



Brussels, 19 June 2000

POLICY INPUT SEMINARS ON LIFE LONG LEARNING

INFORMATION FOR PARTICIPANTS

Background

At the Lisbon European Council (23-24 March 2000) the EU set itself the strategic target of becoming the most competitive economy in the world capable of sustainable growth, with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. The EU is now in the process of developing a new appropriate policy mix which will combine investing in people with a transition to the knowledge based economy and a modernisation of the European social model. The development and promotion of a **comprehensive lifelong learning strategy** is a key element of this approach.

The European Commission will present, by the end of this year, a Memorandum on

Lifelong Learning for Active Citizenship in a Europe of Knowledge

Preparation of the Memorandum will include targeted consultation with experts and stakeholders, by means of a series of **policy input seminars** on different themes between May and September 2000. Some of these seminars are organised directly by DG EAC, others are being organised externally.

Lifelong Learning

LLL is defined as encompassing all purposeful learning activity, whether formal or informal, undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence.

LLL is understood as a new paradigm in education and training which is necessitated by the new reality of the knowledge based economy, in which one's chances in life are increasingly based on individual skills and competencies, which, in turn, have become perishable products against a background of accelerating developments in science, technology, commerce and the effects of globalisation.

At the same time, we must seize the occasion not just to follow, but to set the pace of changes. LLL must be proactive: the challenge is to redesign an inclusive society where appropriate balances are struck between equity and efficiency, between equal opportunities and excellent outcomes of education and training systems, whatever their new architectures may be.

Therefore, LLL for active citizenship entails enabling and encouraging citizens of all ages and circumstances continuously to renew their social, cultural and vocational resources so that they remain well prepared for active participation in society.

Purpose of the Memorandum on Life Long Learning

The main objectives of the Memorandum are to:

- ◆ provide **focus and impetus** to the European process for implementing LLL
- ◆ summarise **achievements** to date made in developing LLL in Member States and at EU level
- ◆ identify key **challenges and obstacles** in promoting and implementing LLL at various levels (citizen, local/regional, national, EU)
- ◆ propose points for **future action**, in terms of objectives, guidelines or benchmarks based on systematic and relevant indicators and information

The Memorandum will be drafted over the coming months; it will be presented to the Education Council in November 2000 and publicly launched in early December at a conference on LLL under the French Presidency of the European Union.

Contribution of the seminar series

The seminars are consultative in nature and will include experts and stakeholders in the broadest possible sense. Institutional partners such as the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions will also be invited.

The seminars will be organised around a number of key themes, either on the **objectives** of LLL (i.e. active citizenship, key qualifications), its **delivery** (non-formal pathways, transparency and accreditation), **instruments** (ICT, guidance and counselling, innovative pedagogy), **stakeholders** (teacher education, local/regional strategies, role of associations/NGOs) and, last but not least, the **provision of resources to make LLL a reality** (investing in human resources). The seminar themes are not mutually exclusive – issues will and should be taken up from different angles on different occasions.

Key questions for each seminar.

A specific thematic briefing note has been prepared for each seminar. However, each seminar will focus on two core questions:

- key challenges and obstacles for the theme at hand;
- examples of good practice and innovative solutions for the theme at hand.

What do we expect from participants?

- We believe this is a unique occasion for you to help design EU policy outlines. Be candid and clear, but also well prepared, in whatever messages or proposals you may wish to present.

- We therefore request **all** participants to send – preferably in advance – a **brief written response to the thematic briefing note** (details of where to send this material are shown further below). This response – **no more than three typewritten pages** – should **address the two core questions** shown immediately above, based on your knowledge and experience of the issues at hand. You are invited to strengthen your contribution both with research or statistical data and with examples of good practice or innovative solutions that have demonstrated their effectiveness. Please indicate key research, policy and practice documents that you consider important in this context.
- The Brussels seminars organised directly by DG EAC are intended to provide as much room for discussion as possible. Brief inputs to open debate on a particular topic are included, but we seek an active and focused exchange with all participants, not a series of extended individual presentations – whether of individual studies, policy measures or the institutions with whom participants are associated. You are therefore cordially invited to bring brochures, etc., which provide more detailed information of this kind for other participants.

We thank you for your participation and look forward to meeting you!

Written responses should be sent to: Maria-Nina.Lopes@cec.eu.int

Please do not forget to include your name, affiliation and the title of the seminar in which you are participating.

Please try to send your response in advance of the meeting date, so that copies can be made for all participants.