

**Position by CEC European Managers – February 2016**

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**QUESTIONS**

**General framework/Upskilling adults**

1. Do social partners agree with the relevance of the issues and priorities identified?

*We agree with the description of the situation given in the document, and we insist on the links between the issue of skills in Europe and professional mobility. For an highly-mobile category like ours, fostering mobility at European level can prove effective in achieving several objectives: not only can it work as a stabilizer, reducing at the same time unemployment in some regions and labour shortages in others, but encouraging people to live and work in a different European country than the one of origin can contribute significantly to the reinforcement of that feeling of common European "belonging" which, we believe, is still missing in far too many cases.*

2. Which solutions to the issues identified would social partners propose?

3. In particular, given poor employment and social prospects for the low-skilled, what can be done at European level to help them attain higher levels of skills and qualifications?

*We believe the solution can lie in the improvement of the measures and tools specifically designed for those who are in employment. This can happen via "traditional" educational systems, based on school-like solutions, but more should be done to encourage the diffusion of non-school setting.*

*But at the same time, we should also consider the issue of skills and the level of preparedness of our societies from the perspective of the highly-skilled: if on the one hand it is important to make sure that all European citizens (irrespective of whether they are workers or not) are equipped with basic skills and can make use of structures that continuously "update" such skills, on the other hand Europe's future growth paths are characterized by an increasingly higher percentage of highly skilled workers. And these workers (with managers being a significant part of this specific group) need continuous training, to keep up with the technological development and the corresponding evolution of the market. This is even truer if we look at the current retirement trends: workers will stay longer on the job, and the skills acquired through education and professional experience might become rapidly outdated in a quickly-evolving professional technological environment.*

4. What can be done to better understand labour market needs and trends, including at regional/local level?

*It is necessary to ensure real-time communication between companies and employers' organizations (even at local and/or sectoral level) and PES and other public authorities responsible for the functioning of the labour market, to make it possible for the latter to react rapidly to the need of production.*

5. In which ways can the social partners contribute to and support the different initiatives?

*With their on-the-field knowledge of the needs of the economy, social partners need to be integrated in those interaction mechanisms described above.*

### **EQF**

6. Do social partners agree with the relevance of the issues and priorities identified?

*Yes, we do.*

7. What obstacles are faced by organisations (employers, education institutions, etc.) when trying to evaluate qualifications from other countries?

- a) Specific to qualifications from EU countries
- b) Specific to qualifications from Non-EU countries

*In their everyday professional activities, the people we represent are asked to deal with recruitment. And in order to do so effectively, we believe that it is necessary to give more prominence to the skills acquired outside the traditional educational paths. Competences acquired through informal learning can be as effective, important and “prized” by companies as, and it would be beneficial if a system for quick documentation and recognition of such skills were put in place.*

8. What are the difficulties – if any – caused by specific items when trying to evaluate qualifications from other countries, including:

- a) Learning outcomes
- b) Work load (credit, hours, duration)
- c) Comparability of qualification types
- d) Authenticity of qualifications from other countries

*We don't have sufficient experience and knowledge to reply to this question.*

9. What enablers assist organisations (employers, education institutions etc.) when trying to evaluate qualifications from other countries (useful tools, services, frameworks, etc. including NQFS and the EQF)?

*We don't have sufficient experience and knowledge to reply to this question.*

10. In which ways can the social partners contribute to and support the initiative?

### **Better tools and services/Europass**

11. Do social partners agree with the relevance of the issues and priorities identified, taking account of their knowledge of/experience with Europass and other tools and services under consideration (Skills Panorama, Learning Opportunities and Qualifications Portal, EQF, ESCO, Euroguidance) – both in relation to their online presence and operation of centres where relevant?

*Allowing for a more transparent and quicker comparability of professional qualifications and education levels definitely contributes to a smoother functioning of the labour market. We welcome the diffusion of user-friendly mechanisms and on-line platforms that make it easier for individuals to recover the relevant information they need to best advertise their own profile or to better understand the opportunities that are available. CEC European Managers has participated in the ESCO consultation launched in October last year, and before that was involved by the ESCO*

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*Secretariat in some preliminary analysis of the “Business administration” sector. Without entering too much into detail for each of the tools mentioned above, we believe that further simplification of the different tools available, and their streamlining (as suggested in the document) would contribute greatly to increasing their diffusion among Europeans.*

12. What information do individuals, such as job-seekers and learners, need when:

a) making education and training choices? *A clearer indication of the job opportunities that are available when choosing a specific training/education scheme. To contribute to the solution of the “dilemma” between unemployment and skills-mismatch, young people need to receive a complete and exhaustive picture of the actual status of the labour market, and education structures need to be integrated in a network with all the stakeholders that contribute to the functioning of the labour market to be able to perform this vital role. Clearly, education is also about personal choice and inclinations, but we believe that inefficient education systems that are unable to intercept the current and future needs of the economy contribute to high unemployment rates, especially among the young. The same applies to upskilling and re-orientation: it is the responsibility of employment services to provide the necessary occupational and vocational counselling to current workers in search of new employment opportunities, based on an accurate analysis of employment trends and needs.*

b) undertaking job-hunting activities? *Next to the contractual aspects (remuneration, employment conditions, etc.), individuals looking for job opportunities abroad need to receive information about the living conditions of the country/countries of their interest. Many of our affiliates have voiced the request for a tool that allows them to receive complete information about what it means to live in a foreign country in terms of schooling for the children, health system, housing, etc.. We have put in place such an internal mechanism, which we will continuously improve for the use of our affiliates; considering this experience, we believe that when it comes for individuals to opt for a job opportunity abroad, such information should be provided directly by the employment services accompanying them.*

*In this perspective, one of the Federations of CEC European Managers – FECCIA, the European federation of managers in the chemical sector, launched a project aiming at setting an on-line mentoring scheme for graduates and young professionals in the chemical sector who would like to start a career in a European country.*

13. What information do organisations (including employers and education institutions) need to understand skills and qualifications held by individuals?

*As said previously, the reference to skills obtained through traditional schooling and education is of course essential, but cannot be the only information CVs and other documents can provide. It is important to develop mechanisms that allow for a standardized and uniformly accepted reporting of skills and competences acquired informally and/or outside the traditional educational paths.*

14. In which ways can the social partners contribute to and support the initiative?

*They could provide additional information to their affiliates concerning the nature, goal and functioning of the tools available, raising their awareness.*