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OECD's Education Policy Analysis 2001, Meeting of OECD Education Ministers

Lifelong learning is becoming more than just a slogan as OECD countries make determined efforts to implement policy strategies agreed on in the 1990s. But governments and teachers must take care to ensure that systems and structures keep step with the changing demands of the "knowledge society".

The latest edition of the OECD's *Education Policy Analysis*, out on 27 March 2001, will review achievements over the past five years and look forward to some of the challenges that will shape schooling systems in the 21st century. **The publication will be presented at a news conference at 11.00 a.m. on 27 March at OECD headquarters. The report's conclusions will serve as a basis for discussions at a meeting of OECD Education Ministers in Paris on 2-4 April.**

One of the main topics of the 2-4 April ministerial meeting will be how best to enable citizens to take advantage of lifelong learning opportunities in order to continually update and upgrade their knowledge, skills and competencies. Learning should not be tied to age, gender, profession or social status, as the needs of today's knowledge economy transcend such barriers. But making lifelong learning a reality for all requires the development of innovative teaching and learning in both formal and informal settings.

This year's *Education Policy Analysis* reviews progress in implementing lifelong learning programmes in OECD countries. The approaches differ in focus, with some countries stressing employability and competitiveness (e.g. Korea, Austria, the Netherlands) while others concentrate on personal development and the need to generally enhance the level of education (e.g. Czech Republic, Sweden, United Kingdom).

The report stresses the need for civil society to assume increased responsibilities alongside government in such areas as vocational training and apprenticeships, company-sponsored courses and partnerships between public and private institutions for workers and the unemployed. In a particularly thought-provoking chapter, the report examines the outlook for schools, asking whether these institutions will continue to exist as we know them today or whether we are on the threshold of a "de-schooling" scenario which will see the development of alternative structures for education.

The three-day ministerial meeting will commence at 4.00 p.m. on Monday 2 April with a Forum on Information and Communication Technology and Education which will be open to the media. The ministerial meeting itself is not open to the media, but a parallel series of media seminars will enable journalists to explore in greater detail with OECD and national experts some of the main themes under discussion. There will be a news conference at the close of the meeting at 3.00 p.m. on Wednesday 4 April.

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OECD Media Relations

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Practical Information

I. Education Policy Analysis

The report will be available to journalists on the OECD's password-protected website as of 11.00 a.m. on 27 March 2001. Journalists in Asia/Pacific time zones will be allowed advance access, on request, to an electronic version of the publication by e-mail under embargo 12 hours ahead of release time. Journalists in other time-zones will be allowed advance access by e-mail 4 hours ahead of release time. **The report will be sent by e-mail on request only.**

Requests to receive the report by e-mail under embargo or to obtain a password to access the website should be sent by fax or e-mail to Nicole Le Vourch (nicole.levourch@oecd.org) or Sonia Primot (sonia.primot@oecd.org) in the Media Relations Division (fax: 33 1 45 24 80 03).

II. OECD Education Ministerial Meeting

There will be a short photo opportunity at the beginning of each session of the meeting. A press room equipped with phone lines will be available at OECD headquarters. Lighting will be installed so that photographers and camera crews can shoot the arrival of ministers and the meeting room. Radio and television studio facilities can be used free of charge and facilities to feed on fibre-optic lines can be arranged through the Radio/TV section. (Contact Radio-TV : tel. 33 1 45 24 80 97/80 99 - fax 33 1 45 24 94 37 - Contact Photos : tel. 33 1 45 24 81 63).

For further information and for accreditation to the meeting of OECD Education Ministers, journalists are invited to contact Jacob Arfwedson in the Media Relations Division (Tel: 33 1 45 24 81 03 or jacob.arfwedson@oecd.org).