisbon goals it is necessary to strengthen the idea of "co-operative multi-level governance" at European level. Through this approach regional and local communities and stakeholders will be collaborate in shared projects and participate in governance.

The review of the Lisbon strategies and the new 2007-2013 programming of Structural Funds offer the opportunity to create new synergies that will help achieve these objectives.

### **A. The Regions are the focus for the implementation and development of European strategies for economic growth and new job creation.**

1. Regional public policies, which support the creation of know-how via education, training and research, are a key factor in regional economic growth.

The Regional Governments support change in the Regions by creating infrastructures (high quality sites, basic infrastructures, technologies and know-how), nurturing a context that favours development (enterprise culture, specialist poles or clusters, finance, etc.), backing the presence of a skilled workforce, which is the result of managing demographic dynamics and the distribution of high-level training.

2. Many regions have institutional powers and responsibilities with regard to training human and social capital within their territories.

To ensure their policies are at their most effective, a number of Member States have increased the powers of regional and local government. There has been an increased tendency to devolve the government of factors influencing economic and social development to the regional and local level. At present, approximately two-thirds of the

European population live in countries where power has to varying degrees been decentralised to regional parliaments and local authorities. Regions which in total account for 203 million inhabitants in eight member states have legislative powers. In others, such as France or Poland, a degree of regionalisation has taken place but regions do not have legislative power as such, while in many Nordic Countries policies are driven by local or municipal authorities. To conclude, a majority of Europe's 500 million citizens live in states where regional and local authorities have competences in the field of lifelong learning and employment policy.

In these countries, regional and local governments operate in conjunction with central government and their actions have a profound impact on the equity and efficiency of the education and training systems, levels of innovation and the degree of modernisation of training systems. As set out in the 4<sup>th</sup> Cohesion report, over the past ten years there has been an increase in the share of investment under the control of local authorities.

This means that activating the Copenhagen Process and its priorities<sup>1</sup>, and attaining the benchmarks of the Lisbon strategy is possible only through the commitment and effort of local and regional governments.

As the Council of Ministers' Helsinki communiqué of December 5 2006 stresses: "The success of the Copenhagen process relies on the active involvement of all key stakeholders in the field of VET". In our opinion, this starts with regional and local government stakeholders.

In other words, the contents of the White Paper on European Governance (428/2001) must also be implemented in the field of education and training policies, with a view to ensuring that "all the levels of power responsible for the implementation of European legislation should be involved fully in its preparation and in the development of EU policy". In addition, the effective participation of Regional and Local governments in the implementation of EU policy is required to promote the full involvement of social partners and civic society in general.

## **B. The Regions must play an active part to ensure the cohesion of educational, training and labour policies.**

1. It is possible to speed up the process of modernising our and upgrading the quality of education and training systems if incentives are put in place to encourage co-operation and co-ordination between local and regional governments (mutual learning, the development of common instruments etc). As the Helsinki Council of Ministers' communiqué stresses: "A more systematic approach is needed to strengthen mutual learning, cooperative work and the sharing of experience and know-how. This should be facilitated by (among other things) a

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<sup>1</sup> strengthening the European side of education and training, developing information and guidance services, promoting a common system of skills and qualifications, developing the quality of the systems

systematic and flexible framework to support peer learning activities in the field of VET. The framework should also support decentralised peer learning”.

It will be possible to fulfil this requirement mainly through trans-regional cooperation, which has now become possible under the new ESF regulation.

2. As far as EARLALL is concerned, the objective is to help all the Regional and sub-Regional territories to satisfy the European benchmarks set by Lisbon and subsequent agreements. Cutting dropout numbers, raising lifelong learning participation, improving reading skills and so on, are relevant objectives at more than just the European or national level. Each individual territory should be able to make a self-assessment as regards the challenges raised by the Lisbon strategy. Each relevant regional or local government should be able to define its own objectives regarding each of the benchmarks, be in a position to take on increased responsibility, and understand how to implement effective regional and local policies in their areas.

Advances must be made on a broad front otherwise there is the danger that we will only fulfil the Lisbon objectives by favouring some areas to the detriment of others: a point made very clearly in the 4<sup>th</sup> Cohesion Report. With this in mind we should underline, as the Committee of the Regions has reiterated (2003/C66/01), that the solution to the problem does not lie in rendering all the European Regions uniform (“equality is not the same thing as uniformity” –CoR:2003/C 66/01). Nor is it to be found in centralising responsibility or generalising uniform solutions. Rather, it is to be found in establishing responsibility at the regional and local level.

