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Interim Report
on the Implementation of the Programme

Leonardo da Vinci

(Presented by the Commission)

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1. Introduction

By its Decision of 6.12.1994, the Council established the Leonardo da Vinci programme for the development of a vocational training policy at Community level (1995-1999). This programme followed on from the former programmes - Petra (social and professional insertion of young people), Force (continuing training), Comett (University-Enterprise Co-operation in the field of training in technologies) and Lingua (promotion of training in linguistic skills). It was adopted at the same time as the Socrates programme in the field of education. It is open to the Member States of the European Union, as well as to countries from the European Economic Area (*Iceland, Norway, Liechtenstein*). The participation of associated countries from Eastern and Central Europe, as well as for Cyprus, is foreseen.

The Council Decision referred to above provides for a regular evaluation of the programme, based on reports submitted by the Member States and the participating countries and on an external evaluation.

This document represents the first interim evaluation report. It covers the period 1995-96. It consists of two parts: firstly "*a short presentation and an analysis of the evolution and trends in systems and provisions regarding vocational training in Member States and participating countries of the Leonardo da Vinci programme*"; secondly, as requested by the Council, an analysis of "*the implementation and of the impact of the programme*".

2. Trends and developments regarding vocational training systems

A cross-analysis of the reports of Member States and participating countries has enabled a number of common trends and developments to be identified. What follows is just a summary of those.

2.1 Main trends

Vocational training systems of Member States and participating countries are rather complex and diverse. However, they all face similar challenges.

Thus, it is quite clear that the **concern for employment and employability is becoming more and more pronounced in vocational training policies**. This overwhelming trend takes different

forms and it is implemented in diverse ways, whether it applies to specific programmes for combating exclusion or to actions seeking to strengthen the links between schools and enterprises or to actions regarding the recognition of skills, etc. A common feature of all these is the increasing blurring of the distinction between education and lifelong learning and the diminution in the division between initial and continuing vocational training.

Reforms undertaken in the Member States and in the participating countries over the last few years have aimed, mainly, at **validating vocational training and guaranteeing its quality especially through by increasing flexibility and modernization**.

Overall at the level of evolution of systems a dual trend is apparent which relates to the structure of the various national systems. This trend either takes the form of wide-ranging and in-depth changes in the programmes as it has been the case in *Luxembourg* and *Liechtenstein*; or the trend is towards the strengthening of existing provisions, often accompanied by a simplification of procedures and structures - as has been the case in *France* for example. Pragmatism and efficiency, flexibility and a concern for rapid reaction in the provision of training seem to be common features of all systems.

If there are noticeable differences in the involvement and participation of various actors (social partners, local and regional actors) in Member States and participating countries, there is however, a clear trend towards a **stronger active involvement of all the actors** which is part of an overall trend towards **regionalisation, decentralisation** and the **individualisation** of vocational training.

One of the main differences between national approaches lies in the will to legislate or not in this field. Situations in different Member States vary greatly from those where there is an obvious and strong will to legislate (as in *France*) to those where the will to avoid legislation is equally strong (as in the *United Kingdom* and in *Germany*).

2.2 Specific trends

2.2.1 Trends regarding systems of initial vocational training

The report from *Germany* identifies the main current issues regarding initial training, these are: an insufficient number of traineeships, a need to introduce some differentiation into the system so as to take into account all levels of personal capacity,

aptitudes and skills, modernization of existing professional profiles, a need for new training content and pedagogical methods, the needs to address the issue of parity of esteem between general education and vocational training as well as the opening up of the apprenticeship system to higher education level, especially technical education.

Two main trends can be identified in the area of initial vocational training: **the will to reinforce the validation and recognition of initial vocational training and a closer relationship between schools and enterprises.**

It is in this context that efforts made in favour of **apprenticeship training** should be noted. Existing systems are being strengthened and linked work-and-training approaches are being developed beyond the traditional apprenticeship model towards new types of training and new target groups. Linked work-and-training, under its various forms (including apprenticeship) is to be found at all levels of initial vocational training, including at University level.

In parallel, it is of some note that specialisation too early, is being rejected. As is underlined in the case of *Greece*, preference is being given to the development of a combination of technical and behavioural skills in the perspective of life-long learning. Linked work-and-training schemes are being recognised more for their capacity to promote **transversal skills** than for the preparation for particular professions. Similarly, *Italy* underlines the fact that new developments affecting its initial vocational training system are geared towards improving the level of its basic training, and the promotion of multi-skills so as to facilitate the adjustment to new professional and organisational profiles.

The development of linked work-and-training schemes is also quite clear in most provisions regarding the socio-professional entry for young people or for people excluded from the labour market. In this context, *Germany* stresses that updating the contents and the development of new pedagogical approaches, supported by a number of model experiments, is also a priority for the actors of the initial vocational training system. In the *United Kingdom*, for example, Modern Apprenticeships in England and Wales offer young people a work-based route to skills at craft, technician and junior management levels, which combine apprenticeships traditions with modern qualifications and learning methods.

School systems are tending to open up to **links with various training paths**. In any case, it is too early to speak of integration of general and professional training paths. The will to set up bridges is nevertheless obvious.

After compulsory schooling in *Portugal*, the three routes of long duration technical and vocational training (3 years) lead to a certificate of vocational qualification and a secondary school diploma which allows for the immediate vocational insertion and access to higher learning on the same terms as those for other general routes.

In this area, one should also include projects which aim to ensure a **double qualification**, i.e. general and professional qualifications which will enable students to organise their school career either directly towards a profession or towards higher education studies.

Ireland's intention to bring about a radical transformation of its system of vocational training should be mentioned. The new model, based on modules, became operational for all handicraft professions in 1995. It is based on common standards with seven phases of alternating training on- and off-the-job.

Germany, for example, is modernising some 90 professions and, currently, social partners are currently examining the opportunity of introducing 30 new professions from 1997 onwards. *Spain* has just produced a compendium of vocational diplomas bringing together more than 135 professional profiles.

While a general trend towards the **differentiation** of professional profiles is evident, there are instances of the emerging necessity for an extended and more common knowledge base. The orientation is to enable, on the basis of differentiated methods, a maximum number of young persons to acquire a diploma or a professional certificate according to their cognitive abilities and their personal interest. Another case here is *Austria*, which is developing a policy for improving the attractiveness of vocational training by introducing flexible and differentiated structural approaches (periods of schooling and linked work-and-training placements on a weekly or yearly period) according to the participants' abilities. More explicit links with other forms of teaching are thus established mainly at higher education level so as to secure the maximum number of graduates. *Denmark* underlines the importance of widely available access to initial training measures and the necessity of individualising training paths for young

people - an approach that has resulted in programmes such as "Education for all" and "Programme for individualised training for young people". Furthermore, *Finland* has signalled its desire to develop a system for validating qualifications through diplomas and certificates, especially of a vocational nature - a trend that is present under various forms in most Member states and participating countries.

Germany, notably, mentions the necessity of training young people with a European dimension in mind; this should be achieved by an intensification of trans-European mobility, a better knowledge of languages and by integrating the placements undertaken in other countries into vocational qualifications.

Finally, the necessity, at the level of initial vocational training, to set up the basis for the development of a more generalised participation in continuing training is being emphasised.

