

SER COMMITTEE'S VIEWS ON LIFELONG LEARNING ACTION PLAN

Press release regarding advisory letter

16 February 2005

In an advisory letter to the Lower House's Standing Committee on Education, Culture and Science, and Mark Rutte, Deputy Minister for Education, Culture and Science, the SER Committee on Labour Market and Education Issues set out its views on the Cabinet's Lifelong Learning Action Plan. The letter was drawn up for the purposes of the Standing Committee's General Meeting with the Deputy Minister on 17 March regarding lifelong learning.

The SER Committee believes that the Cabinet's Lifelong Learning Action Plan marks an important step towards making lifelong learning a reality, clearly defining the Cabinet's objectives in this field. Continued learning gives everyone the opportunity to fulfil their potential and therefore to improve their position in society and in the labour market. In turn, this promotes economic development. In addition, the Action Plan clearly sets out adults' right to government-funded education. Important initiatives include creating an open online education market and extending the range of tools for recognising people's competencies (*Erkennen van Verworven Competenties*, EVC).

However, the SER Committee doubts whether the Action Plan will be sufficient to break through the current impasse in policy implementation. The Cabinet's decisions are driven too much by its responsibility for the public education system, and the Cabinet does too little to increase the involvement of other parties. For instance, more and better financial arrangements should be put in place to enable employees to make their own career choices. Employers must also be encouraged to create more sustainable learning opportunities. Benefits agencies currently systematically leave too little scope for people to keep receiving benefits while following training.

By playing a stimulating and facilitating role, the Government can help employers and employees to recognise the benefits of education for both. This will encourage employers and employees to assume responsibility and to reach agreements on education sooner. This could also help to accelerate the business community's shift to a more innovative approach in its funding of education and development.

Note to the Editor

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