### **C. Priority areas of co-ordination and co-operation**

EARLALL suggests that priority areas for joint working should be:

1. Activities connected to helping local and regional governments achieve agreed European benchmarks in the field of education and training, such as work to assess performance and gauge progress of policies and practice at local or regional level
2. Student and worker mobility: “Brain mobility” for study or work is an essential policy in developing and attracting skills and is a qualifying priority in the European Lifelong Learning Programme. Current experience shows how inter-regional co-operation can improve the quality of student and worker mobility.

3. Work to compare education and training, labour, innovation and research policies, systems and practices with a view to identifying best practice and adapting models for transfer.

#### **D. Implementation methods**

To create a favourable context for strengthened co-operation between regional and local governments. EARLALL suggests that the following steps should be taken at EU level:

1. A “soft” Open Method of Co-ordination between Regional governments must be developed and anchored to relevant EU Institutions.

The experience of the “Prevalet” pilot project undertaken by EARLALL has shown that an OMC model that is revised, simplified and based on voluntary and cooperative principles can be very effective.

2. Co-operation and co-ordination between local and regional governments must be backed by European level support services concentrating on regional policies in the areas of education, training and labour (collection of data, statistics and information, research, analysis).

Research into Regional education and training policy and systems must be rolled out at speed in order to cover the current data shortfall, which is preventing a comparative view of the performance of devolved education and training systems from being achieved. Research into best practice should also cover policies and practices at regional and local level.

## **2. Transnational Cooperation Through European Social Fund (Esf) Support 2007-2013**

### **Introduction**

1. The regions of Europe have a proud record of achievement in co-operating to facilitate transnational exchanges of learners, teachers and ideas and in promoting links between schools, colleges and universities. The Comenius, Leonardo, Erasmus and Grundtvig programmes, together with the Youth and EQUAL programmes, have been instrumental in fostering such cooperation and this is set to expand over the next seven years with the inception of the new integrated Lifelong Learning Programme and the introduction of the transnational element of the European Social Fund. Together, the LLP and the transnational element of ESF have the potential to deliver a step-change in inter-regional cooperation in pursuit of the shared aims of the Lisbon agenda.
2. EARLALL, as the leading pan-European network of regional governments with political authority in the field of lifelong learning, has been at the forefront of the drive to encourage inter-regional cooperation, both in respect of the joint development of mutually beneficial projects and in the sharing of experience with partner regions and more widely. The Association has taken an active interest in the gestation of policy regarding the LLP and the transnational element of ESF, using its political authority and understanding of the processes of delivery to provide a constructive input to the European Commission's consultations on the new programmes.
3. The focus of this paper is on the transnational element of ESF. It identifies some prospective fields of common concern where joint action with partner regions with similar priorities is most likely to be beneficial. It also points to aspects of the process of developing cooperation on which some further collective thought is required and on which EARLALL members and other regions can assist the European Commission in taking forward.

### **The Future European Social Fund 2007-2013**

4. The new regulatory framework for the future Structural Funds, 2007 – 2013, provides for the mainstreaming of trans-national and inter-regional co-operation. Under this new framework ESF shall

*“ also support transnational and interregional actions in particular through the sharing of information, experiences, results and good practices, and through developing complementary approaches and coordinated or joint action”.*

5. In this context, the European Social Fund will support transnational and inter-regional actions across all Member States. Thus individual Member States will establish how a transnational dimension is to be incorporated into all aspects of the Operational programme, including design, delivery and implementation structures, and monitoring and evaluation, of ESF Operational Programmes. Mainstreaming transnational activity provides an excellent opportunity to add value to the implementation of ESF Programmes by facilitating collaboration in areas of mutual interest with other European regions.

## **Why Support Transnational Cooperation Through the Social Fund?**

6. In the previous Structural Fund period the EU Commission has been the main motor and resource for stimulating and supporting transnational co-operation under the ESF, making it work primarily through the EQUAL Community Initiative. EQUAL has clearly demonstrated the benefits of transnational collaboration in stimulating innovation, identifying best practice and supporting dissemination.

7. The revised Lisbon community strategy emphasises the need to strengthen ownership of the reform agenda at national, regional and local level. In this context Member States and, where appropriate, regional governments with devolved authority, will need to assume the lead responsibility for learning from one another through the transnational exchange of good practice.

