



Restructuring forum: Sectors' New Skills for New Jobs



Brussels, 7 and 8 December 2009

Hotel Crowne Plaza Brussels – Le Palace, Rue Gineste, 3

The renewed Lisbon Strategy and the European Employment Strategy stress the importance of anticipating skill needs better and of reducing labour-market mismatches. More recently, the Commission's June Communication "A Shared Commitment for Employment"¹ underlined the priority need to upgrade skills and to match labour market needs. Globalisation, technological change, the shift to a low-carbon economy and demographic developments pose huge challenges that hold both risks and opportunities.

The severity of the current economic crisis calls for stronger policies to improve the employability of the workforce. If Europe's workers are to be capable of adapting to and grasping future opportunities when growth picks up, we need to develop tools to make it easier to anticipate change and manage it positively. In December 2008, following the request by the Spring European Council, the Commission launched the *New Skills for new jobs* initiative², the objectives of which include improving the capacity to anticipate and match labour and market skill needs in the EU. To do so, actions are foreseen to improve knowledge on future skills requirements including at sectoral level.

Comprehensive analysis of skills needs in 18 sectors

As part of the *New Skills for New Jobs* initiative, the Commission has recently published a series of 18 sector-based studies that look at emerging and future skill needs up to 2020 (<http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=784&langId=en>). The results of these studies have been discussed and validated by panels of experts from industry, academia and sector organisations including workers and employers' representatives with expertise in the sector and in skills. These results and recommendations form a guide to the attention of European, national and regional actors enabling actors to bring and adapt such recommendations to their level by launching actions to promote the strategic management of human resources and to foster stronger synergies between innovation, skills and jobs.

Stronger European cooperation in the field of skills anticipation

The results stress the need to develop closer collaboration between stakeholders active in skills anticipation, which include sectors' representatives and education and training systems. At national level these issues are already tackled through sector-level bodies which bring together business, the social partners and the authorities with the shared aim of gaining an insight into likely developments in employment and skill needs and of assisting policy-making.

Amongst the tools the Commission is currently exploring to reinforce European cooperation in skills anticipation, the Commission has launched beginning of this year the realisation of a study to analyse the feasibility and possibility of establishing sectoral councils on

¹ COM(2009) 257 final

² COM(2008) 868 final.



employment and skills at EU level. The objective of this analysis is to evaluate the value-added and the need for stronger cooperation at European level between national/regional sector skills councils.

Objectives of the forum

The first objective of the forum, organised by the European Commission in cooperation with the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC) and the Committee of the Regions, is to present, promote and discuss these 18 sectoral studies. Day One (*Prepare for the jobs and skills of the future*) will set the scene for discussion and debate between the stakeholders on the role of skills needs anticipation in employment, education and training policy making and practices, and on how and by whom this should be done. The main results of the 18 studies will be presented, highlighting the common challenges, the differences and the relative position of the different sectors under review in relation with competences and skills requirements. Workshops will offer the opportunity for participants to listen to the presentations of good practices for specific sectors and discuss further some of the recommendations laid down in the studies. Workshops have been divided by thematic covered in the studies' recommendations. For each workshop, a transversal view of the theme chosen will be presented across all sectors followed by presentations of two concrete cases of implementation of those recommendations by the actors themselves for two specific sectors.

A second objective will be to launch a discussion on how to reinforce and promote stronger collaboration at European level in the field of skills anticipation, focussing on the sectoral approach. To this end, the results of the feasibility study on the establishment of sectoral councils on employment and skills at European level will be presented during the forum, followed by the Canadian experience of skills councils and the exploratory opinion from the EESC on the European skills councils.

This forum will serve as a platform for the exchange and discussion of good practice and instruments for dealing with skills identification at sector level.

It will bring together all the parties involved in managing change and anticipating skills, namely representatives of the European institutions, national and regional governments, cross-industry and sectoral social partners, education and vocational providers, academic experts, promoters of good practice, chambers of commerce and industry, regional development agencies, and agencies involved in the promotion of skills development.