



NEW SKILLS FOR NEW CHALLENGES AND IMPORTANCE OF LIFE-LONG LEARNING

The S&D Group firmly believes that education and training are central to the 2020 Strategy - Europe's 10-year strategy for sustainable economic and social development¹. Well adapted and targeted knowledge and skills are crucial components of the economic crisis exit strategy and are key drivers of our EU 2020 vision. Creating a well functioning 'knowledge triangle' of education, research and innovation in order to help all citizens to be better skilled and re-skilled, are crucial for competitiveness, growth and jobs, as well as for equality and social inclusion.

The economic downturn pushes these long-term challenges even more into the spotlight. Public and private budgets are under pressure, while existing jobs are disappearing and new ones often require different and higher level skills. Education and training systems must therefore be more progressive, accessible, targeted, and flexible to meet the needs and aspirations of older people, workers, young people and students who want to enter, re-enter or simply find a job on the labour market.

The S&D goals for Education and Training are:

- guaranteeing access for people of all ages to lifelong learning;
- a European Charter for internships;
- continued modernisation of Member States' higher education systems;
- increasing mobility for both students and teachers eg; better recognition of qualifications, language learning;
- long-term initiatives to tackle the increase in school drop-outs;
- specific action to boost the teaching of sciences and technology in school;
- better collaboration between universities and the business sector;
- targeted training and re-skilling to meet employment needs;
- recognition of non-formal and informal learning;
- fostering media literacy;
- cultivating an interest in innovation and creativity from an early age.

The S&D Group also strongly supports learning mobility of people of all ages from schoolchildren, through VET students and university students, adult learners, to teachers, and is intensely working on and actively participating in defining the future Life-long learning programme for the period of the next 7 years bringing together all the current EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sport. In particular, the Group is fighting for increased funding, higher number of beneficiaries and

¹http://ec.europa.eu/eu2020/index_en.htm

activities supported, more opportunities for VET students and students of master university courses, continued support for youth and educational NGOs, social inclusion, etc.

The S&D Group also recently organized a seminar on Fostering Media Literacy with an aim to define its priorities and start the discussions in order to push the European Commission to develop the EU policy in this area and make it part of the wider education context and life-long learning.