8. The scope for transnational co-operation in the new programmes will be broader than that under the current period through the EQUAL initiative, which is limited to a number of specific themes under the 4 pillars of the European Employment Strategy. The new provision under the future Social Funds allow for support in all policy areas identified for ESF interventions, including adaptability, labour market policies, human capital and strengthening public administration.

9. The range of activities can cover the exchange of information, expertise, results and good practice; the exchange of people; joint development; review, assessment and transfer of experience; and joint action between institutions and organisations.

10. Programming opportunities for transnational co-operation within future programmes can take one of two options. Either through the development of a single priority dedicated specifically to transnational cooperation or through the horizontal integration of such activity through all, or some, of the thematic priorities identified within individual Operational Programmes.

### **Potential Partnerships under the future ESF Programmes**

11 The Livorno conference provides the opportunity to build on the partnership that exists between the regions that are members of EARLALL, and build on the significant experience of facilitating transnational working among its members. It provides the opportunity to explore the potential for further collaboration with the network in delivering transnational cooperation through the ESF programme.

12. The potential exists to put in place a series of bilateral ‘mobility agreements’ promoting the free flow of learners, researchers and workers between EARLALL member regions and with other regions. It is anticipated that such agreements are likely to involve further joint development work in areas such as e-learning, skillsets for entrepreneurship, the definition of other vocational competences, the recognition of credit towards vocational qualifications, and the encouragement of reciprocal work experience placements for students and practitioners between regions.

13. Transnational cooperation will complement the policy initiative “Regions for Economic Change”. This initiative builds on the establishment of trans-European networks and of regions and cities each working on a specific theme. Experience gathered from transnational cooperation could feed into the networks established under the Regions for Economic Change initiative and vice versa.

14. Beyond this, arrangements will need to be put in place by the European Commission to ensure that transnational activities supported through the ESF Operational Programmes do not overlap with those supported through other Community programmes, notably the vocational education and training (VET) and adult education strands within the EU Lifelong Learning Programme (ie the Leonardo and Grundtvig sub-programmes), VET projects within the Erasmus sub-programme, and the policy development and information and dissemination strands of the transversal sub-programme. However, boundaries need to be drawn with care as there is scope for these sub-programmes of the LLP to serve as sources of support for pilot projects which, if successful, might then be disseminated and ‘mainstreamed’ using the transnational element of ESF to support replication in other regions.

### **Issues Impacting on Implementation**

15. Regional governments have been quite successful in the implementation of the EQUAL programme. This has provided important lessons to be fed into the implementation of transnational activity under the future programmes with various projects demonstrating effective templates for partnership working.

16. The recent EU Commission seminars on “*Transnational and Interregional Co-operation in ESF Programmes for 2007-2013*” highlighted a number of key issues which would need to be addressed in taking transnational activity forward through the future ESF programmes.

17. Member states highlighted unanimously that the implementation arrangements have to be clear and simple and that full cooperation with other partners from other Member states and Managing Authorities will be essential. Specific issues raised include the need for an easily accessible platform at EU level to facilitate partner search and matching, the scale of work to be undertaken in exploring and preparing for potential projects, the lack of clarity about project proposals, objectives and aims, and the impact of different cultures and working practices.

18. The Livorno conference affords EARLALL members to agree a mechanism for effective delivery and implementation.

19. Key issues to be explored therefore include:

- how best to support network development,
- how to support more thematic working,
- what frameworks are needed to facilitate partner engagement,
- what action is needed for validating good practice,
- overcoming linguistic and cultural barriers,
- what assistance is needed in the presentation, dissemination of good practices, and
- what agreements are needed in relation to specific issues relating to the organisation of projects, participation in visits, events, placements, communication and translation requirements.

20. It is suggested that EARLALL could play an important role in forging together initial inter-regional partnerships by firstly mapping Regional priorities, then identifying, at an early stage, project proposals that are likely to have resonance in addressing ESF priorities in several regions. Such inter-regional partnerships involving EARLALL members might serve as a means of testing, on a limited scale, the scope for and the value added by transnational cooperation

with a view to extension to other regions and Member States subsequently, if the results in these pilot regions proved beneficial.

21. The European Commission could play an active facilitating support role in mapping Member States and regions with closely matched problems and priorities, drawing on the information provided in the Operational Programmes of the relevant ESF Managing Authorities and disseminating the experiences of the pioneer project partners to wider networks.

22. Early consideration of these issues will enable EARLALL members to move forward more confidently in the implementation of transnational activity through their ESF programmes.

