



DGIV/EDU/HE (2001) 33  
Or. Eng.  
Strasbourg, 5 February 2002

The Council of Europe and the Conference of the Presidents of University

**LIFELONG LEARNING FOR EQUITY AND SOCIAL COHESION  
A NEW CHALLENGE TO HIGHER EDUCATION**

**Final Conference**

Under the auspices of

Jack LANG  
Minister of National Education

and

Hubert VEDRINE  
Minister of Foreign Affairs

**DRAFT REPORT OF THE GENERAL RAPPORTEUR**  
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Paris, 15-17 novembre 2001  
Sorbonne, 47 rue des Ecoles 75005 Paris

**ITEM 10**

Directorate General IV: Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport  
(Directorate of School, Out-of-School and Higher Education/Higher Education and Research Division)

## Preface by the Secretariat

At its plenary session in March 1998 the Higher Education and Research Committee (CC-HER) adopted a project on "**Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education**" within the first pillar of its work programme "Policy and Practice for European Higher Education". The activity was launched at a symposium held in Budapest from 12 to 14 November 1998. A Working Party under the chairmanship of Professor Suzy Halimi (France) was set up to steer the activity.

The project<sup>1</sup> pursues political aims in a crucially important field for the future of the academic community in Europe: the challenge of lifelong learning. It is in line with the priorities defined by the Second Summit of Heads of State and Government of the Council of Europe in October 1997, which called for a "new strategy of social cohesion" within the framework of democratic security. The specific role of higher education in this strategy is to combat exclusion and marginalisation by ensuring equality of opportunity in education and meeting the new demands raised by society following the profound political, economic and social transformations which have taken place in Europe.

The project has addressed these issues in a number of case studies, expert reports, national papers, a Draft Recommendation and three specialised workshops on the following themes:

- Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society (Bornholm-Denmark, 1999)
- Application of new information and communication technologies in lifelong learning (Catania-Italy, 2000)
- Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning (Kranjska Gora- Slovenia, 2000)

The Final Conference on the project held from 15 to 17 November 2001 in Paris discussed the main outcomes of the projects and some additional aspects of the theme, namely

- Financing and partnerships for equity: lifelong learning for all
- The University and lifelong learning: contributions and challenges,
- National and European higher education policies in lifelong learning: lifelong learning and the European space for higher education

This document presents the general report from the meeting drafted by Professor John Brennan, General Rapporteur, member of the Working Party. The programme of the conference and the list of participants are given in appendices.

***The choice and the presentation of the facts, as well as the opinions expressed in the report are those of the author alone and do not commit the Working Party or the Secretariat.***

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<sup>1</sup> DGIV/EDU/HE (2001) 23, *Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education, Secretariat Report (Strasbourg, September 2001)*.

## Introduction

The final conference of the project *Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a new challenge to higher education* had three principal aims: (i) to take stock of and disseminate the results achieved within the project (the conclusions of its three thematic workshops and recommendations to the Council of Ministers), (ii) to discuss a number of themes related to possible follow-up activities, (iii) to identify partners for further co-operation and follow-up activities among international organisations, governments, higher education and research institutions, non-government organisations, employers, professional networks and other bodies involved in lifelong learning.

Three previous workshops in the frame of the project had dealt respectively with *Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society*; *Application of new information and communications technologies in lifelong learning*; *Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning*. Additional themes to be addressed at the final conference were (i) *Financing and partnership for equity: lifelong learning for all*, (ii) *The University and lifelong learning: contributions and challenges*, (iii) *National and European higher education policies in lifelong learning: lifelong learning and the European space for higher education*.

Thus, an ambitious and wide-ranging agenda had been set for the 170 conference participants who gathered at the Sorbonne from 15 to 17 November 2001. Virtually all European countries were represented. Participants included representatives of national governments and international organisations, university leaders, researchers and other experts in the field. Many present had attended one or more of the previous workshops and the conference afforded these participants a valuable opportunity to share their experiences and conclusions with a wider audience.

It was evident at the conference that the project had succeeded in defining the nature of the problems facing the further development of lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion. It had also succeeded in sharpening the focus on the kinds of actions that would be necessary if the goals of extended and widened access to lifelong learning were to be achieved. But many of these actions remained to be taken. Certainly, the results of these actions remained to be researched and evaluated. The conference and the project have established an important agenda of issues to be tackled by others. This report will attempt to record the main issues, the problems associated with them and the kinds of actions that will need to be taken if the problems are to be overcome.

The rest of this report is organised in five sections. First, some general issues which have arisen in the project and in the final conference will be recorded. The following section addresses the three main conference themes and also notes some points in connection with the main themes of the overall project. Conclusions from five parallel conference workshops are recorded in the next section. The final two sections attempt to summarise the problems that remain to be faced and the kinds of actions that will be needed.