2.2.2 Trends regarding systems of continuing vocational training

The first thing to be noted is that reports from the Member States and participating countries emphasise that the number of persons undergoing training measures has increased regularly over the last few years.

Three trends can be identified in continuing vocational training: **decentralisation**, a **search for quality** and a **search for a tailored and flexible training offers**.

Enterprises are looking more and more for a direct link between training measures and the work place. This follows a **decentralisation** of training measures. Enterprises are also increasingly considering the economic value of these measures - thus looking for quality training which offers a return on investment. Consequently, local and regional actors, as well as social partners are becoming more actively involved.

Decentralisation of continuing vocational training often takes the form of **regionalisation**. Thus, in many Member States and participating countries, the region becomes more and more the natural locus for the development of training policies - thus, also, the importance of implementing accompanying measures at regional level. For example, *Belgium*, which has witnessed extensive changes over the last few years now relies on a set of national and regional measures in the area of vocational training. A similar trend is apparent in *Spain* where some autonomous regions

have a large margin for manoeuvre in the organisation of their education and training system. In *Italy*, new functions have also been allocated to regions which, in addition to initial training for young people, are starting to offer training to qualified personnel and for adults; regions are entirely responsible for the planning and the implementation of their training activities - with the underlying aim of bringing vocational training as close as possible to the dynamics of the labour market. In *Sweden* and in *Norway*, local and regional actors also play an important role in adult education by developing approaches strongly geared towards the labour market.

The economic dimension of training plays a major role in most cases. This has resulted in a drive towards ensuring quality in terms of supply and a concern for the return on investment.

The overriding demand is for very flexible solutions, with **recourse to modular approaches and to new technologies**. Thus, a very clear trend towards distance training and adult education outside the working hours aimed at obtaining school-based qualification is apparent - as in *Finland* for example.

A broadening, a professionalisation and a diversification in the supply of training - both at the level of the actors and at the level of supply can also be noted. There is also a trend towards individualisation and tailored approaches leading, preferably, to new and accessible qualifications for a wide range of target groups. The issue of controlling the quality (of the supply) is a real concern.

Training supply is obviously broadening and diversifying. Public organisations are increasingly becoming real training suppliers. *Luxembourg* maintains that, all things considered, it is the State, with all its institutions attached to ministerial departments, which should be the most important supplier of training measures.

Thus, in quite a number of participating countries Governments have set up Agencies for supporting vocational training, so becoming, themselves, training suppliers.

Another trend arises from the increasing role played by universities in the supply of training. Thus, in *Sweden*, the legislative authorities have explicitly called the universities to become actively involved in vocational training. This trend can be explained by the fact that Swedish higher education institutions

have always been oriented towards vocational pathways

Different organisations are increasingly becoming involved in the training market - of which there are many micro-enterprises specialised in very specific areas. This also implies the **necessity for greater transparency in the training market.**

It should also be noted that some countries are in the process of radically reforming their system of continuing training and are establishing specific legislation by means of framework laws - as is the case now in *Luxembourg* or in *Liechtenstein* - or as in *Spain* where a plan for transforming vocational training has been in the process of being implemented since 1993. These new orientations of the institutions are simultaneously oriented towards several different objectives: guaranteeing vocational training capable of responding to the economic and industrial changes relating to the introduction of new technologies at all levels of the production process and to new forms of work organisation; enabling workers to adapt their skills and qualifications to the levels required by the new occupational profiles; validating, certifying and recognising experiences and vocational training acquired throughout working life; and, finally, regulating vocational training markets taking account of the need to improve the quality of supply. Similarly, since 1997, *Portugal* has just begun to implement a policy aimed at re-directing vocational training towards greater efficiency and individualised flexible solutions of a high qualitative level - a move that should benefit mainly SMEs.

In general, as stated in the *United Kingdom's* report, strategies are being designed with the objective of developing coherent vocational training systems, capable of responding to current changes. These systems are based on partnerships between government, social partners, training suppliers and individuals. The overall objective is to encourage employers and individuals to invest efficiently in the development of new skills as well as to prepare disadvantaged persons for the labour market. The aim is to enable young people to acquire the necessary technical, technological and behavioural skills needed for their entry into the labour market. Both the amount of training and the strategies through which they are being delivered have been assisted in the objective 1 to 6 regions by the contributions of the European Social Fund (ESF).

There is thus a need to make sure that training is adapted and directly connected with the needs of the

working environment; that it is delivered within reasonable cost limits, while not forgetting to account for the need to demonstrate return to the investment.

2.2.3 Trends regarding the links between school, training and employment

The divisions between initial and continuing vocational training are getting blurred. Through training numerous projects help young people in their transition between leaving vocational or higher education establishments and their entry into the professional world or into an enterprise.

The clearest example is given by *Sweden* where the distinction between vocational and general education is almost imperceptible. The basic idea is to reduce the gap between these two types of training as much as possible. Thus, specialisation does not start before the higher phase of secondary education.

In the *Netherlands* an experimental route is developed to give students in higher vocational education the opportunity to follow some linked work and training schemes (HBO-MKB route). In the *United Kingdom*, national framework of qualifications provides effective and flexible routes from general education to occupational standards. Three types of qualifications, i.e. academic GCSEs/GCEs, broad vocational qualifications (General National Vocational Qualifications) and occupationally-based vocational qualifications (National Vocational Qualifications) - can lead to employment and training or to further and higher education. Other Member States and participating countries are also seeking ways in which to bridge the gaps between previously separated training areas. Such concerns form the backdrop to the approach advocated by the decision establishing the Leonardo da Vinci programme in which the *continuum* of "lifelong learning" help provide an overall broadening of offers for training. The exploration of additional modalities for the recognition of qualifications compared with more traditional certificates or diplomas also reflects such developments.

A renewal of the dialogue between education/training institutions and enterprises is also discernible. Closer co-operation in the fields covering the implementation of linked work and training schemes, transnational vocational placements and exchanges are developing, especially at higher education level. Co-operation is also developing with enterprises which are the actors who most frequently seek a role for training with a view

to integrating education qualifications with professional experience.

In the perspective of life-long learning and of bringing education and training closer to the world of work, since 1989 in *Portugal* a new route to vocational training, the vocational schools, which involve local authorities, enterprises and other organisations in the world of work have been developed.

This move results in the search for **new alternative approaches to diplomas**, to identify bridges between the two systems, to implement a double qualification (general and vocational) so as to ensure the broadest possible range of studies, and of validating professional experience.

In this context, it is possible to include informal knowledge, so that school diplomas on their own are not enough. As underlined in the report prepared by *France*, the trend is towards the development of tools enabling professional experience to be analysed and validated for their equal consideration with school qualifications. In the same context, the case of *Norway* is noteworthy: a system of competence validation which leads to certificates independent of the way they have been acquired has been implemented.

For example, in *Germany*, a discussion has been launched regarding the development of regulations enabling those having the title of Meister to have access to higher technical education without being obliged to possess a diploma certifying that they have completed secondary vocational education.

In general, the **role of Universities** is also changing. Not only do they seek active co-operation with enterprises in the area of research, but they are becoming increasingly involved in vocational training which, next to research and purely academic teaching, is becoming their third major area of activity. One should note that most of the Member States and participating countries are giving higher autonomy to their universities. For example, in *Austria*, a specialised university has been created for the vocational training of those having an academic diploma. In *Finland*, like most Member States and participating countries, Ministries of Education are in the process of broadening their networks of non-university higher vocation education.