23. Special attention should be devoted to fostering the cooperation with the new EU Member States and with countries from the Mediterranean area

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### **3.Mobility of Students, Trainees, Researchers and Workers**

#### **On the relevance and grounds of mobility's importance**

In the XXIst century's society, mobility has acquired a key relevance on people's teaching, training and learning processes.

The characteristics found in global economics and society imply the necessity of training systems able to give technicians, professionals, researchers and workers enough capability to intervene and operate in a more and more internationalised labour market.

It is convenient then to include in the educational and training processes mobility experiences and activities fostering the acquisition of social, linguistic, technical and cultural competencies.

Up until now, the main characters in the European mobility actions have been the university students. We can hold as proof the growing numbers of Erasmus participants and the enormous popularity reached by this European programme.

The European Parliament has acknowledged the importance of mobility, and has stressed the necessity of spreading its benefits to a significant number of VET students and apprentices as well as to young researchers and those already in the labour market.

It is in this sense that the new LLP (Lifelong Learning Programme) comes across this European Parliament recommendation, and sets itself as a goal the inclusion of a much greater number of participants belonging to such sectors during the 2007 – 2013 period.

#### **On the relevance and grounds of the participation of the Regional Administrations in the organisation of training mobility actions**

An overall characteristic in the innovation of European education and VET systems has been the growing decentralisation and the new competencies acquired by the regional administrations, not just in their own management and organisation, but also in their definitions and contents.

The degree of such decentralisation varies according to the political organisation of each State. It may range from just an administrative decentralisation (states following a centralised model) to full and general competency in confederate and federal states.

On the other hand, the implementation and generalisation of mobility actions implies the active participation of the training centres. But this participation requires an essential support on several aspects (technical, logistic, economical and others) so that these mobility actions may eventually come true.

It is in this sense that the participation of the regional administrations becomes fundamental in most member states to ensure all necessary warrants and conditions required by the training institutions to carry out their mobility projects.

#### **Instruments for the support and implementation of the mobility**

Three essential instruments can be identified to support the implementation and generalisation of the mobility projects aimed at VET students and apprentices:

- Participation in European Programmes, mainly LLP, and in the activities covered by the ESF and ERDF transnational co-operation lines.
- Participation in regional administrations networks on VET subjects.
- Establishment of bilateral co-operation agreements between regional administrations for the enhancement of mobility.

The development and combination of these three instruments arises as a key factor to ensure the implementation of mobility projects under good quality conditions due to the fact that it allows:

- the diffusion of the necessary information among the training centres.
- the connection between centres from different states willing to take part in mobility projects.
- the ensuing development of networks among the centres participating in mobility projects.
- the direct dialogue with the companies and the social and economical agents.
- certification and acknowledgement of the training acquired during mobility

Transparency and validation of such training is easier thanks to several tools established at European level such as

- EUROPASS
- EQF
- ECVET

Their further development will allow in the near future the validation and capitalisation of the training acquired during mobility.

### **Organisation and management of the mobility**

For the regional administrations to be in a position of carrying out such functions of support and encouragement of the mobility, the necessary instruments must be at their disposal:

- Legal instruments: basic competencies in the management and organisation of VET in their territories.
- Economic instruments: specific budgetary items for the funding of mobility.
- Technical instruments: human support teams for the promotion and development of the mobility projects in the training centres.

### **Final considerations**

The generalisation of the mobility among the young VET students and apprentices, adults, trainers and teachers, requires an active and determined participation of the regional administrations. It necessarily implies that the Commission and the member states acknowledge the importance and the necessity of their participation in the management and organisation of the mobility actions, and therefore of their participation in the European VET managerial and directive state and community organisms.

On the other hand, the development of the mobility projects represents a very important element for the improvement of the quality of training systems both because of the exchange of good practices among the different systems and because of what it implies in innovation and modernisation. In a word, such projects will not just contribute to the education of young technicians and professionals but will also help in the actual building of a European training space.

This is the opening process towards the new programming period of the European Community, where the regional administrations will have an essential role to play.

In short, it would be convenient to plan the development of mobility actions adapted to the following criteria:

- To offer the necessary quality to let it become a significant training period.
- To develop a number of activities to achieve an important and growing participation among the different target groups.
- To accept the existing differences among the VET systems in the member states, and to acknowledge their specific value.
- To allocate enough resources from the regional Administrations to spread and enlarge mobility.
- To assess the activities carried out, in order to learn from experience, to correct deficit and surpass the obstacles found on the way.