## General issues

It has been clear throughout the project that the concept of lifelong learning means different things to different people. The definition adopted by the project is as follows:

“Lifelong learning is a continuous learning process enabling all individuals, from early childhood to old age, to acquire and update knowledge, skills and competences at different stages of their lives and in a variety of learning environments, both formal and non-formal, thus maximising their personal development, employment opportunities and encouraging their active participation in a democratic society.”

This is an inclusive definition. By subsuming within it the formal and the informal, it embraces all of the education provided by universities, not just that which is labelled adult education or some equivalent term. On this definition, the ‘challenge for higher education’ is to define or re-define a place for itself within this much larger world of lifelong learning. Higher education institutions are thus only one of the many contexts in which learning takes place. It was clear at the Paris conference that many people in universities still do not see it this way, regarding lifelong learning as a distinctive, albeit important, part of their institution’s activities rather than embracing the whole. This might not matter overmuch except that it could inhibit the universities from asking the crucial question about their contribution to lifelong learning, i.e. what is special about their contribution (compared with the contributions of others)?

It was clear at the conference that university representatives – if not always their colleagues at home – saw universities as having a central place in lifelong learning. Yet an eloquent address from the world of employment warned that eventually there might be no place for universities at all. But what of the learner? This takes us to the central focus of the project: lifelong learning for *equity and social cohesion*.

In a context of lifelong learning *for all*, it has to be recognised that very many learners would not consider universities or other higher education institutions as places where their learning needs could be met. For these people, universities represent a world from which they feel excluded. The important question which follows on from this is whether the grounds for their exclusion are legitimate or illegitimate. No-one at any of the workshops or the conference of the project had proposed that higher education institutions could or should provide all possible forms of lifelong learning to all possible types of learner. But what, returning to the previous question, is the special contribution which *higher education* should be making to lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion?

It was not always easy at the conference to distinguish goals of equity and social cohesion from other purposes of lifelong learning, for example lifelong learning ..... “for economic prosperity” .... “for improved productivity” ..... “for a competitive and dynamic society” ..... even “for increased human happiness”. These other important purposes of lifelong learning were repeatedly referred to by speakers, yet they did not represent the main focus of the project.

Throughout the project there have been times when the focus on ‘equity and social cohesion’ has, if not been forgotten, been given secondary emphasis to economic imperatives. This is not, perhaps, entirely surprising, in view of wider debates about globalisation and the knowledge society, both concepts which have been defined largely in economic terms. And yet there have also been some spectacular recent examples of the absence of equity and social cohesion in the world. In considering an action agenda for lifelong learning, the possibility of conflict between economic and social objectives should surely at least be considered and priorities clarified.

If there was sometimes a lack of consensus about the precise meaning to be attached to lifelong learning and differences in the emphasis given to equity and social cohesion issues, there was consensus about quite a lot of other things. These will be discussed in later sections of this report but we might summarise them by saying that

- there was consensus about the importance to be attached to lifelong learning – socially and economically, nationally and internationally;
- there was consensus about many of the practical measures that were needed to promote lifelong learning: these included:
  - credit systems
  - greater use of information and communication technologies
  - partnerships – within education and between education and other social and economic partners
  - more emphasis to be given to learning outcomes
  - better information and guidance to be available to potential learners
  - greater acceptance and recognition for work-based learning
  - quality assurance arrangements.

If there was a good degree of consensus about the measures which needed to be taken, there was less consensus and confidence about the extent to which the measures would actually work. Although there was acceptance that our empirical knowledge was quite limited, the conference did identify some major obstacles to successful implementation. Most of these had to do with people: potential learners who did not want to learn, who did not perceive any need, who had other priorities; university professors who attached little importance to teaching, who were ill-prepared and disinclined to teach new kinds of things to new kinds of student. As someone from the floor of the conference remarked: public policy is a blunt instrument of change. Thus, for all the progress that has been made in enacting legislation, in establishing structures and procedures, there remains much to be done in raising awareness and in changing attitudes and values.

## **Themes**

### ***Financing and partnerships for equity: lifelong learning for all***

A round table was devoted to the topic. Most speakers agreed that the question of ‘who pays?’ was inextricably linked to the question of ‘who benefits?’ According to

the answer to the latter question – society? the economy? individuals? – should come, at least in part, the answer to the former. However, the problem with rate of return analysis – alluded to by several speakers – is that it places the focus on the economic, whether at societal, enterprise or individual level. While it is probably true that concepts of equity and social cohesion can also be reduced to questions of economic rates of return, it is surely the case that important ideas and values are lost in so doing.

