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The ADAPT and
EMPLOYMENT
Community Initiatives
Innovations n°5

Employment & European Social Fund



Telework:
tomorrow's form of work

Employment & social affairs



European Commission

What is the European Social Fund?

The European Social Fund (ESF) invests in people. Its purpose is to improve the prospects of those who face the greatest obstacles in finding, keeping or regaining work. In this way the ESF enables millions of people throughout the European Union to play a fuller role in society and thus improve their quality of life.

The ESF provides European Union funding on a major scale for programmes which develop or regenerate people's 'employability'. This task centres on providing citizens with the right workskills as well as developing their social interaction skills, thereby improving their self-confidence and adaptability in the job marketplace.

The ESF channels its support into strategic long-term programmes which help regions across Europe, particularly those lagging behind, to upgrade and modernise workforce skills and to stimulate entrepreneurial initiative. This encourages domestic and foreign investment into the regions, helping them to foster greater economic competitiveness and prosperity.

The ESF is the main tool through which the European Union translates its employment policy aims into action. In the six years 1994-1999 the ESF, which operates in all Member States, will have

made available ECU 47 billion, accounting for almost ten per cent of the European Union's total budget. The ESF also helps unlock funding at national level, through the use of a joint-funding principle which permits ESF support to be made available only for active measures already being undertaken by Member States to increase people's employment prospects.

The ESF's aims are both preventive and remedial. To help prevent future long-term unemployment, the ESF focuses its support on programmes which prepare young people better for working life, which help those in employment adapt or develop their skills to meet the challenges of change in the workplace, or which intervene early to help those losing their jobs who may be at risk of long-term unemployment to regain work quickly. For those who have reached the stage of long-term unemployment, the ESF concentrates on supporting coordinated programmes which provide a step-by-step path for people back into work. Underlying all the ESF's work is the principle of ensuring equal access to employment for men and women, the disabled, and disadvantaged minorities at risk of social exclusion.

Programmes are planned by Member States together with the European Commission and then implemented through a wide range of provider organisations both in the public and the private sectors. These organisations include national, regional and local authorities, educational and training institutions, voluntary organisations, trade unions and works councils, industry and professional associations, and individual companies. The ESF helps fund a broad range of active schemes and projects, which include vocational training; work experience and placement schemes; training of teachers, trainers and public officials; employment counselling and job search assistance; employment aids and child-care facilities; schemes for developing or improving in-company training systems and structures; and research projects which anticipate and help plan for economies' future workforce needs.

The ESF acts as a catalyst for new approaches to projects, harnessing and bringing to bear the combined resources of all involved. It fosters partnerships at many different levels and encourages the Europe-wide transfer of knowledge, sharing of ideas and best practice, ensuring that the most effective new solutions are incorporated into mainstream policies.

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Telework:
tomorrow's form of work



European Commission

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Telework: tomorrow's form of work

Introduction

"In the digital economy, the firm as we know it will be transformed. Just as the organisation is changing, so are the job and the nature of work itself. As the world of work shifts from the hierarchical corporation to the new extended structures, there is a shift in the potential for work location. The office is no longer a place, it is a system. The roles of individuals within that system are no longer just jobs but fundamentally new working relationships".

Don Tapscott, The Digital Economy, McGraw Hill, 1995

If we were to be offered the chance to become teleworkers, would we take it? Would we be attracted by the flexibility of using computers and telecommunications to work at home, or in local centres, saving us from having to travel long distances to factories or offices? Or of working telematically with people on different sites, even in different countries?

Would we see it as an opportunity to launch a new business? Or would we be deterred by our own lack of previous experience, worried about becoming isolated from colleagues, concerned about our ability to separate work and home life?

Would we all know what telework is?

What is telework?

There is no universally accepted definition of telework. The available definitions cover a wide range of home-working, alternating telework, multi-site telework, freelance telework, mobile teleworking, and telework from relocated back offices. For this publication we have used the broad definitions used in the Commission's 1997 Status Report on European Telework, *Telework 1997*.

Telework is work carried out by the use of computers and telecommunications, in order to overcome restraints in place or time of work. In the USA it is called Telecommuting.

Teletrade, including **electronic commerce**, is business conducted through information and communication technology (ICT) networks. Advanced ICT (such as the Internet) is used to market and sell goods and services, to enhance customer relationships and to reach distant markets without the overhead of a local "physical presence".

Telecooperation is the application of ICT by people, working collaboratively over a network, in real or virtual teams.

Many projects co-financed by the European Social Fund's ADAPT Community Initiative (see Annex 2: The ADAPT Initiative) reflect the concern of individuals, companies, trainers and policy-makers in all Member States to understand what telework has to offer, and to exploit it,

- as a way of modernising existing employment, and making it more profitable,
- and as a route to creating new jobs, and spreading work within isolated communities and those with weak industrial infrastructure.