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## **4. Trans-regional co-operation in the field of e-Learning**

### **The role of the regions in the implementation of European strategies for education and training to support the Lisbon objectives regarding Growth and Jobs**

At the present time, Europe faces a double challenge. On the one hand, it must provide a response to the reality of the gradually aging of its population, which in the long run will result in a considerable decrease in the population of working age and in a significant increase in the proportion of people receiving a pension.

The European Commission estimates that if the fall in the active population is not offset by a considerable rise in productivity, potential growth will fall radically to about 1% before 2040, which is half the current level. A fall in economic output of this size, together with an increase in expenditure due to aging, would cause considerable strain on the European social model.

On the other hand, the intensive pace of globalisation has exposed the EU economy to increasing foreign competition. The economic sectors exposed to foreign competition have increased, and now include not only high technology products but also goods and services that require highly intensive labour.

Faced with these forecasts, in February 2005 the Commission proposed to re-launch the Lisbon strategy in order to focus the EU's efforts on two main tasks: producing higher, more lasting growth and creating more better-quality jobs.

The aim of the Lisbon cooperation agreement for growth and jobs is to modernise the European economy in order to protect our social model in view of increasingly global markets, technological change, the pressure on the environment and the aging of the population.

There is a widespread consensus regarding the vital importance of education and training for achieving this aim. Europe must invest more in its young people, and in education, research and innovation, in order to provide our society with the assets and perspectives to create wealth and offer security to our citizens.

Access to the most wide-ranging possible education is not only a tool for the future of a knowledge-based Europe, but at the same time also ensures growth and social cohesion. The main challenges that arise at all levels are: removing the barriers to education, making permanent training possible for all and improving the quality of the education system.

The European regions have a responsibility for professional training and adult education. Regional and local authorities can and do play a key role bearing in mind:

- the responsibilities that they have in education and training
- precise knowledge of their citizens' needs for education and training
- the needs of qualified professionals in the various productive sectors in their vicinity
- their proximity that enables them to promote and disseminate policies and the appropriate management of the available resources according to needs
- their closeness to the various training and productive agents in order to facilitate cooperation between networks and create synergies between the various parties involved in this process.

The development of the regions in Europe basically depends on the use made of their potential as far as science, research and innovation are concerned. However, in order to guarantee these possibilities it is vital to establish solid bases in general education from the earliest possible ages and to motivate adults to continue in life-long learning processes.

In this context cooperation between regions can significantly help to achieve the aims that have been set as they all face the same challenges and similar problems with similar methods and similar concerns.

As a result, within the framework of EARLALL we need to deepen internal cooperation among its members along the lines that have already been drawn up:

- working in stable networks according to areas of interest and priorities
- improving the exchange of information and good practices
- promoting study visits to analyse specific issues in depth
- establishing indicators for appropriate benchmarking that reflects the situation in member regions

### **How regions can co-operate through interregional co-operation in the field of e-Learning**

In May 2006 “The regional dimension of the European e-Learning Agenda” conference took place. This was organised by the Delegations in Brussels of some EARLALL member regions and supported by EARLALL. At this conference they disseminated the conclusions drawn from the information that had been gathered on the various experiences carried out in the participating regions regarding various aspects of e-Learning.

The conclusions highlighted the important role the regions play in the promotion of e-Learning and in helping European society adapt to a knowledge-based economy.

It was also noted that participating regions tackled e-Learning with similar methodologies, and faced similar difficulties, alternatives and concerns.

To be more precise, as far as interregional cooperation was concerned, the following requirements were stressed:

- Promoting events in order to disseminate good practices
- Preparing a set of indicators that enable appropriate contrasting and in-depth knowledge of policies regarding e-Learning and the various regional experiences
- Establishing working groups and networks for specific issues

Furthermore, in October 2006 within the framework of the PREVALET project and as a result of the visit that representatives from the Basque Country paid to the TRIO project in Toscana, it was noted that there were common problems in the field of e-Learning, which made it possible to reach the conclusion that it would be to everyone’s advantage to provide a collective response to the challenge of e-Learning, if possible based on joint solutions. This resulted in the document, “3 axes for courses of action based on pre-projects in the field of ICT/e-Learning” that was presented at the General Assembly of EARLALL held last October.

In this document four courses of action were proposed that could be carried out jointly. We put forward the idea of sharing resources and knowledge to provide common responses to common problems in:

- 1) *The creation of a common EUROPEAN Repository of Reusable Learning Objects for all the interested member countries and regions.*
- 2) *The development of a Training Platform based on artificial intelligence, developed on free software.*
- 3) *The development of advanced author tools for the intelligent platform*
- 4) *The assessment and recognition of the apprenticeships made by eLearning means*

There are many differences between training on line and in presence.