Financing was not, however, only about *who* should pay. As several contributors pointed out, the size of the costs of lifelong learning were equally as important as the question of who should pay them. Costs would inevitably rise as more people spent more time as ‘learners’. Such rises could be offset to some degree by reducing unit costs. Increased use of information and communications technologies could help reduce unit costs, if applied in appropriate circumstances and on a sufficiently large scale. Shorter periods of study could also provide opportunities for reducing costs. But, in considering these and other strategies, higher education institutions needed all the time to remember that they were part of an increasingly competitive marketplace. New learning opportunities developed within firms or in the private sector could bypass the universities if the latter were perceived as insufficiently relevant or price competitive.

A connected point was whether state funding of lifelong learning should be directed to institutional providers or to consumers (a term, disliked by some, for potential students). Perhaps unsurprisingly, most university leaders seemed to favour the funding of institutions. However, those outside higher education clearly worried about whether universities would be sufficiently responsive to ‘consumer requirements’ unless consumers were empowered to purchase their own learning. The equity argument might seem to favour the funding of students: ensuring greater equity in ‘purchasing power’ to widen access to learning opportunities. Against this, it can be pointed out that talk of consumers inevitably leads to an emphasis on individual rather than social benefits.

There was rather more consensus about the value of partnerships, although insofar as this frequently implied partnerships between higher education and employers, the economic rather than the wider social aspects tended to be emphasised as a result. As one speaker stressed, universities needed to be responsive to all social needs, not only the economic. A wider conception of partnerships was needed and this was likely to imply a need for greater openness and flexibility on the part of universities and other higher education institutions.

The discussion on financing and partnerships was wide-ranging but did not always focus on the project themes of equity and social cohesion. As a consequence, it did not really consider the possibility of conflict between social and economic purposes and benefits. And yet, depending on how lifelong learning opportunities are funded, they may serve to pile further advantages on the already advantaged, thereby contributing to the opposite of the goals of equity and social cohesion.

### *The universities and lifelong learning: contributions and challenges*

In his presentation, Guy Haug reported on the results of a survey of universities undertaken by the European Association of Universities (EAU). The survey had investigated the institutional approaches taken to lifelong learning and had categorised the universities into three basic types. In the first type, lifelong learning was separate and seen as marginal to the main businesses of the university. In the second type, lifelong learning was regarded as one of three equal 'pillars of activity' along with research and education (of conventional students straight from school). But in the third type, lifelong learning was seen as the 'basic concept' of the university.

The conference was not told enough details of the survey to know how many institutions fell within each type, what variations existed between countries, and what constituted lifelong learning within the different types of institution. One might speculate, however, that many of Europe's oldest and most distinguished universities might fall within the first type and that institutions in the third type would be few in number and lacking in relative prestige.

The equity and social cohesion agenda certainly directs attention towards the differences in status attached to different kinds of lifelong learning and to different kinds of lifelong learner. These are matters which touch upon the deep culture and values of higher education institutions. It is an area where change is difficult to achieve although institutional leaders and governments can do something through the rewards and incentives they attach to different kinds of university activity.

Without cultural change within higher education, the various practical measures which aim to promote lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion are likely to have disappointing results. Such measures are nevertheless important and include things like:

- greater openness and flexibility to things like work-based learning and alternative qualifications;
- semesterisation and modularisation;
- greater numbers of entry and exit points;
- shorter courses taught at times convenient to older students;
- use of information and communication technologies;
- diploma recognition based on learning outcomes rather than length of study period.

Most of the above measures seek to address aspects of the general problem that higher education structures and conventions are too rigid to accommodate people with different backgrounds and needs. However, there is the additional issue, scarcely touched on in the conference, of the curriculum. What are the implications for the university curriculum of lifelong learning for equity and social cohesion? Are they the same as for lifelong learning for economic prosperity? The conference was unfortunately silent on the answers to these questions.

European higher education institutions differ from one another in all sorts of ways. A practice that would be quite impossible to imagine in one university might have been

commonplace in another one for many years. Things that seem radical and innovative in one institution can be regarded as routine and traditional in another. A greater recognition of the diversity of higher education institutions – both within and between individual countries – could provide opportunities for the sharing of experiences and good practice and, in so doing, go some way towards undermining the conservatism of at least some parts of the academic profession.

