

## **Guidance conference Jyväskylä 6-7 November 2006**

### **Closing speech by Gordon Clark**

- The Conference was extremely worthwhile in helping us progress towards creating a structure for the wider European guidance community. But the national – and even local – level remains the most important in terms of guidance services.
- The Conference has provided an essential stepping stone to support strengthening coordination between policymakers, stakeholders, providers and practitioners at the national level. In setting up this conference, the Finnish presidency has tried to meet this aim through the composition of national delegations, and we hope that you have taken advantage of the many opportunities for informal as well as formal networking. This augurs well for the further development of national lifelong guidance fora or other representative structures.

I would hope that this conference will mark a pivotal point in moving on from policy analysis and development to implementation, not only in terms of guidance but also for Lifelong learning (LLL) in general.

- The purpose of the Conference for us in the European Commission – both DG Education and Culture and DG Employment – was to serve as a mechanism to consult practitioners and stakeholders, with whom we do not have enough opportunities to engage in dialogue.
- Thanks to the Finnish Presidency for bringing together the employment and vocational guidance sector with the educational sector. It is absolutely essential to preserve this link in future at the European and national levels.
- We will take away the conference outcomes and reflect on them. We will consult very closely within the Commission (especially with our colleagues in DG Employment, as was emphasised in some of the working groups) and with the Expert group before issuing a call for the proposed European lifelong guidance network.

- We hope that policymakers and practitioners will come away from the conference with a renewed sense of purpose, and that they will provide strong support for the proper ***inclusion of LL guidance as an essential building block in the comprehensive national lifelong learning strategies*** which MS are putting in place as part of the Education and Training 2010 work programme, which is the contribution of the world of education and training to the Lisbon strategy. Much work has still to be done by most Member States in 2007 and 2008 to establish these LLL strategies. We are counting on the guidance community, who really understand better than most the need for real LLL, to influence and help ensure that dynamic and inclusive LLL strategies are put in place in all countries with the involvement and support of all relevant stakeholders.

I would like to thank

- The University of Jyväskylä for the very efficient organisation of this conference
- The Finnish education and labour ministries for their support and cooperation
- The excellent choir of young people which gave us a cultural input at the beginning of the conference
- The City of Jyväskylä for its kind hospitality
- Cedefop which, together with the European Training Foundation, provided constant support
- The European Guidance Expert group (particularly John McCarthy, Tony Watts, Ronald Sultana and especially Dr. Raimo Vuorinen, who has devoted so much time and energy to the process and especially to this conference
- Finally, I look forward to meeting you all again at the next European conference in 2008.