It is all about making the most of the real potential of e-Learning and not about perpetuating the flaws in the face-to-face model that practically – except through specific diversification and support programmes...- doesn't tackle diversity as it deals with all students by following the same teaching and learning model, while at the same time it loses the added value provided by the human factor in learning.

That is, it combines the worst two cases in the new model.

The solution that has been proposed is a result of a study carried out by TKNIKA on diversity which means that each of us has a different mental model, and as a result, a different style of learning.

- 1) The use of Artificial Intelligence in learning platform behaviour study scenarios would assign each person to a series of standard models that would establish his/her style of learning. Once this has been established, on-line training can provide a response to this behaviour.
- 2) The contents should be developed according to a variety of methodologies so that in this way the platform would assign one or another option to each person at any time. This obviously requires an author tool that would make it possible to develop contents with a high degree of autonomy and in guided form to guarantee that in this way it could deal with the highest possible number of learning styles.
- 3) As a third element to help to improve the Investment Return, it would make available a common European repository of reusable multilingual, multimedia learning objects etc, with standard classification, that would allow for its individual use in any kind of teaching.

Technological umbrella: in order to ensure that the life cycle of the product that results from this project would be appropriate, the technology that would provide a solution to the project should be able to handle BPM (Business process management) and SOA (service orientated architecture). In this way in our Education Systems it will be possible to guarantee the use of technologies that are already common in the world of industry, banking and insurance, as well as in emerging businesses for automating processes, tasks, reducing times and costs, to monitor in real time the processes of our BI (Business Intelligence) organisations, and have a tool available that is not far removed from this technology and which can integrate it naturally.

## Conclusion

Key issues to be explored therefore include:

- how best to support network development
- how to support more thematic working
- what frameworks are needed to facilitate partner engagement
- what action is needed for validating good practice
- what agreements are needed in relation to specific issues relating to the organisation of the projects, participation in visits, events, placements,...

EARLALL could play an important role in forging together inter-regional partnerships by identifying, at an early stage, projects proposals that are likely to have resonance in addressing eLearning priorities in several regions. Such inter-regional partnerships involving EARLALL members might serve as a means of testing, on a limited scale, the scope for and the value added by transnational cooperation with the view to extension to other regions subsequently, if the results in these pilot regions proved beneficial.

The European Commission could play an active facilitating support role in mapping regions with closely matched problems and priorities, drawing on the information provided in projects submitted in the framework of European programs and initiatives in relation to eLearning, such as Lifelong learning program, e2010 initiative and the 7<sup>th</sup> Research Framework program.

*Ed by Alberto De La Cuesta on behalf of Mrs. Igone Azpiroz, Directora de Aprendizaje Permanente, Gobierno Vasco*

## 5.Lifelong learning for the promotion of entrepreneurship

Promoting entrepreneurship is one of the key activities to achieve the objectives which were set up in Lisbon in 2000. Training in entrepreneurship contributes to develop the personal skills that are necessary both for acquiring key competencies in young people and for raising the levels of business activity in the European Union.

In 2002, the European Commission pointed out entrepreneurship as one of the eight key competences in the shape of knowledge that should be acquired by everyone, which are the following:

- communication in the mother tongue
- communication in foreign languages
- mathematical competence and basic competences in science and technology
- digital competence
- learning to learn
- social and civic competences
- sense of initiative and entrepreneurship
- cultural awareness and expression

The importance of promoting entrepreneurial attitudes was made clear in the Green Paper for Entrepreneurship in Europe, in the Spring Report of 2003, which emphasises investment and growth through knowledge, innovation and dynamism in enterprises.

As a follow-up to the Green Paper, the Commission presented an Entrepreneurship Action Plan at the 2004 Spring European Council. Entrepreneurship education was seen as an important way to create more entrepreneurial mindsets among young people, and so was it established in the Key Action Sheets of the Action Plan, by including *Key Activity 1-Fostering entrepreneurial mindsets through school education*.

The guide on good practices in promoting entrepreneurial attitudes and skills through education, presented in 2004 by the member of the European Commission responsible for enterprise and information society, Erkki Liikanen, points out that entrepreneurial skills and attitudes provide benefits to society, even beyond their application to business activity. In fact, personal qualities that are relevant to entrepreneurship, such as creativity and a spirit of initiative, can be useful to everyone, in their working activity and in their daily life. Consequently, entrepreneurship is acknowledged by the European Council and the European Charter for Small Enterprises as one of the basic skills which should be developed through education from an early stage through all educational levels, including further and adult education. By starting at primary education we can achieve a change of attitude in our future young population which will give greater dynamism to European economy.