***National and European higher education policies in lifelong learning: lifelong learning and the European space for higher education***

It was clear that the Bologna process was giving an impetus to changes – in recognition, quality assurance, credit systems, emphasis on learning outcomes – that could extend opportunities for all students. From the European Commission, Michel Jouve spoke of the objectives of a ‘European area’ for lifelong learning as being the promotion of prosperity, social cohesion and tolerance. It would permit increased levels of mobility among European citizens. The overall strategy was to make educational systems more open and flexible. This would require more partnerships, more attention to the needs of learners, strengthening the motivation of learners, more investment and funding, more quality assurance. Practical actions would need to be taken to ensure accreditation of formal and non-formal certificates; greater use of the European Credit Transfer Scheme (ECTS); minimum quality levels; better information, advice and guidance; regional networks to spread good practice; and initiatives on basic skills.

The Bologna process was stimulating change at national levels and it was here that issues of equity and social cohesion needed to be addressed. With the important exception of immigrants and refugees, the least advantaged students were also amongst the least mobile. For such students, the idea of a ‘European space’ for education was a fairly abstract notion. These students needed to have access to flexible learning opportunities in their local community.

Examples of national policies and practices were provided from Denmark and Slovenia. Issues of equity and social cohesion were addressed in the context of the needs of refugees and immigrants. Hans Peter Jensen spelt out the consequences of not addressing these needs: segregated societies, organised crime, the welfare state at risk, democratic and liberal values undermined. On the other hand, the potential benefits to society of enabling refugees and immigrants to use and develop their competencies were considerable.

What did all of this imply for universities? At minimum, it was suggested that universities must be *liberal* in their evaluation of the merits and achievements of potential students. And second, there was a challenge to higher education staff to develop courses that would be culturally relevant, not just to immigrants, but to all minority groups and to all sectors of society.

Although European level developments were attracting a lot of attention, several participants emphasised that it was the strategies being pursued at national levels that would ultimately be most important. As Kristina Lutz from ESIB remarked to the conference, Bologna provided a vision rather than solutions. Once again, the



importance of sharing information and examples of good practice was apparent to achieving workable solutions at national and institutional levels.

### **The project's three main themes**

Throughout the conference, opportunities were taken to revisit the project's three main themes, each of which had been the subject of a previous workshop. Opportunities were also provided in a series of parallel workshops at the conference to allow exploration of related issues. Brief summaries on each of these is provided below. First, the project themes:

#### ***Meeting the needs of students in a changing society***

“Students are people who study. Students are not consumers.” Kristina Lutz from ESIB was forthright on this point. Others were less certain. ‘Student’, ‘learner’, ‘consumer’: each term carries with it a set of values and assumptions. If the conference did not really unpack the terminology, it did nevertheless conclude that it was necessary for higher education institutions to know and understand better what their students (and their potential students) wanted. If this was consumerist, so be it. It was also necessary to remember that students are very diverse, not just in terms of age and backgrounds, but in terms of aspirations and motivations. Although some participants spoke of ‘unmotivated students’, it might be more accurate to talk of students whose motivations did not match the expectations of some higher education teachers. In such cases, it was vital to find out what the students’ motivations actually were, and to set about trying to meet them.

A major concern of the final conference was with the needs of students who were migrants or refugees. All were agreed that higher education had a responsibility to do something, and to do it urgently. Actions that could and should be taken included the development of special programmes and the adoption of liberal admission procedures to existing programmes. Concerning the latter, whenever possible emphasis should be placed on the assessment of competences rather than requirements for documented credit hours.

The point about the assessment of competences was mentioned at several points during the conference. Its radical implications should not be overlooked. It implies that what is important is what people actually know and can do (learning outcomes) rather than how much and how long people have studied. If this approach were to be adopted for all students in higher education, it would represent a major change in the relationship of higher education to society. It would mark a significant step towards greater equity.

#### ***The application of new information and communications technologies in lifelong learning***

The potential benefits and the possible dangers of new technologies were referred to several times during the conference. On the positive side, the appropriate use of new technologies could help drive down average costs and so make higher education more

affordable, whoever was paying. They could also help make the learning process more successful, reducing the risks of failure and non-completion. Relatedly, they could also help reduce the effects of cultural biases in the teaching and learning process, by rendering less visible assumptions based on gender, social class or ethnicity.

The dangers, however, were that restricted access to appropriate technologies could represent another source of inequity. Governments, it was suggested, should make provisions for access to information and communication technologies in various public places. But the case could also be made that higher education institutions also had responsibilities to ensure that all their students had access to necessary technologies. This should also include students who were remote from campus.

### ***Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning***

The need for greater flexibility and openness in structures and qualifications has already been referred to in this report. In particular, the conference placed emphasis on the need for a better articulation between formal and informal experiences of lifelong learning. It was recognised that universities had no monopoly over learning. In fact, universities had a responsibility to recognise learning which had taken place elsewhere. Having recognised it, they should accept its legitimacy and exploit its potential for further learning.