Telework is at different stages of development in different Member States, and often in different regions in the same Member State. It is being used by individuals working at home, by large companies creating remote service centres and call-centres, and by small firms providing new services, and marketing existing services in new ways. Much of this variety is reflected in ADAPT projects.

This report looks at:

- the world and European background against which ADAPT projects are working – The shift to telework;
- how the Member States set out to use ADAPT - ADAPT and telework;
- project approaches and innovations in telework, affecting people business and training networks, and new jobs - all reflected through key themes emerging from ADAPT telework projects.

It is also available on the EU website:
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/dg05>
and on the ADAPT Web site:
(<http://www.europs.be/>).



The move to telework

Teleworking is on the increase

The expansion of telework is largely governed by:

- growing numbers of people linked to telephones;
- the expansion of the Internet and its use;
- growing numbers of people linked by e-mail;
- improving computer literacy, and expanding ownership of personal computers;
- improving capacity to resolve legal, regulatory and policy differences between countries.

Telework is most widely developed in the USA where, in 1997, it was estimated that some 5.5 million people were teleworking (or telecommuting), representing some 4.5% of the labour force.

(Source: European Commission – *Telework 1997*)

Europe is some way behind the USA, but the Commission's *Telework 1997* report (estimates extrapolated from a wide range of national reports and studies) indicated that:

- around 1.48 million (1% of the labour force) were teleworkers;
- the highest percentages were in Sweden (3.77%), Finland (2.50%), the UK (1.40%) and Ireland (1.22%);
- the lowest were in Austria (0.25%), Denmark (0.37%), Germany (0.41%), and Greece and Italy (both on 0.46%).

There was not, therefore, a clear North/South divide. The best broad correlation was with the percentage of the labour force on e-mail. In Sweden 43.6% of the labour force had e-mail, whereas in Austria only 9% had it. But in Denmark, 19.7% of the labour force were on e-mail, a higher proportion than in either the UK or Ireland. Here other factors are clearly at work.

Telework 1997 estimated that, between the date of the 1996 survey, which furnished its data, and its publication, more than half a million more Europeans had become teleworkers. The report estimated that more than 2,000,000 Europeans are now teleworkers.

Telework and industrial change

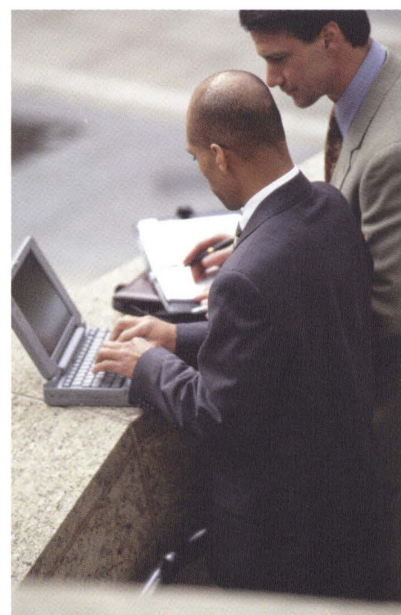
The move to teleworking has also been stimulated by industrial change, particularly:

- the growing introduction of less centralised forms of work;
- the expansion of the service sector at the expense of traditional manufacturing.

Telework is also a factor in further change:

- generating new models of work organisation for groups of home workers and nomadic workers;
- helping change patterns of trade in both goods and services.

The growing variety of telework is one of the most important phenomena in the evolution of the Information Society. And it is likely to be one of the most enduring.



The changing context

European employment policy now recognises the strong linkage between industrial competitiveness, the employability of the workforce, and the adaptability of firms, especially small firms. This is the framework within which ADAPT operates, and within which telework is becoming an increasingly important part.

- Companies in both manufacturing and service sectors are now viewing the introduction of telework as simply an evolution in work organisation. Instead of fearing it as a threat, they are concentrating on its practical implications for changes in production processes and information flows, and the removal of barriers between staff.
- Trade Unions are negotiating new general frameworks for home-working, and distance-working, concluding collective agreements on behalf of their members, and spreading practical information to their affiliates.

- Training institutions and service providers are adapting to new business requirements. Both teletraining and training for the use of information and communication technologies in telework have become major issues.
- Policy makers and administrators have also discovered telework. It has offered them new opportunities to consult and collaborate with the public, and with other officials. It furnishes them with new means of extending equal access and equal opportunity. It offers the means to improve logistics (for instance relieving traffic congestion).