2.2.4 Developments covering disadvantaged target groups

All Member States and participating countries express an additional concern to implement actions and programmes which have been designed for the specific needs of different target groups, such as unskilled young people, the young and, the long-term unemployed, the disabled and migrants.

In the drive to make qualifications accessible to all, emphasis is placed on the fight against school failure and, thus, against exclusion from the world of work.

Professional entry, the improvement of employability and the stabilisation of employment are major concerns. One has to go beyond the short-term objectives of qualification (especially for continuing vocational training, for adapting the job place) towards a broader adaptation of individuals to evolving systems of production and work organisation. One aspect of this issue concerns the types of regulations of training schemes requiring effective consultation between the State and social partners, the actors of the economic world and those in the world of training.

The objective is to give those in charge of training the reference points to enable them to orientate their own training programmes and pathways.

In 1996 the *Netherlands* established a new system which put in place qualification standards at the level of secondary vocational education. These standards are determined jointly by the world of education and the world of work, and are organised by sectors. This system of qualification standards was realised with the implementation of the WEB (Adult and Vocational Education Act). The *United Kingdom* introduced a framework of national occupational standards, on which it bases its National Vocational Qualifications (NVQs) and SVQs in Scotland. The assessment and certification process for these qualifications is independent of the training process itself.

Secondly, as underlined by *Belgium*, there is also the need to increase investment in a new field called **professional transition and re-entry**. This covers measures for young people who do not succeed in finding a job or workers who are excluded from jobs.

Reports from Member States and participating countries underline the importance of measures and programmes adapted to various target groups as an instrument for combating unemployment and social exclusion. All these measures are directed - although they represent a very heterogeneous group - towards improving the potential for social and professional

entry of these target groups. The financing of these measures is provided by public authorities or by Community programmes or initiatives.

2.3 Conclusions

The organisation of training systems is undergoing a major evolution, within which contextual debates between public authorities and social partners continue to be important. This becomes quite clear when considering the aim of training or its financing.

The reports attach great importance to the role played by enterprises regarding policies developed in the field of vocational training. This role finds specific expression in particular systems which have varying forms of access to training. Thus, it is impossible to consider the cases of *Belgium* (Funds collected for high-risk groups), *France* (with its general obligation to contribute financially to training), *Ireland* (tax-grant in some professional sectors) or the *Netherlands* (O & O fondsen = Training and Development Funds, which are funds earmarked for the financing of training measures) as similar systems.

The participation of enterprises, and, moreover, of professional organisations in the definition of objectives and contents of training remain a central issue in many Member States and participating countries.

At a transeuropean level, the export of national experiences or legislation to other countries remain limited. For example, the "job rotation" scheme is known in Nordic countries through *Denmark's* experience, but it remains specific, while in other countries it takes other forms within individual projects. This can also be noticed for the National Vocational Qualifications (*United Kingdom*), whose implementation in other EU countries has yet to succeed. Reasons for these difficulties are numerous. One of these is certainly the fact that most of these programmes have been launched in very specific national cultures and contexts - thus making their transposition in other environments rather delicate. Conversely, two types of **convergence** should be noted. The first one concerns the field of vocational training itself; the second, its link with the socio-economic environment.

Regarding the first set of convergencies, one should note that the issue of pedagogy (and of its improvement) is a concern common to the different systems. The development of modular approaches and the establishment of individualised training

pathways, e.g. *Denmark* with its training courses in open workshops - illustrate this point. This trend reflects the massive integration of new information and communication technologies as training tools.

Equally in this context, the transition from qualification to that of skills, as well as a trend towards the valorisation and the recognition of professional experience raises additional issues. This appears to be a decisive point in relation to access as entry to many vocational training courses themselves are determined by school and academic prerequisites. The trend is towards the implementation of skill evaluation systems which are independent from the way the skills have been acquired. Apart from the *United Kingdom* NVQ, the case of *Ireland* is of note as it has established a national structure for certification which covers all the non-university types of higher education as well as continuing training. In 1991 *France* set up the "bilan de compétences" (skills balance) as an instrument for helping enterprises and workers - the latter having the possibility to get financial support for achieving this "skill balance" outside working time.

Specific importance is also given to self-training and lifelong training schemes, confirming the acceptance that the learner is the central locus of the training process. This trend is reinforced by the establishment of accompanying structures: reception, information, guidance and advice. In the *United Kingdom*, careers services are provided under contract to the Government through a network of public and private organisations. They provide comprehensive information and guidance at a local level, geared to individual needs.

The second point of convergence concerns the link between the field of vocational training and the socio-economic contexts - such as the **world of work and employment policies**. It does indeed appear, in a reading of the reports of participating countries that training measures and initiatives are increasingly geared towards maintaining jobs and improving the employability of the individual. If account is taken of certain target-groups, especially the disadvantaged ones, training becomes a component of an employment policy, possibly of a social policy. Training supply is being extended to include new target groups and new contents. The report from *Greece* specifically underlines the importance of ensuring the proper match between training supply and the real needs of the labour market in terms of skills and qualifications.

In *Italy*, the agreement signed between the government and the social partners in 1996 indeed has the objective of establishing closer links between training and the labour market by way of consultative action.

Another point is clearly apparent. The number of those having benefited from training measures has regularly increased over the last few years. This is true both for initial training and for continuing training. From the reports of the participating Member States, it is quite clear that public authorities do intend to strengthen these developments even further - i.e. to increase the number of young people leaving training systems with a certificate.

Furthermore, it is interesting to compare the role of the various actors in relation to the target groups for whom the measures have been developed. In most Member States, public authorities - albeit in different ways - play a role in the process of professional qualification. The State contributes in the planning, the organisation and in the control of vocational training, especially in regards to quality. Most often, it determines the general framework within which the vocational training market may develop. However, public authorities do remain the main training provider for groups at risk. It seems, however, that the relevance of public authorities is tending to diminish: this may result from regionalisation of vocational training and from the growing implication of the social partners in the entire decision-making process.

In all cases, the evolution in the role of the State has to be considered in parallel with the implication of the social partners and that of the local and regional actors. However, in relation to the publics concerned, and to the role allocated to the social partners, the role of the State is more or less crucial in the process of vocational qualification.

However, it remains extremely difficult to classify the vocational training systems of the Member States and participating countries according to common categories. Rather than designing complex tools for such a classification, it would be more useful to develop evaluation tools for enabling training systems to position themselves each vis-à-vis other systems as well as vis-à-vis the main developments which are taking place.

3. Implementation and impact of the Leonardo da Vinci programme

3.1 Description of the structures and implementation process of the Leonardo da Vinci programme

Within the Leonardo da Vinci programmes planned measures are divided into strands and instruments. The overall orientations of the programme are specified within a common framework of objectives and by those actual priorities for the calls for tender which are set annually.

These overarching priorities - which come within the context of article 127 to the *Treaty establishing the European Community* - aim at making sure that the Leonardo da Vinci programme is an instrument for the implementation of a vocational training policy of the European Community, particularly in the context of the conclusions drawn at *Essen* by the *European Council* (1994), of the *Confidence Pact for Employment in Europe* (1996), as well as by the guidelines laid out by the Commission in its White Paper "*Growth, Competitiveness and Employment*" (1994) and in "*Teaching and Learning: towards the Learning Society*" (1995).