Many of the necessary mechanisms to achieve this are now known and accepted, at least formally. They include credit transfer arrangements, assessment of prior experiential learning, greater use and assessment of work-based learning. More difficult is ensuring that these mechanisms are fully utilised. A mixture of conservatism among the academic profession and lack of awareness among potential students may be preventing the full benefits of these mechanisms from being achieved. The problem of conservative professors is ultimately one for academic leadership, not least at the most prestigious institutions. Incentive and reward schemes need to be devised which encourage staff to extend access rather than restrict it. The responsibility for raising general public awareness about flexible and open learning opportunities might rest predominantly with governments, although governments will need to be assured that higher education will genuinely act on the new structures and mechanisms that have been put in place.

### ***Conference workshops***

The first of the workshops concentrated on *the role of universities in social cohesion*. The workshop focused on the plight of immigrants and refugees, important for many countries. Problems faced by these groups included a lack of integration with the labour market, high drop-out rates from schools, insufficient opportunities for vocational training, absence of documentation or problems in validating documentation, lack of awareness of social codes, susceptibility to organised crime. Measures that were needed included more job-based practical training, counselling services for minority group students, language and social skills training. The workshop made five recommendations for a greater role from higher education :

- (i) more flexibility in recruitment, including in the assessment of language skills and work experience,
- (ii) the provision of introductory programmes which could provide an access route to mainstream higher education,
- (iii) special training of teachers,
- (iv) special programmes directed towards awareness raising among the general public,
- (v) research into the processes and problems of integration.

The second conference workshop addressed the issue of *reforms in higher education and lifelong learning*. The workshop heard an Italian case study which emphasised the need for flexible, dedicated resources to promote credit systems, employability and internationalisation. It also identified a whole series of problems that had to be addressed:

- how to raise awareness of governments?
- how to build consortia, especially with small to medium sized enterprises?
- how to ensure appropriate recognition of qualifications?
- how to select and train teachers?
- how to certificate competences from informal learning?
- how to balance research and teaching and how to evaluate the latter?

*Accreditation of work-based learning* was the subject of the third conference workshop. In common with several other countries, France had recently initiated national reforms which included provision for the greater recognition of work-based learning. In the French case, this allowed the establishment of panels to determine both admissions and exemptions based on work-based learning. There was also more advice and guidance available and a directory of specialists who could be called upon to assess work-based learning. The problem was that not enough people were using the new opportunities. Experiences from other countries emphasised the importance of avoiding any sense of 'second-class' diplomas for work-based learning, the need for transparency in recognition processes and the need for accreditation to be recognised by society as a whole.

The fourth conference workshops dealt with *Lifelong learning and distance education*. From an international perspective, distance education could no longer be viewed as a new phenomenon, even if countries differed in the progress that had been made in exploiting its potential benefits. These included greater diversity, flexibility and enhanced quality. The workshop also emphasised that there was no standard model for providing distance education and that it was important to protect cultural diversity.

*Lifelong learning and the civil society* was the subject of the fifth conference workshop. Noting that lifelong learning was not a new phenomenon, the workshop recognised the danger that unequal access to education would create social *exclusion*. The benefits to civil society of reversing this association were considerable, for example in the reduction of crime or in more thriving community arts. Examples of each of the above were discussed. The workshop also advocated more opportunities for practitioners and researchers to interact and to share experiences.

### **Continuing problems and the agenda for research**

The conference identified plenty of problems for the attention of the various national and international organisations that were present. In his presentation to the session on *Lifelong learning and the European higher education area*, Guy Haug listed five major problem areas, valid across most parts of Europe. These were:

- how to analyse ‘new demand’ (and, we might add, how to convert ‘need’ into ‘demand’)
- why people drop-out of education and formal learning
- how to stimulate innovation in teaching and learning appropriate to the needs of lifelong learning
- how to assess and recognise learning, wherever it has occurred
- how to stimulate partnerships within the ‘learning society’
- how to increase the societal value of lifelong learning
- how to place the learner at the ‘centre’ of debates and developments in lifelong learning.

Underlying many of these problems was the more general problem of stimulating cultural change, both within higher education institutions and in the wider society. While accepting the importance of legislation as a necessary pre-requisite for change, its limitations in actually bringing such change about were fully recognised.

An agenda for future research in lifelong learning was presented to the conference by Mike Osborne. He identified five main research themes as follows:

- analysing the impact of formal and informal routes to lifelong learning
- the implications of changes in industry and the economy for learning
- changing organisational structures to promote lifelong learning
- the process and experience of lifelong learning
- new technology and learning

Other themes included the impact of changing political structures, teaching and learning in post-compulsory education, adult literacy, academic literacy, interdisciplinary research.