European Union jobs policy and telework

The Luxembourg Summit committed the Member States to a co-ordinated approach to preserving and creating jobs. The Summit agreed Employment Guidelines, setting objectives and targets organised around a strategy with four pillars. The expansion of teleworking is closely relevant to each of them:

- **EMPLOYABILITY** – computer literacy and the ability to work independently are key aspects of employability;

- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP** – teleworking is an increasingly important method of work organisation for new and micro-businesses;
- **ADAPTABILITY** – the capacity to make creative use of information and communications technology and to work in networks are crucial aspects of companies' and workers' capacity to operate flexibly;
- **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES** – a high proportion of women are involved in teleworking and their working conditions and pay are liable to be very different from those which they would enjoy in conventional workplaces.

National Employment Action Plans see telework as a job creator

Telework has become an important issue for national policy. In April 1998, each Member State followed up the Luxembourg Summit with a **NATIONAL EMPLOYMENT ACTION PLAN**. These show how each Member State is setting out to implement the Employment Guidelines. In their references to modernising work organisation, a number of Member States announced their actions on telework:

Belgium has been developing a new legal framework for home working and telework.

In **Denmark** social partners have agreed to create appropriate settings for distance working and telework.

As many workers are no longer required to attend traditional workplaces, **Spain** will draw up a study in 1998, possibly leading to new regulations.

A bill on telework has been before the **Italian** Parliament. Key measures at national level will be promoted to encourage this kind of new work organisation.

In **Austria**, hi-tech telecommunication networks in rural areas, particularly in those with low population density, will be encouraged for their job creation potential.

Portugal has a regulation on homework, and plans a regulation on telework. Teleservice centres providing local support and job-exchange for telework will help integrate people with disabilities into the labour market.

In **Sweden**, a commission has been appointed to review regulations on distance work.

The **UK** has been reviewing the status of "atypical" workers, like home workers, examining issues of social protection and working conditions.

ADAPT and telework

A human resource issue

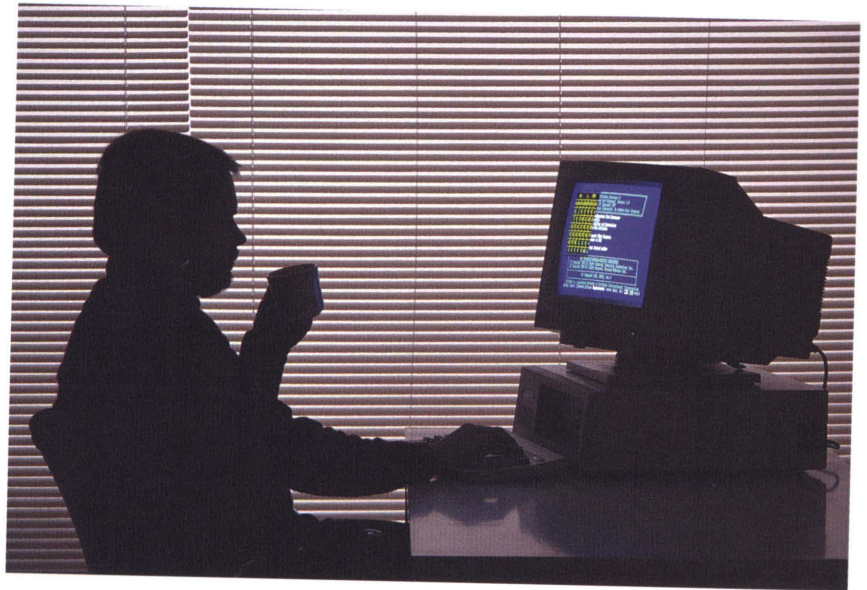
ADAPT is the European Social Fund's Human Resource Community Initiative designed to help employers and workers anticipate industrial change and deal with its effects. It has a specific priority, called ADAPT-BIS (Building the Information Society), linked to new information and communication technologies and human resources.

ADAPT deals particularly with the impact of industrial change on workers and employers in small firms. Projects encourage attitudes and mechanisms, which help workers, managers, service providers and policy-makers to prepare themselves for future evolution and change. **ADAPT's telework projects are, therefore, concerned with the impact of technology on people - human resources - not specifically with the technology itself.**

ADAPT projects are selected nationally, and often regionally, reflecting wide diversity of business needs and perceptions. Projects work for two, or sometimes three years in transnational partnerships. They have an important contribution to make to European practice and policy, and a role to play in raising awareness of telework amongst the business community and the general public.

ADAPT is designed to ensure that the results of its innovatory projects are transferred to mainstream policy and practice. A National Support Structure helps administer project activity in each Member State. Social partners and other interest groups are represented in Member State Monitoring Committees. The Commission and Member States jointly administer thematic analysis and developmental work at European level.

