

COMMENTS TO THE 'RECOMMENDATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL ON KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING' AND THE COMMISSION STAFF WORKING PAPER 'TOWARDS A EUROPEAN QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK FOR LIFELONG LEARNING'



I. Introduction

- With this document, the **European Association of Conservatoires (AEC)**¹ would like to contribute to the discussion in the Committee for Culture and Education of the European Parliament on the proposal on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2005/0221[COD]) and the Commission staff working paper 'Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning' (SEC[2005] 957)
- In general, the AEC welcomes these proposals as important contributions and helpful working tools that will support the important role of education and training in the framework of the Lisbon Strategy principles and facilitate mobility, transparency, comparability and recognition in education in Europe.
- When seen from the perspective of the sector the AEC represents, which is music education, the general lifelong principle underpinning this proposal is highly relevant. The developmental process of musicians is unusually long as a consequence of the various intellectual, artistic and physical aspects related to the music profession, so that a musician typically starts music training at a very young age and continues to make and study music up to or well after retirement, thus making music the ultimate example of a lifelong learning process.
- More specifically, the AEC, being an organisation deeply rooted in both education and culture, welcomes and strongly supports the inclusion of Key Competence 8: Cultural Expression in the proposal on key competences. We see this competence as a vital component of the proposal: cultural expression can underpin intercultural dialogue and understanding, which is essential to the further development of the European integration.
- Cultural expression can also be an important tool to develop creativity, which is seen as an increasingly important factor in the development of the knowledge-based society of today. Creativity is important for imaginative thinking, taking confident decisions, taking risks, not being concerned with right or wrong, listening to other people, being patient and non-argumentative, having lots of ideas and not one, spotting surprises, trying different ways.... These are all transferable skills that are vital in any professional context.
- As a consequence, the inclusion of cultural expression as a key competence offers a unique opportunity to establish a clear link between education and culture.

II. We therefore suggest the following:

- 1) A direct link between the Key Competences and the European Qualification Framework
A relationship has to be established between these Key Competences and the learning outcomes as described in the 8 levels of the European Qualification Framework (EQF).

¹ ¹ For more information about the activities of the AEC, please visit the extensive AEC website at www.aecinfo.org. For more information about the activities of the AEC in relation to the Bologna Declaration Process, please visit the 'AEC On-line Bologna Handbook' at www.bologna-and-music.org

We do find it important to point out that, although the Commission Staff Working Document 'Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning' (SEC[2005] 957) states on page 29 that the key competence 'Cultural Expression' is one of the competences that have been integrated in the 'personal and professional competences' of the EQF level descriptors, the word 'cultural' does not feature even once in the level descriptors, whereas 'social' and 'ethical' issues are mentioned several times. We would recommend making the references in the EQF learning outcomes to the key competence cultural expression more direct, as it is clear that respect for cultural diversity and the need for intercultural dialogue and understanding are one of the corner stones of European integration.

- 2) More attention to cultural education in the member states
Member states should be urged to give more attention to cultural education. It seems like the Lisbon Strategy is mainly resulting into concrete proposal for technological developments (e.g. the European Institute for Technology – EIT).
- 3) A closer link between the educational and cultural programmes of the EU
This matter has already been addressed in the proposal for the new EU cultural programme starting in 2007.

III. As a consequence, we propose the following AMENDMENTS:

a) In the proposal on Key Competences for Lifelong Learning (2005/0221[COD]):

1. *Page 10, point 5:*
Ensure the coherence of adult education and training provision for individual citizens via close link to employment, ***social and cultural policies*** and other policies affecting young people and collaboration with social partners and other stakeholders
2. *Page 11, point 3:*
Promote the wide use of the 'Key Competences for Lifelong Learning – A European Reference Framework' in related Community policies, and particularly in the implementation of ***employment, youth, cultural and social policies***, and develop further links with social partners and other organisations working in those fields;
3. *Page 18, 3rd paragraph:*
Skills relate to both appreciation and expression: self-expression through the variety of the media with individuals' innate capacities and appreciation and enjoyment of works of art and performances. Skills include also the ability to relate one's own creative and expressive points of views to the opinions of others and to identify and realise economic opportunities in cultural activity. ***Cultural expression is essential in the development of creative skills, which can be transferred to many professional contexts.***

b) In the Commission staff working paper 'Towards a European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning' (SEC [2005] 957):

1. *Pages 19-21, most right-hand side column*
The insertion of the word 'cultural' in the professional and vocational competence in levels 4, 5, 6, 7 on pages 19, 20 and 21 (most right-hand column in grey). See for the attached example: the inserted word 'cultural' has been written italic, bold and underlined.