Given the claimed centrality of lifelong learning to the needs of the new ‘knowledge society’, it is deeply ironic to realise how large are the knowledge gaps about lifelong learning itself. Perhaps the time has come when exhortation should be replaced by analysis. Set against the many statements about what *should* be done, our knowledge about what *is* being done and about what have been the consequences of doing it looks depressingly meagre.

## Conclusion

At the end of the project, *Lifelong Learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education*, a fair degree of consensus has been achieved about the importance of lifelong learning and about the kinds of strategies that governments and higher education institutions can take to foster it. Implementation is another matter. The final conference discussed many obstacles to effective implementation, not least the need for radical change within higher education institutions. Although true, it is true of some institutions more than others. There is much diversity within European higher education. Many of the developments called for during the conference, and recorded in this report, already exist in some places. They need to be extended, to become normal rather than exceptional, but the successes of the few demonstrate that they can be achieved.

By placing its emphasis on lifelong learning for *equity and social cohesion* rather than the more frequently emphasised needs of employment and the economy, the results of this project may be able to tap some of the reserves of idealism that exist within European universities. In attempting to ensure that issues of equity and social cohesion are given continuing prominence, those who work in higher education should remember that universities cannot be neutral on this matter. If we are not 'for equity and social cohesion', then we are necessarily for their opposite.

## **APPENDIX 1 - PROGRAMME**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES OF THE CONFERENCE**

- To take stock of and disseminate the results achieved within the project, namely the conclusions from its three thematic workshops and the recommendations submitted to the Committee of Ministers for adoption.
- To discuss a number of themes related to possible follow-up activities, namely:
  - **Financing and partnerships for equity: lifelong learning for all,**
  - **The University and lifelong learning: contributions and challenges,**
  - **National and European higher education policies in lifelong learning; lifelong learning and the European space of higher education.**
- To identify partners for further cooperation and follow-up activities among international organizations, governments, higher education and research institutions, non-government organisations, employers, professional networks and other bodies involved in lifelong learning.

### **THEMES**

#### **Stocktaking**

The discussions should be based on the general reports/publications of the proceedings of the workshops carried out within the project:

- *Meeting the needs of all students in a changing society*  
(Analysis of the demand of a diversified public and the response to the concrete needs, stimulating new demands, monitoring of access, participation, student progress, and dropout).
- *Application of new information and communication technologies in lifelong learning*  
(Impact of new teaching and learning methods with special emphasis on the introduction of new cost-effective information technologies, student/teacher, teacher/teacher and student/student relationships in a new environment).
- *Structures and qualifications in lifelong learning*  
(Adaptation of course structures and qualifications, modularisation, elaboration of coherent study programmes, quality assurance and accreditation, evaluation and recognition of credentials gained both through formal and non-formal learning).

### **Additional themes**

- **Financing and partnerships for equity: lifelong learning for all**  
(funding policies in lifelong learning including measures for underrepresented groups: minorities, displaced persons, refugees, unemployed, drop-outs and other socially excluded groups).
- **The University and lifelong learning: contributions and challenges**  
(the learners' perspective, the teachers' perspective, the University and its partners).
- **National and European higher education policies in lifelong learning: lifelong learning and the European space for higher education**  
(frameworks of structures and qualifications, mobility, employability, lifelong learning in the context of the Bologna Declaration).

### **BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

- Three publications on the 3 workshops
- An activity report on the project (Secretariat)
- Compendium of national reports "Financing of lifelong learning"

### **PARTICIPANTS**

- senior officials and other representatives of the host country;
- General Rapporteur – Professor John Brennan, Director of the Centre for Higher Education Research and Information, the Open University (United Kingdom);
- keynote speakers – experts to give presentations on the main subthemes included in the project;
- resource persons – one member of the Steering Group per working session to serve as a moderator of the discussions carried out by each working group and one rapporteur per working session to sum up the main issues ?;
- Council of Europe member states experts – by nomination;
- policy makers/funders;
- representatives from partner institutions;
- representatives of employers;
- representatives of the Congress of Local and Regional Authorities in Europe;
- observers in the CC-HER : EU, UNESCO, OECD, EUA, ESIB etc;
- Council of Europe representatives.

### **EXPECTED OUTCOMES**

- A General Report
- Input for the final report on the project and for subsequent activities
- Publications

### **ORGANISATION OF THE CONTENTS OF THE DEBATES**

**First day:** Registration, opening sessions, stocktaking sessions.

The discussions will focus on the main results of the Council of Europe's project and on the challenges faced by higher education institutions.