However, this has not yet led to making entrepreneurship a common feature or a widespread subject in our education systems, nor has the training of teachers on this matter been sufficiently developed.

The GEM-2006 report indicates that the average entrepreneurial activity in Europe is 6% in contrast with that of the USA, which is 10,03%

This percentage is not enough to generate a dynamic economy, capable of confronting globalisation and de-localisation of enterprises. This is why we need every single country in the European Union to take action in order to change the situation for the better.

Entrepreneurship education:

- Promotes usage of ICT and encourages participation in knowledge society.
- Encourages mobility of citizens through the development of joint projects.
- Fosters language learning.
- Is relevant for solving problems in the labour market and helps social cohesion.
- Includes unlocking personal potential to develop creativity, taking initiative, responsibility, independence, risk-taking, team work.

It should be emphasised that entrepreneurs should always be educated to a strong sense of co-operation, social responsibility, environmental care and sustainability.

Policy commitment to promote entrepreneurship is relatively new in Europe and therefore sharing best practice among the Regions and learning from each other's experience is vital at this stage.

It is important to choose a co-ordinated approach, which involves national, but especially regional and local governments. European Regions, very often holding full/wide competence in education, training and employment, are closer to the problems that arise in their environment and they are also the ones who know better the resources and the most adequate solutions to the problems related to training, employment and economical growth. In this context, developing and implementing policies from the regions will produce more direct and better results in business and job creation and growth.

A strategy for entrepreneurship in education is an investment in future innovation and in a more dynamic society, where individuals are capable of identifying opportunities and taking action by transforming ideas into activities in a social, cultural or economic context. It is the responsibility of educational Institutions to implement this strategy. Therefore, Regional and Local Authorities have a crucial role to play.

The Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe, which was an outcome of the Conference held in Oslo in October 2006, offers a rich menu of proposals, from which we propose to pick the following actions to develop in co-ordination among the member Regions that wish to do so:

- Offer political support for entrepreneurship education at all levels.
- Promote entrepreneurship education at regional level, with a coherent program bringing together local stakeholders and addressing the various levels of education through a range of different instruments.
- Ensure public funding /support for entrepreneurship education activities, including the use of practice-based pedagogical tools, the implementation of pilot projects and of concrete enterprise projects in schools.
- Build a common platform of existing programs, projects and teaching materials in our regions, in order to help sharing and dissemination and to be used as support for practitioners in improving the offer of entrepreneurship education.

- Develop research to assess the impact of entrepreneurship education on individuals, communities, society and the economy.
- Launch innovative actions for training teachers, providing specific training in entrepreneurship, explaining why entrepreneurship is a key competence for all and how related methods and activities can bring more dynamism and innovation into different courses.
- Encourage the creation of learning communities with the mission of fostering entrepreneurial mindsets, by building links between education and the business world.
- Launch awareness campaigns and celebrate entrepreneurship education activities and programs that work well, by organising awards and competitions.
- Support the mobility of educators across Europe; greater mobility and exchange of experience is needed in Europe. Programs need to be developed that allow educators to spend time at other institutions and/or in the private sector to truly engage, learn and develop. Europe needs greater sharing of knowledge and good practice across sectors and borders.

EARLALL calls on the Commission to:

- provide financial support, through the Community Lifelong learning Program and/or other instruments for these activities
- to otherwise assist EARLALL in its work on entrepreneurship education through for example policy advice and assistance with promoting the results of its work in this field

Such systematic and effective joint working will deliver real progress in promoting entrepreneurial mindsets across the European Union.

*Ed by Mrs. María José Vázquez Morillo, Junta de Andalucía*

## **6. Transregional Co-operation in the field of Lifelong Learning and Innovation Policies**

Innovation is a priority of all member states of the EU. The diversity of the measures and schemes reflects the diversity of the structural frameworks, cultural preferences and political priorities in the member states. Innovation is a cornerstone of the “Lisbon strategy” launched by the European Council in March 2000, and subsequently emphasised by European Councils, in particular at Barcelona in 2002.

Lifelong learning and innovation policies become still more important factors for regional development – they are so to speak major building blocks for a country’s long-run economic and social wealth. As a consequence, we – as regional governments - try to promote the implementation *and* integration of these policies to increase economic and social wealth.