These priorities are established in close consultation with the Leonardo da Vinci Committee. In 1997, as in 1996, these priorities were: encouraging the acquisition of new skills, strengthening co-operation between school and enterprise, combating exclusion, treating investment in training and capital on an equal basis, extending access to knowledge with the tools of the information society. The horizontal dimensions of the programme are equality of opportunity, social dialogue, regional development and industrial change.

3.1.1. The process at Community level

3.1.1.1 Organisation of European structures

The Leonardo da Vinci programme is implemented by the Commission with the support of a Leonardo da Vinci Technical Assistance Office. According to the Council Decision, the Commission is responsible for defining the main policy directions of the programme, for ensuring the management and co-ordination of the processes relating to the calls for

proposals and, for *final* selection of the proposals which merit financial support.

In the execution of these different tasks, the Commission is assisted by a committee consisting of representatives of Member States and countries in the European Economic Area and, in certain cases, the observers of the Social Partners, all of whose functions are specified in the Council Decision.

In keeping with this Decision, sub-committees have also been established on initial vocational training, on continuing training and on university-enterprise co-operation. These have met regularly to discuss issues notably the definition of the priorities and the analyses of the results of the calls for proposals.

3.1.1.2 Activities of the European structures

Within the framework of its responsibilities, and with the support of its Leonardo da Vinci Technical Assistance Office, the Commission ensures the preparation and the management of the calls for proposals, the implementation of the evaluation process for the proposed projects and the activities for operationalising and monitoring the funded projects and disseminating their outcomes. As a result, there is a permanent link with the National Co-ordination Units.

In practice, and by producing analyses and information documents on the various invitations for proposals, these activities comprise helping promoters designing projects, organising thematic and dissemination seminars and establishing a link with Eastern and Central European Countries (PECO) and Cyprus to ensure their integration in the programme.

Furthermore, the Commission and its Technical Assistance Office, produce a number of regular publications, such as the compendia which describe the projects and calls for proposals of promoters, analytical brochures on the results of the calls for proposals and general information brochures. A data bank comprising products of previous programmes has also been set up and is available for consultation at the Multimedia centre at the Technical Assistance Office.

3.1.2 The process at the level of participating countries

For their part Member States and participating countries have set up information, animation and

monitoring structures: National Co-ordination Units (NCUs).

3.1.2.1 Organisation of national structures

Initial and/or continuing vocation training do not come under the responsibility of the same ministerial departments or, even, solely within the remit of the public authorities. In some participating countries, for example, initial vocational training is mainly the responsibility of the Ministry of Education, as in *Germany* or in the *Netherlands*. In other Member States and participating countries this responsibility is shared between several ministerial departments - mainly Education and Labour - as in *France*. As a result the management and the animation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme at the level of the Member States and participating countries mirrors the diverse arrangements in Member States and participating countries.

Furthermore, most Member States have set up tripartite consultative and national management committees which assist in the definition of national priorities and ensure a link with the key players in vocational training. These committees, together with the National Co-ordination Units, participate, normally, in the definition of national priorities for Strand I, and in projects evaluation and pre-selection processes at national level.

The main function of the National Co-ordination Units, which are financially supported by the Commission and the Member State, is to provide assistance to the national authorities, the Commission and to potential project promoters and contractors.

NCUs play an important role in this respect: they assist in ensuring that the programme impacts on national policies and structures; they organise promotion, technical assistance and dissemination seminars for project contractors; they help the development of thematic, sectoral, national or transnational networks.

The nature and the organisation of these interventions vary according to the participating country. In some of them, such as *Ireland, Denmark and Sweden*, NCUs also manage the Socrates programmes and the Community initiatives Employment and Adapt. The NCUs of some other countries are linked to institutions, generally at national level, and manage the programme autonomously - as in *Germany*. Some participating countries have set up several NCUs, the terms of reference of which are distributed according to the

various target groups or to the programme measures - as in *France*, in *Luxembourg*, or in *Germany*.

3.1.2.2 Activities of national structures

The main activities of NCUs for which, they receive an operating grant from the Commission, based on a statement of accounts, are to organise and launch conferences; to frame a national operational and dissemination plan; to ensure the publication of calls for proposals; to organise national - or even, transnational - contact seminars; to evaluate the project submissions and to organise animation and monitoring seminars with the projects which are funded.

The purpose of these activities is to monitor, in partnership with the Commission, the development of project activities and outcomes and to contribute to solving problems which a project may encounter during its implementation. Moreover, NCUs contribute to operationalising the thematic, national or transnational aspects of the programme.

NCUs are furthermore responsible for the management of transnational exchange and placement programmes under Strand I. To that end, and having first submitted an operational plan, they receive a global grant for the different target groups concerned.

NCUs also publish compendia of national projects, information brochures and newsheets.

3.2 Budgetary data

The Council Decision estimated that the financial resources which are required by the Community for the implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme would be 620 MECU for the period 1995-99.

The distribution of the sums allocated to the various strands and measures is decided by the Commission following the opinion of the Leonardo da Vinci Committee.

One should note that there are maximum and minimum limits to the budgetary distribution between the different measures of the different strands. A minimal threshold of 35% of the total budget is allocated to pilot projects, as against 30% for placements and exchanges. A maximum ceiling of 20% is set for other measures, especially surveys and analyses, exchange programmes, comparable

statistics as well for National Co-ordination Units under Strand IV.1

For the first two years of the programme, the budget authority has allocated an envelope amounting to 139.5 MECU in 1995 and 154.4 in 1996.

The following table sums up the budget distribution of the programme for the first two years:

Table 1
Distribution of the Leonardo da Vinci budget for 1995 and 1996

	1995	1996
Pilot projects	75,2	84
Strand I	27,2	33,6
Strand II	38,6	43,9
Strand III	9,5	6,5
Placement & exchange programmes	45,7	51,4
Strand I	28,6	29,4
Strand II	17	22
Strand III	0,1	0,03
Others	18,5	19
III.2.a	6,9	6,2
III.2.b	0	1,3
Strand IV	11,6	9
Total (MECU)	139,5	154,4

3.3. The first results of the Leonardo da Vinci programme

Since the launch of the programme three calls for proposals have been published - in 1995, 1996 and 1997. The first two calls (1995 and 1996) resulted in the presentation of 7600 proposals. Evaluation and selection procedures implemented by the Commission in co-operation with the Member States have ensured the financing of 1542 projects for a total amount of 201.8 MECU.

Table 2
Results of the first two calls for proposals (1995 and 1996)

	1995	1996
Number of Projects selected	749	793
procedure I	319	299
procedure II	430	494
Pilot Projects	581	582
Placement and Exchange Programmes (Strands II and III)	121	170
Surveys and Analyses	47	41
Number of Partners	13212	10267
procedure I	2210	2131
procedure II	11002	8136

This data shows that the programme has reached significant proportions in respect of the numbers of projects, transnational partners, and of the vocational training professionals involved.

Analysis of the first two years of the Leonardo da Vinci programme illustrates that the programme has evolved towards taking better account of the real challenges facing vocational training in Europe. To ensure the consolidation and improvement of systems, arrangements and practices of vocational training however, there is a need for the 1542 projects which have been funded to undergo a qualitative evaluation with respect to their capacity to meet their goals and deliver concrete results which are transferable to all 18 participating countries.