**Second day:** Additional topics/themes discussed in a round table/plenary sessions/parallel workshops.

- The round table will review national funding policies in lifelong learning with a particular attention to measures.
- National and European policies in lifelong learning also in the context of the Bologna Declaration will be reviewed in two plenary sessions.
- Five workshops carried out in parallel will focus on selected topics related to the main theme of the project:
  - two workshops will discuss the mission of the university in terms of social cohesion and its contribution to civil society;
  - two workshops based on case studies/examples of good practice will focus on higher education reforms and lifelong learning;
  - one workshop will discuss the role of open and distance education in lifelong learning.

**Third day:** Reports from the working sessions, proposals/recommendations for further follow-up/implementation activities, conclusions from the general rapporteur, closing session.



## Timetable

**Thursday, 15 November 2001 – 17 rue de la Sorbonne**

12h30 – 14h00	<b>Registration</b> ( <i>Salle des Autorités</i> )
14h00 – 14h45	<p><b>Opening session</b> (<i>Amphithéâtre Louis Liard</i>)</p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Per Nyborg, Chair of the Higher Education and Research Committee of the Council of Europe (CC-HER)</p> <p><b>Opening addresses by:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Per Nyborg, Chair of the CC-HER</li> <li>• Bendik Rugaas, Director General, DGIV- Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Council of Europe</li> <li>• Bernard Belloc, President of the Conference of the Presidents of French Universities</li> <li>• Jean-Pierre Boyer, Secretary General of the French National Commission for UNESCO</li> <li>• Yves Saint Geours, Deputy Director of the Directorate General for International Co-operation and Development, Ministry of Foreign Affairs</li> <li>• Jack Lang, Minister of National Education, represented by Thierry Simon, DRIC- Ministry of National Education</li> </ul>
14h45 – 15h30	<p><b>Keynote address</b></p> <p>Pedro Lourtie, <i>Deputy Minister of Education</i> (Portugal)</p>
15h30 – 16h00	Coffee break
16h00 – 18h00	<p><b>Plenary Session</b></p> <p><i>Lifelong learning and higher education</i></p> <p><b>Chair:</b> Ms. Baiba Rivza, Chairperson of the Council of Higher Education (Latvia)</p> <p>I. Presentation of the major results of the CC-HER Project on “<i>Lifelong learning for Equity and Social Cohesion: a New Challenge to Higher Education</i>”</p> <p>Speaker: Suzy Halimi, <i>Chair of the Working Party of the CC-HER’s project</i></p>

Discussion

*II. Lifelong learning as a challenge to higher education institutions*

Speakers:

- François Petit (France): *Lifelong learning as a challenge for French universities*
- Evangelos Livieratos (Greece): *Lifelong learning: a challenge for the university teacher*
- Michael Osborne (United Kingdom): *The role of research in lifelong learning*

Discussion

19h00

Free evening

<b>Friday, 16 November 2001- 47 rue des Ecoles</b>
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09h00 – 09h30

*Grand salon de la Sorbonne*

09h30 – 11h00

**Round table**

*Financing and partnerships for equity: lifelong learning for all*

**Resource persons :**

- Francis Mer, *Pdg d'USINOR*
- Eric Froment, *President of the EUA*
- Mr. Gregory Wurzburg ( *OECD*)
- Key Mc Keogh (Ireland)
- Istvan Szabo (Hungary)
- Vincent Merle, *Directeur de Cabinet de Nicole Péry, Secrétariat d'Etat aux Droits des Femmes et de la Formation professionnelle*

**Moderated by:** Antoine Reverchon from the newspaper “*Le Monde*”

Discussion

11h00 – 11h30

Coffee break

11h30 – 13h00

**Plenary session***National and European policies in lifelong learning*

**Chairs:** Giuseppe Ronsisvalle, *University of Catania* (Italy) and Claude Alquié, *University Paris VI* (France)

Speakers:

- Michel Jouve (*European Commission*): *Presentation of the European Commission's Memorandum on Lifelong learning*
- Hans Peter Jensen (Denmark): *Lifelong learning policies in the Nordic countries*
- Majda Širok (Slovenia): *Lifelong learning policies in Slovenia*

Discussion

13h00 – 14h30

Buffet lunch hosted by the Rector, René Blanchet

14h30 – 16h00

**Workshops on lifelong learning policies and challenges**

Workshops held in parallel

1. **Workshop 1 : Salle Gréard (Working language: English)**

*“The role of the University in social inclusion”***Moderator:** Ina Grieb (Germany)**Rapporteur:** Boris Galabov (Bulgaria)