A regional growth model has become widely spread during the past years. The objective is of course to increase regional economic and social wealth and the method is to use the so-called *growth drivers*. Usually the *growth drivers* consist of the following elements: Human capital, innovation, entrepreneurship and IT abilities. The actors in this process are enterprises, knowledge institutions and public authorities.

In Denmark this model has been used as the basis for the regional development strategies that the new Regional Governments have set up. The strategies are linked to an overall globalisation strategy that the national Government has launched which is also in line with the Lisbon objectives. This model for regional development is most probably used in many European countries and regions.

The interesting part for EARLALL is that the growth drivers consist of elements that are vital to our organisation: Entrepreneurship, innovation, IT abilities and human capital which is enhanced by lifelong learning.

The challenge is to combine these elements and to do this in a transregional collaboration. It might have been one of the reasons for the European Parliament to set up a budget line in 2004 to promote studies in this field.

### **The Regional Knowledge Management**

The REKNOMA project – “Regional Knowledge Management” – was set up in an EARLALL framework to address this initiative and the challenge. The project analysed and compared experiences from regions in Italy, Sweden and Denmark. The regions – Tuscany, Västra Götaland and Vejle - have in different ways used partnerships to promote regional development.

REKNOMA defined a “partnership for innovation” as a collaborative network between public authorities, enterprises and knowledge institutions to promote or realize a common objective within a specific area.

The project made a survey of regional partnerships in the field of textile production, food production, transport, mechanical electronics and others. It analysed ways to link learning and innovation in partnerships to transfer knowledge from the university to the enterprises – and vice-versa. It also tested methods to exchange knowledge in the partnerships – and between partnerships across regions.

The project resulted in a number of interesting findings as well as very useful experiences on possible ways to establish transregional partnerships.

The most interesting recommendations from the project to regional governments have been

- to establish access anchors in the regions to enable access to international knowledge for enterprises and institutions
- to support integration of further education, learning and innovation within enterprises
- to develop partnerships to support enterprises' reorganisation as a response to alterations in the global production system
- to establish partnerships with partners in other regions – including regions abroad, because relevant competencies are not necessarily geographically concentrated

## **Perspectives**

One of the central points in innovation management is the diffusion and exploitation of innovation -or in EU terminology: dissemination and exploitation of results or valorisation. Unfortunately the diffusion of innovation is easier said than done - many obstacles linger along the way and so much innovation is doomed to fail, because of, for example budgetary constraints, lack of skills or poor fit with current goals. As the REKNOMA project has shown, innovation can be diffused and be successfully applied when establishing co-operation between "partnerships for innovation".

The project has shown that it is possible to develop partnerships for lifelong learning and innovation across borders and thereby to develop the dynamics of regional co-operation.

The policies by which we – as regional governments - could support partnerships are among others:

- to involve public authorities, enterprises, and educational and research institutions in planning, decision-making and resource allocation
- to cover transaction and development costs when establishing and building a regional partnership
- to reduce or eliminate existing barriers that hinder participation
- to invest in necessary infrastructures
- to consider that relevant partners are not necessarily spatially or geographically concentrated

The most significant aspect of the research is that it has delivered results, which have immediately enabled two of the Regional Governments to start co-operating concretely in the area of the education of young talents and *brain* mobility in general.

Only if we – the regional Governments - join forces, we can get the best approaches and the most effective solutions to integrate lifelong learning and innovation policies. Instead of utilizing unflexible and mostly more bureaucratic centralised systems, the flexibility of the regional decentralised systems is a good breeding ground for innovation. There are wide perspectives in co-operation between our regions, if we manage to link the partnerships or clusters in our regions to each other.

To develop a trans-regional dimension in the field of lifelong learning and innovation EARLALL constitutes a very good basis. However, each one of us has to think of ways to

integrate the transregional co-operation into our domestic strategies to push development forward.

On the foundation of sustainable regional growth and in the context of global challenges, the EARLALL regions support their respective countries and the European Union. This line of thought lies at the heart of EARLALL: we try to advance Europe by strengthening our regions in the context of a transregional collaboration and we call on the European Commission to:

- further facilitate and promote the trans-regional work undertaken by networks like EARLALL
- support continued trans-regional collaboration in the field of innovation and lifelong learning building on the lessons learnt from the Reknoma project

*Ed by Mr Karsten Uno Petersen, Region of Southern Denmark, Chairman of the Committee for Regional Development*