The time has come for a follow up, animation, and reconsideration of the contents and methods which make it more possible for the Leonardo da Vinci programme to be a real *"European laboratory for innovation"*.

Funded projects can be grouped into three main categories: those which focus on forecasting of training and guidance needs

in relation to a specific environment, those which concern the design of innovative training methods and measures by means of developing training products, often based on multimedia systems, and those directly relating to the enterprises and the training organisations. The active participation of the social partners in the programmes, as well as the setting up of transnational training networks (sectoral

or regional networks), is also noteworthy. These two factors should have a significant effect on the promotion and the dissemination of new knowledge and know-how.

A more in-depth analysis leads to the conclusion that the majority of the projects tend to fall under the three categories. Increasingly, projects explicitly seek to develop solutions through a consideration of the processes - beginning with the identification of a specific need and leading, via the implementation of more wide-ranging educational methodologies, to the design and the implementation of focused solutions targeted for specific contexts.

In the projects assisted in 1995 there were 13212 partners participating in 749 projects, as against 10267 partners for the 793 projects selected in 1996.

The participation - even after the first calls for proposals - of SMEs in the programme is admittedly weak, especially if we consider that it is mainly small and medium enterprises which create jobs. In the light of this insufficiency of participation, all those responsible for the Leonardo da Vinci programme will need to be more actively encouraged to make the additional investment required to ensure a bigger participation of SMEs in the partnerships, not least in the simplification of procedures.

Nevertheless, it is also necessary to nuance the assessment. If it is true that for the three categories combined, the offers to train appear greater than the demand for them, then it should not be forgotten that the measure best suited for the participation of enterprise (including SMEs) is Strand II "improvement in actions of vocational training", particularly measures II.1.1.a "innovation in vocational training" and II.1.1.c "Transfer of technological innovations". Similar conclusions apply for transnational exchange and placement programmes of Strand II.

Through its placement and exchange programmes, the Leonardo da Vinci programme has also contributed substantially to the European mobility of various target groups.

Table 3
Number of programmes and beneficiaries of placements and exchanges foreseen in 1995 and 1996

	Number of programmes		Number of beneficiaries	
	1995	1996	1995	1996
I.1.2.a - Placements for young people undergoing initial vocational training short-term placements				
	604	*	9943	10063
I.1.2.a - Placements for young people undergoing initial vocational training long-term placements				
	96	*	982	1009
I.1.2.b - Placements for young workers				
	293	*	4704	5333
I.1.2.c - Exchanges for instructors				
	293	*	2242	2379
II.1.2.a - Placements for people undergoing university training and for graduates				
	102	144	5175	7731
II.1.2.b - Exchanges between enterprises and universities and/or training bodies				
	11	11	121	146
II.1.2.c - Exchanges of people in charge of training				
	11	12	47	231

* data not yet available

It can be noted that the Leonardo da Vinci programme has in 1995 and 1996 enabled more than 50,000 people - of whom 22,000 young people in initial training, 10,000 young workers and 13,000 higher education students or graduates - to benefit from a European mobility grant for guidance and training periods throughout Member States and participating countries.

Furthermore, the Leonardo programme foresees the implementation of a programme in the field of statistics under Strand II.2.b as well as of a programme of study visits managed by Cedefop under Strand III.3b.

The Council Decision of 6 December 1994 makes it possible for the Commission to propose a work programme concerning an "Exchange of comparable data" under Strand III.2. Following a proposal by the Commission, a 10-point programme has been adopted by the Leonardo da Vinci Committee, the implementation of which is ensured by a Working Party "Statistics in the field of education and training" comprising representatives of the Member States and of the Commission. In

1995, a call for tender led to three projects, begun in 1996, "a survey of initial training", "a survey of continuing training" and "transition to working life". A project on "comparable classification" was managed by CEDEFOP. In 1996, three themes were included in a specific call for tenders, namely, "the supply of training", "the learning of languages", "comparable classifications" and "literacy for adults". The amounts committed for this first phase total 1.3 MECU; it is intended to broaden the size and the field of investigations in 1996 and 1997 up to an additional amount totalling 2.1 MECU.

The Community programme (measure III.3.b) for study visits for vocational training specialists within the European Union is co-ordinated by Cedefop. In co-operation with a network of national liaison officers, this programme foresees the organisation of study visits, lasting from 3 to 5 days, focusing on themes such as youth training, adult education or the impact of new technologies on vocational training. 1,225 vocational training specialists, distributed in 116 groups have benefited from such a study visit; on average, the individual grant amounted to 1350 ECU in 1995 and 1996. The total budget allocated for the study visits for the same period amounted 2.3 MECU.

3.4 Impact of the Leonardo da Vinci programme

As indicated at the beginning of this interim report, the analysis undertaken concerns the first two years of the implementation of the programme. Given the fact that the first projects did not become operational until early 1996 and that, on the other hand, their average duration is 2 years, the views expressed below cannot be considered as definitive.

Another element should be underlined: as a "European laboratory for innovation", the programme intends supporting actions aiming at improving vocational training systems and arrangements or vocational training actors in Member States. Obviously, such an impact requires some time to materialise.

Conversely, it is already possible to identify, through the external evaluation report and reports of Member States and participating countries, the technical and administrative weaknesses of the programme implementation. In this respect, it should be noted that the reports rely mainly on interviews and answers to questionnaires sent to promoters and key actors of the programme.

Results thus obtained are more concerned with the difficulties encountered when implementing the projects than the impact of the programme.

This being said, it is possible to identify some key elements regarding the impact of the programme.

3.4.1. Impact and the evolution of the systems

From the analysis of the reports, it appears quite clearly that the **pilot projects are part of the development of vocational training systems and arrangements in Member States** - especially in relation to the general trends identified at the beginning of this report. The programme does illustrate the evolution of the entire vocational training field - its aim being to enable a maximum number of institutions and individuals to benefit from this evolution.

Furthermore, and this is especially true for Strand I projects, activities developed by promoters are wholly integrated in the vocational training national provisions; it is thus normal that these projects are in time with the main trends of vocational training systems.

This positive correlation does not mean that the funded pilot projects are just an extension or a copy of national operations. Both as regards the objectives, the content and the methods, transnational projects aim at developing innovative approaches. This being said, their diversity does not run against priorities of common interest in a context requiring very rapid adjustments and evaluations.

By proposing innovative answers concerning new qualifications, new professional profiles, new means of access, new modalities for bring schools and enterprises closer, new routes for professional insertion and "stabilisation" - especially through apprenticeship and linked work-and-training, transnational projects give a definite impulse to the real daily life operations of vocational training.

It is equally significant that the programme attracts the main vocational training actors who are clear that training represents a **priority for investment**.

3.4.2 Impact and innovation

The Leonardo da Vinci programme is defined as the *"laboratory of European innovation"* in the field of vocational training. An examination of the national

and evaluation reports suggest that it is at this level that the more significant impact of the programme can be seen. A number of new approaches which address key objectives like new qualifications, new professional profiles, better access to training, notably new forms of entry and recognition of qualifications find support in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. In evidence are the development of new content, products, methods and services, with regard to a large range of target groups and the issue of equal opportunities as well as the marked orientation on projects with regional dimensions.