2. **Workshop 2 : Salle des Commissions (Working language: English)**

*“Reforms in higher education and lifelong learning”*

**Moderator:** Giuseppe Ronsisvalle (Italy) *“The higher education reform in Italy in a lifelong learning perspective”*

**Rapporteur :** Anna Grabowska (Poland)

3. **Workshop 3: Salle Bourjac ( Working language: French)**

*“Accreditation of work-based learning”***Moderator:** Michel Feutrie (France)**Rapporteur:** Jean-Pierre Jallade (France)

**Speakers:** Jean-Michel Hotyat, *Higher Education Directorate, Ministry of National Education (France)*, Joseph Joly, *Director of Continuing Education, Université Louis Pasteur, Strasbourg*

- 4. Workshop 4: *Grand Salon* (Working languages: English and French - interpretation available)**  
*"Lifelong learning and distance education"* (organised by the French National Commission for UNESCO)

**Chair:** Abdul Waheed Khan, *Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information (UNESCO)*

**Rapporteur:** Max Egly (France)  
**With the participation of :** Suzy Halimi (France), Louise Bertrand (Canada), José Vicente Fernandez (Spain), Vladimir Sokolov (Russian Federation), Anna Thorn Baldursdottir (Iceland), Max van der Kamp (Netherlands), Grazyna Wieczorkowska Nejtard (Poland), Arvid Löfberg (Sweden), Mike Osborne (UK), Francis A. Steier (World Bank)

- 5. Workshop 5: *Salle des Actes* ( Working language: French)**  
*"Lifelong learning and the civil society"*

**Moderator:** Gabriel Cohn-Bendit (France)  
**Rapporteur:** Jacqueline Oumer (France)  
**Speakers :** Pierre Léna (Association « La Main à la Pâte), Loïc Chevrant-Breton (Association « Art et Développement »), Jean-Marie Petitclerc (Association La Valdaco), Pierre-Marie Mesnier (Président du réseau DHEPS – Diplôme des hautes études en pratiques sociales)

16h00 – 16h30 Coffee break

**16h30 – 18h00 Plenary session (*Grand Salon*)**

*Lifelong learning and the European higher education area*

**Chair:** Ms. Anita Lehtikoinen, *Ministry of Education (Finland)*

**Speakers:**

- Guy Haug (*European Commission*)
- Véra Štastná, *Ministry of Education (Czech Republic)*
- Kristina Lutz (*ESIB*)
- Pierre Legrand, *First Vice-President - Conférence des écoles de formation d'ingénieurs (France)*

19h00 Conference dinner offered by the Regional Council of Ile de France  
Welcome address by Josiane Schiavi, Vice-President of the Regional Council, in charge of Higher Education

**Saturday, 17 November 2001- 47 rue des Ecoles**

***Grand Salon de la Sorbonne***

9h00 – 10h30 **Plenary session: reports from the workshops**  
**Chair:** Emil Paun, *Director General of Continuing Education, Ministry of Education and Research (Romania)*

**Speakers:** the rapporteurs of the workshops

Presentation and general discussions on the results from the workshops

Discussion

10h30 – 11h00 Coffee break

11h00 – 12h00 **Closing session**

**Chair:** Alain Gaudemer, *Head of European Affairs at the Conference of Presidents of French Universities (France)*

**Concluding remarks** by John Brennan, General Rapporteur  
Adoption of the conclusions of the Conference

around 12h30 **Closing of the conference:**

- Bendik Rugaas, *Director General, DGIV- Education, Culture and Heritage, Youth and Sport, Council of Europe*
- Jean-Luc Mélenchon, *Ministre Responsable for Professional Education (France)*

around 13h00 Closing cocktail

**This Conference of the Council of Europe has been organised with the generous support of:**

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Musée national d'Histoire naturelle

Chambre de commerce et d'industrie de Paris

Conseil Régional d'Ile de France

Rectorat de Paris

Strasbourg, 19 November/novembre 2001

The Council of Europe and the Conference of the Presidents of University  
Le Conseil de l'Europe et la Conférence des Présidents d'Université

**LIFELONG LEARNING**  
**FOR EQUITY AND SOCIAL COHESION: A NEW CHALLENGE TO HIGHER EDUCATION**  
**L'EDUCATION TOUT AU LONG DE LA VIE**  
**AU SERVICE DE L'EQUITE ET DE LA COHESION SOCIALE: UN NOUVEAU DEFI**  
**A L'ENSEIGNEMENT SUPERIEUR**

**Final Conference/Conférence finale**

Under the auspices of/sous le haut patronage de

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Hubert VEDRINE  
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