



**COUNCIL OF
THE EUROPEAN UNION**

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SOC 52**

NOTE

from: General Secretariat of the Council
to: Council

Subject: A national contract for the development of higher education as a new model:
increased public investment to achieve ambitious national qualification objectives
in Portugal
- Information from the Portuguese delegation

Delegations will find attached an information note from the Portuguese delegation on the above subject, which has been included on the provisional agenda, under "other business", for the forthcoming Education, Youth and Culture Council meeting on 15 February 2010.

A national contract for the development of higher education as a new model: increased public investment to achieve ambitious national qualification objectives in Portugal

The Portuguese delegation would like to inform the Council on a recent initiative regarding the signature of a **national contract** between the Portuguese Government and all the Rectors and Chancellors of public higher education institutions (universities and polytechnics) in Portugal establishing the basis of the **programme for the development of higher education in 2010-2013**. This national contract, signed a few weeks ago by all parties involved, may be seen as a new contractual model for public investment of higher education institutions at national level, as it intends to boost higher education qualifications in society, contributing to economic adjustment and recovery, while providing an increase in public funding in 2010 and a commitment to ensure budgetary stability in the following years.

Higher education institutions commit themselves to make additional efforts in education and training with the goal to increase tertiary-level qualifications to 100,000 extra students over the next 4 years. Active workers are specifically targeted. Public higher education institutions will thus open up access to more students, including students coming from disadvantaged groups, and increase post-graduate training and internationalisation, as well as distance learning.

Higher education institutions, together with the Government, will create the conditions to attract active graduates (employed and unemployed) for professional postgraduate training, opening up opportunities to new students and seeking the involvement of employers.

Universities and polytechnics have taken collective responsibility to pursue their internal reform and to contribute, in partnership with the Government, to the reorganisation of the institutional higher education network (namely through consortia) at national and regional level, in order to promote quality and make the best effective use of available public resources.

Higher education institutions also commit themselves to raise students' attainment levels as well as to stimulate, in partnership with other stakeholders, the social responsibility of students towards society, namely by promoting entrepreneurship and voluntary social and cultural activities by the students themselves.

Higher education institutions will put forward detailed development programmes and specific indicators linked with the objectives defined in the national contract. The development of these programmes will be subject to annual external evaluation.