In all Member States the innovation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and, as a consequence, its impact is more developed at the early stage of the creation of projects which permit the integration and joint utilisation of the methods and tools which are targeted to specific groups. Nowadays the development and utilisation of the CD-ROM is not more innovatory in its own right, but its combination with long distance learning for addressing those who are some way from the large centres of training provision does constitute an innovatory factor.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme provided evidence of the specificity of innovation in the substantive aspects of professional training. On the one hand, it is relative : what was innovative in a certain context was already in place in another. On the other hand, it is evolving. In spite of any counter effects of previous Leonardo da Vinci programmes, we consider that there is a truly qualitative improvement in the operations of new programme. Furthermore, observation of the years spent under the Leonardo da Vinci programme opens up a dynamic which can only be realised in the medium term.

3.4.3 Impact on systems and practices

The majority of the projects constitute responses or preliminary reactions to real situations requiring new solutions concerning the integration of young people without qualifications, vocational training in SMEs etc.

Only rarely did the size and exploratory nature of the projects have a direct impact on the vocational training systems. Indeed, **as a result of the dynamic created, the actors were pressed into questioning the system**. It is the first step of the potential dynamic of the system offering opportunity for a larger impact. It is of particular significance that the impact of the Leonardo da Vinci programme was more marked in those systems which were least developed.

Certain countries, like *Luxembourg* and *Liechtenstein*, which are already in the process of reforming their vocational training systems, noted that the past and present Leonardo da Vinci programmes did not affect their considerations in the implementation of new legislation on vocational training systems and decisions concerning the new directions are taken elsewhere.

In the short term, the real impact is always felt on the ground. Two dimensions of the projects merit particular attention. Certain projects focus essentially on **testing new models**, either the models themselves or concepts imported from abroad, applying a new idea or passing on good experiences, etc. Other **projects mainly seek the real innovatory solutions** at the risk of failure. Thus surveys and analyses are often undertaken to analyse the conditions for effective implementation of the previous pilot projects.

The advantage of transnationality is that it deals more easily with the territorial constraints which all national systems recognise. It is also significant that many projects come under a logical process (without necessarily using the concept) or are supported by the original partners.

3.4.4 Impact and structure of the programme

The *French* experience suggests that the majority of promoters saw the Leonardo da Vinci programme as an opportunity to develop and amplify an existing project.

This comment was self evident in those national reports which only advanced projects for the first call for proposals. Nevertheless, certain basic observations inform us of the way in which the structure of the Leonardo da Vinci programme favours projects having an impact or not.

Even if respecting objectives constitutes a criterion for eligibility, a reading of the national reports makes apparent their coherence with the common framework of objectives. In the same way and more generally, they reflect the fundamental commitment to **professional entry, new qualifications and employability**.

Two other aspects were also made evident: **transnationality** and the **multiactor character of the partnerships**.

If the reports failed to underline the difficulty of transnationality for the management of the projects, they nevertheless always provided evidence of their richness.

Thus the European dimension of the projects can be shown as follows :

1. To achieve the goals of entry, employability, access, etc., the promoters and partners deliberately chose the **transnationality route to try new approaches which facilitate the provision of responses to ongoing changes**.
2. The **creation of the tools and reference material or joint modules for training** is seen to be essential. Given the problems they often but not always encounter at national level, the response was fundamentally transnational.
3. The European dimension is sought more as an **enrichment** at the centre of the projects than as just a question of joint construction.
4. Finally, the European dimension is reaffirmed and further assisted through **mobility** by the exchanges and the ways in which the exchanges are facilitated.

Another major achievement arises from the **complementarity of the players who worked on these projects**. The multiactor character of the partnerships encourage higher objectives for the projects.

One thus sees new structures of partnerships emerging and by implication different institutions, training organisations, professional associations, local authorities or enterprises. In terms of impact these new forms are themselves a consequence of the operation of the programme.

In this respect, the programme allows **close collaboration between universities and enterprises**; one side brings methodology and the other side knowledge and know-how. This benefits the enterprises in systematising the methodological approaches of universities as well as individuals from universities thus reducing the gap which far too often separates higher education and the world of work in certain Member States and participating countries.

Furthermore, the projects are increasingly tending to **open up new sectors of activity**, which until now were less open to training actions. Thus one sees new professional profiles emerging in sectors of environment, health, restoration of heritage, safety, home-working, etc. all of which are in line with the orientations defined by the Commission on

the subject of local development and creation of new jobs.

In general, **growth in training actions in favour of new targeted groups**, inaccessible to by vocational training actions, can be noted, such as ethnic minorities, people in disadvantaged areas and handicapped people. It is, however, regrettable that good quality proposals with equal opportunities are too limited in number. Moreover, it appears that the specific references to university-enterprise associations for training in the measures which can benefit from Community support have created some ambiguity with the "AUEF" supported by the old COMETT programme. Nevertheless, the broad, open structure of the programme, which has space for all actors in the field of training, is without doubt a positive factor for both those offering as well as those demanding training.

3.4.5 Impact and mobility

A certain impact of the programme lies in the development of transnational mobility. **European mobility is a concern for those young people in training, whatever the status, apprentice or school, youth workers, students and young graduates, to improve and keep their own employability so as to gain easier access to work and maintain employment stability.** Experiments of new models linking work-and-training are particularly interesting.

The integration of youth is thus improved by mobility, generating an increase of know-how in terms of competence, from a linguistic point of view, as well as from a point of view of professional experience. In particular mobility adds more in terms of personal experience and to the curriculum vitae.

Enterprises gain from mobility through the flexibility of modular approaches and new forms of linked work-and-training which notably is aimed at an already qualified or well-qualified public.

Two types of activity emerge : on the one hand, the construction and consolidation of networks, both resource and reception centres, directly responding to the objectives of promoting mobility and to entry of trainees in to working life. On the other hand, making available information tools and management aimed at apprentices, could act as a channel for professional entry.

In this context, the **innovative character of projects is largely due to partnership structures.** Mobility projects show limited innovation when they are simply projects from previous programmes: this is the case of certain projects supported by recurrent structures (same issues, same partnership). On the other hand, where mobility is placed in a broader context to respond to specific problems, by setting up appropriate frameworks and associating social partners, it has a considerable potential impact.

This impact is notably ensured when placement and exchange programmes are integrated in the conceptual framework for which the pilot project has been established. The programme of placements and exchanges therefore supports the pilot project. In operationalising the transnational character of the project, the pilot project can be integrated into a network. Moreover, foreign partners could benefit from national experiments.

3.4.6 Impact, global approach and new training methods

It is shown that the impact is all the more important if the project is able to **develop real training strategies** by the creation of a clear link between several elements: analysis of changes of knowledge and know-how, understanding of professions, linking jobs, tasks and know-how, establishment of a methodological framework aimed at the analysis of future training, thinking, forecast and prospective of future professions. The process of establishing the projects is increasingly the logical development of a global methodology of work which consists of defining the reference points of employment, analysis of posts, the definition of the know-how necessary for employees occupying these posts, analysis of the needs of firms in terms of knowledge, development of training material, use of new learning tools and methods of disseminating the results, all based on new technologies.

The impact should be particularly noticeable during the development of a pilot project, a multiplier project, from surveys and analyses.

