



UNION EUROPEENNE DE L'ARTISANAT ET DES PETITES ET MOYENNES ENTREPRISES  
EUROPÄISCHE UNION DES HANDWERKS UND DER KLEIN- UND MITTELBETRIEBE  
EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION OF CRAFT, SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED ENTERPRISES  
UNIONE EUROPEA DELL' ARTIGIANATO E DELLE PICCOLE E MEDIE IMPRESE

## **UEAPME Resolution on Vocational Education and Training and Mobility of apprentices and young people in initial VET**

Whereas:

1. On 12 November 2002, the Council approved a Resolution on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This was the basis for the declaration adopted by the Ministers responsible for vocational education and training (VET) of the EU Member States, the EFTA/EEA and candidate countries, and by the Commission and the European Social Partners at their meeting in Copenhagen on 29 and 30 November 2002, eventually becoming the strategy for improving the performance, quality and attractiveness of VET (Copenhagen process).

2. On 15 November 2006 following a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council, an action programme in the field of lifelong learning was established. The general objective of the Lifelong Learning Programme is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge-based society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion, while ensuring good protection of the environment for future generations. In particular, it aims to foster interchange, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community so that they become a world quality reference.

3. On 16 to 17 April 2007 the Final Declaration of the European Conference on Craft and Small Enterprises in Stuttgart, states the necessity to increase the level of the skills base available to crafts and small enterprises and to make these enterprises more attractive for young people. This can be achieved through the following actions:

- Improving the transparency and mutual recognition of qualifications in vocational education and training<sup>1</sup> while putting more emphasis on dual education systems such as apprenticeship

---

<sup>1</sup> In particular through the development and implementation of common tools such as the European Qualification Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

- Encouraging and facilitating mobility of young people within the crafts and small enterprises sector, for example through better use of the “Leonardo da Vinci” action within the Lifelong Learning Programme in particular the exchange of apprentices, facilitate and promote the transfer of knowledge and competence in crafts and small enterprises as well as to foster the cooperation between higher education institutions and small enterprises;

4. In October 2007 the European Social Partners delivered a joint analysis on the key challenges facing Europe’s labour markets. Their recommendations included to make the education and training systems better adapted to the need of the individual and the labour market, as well as promoting the parity of esteem and the permeability between vocational education and training and to other forms of education, including higher education.

5. The UEAPME position paper on the Draft 2008 joint progress report on the implementation of the “Education & Training 2010 work programme”, where UEAPME sharing the view of the European Commission recalls that particular attention must be paid to the issues of raising skill levels, lifelong learning strategies, and the knowledge triangle.

However, UEAPME would like to recall that the following three additional priorities are key for the success of the European economy and therefore need to be addressed urgently:

- Reducing the number of early school leavers
- Enhancing the attractiveness and quality of Vocational Education and Training
- Increasing and facilitating Mobility in education and training

6. Further, UEAPME set out in its concept paper of 8 January 2008 that a clear need appeared in the last years for a new qualitative step forward with the creation of a specific mobility programme dedicated to apprentices and young people in initial vocational training in order to make mobility a real and easily accessible option of individual training pathways in the framework of well-defined training policies.

7. The recommendations of the report by the High-Level Expert Group on « Making learning mobility an opportunity for all » outlined the need to strengthen significantly the mobility of young people in initial vocational education and training, both in terms of numbers, as well as in improving the conditions for mobility.

8. The current work of the European institutions on elaborating and adopting a European Small Business Act for which UEAPME has relentlessly called for, based on a solid legal foundation and established on the “think small first” principle, in view of creating a more favourable environment for small enterprises and craft enterprises and to give concrete answers to the different challenges they must face in the course of their lifecycle.

9. The joint declarations of 1st July 2008 of President Sarkozy, in his capacity as President of the Council of the EU and of President Barroso, President of the European Commission, for an «Erasmus for apprentices programme».

## **The General Assembly of UEAPME gathered in Tours on 30 October 2008,**

- asks the Ministers in charge of Education and VET that meet in Bordeaux on 26 November 2008 solemnly, to include in the Council conclusions the adoption of the Communiqué de Bordeaux priorities and notably the development of mobility of young people in alternating initial vocational education and training by strengthening and adapting the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP 2007-2013) in order to create a real «Erasmus for apprentices»;
- calls for the European Commission to keep up the efforts undertaken for several years to equip the current and future education and VET programmes for the period 2013-2020 with measures shaped to develop significantly the mobility of young people in alternating initial vocational education and training, including the apprentices.

These measures should notably ensure,

- to increase the visibility of the mobility programmes,
  - to valorise the participation of enterprises in the receiving and sending of young people for European mobility,
  - to accompany and valorise the formation of platforms between training providers in order to secure mobility based on sustainable partnerships,
  - to facilitate the recognition and validation of competences acquired during the mobility period.
- suggests to the European Commission to establish within the Lifelong Learning Programme Committee a working group commissioned with elaborating recommendations in view of increasing decisively the mobility of young people in alternating initial vocational education and training within the action programme comprising part of the current and successive Lifelong Learning Programme;
  - commits its members to communicate these requests and suggestions towards all stakeholders of young people and apprentices in initial vocational education and training in their respective country;
  - engages its members to promote and accompany, every time that this is possible, the actions contributing to develop the mobility of young people in initial vocational education and training, on a regional, national and European level.

30/10/08

\*\*\*