The starting point of projects is generally an analysis of what currently exists in the field. Monographies or case-studies are developed for this purpose in the various participating countries, either by questionnaires which can lead to field studies of pre-selected enterprises. At this stage the needs in terms of new competences, implementation of new techniques and new tools or in terms of emerging

jobs and the corresponding training needs are identified for each partner. During this phase exchanges between partners on the various concepts used, as well as the methodology to be developed is rich and numerous. It is a question of capitalising the results of the analysis subsequently and establishing a common synthesis from the national conclusions.

The impact of global approaches, concrete and targeted, depends on real strategies to provide a solution to a specific problem, if it concerns professional integration, access to training for SME employees or others. Pedagogical thinking, drafting of course material, creation of products (for example a CD-ROM) are all elements of a huge ingenuity of vocational training.

3.4.7 Real and perceived impact

The Leonardo da Vinci programme and more globally vocational training are subject to a discrepancy between the established ambitions and the achievements in the field.

With this in mind, the broad perspective and the general aims of the programme have probably yet to be met. This has allowed a wealth of initiatives, but also their exposure. If the complexity and the diversity, among others, of the field of vocational training is taken into consideration, it is easy to understand that actual impact is not necessarily the perceived impact.

It nevertheless appears, in the light of various reports, that **co-operation which has been initiated and platforms which have been opened respond to changes which are underway and are promising.** This is witnessed by the abundance of initiatives in new qualifications, professional integration, linked work-and-training, access and employability whose convergence is now perceptible.

Similarly, the dissemination of good practices at a European level, such as can be observed at the moment, leave a growing bank of experiments to be carried out and multiplied. Observation of these innovations is extremely important.

Generally the analysis highlights that the impact of the projects from the Leonardo da Vinci programme depend on several factors :

- the extent of openness of the project by its transnationality and its transversality;

- the ability of projects to integrate various target groups (unqualified youths, workers in SMEs, etc.) to which they are addressed;
- the extent of involvement of the social partners, especially, but not exclusively, at the level of implementation, carrying out and dissemination of the project;
- the extent of involvement of partners contributing directly to the definition of training systems;
- the relevance of the subject and the quality of the project;
- the management quality of the project;
- the dissemination strategy of the results and the commercialisation of products, such as distancing learning products or software support.

At the time of the drafting this interim report and more specifically at the time of drafting the national and evaluation reports, the question of the relationship between innovation, impact and change was premature due to the fact that the majority of projects were at the beginning of their work.

In addition, it is important to note a development in the programme in relation to the different calls for tender. Schematically one may note a tendency towards the reduction in the number of proposals profiting from better quality and better coherence of the programme. It is apparent that the projects submitted under the first call for tenders often repeated the logic of the earlier programmes.

This factor is not abnormal as some continuity of the logic has to exist. The field of vocational training does not operate with sudden changes. However, **we are already able to notice that Leonardo da Vinci programme has strongly contributed to coherence in the field of vocational training.** We have now gone beyond the stage of reinventing the wheel and this notably thanks to the structure of the programme which encourages actors to work together. In this sense, the obligation to co-operate constitutes a guarantee for investments and the possibility to do something other than the conventional.

Finally, it should be noted that the impact of projects supported by the Leonardo da Vinci programme is also due to dissemination strategies taken forward by the project promoters. The interest raised by the programme and the methods and tools of training developed during its existence are sure to make an important contribution to the validation of results and this will directly benefit the development of vocational training in the

participating States. However, as the evaluation report indicates, dissemination of results is only just beginning and is still limited. In addition, although it is clearly indicated on the application form, projects which define a precise strategy and which reserve specific funds for dissemination, are rare. It is also probable that budget reductions have resulted in the project promoters investing less in this type of activity.

To bridge this gap, working with all those involved in the programme, the Commission is currently paying particular attention to **validation activities and the dissemination of results** at European level. To this end an initial fair of products was held at the beginning of the Leonardo da Vinci programme which allowed those interested to find out about the different results and outputs to come out of the former Community training programmes.

Among other things, the external evaluation report has revealed four areas for reflection which could contribute to the improvement of dissemination strategies which could be taken forward by the programme and project promoters. These are as follows:

1. The diffusion of examples of good practice.
For this the identification of the most successful projects is recommended along with the preparation of good practice guides based on examples of project results.
2. Networking projects.
If the opportunity arises each project should be encouraged to participate in networks at European level which includes other national or Community activities and a mutual recognition of results obtained should also be encouraged.
3. The importance of new information and communication technology.
Up to now very little use has been made of new information and communication technology either in the management of projects or the overall dissemination of project results. In this area it would be useful to improve the current Internet site and include in it not only a database of information on projects from the different compendia or catalogues produced, but also to set up a real forum of discussion and exchange of information between projects. Also in this area, the development of the current system of

seeking partners at Community level should be reinforced.

4. Dissemination of products.

A number of projects, and notably pilot projects, are developing products which could have applications outside the project partnership. It should be remembered that the first objective of the Leonardo da Vinci programme is to transfer vocational training products to European level and facilitate access to them with the aid of translations, for example.

In this way it should be possible, as indicated in the external evaluation report to communicate widely the lessons which have come out of the range of projects under the Leonardo programme and to apply the results of projects beyond the duration of the project grant under the programme in certain cases.

4. Links with former programmes and complementarity with other programmes and initiatives of the European Community

The overall transition from the former training programmes Force, Comett, Eurotecnnet and Petra to the new Leonardo da Vinci programme can be seen in two ways:

Firstly, this transformation was marked by a desire to secure a certain level of continuity between the broad objectives of the former programmes and the basic principles of the Leonardo da Vinci programme as indicated in Article 4, line 2 of the Council Decision. In this way the experiences acquired during the preceding programmes have been taken into account in so far as a number of partnerships continue to work together to develop new approaches, even if the nature of the organisation of the partnership changes. On this it should also be noted that this continuity has been facilitated by the setting up of transitional measures.

Secondly, the conception of the new programme goes beyond the acquired experience of the old ones. The Leonardo da Vinci programme allows different themes and target groups to be brought together thanks to a number of important guidelines and particular actions. In this way it is able to lend

particular support to the former programmes and the complementarity of training policies by associating different fields of activity, for example equal opportunities, regional and local development, social dialogue etc.

The situation is a little different with regard to the links between the Leonardo da Vinci programme and the Socrates Programmes as well as with Community initiatives such as Adapt and Employment or the Fourth Framework Programme on Research and Technological Development. The Decision setting up the programme underlines the necessity of endeavouring to ensure coherence and operational complementarity between the present programme and the action programme in the domain of education as well as other programmes initiated by the Community.

In order to ensure this complementarity, the Commission has undertaken several different measures. Before launching the first call for proposals, the relevant Commission services prepared a reference document which highlighted the different levels as well as the scale of complementarity. This document was presented to the committees of the different programmes and the Member States and the participating countries were informed of the procedures and timetables of the different programmes and initiatives. Furthermore Member States and participating countries were made aware of the necessity of setting up appropriate co-ordination structures.

In this way, a number of the participating countries established procedures at national level, through their National Co-ordination Units, to verify possible links between projects submitted within the call for proposals for the Leonardo da Vinci programme and the other programmes and Community initiatives. The aim of this work was principally to avoid unnecessary overlaps between projects from different programmes and initiatives. It should also be noted that at national level a representative of the European Social Fund can have access, according to national procedures, to the national Leonardo da Vinci Committees and that a representative of the Leonardo da Vinci programme can participate at the monitoring committees of the European Social Fund.

At Commission level this concertation is done via interservice consultation on the lists of pre-selected projects in the form of a cross examination. Furthermore, with regard to the European Structural Funds a DG XXII official with responsibility for the Leonardo da Vinci programme takes part in

meetings of the services charged with implementing Adapt and Employment. The 4th Framework Programme on Research and Technological Development and particularly the 2nd strand of the Final Socio-Economic Research Programme covering research on education and training makes a contribution to current fundamental research in this field.

Such support measures, for example a joint database, like the one currently used for the Lingua programme, will become all the more necessary as the multiplication of initiatives means that particular attention needs to be given to procedures and also to budgetary and accounting systems.

To this end, it would be opportune for the Commission to strengthen its support for the National Co-ordination Units, for example, by making its central data banks available so that the principle of complementarity can be adhered to. However, it seems evident that the real work on complementarity can only be carried out effectively at national level.

It should also be possible to encourage a regrouping of projects submitted by different partnerships but which cover closely-related themes.

The question of complementarity and the specific nature of intervention by each of those involved in Community programmes and initiatives is still open. In fact, the atmosphere of competition between Community programmes and initiatives is increased by an insufficient concertation at the level of guidelines and the content of the projects funded. The overriding preoccupation should be to find a level of complementarity which would mean that for each of those involved an intervention at their level of competence in proportion to the intervention of the other party.

One of the inevitable conclusions is that of the necessity of precisely defining the objectives of the different Community programmes and initiatives and underlining their specific characteristics and differences as compared to each other.

Generally, it would also be useful to develop reflections on the different methods of co-operation between the different Community programmes and initiatives. An example of this is the joint call for proposals in the area of multi media education implemented in 1997 by the Multimedia Task Force and implicating 6 Community programmes. This

joint call attracted 837 proposals of which 371 had a Leonardo da Vinci element.

Another area worth reflecting upon is whether the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which was designed as a "European laboratory of innovation", should be specially reserved for developing new and innovative approaches in the domain of vocational training which would support other programmes and initiatives. It would then be possible to imagine common approaches to diffusion, dissemination and animation of projects in order to improve the impact of the programmes by working together.

Overall, in view of these remarks the Leonardo da Vinci programme could be envisaged as an articulation between the knowledge of the world of science and the diffusion of innovative products available to support socio-economic actions within the European Union.

5. Conclusions

At the time of writing of the national reports and the external evaluation report, that is after nearly two years duration of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, several conclusions are apparent.

In the first place it should be noted that all the management structures of the programme both at Community and at national level are actively contributing to the development of the programme and to the accessibility of target groups

Secondly, through its two first calls for proposals, the Leonardo da Vinci programme has been highly successful. This is evident in the financing of a total of 1542 pilot projects, placement and exchange projects, surveys and analyses, as well as in the wide distribution of the beneficiaries

In third place, the impact of the programme is clear. It has become the Community programme in vocational training and is widely accepted, even though the participation of some likely groups (SMEs, etc.) needs improving. From the first results of the programme, a real capacity of European expertise in vocational training is on the way to effective consolidation. In this area the programme has begun to function as a "*European laboratory of innovation*". A number of linked innovative projects are working on new products and also on the implementation of a complete training process going from the analysis of needs to the evaluation

of the return on investment in the actions implemented.

Fourthly, it can also be concluded that through its diverse projects, the Leonardo da Vinci programme actively contributes to validating the image of vocational training in Europe. The programme has generated a place for vocational training in its own right consolidating the increasingly necessary parity between general education and vocational training on the one hand and apprenticeships and professional specialism on the other. The strong emphasis placed on mobility is closely linked to this tendency and this goes hand-in-hand with the intensification of linguistic knowledge. Through co-operation within transnational networks and the implementation of innovative projects, the programme contributes to a process of adaptation to industrial change by developing new models and practices which are directed to new fields of activity generally on new technological tools.

Fifthly, it is worth mentioning that one of the strengths of the programme is its great diversity. This is demonstrated not only in the structure of the programme through its diverse objectives but also in its products, the nature of the promoters and partners as well its target groups.

However, this diversity corresponds to the programme's complexity and as such is demonstrated by the high number of objectives and measures and priorities. In addition to this, and necessarily linked to the rapid launch of the Leonardo da Vinci programme in January 1995 following the Decision of December 1994, timetable constraints have reinforced the difficulties inherent in setting up such an ambitious programme.

Among other things the existence of a double procedure of evaluation and preselection at the level of the Commission and the Member States has, given the complexity of the programme, created difficulties which could benefit from careful examination with a view to improving the transparency of the procedures.

It should be added that as well as management, contract and control procedures, in a certain number of cases there have been delays at different levels which have been prejudicial to the smooth running of projects.

More generally the absence of common databases related to proposals between the Commission, the

Member States and participating countries, the use by the former of different selection criteria, that fact that (for Strand I) the national priorities can differ among themselves and not necessarily correspond to the priorities defined by the Commission following the opinions of the Committee, have led to, here and there, some malfunctioning of which the national reports and the external evaluation report are broadly agreed on.

Finally, the budget strategy followed has led to a decrease in the level of grants awarded (as compared with the amount requested) to promoters in favour of an increase in the number of projects. The obligation to reformulate the projects has incurred difficulties and further delays.

It should not be forgotten that for a certain number of potential promoters not very familiar with the previous programmes, the call for proposals and selection procedures have been a handicap.

These difficulties have been accentuated by the fact that the programme had to begin in parallel with the management of transitional measures and the passage from the former programmes towards the new Leonardo da Vinci Programme.

Among other things, the external evaluation report quoted several weaknesses which should be remedied in order to stimulate innovation:

- The different National Co-ordination Units defined different national priorities and applied different selection criteria.
- The final selection remains strongly influenced by national considerations as to the number of projects in each country and the breakdown of resources between countries. Consequently, the number of projects has increased and the budgets of individual projects have been reduced.
- The experts involved in the selection process have underlined that an evaluation undertaken on a project by project basis does not enable the respective merits of similar projects to be judged.
- The time which elapses between the reception of proposals and the announcement of successful projects seems to have been too long in the context of a four year programme of which the projects last on average 2 or 3 years.
- The administrative aspects of proposals were relatively heavy and the evaluations relied entirely on written proposals. In these

circumstances, there was perhaps a tendency to select those projects which seemed to offer the greatest chance of success in terms of management rather than those based on the most stimulating concept.

It should, however, be noted on this subject that the lessons which could be drawn from experiences during the first two calls for proposals, as well as the national reports and the external evaluation report, could only contribute to the improvement and enrichment of the management procedures necessary for the efficient running of the programme. These considerations should be taken into account in the definition of the follow up to the present programme. The external evaluation report offers a certain number of openings for further reflection which should be rapidly examined in this perspective. It is clear that a programme of such a scope should be implemented in such a way as to strive towards constant improvement in its procedures and management systems which contribute to the all those involved in the programme.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme, as very precisely indicated by the title of the Council Decision of December 1994, should be the instrument for the implementation of a vocational training policy for the European Community.

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