At the outset of ADAPT, each Member State signalled its priorities in an **Operational Programme**. Telework was mentioned in several:



- **Flanders (Belgium)** identified the need to design training for managers to enable, inter alia, the development of telework and call centres.
- The **German** Programme predicted growth in self-employment as a result of the use of telework and networking to outsource activities from large organisations. In the new Bundesländer, telework was expected to result in increased job opportunities.
- **Greece** focused on the introduction of new technologies in training systems, and new forms of employment like telework.
- **France** planned to attack social exclusion by adapting workers to the use of new telematically-aided production systems.
- The **Italian** Programme highlighted the potential of telework, and stressed the importance of preparing workers and companies for the impact of technological change on work organisation.
- In **Austria**, the importance of teleworking, telenetworking, telemaintenance and teleteaching was stressed, and particular encouragement given to the installation of local teleservice centres.
- The **Finnish** Programme focused the promotion of remote, flexible and multi-form forms of work, included that of telework.
- **Sweden** prioritised action-oriented networks as a development strategy

ADAPT telework projects

Member States have selected ADAPT projects in two calls for proposals, one in 1995 and another in 1997. Some 4,000 projects will have been financed by the end of the Initiative.

In 1995, relatively few telework projects were selected, but far more were submitted in 1997 as a result of the addition of ADAPT-BIS (Building the Information Society) to ADAPT's priorities. This encouraged promoters to use ADAPT as a network to help workers and small firms react proactively to changes in technology, and in the uses of technology.

A review of ADAPT projects produced a list of just over 100 whose promoters indicated that telework was their principal priority. Others, many of them very interesting, were dealing more with tele-training than with telework itself, or were interested in telework as a secondary objective or priority. They are not directly featured in this report, but account has been taken of their experience and ideas.

It is impossible to extrapolate national trends from this number of projects. However, it is interesting to note that in Sweden, the Member State where telework is already most advanced, no projects were selected, suggesting that neither the national authorities nor project promoters see it as a high priority for further innovation.



In the European Social Fund's other human resource initiative, **EMPLOYMENT**, telework is also the principle focus of a number of projects. In **EMPLOYMENT-NOW**, telework is creating self-employment for women, and projects are examining its implications for equal opportunities. In **EMPLOYMENT-HORIZON**, projects are focusing on the use of telework to improve the integration of people with different types of disability. In **EMPLOYMENT-INTEGRA**, projects are examining telework as a means of integrating people who, for various reasons, have been excluded from the labour market. And in **EMPLOYMENT-YOUTH-START**, they are using telework as a means of introducing young people to work.

Innovation at work - main trends in ADAPT telework projects

Analysis of ADAPT telework projects shows that their activities are widely spread. In summary:

- most ADAPT telework projects are using teletraining or distance learning to prepare managers and future teleworkers;
- telework centres are being set up, and feasibility studies carried out in companies;
- some projects see teleworking as a route to self-employment;
- many see it as a job-creator in rural and remote areas;
- research is being carried out on new types of jobs in the media sector and jobs in more traditional sectors where telework is causing radical change;
- a substantial number of projects are promoting telework in SMEs, many experimenting with SME networks and virtual enterprises as means of improving small firms' capacity to compete with larger companies.

Telework and people

Telework is part of the phenomenon of global change. Its spread faces similar barriers to those deliberately or unconsciously erected against other changes in the way in which work is organised. To address these barriers to telework:

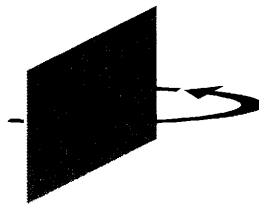
- companies need to be helped to comprehend its technical and organisational implications;
- workers, managers and social partners must be thoroughly informed and prepared for its legal, social and individual implications, and must be helped to prepare their minds for change;
- public authorities, social partners, companies and individuals must combine to exploit its potential for providing jobs for the isolated, the marginalised, and those whose mobility is restricted.

Overcoming barriers to telework

In 1997, the European Commission launched its Green Paper, Partnership for a New Organisation of Work in which it identified the challenges posed by telework. These include: contractual status, employee rights, equality of treatment with on-site workers, involvement and participation in consultation and negotiations, training rights, social security, data protection, environmental impact, privacy, working time, pay, infrastructure and equipment, separation of working and living environments, health and safety, trans-border implications, and legal frameworks for freelancing and trade union rights. **Many of these issues are addressed by ADAPT projects.**

Preparing social partners and other key people for telework is confirmed by project experience as being essential to overcoming institutional barriers.

Acceptance of telework depends heavily on the active and informed involvement of social partners in discussions about its purpose and its implementation. Their main concern – focused on the specific issues highlighted in the Green Paper – is the balance between flexibility and job security.



OSPRACT

The ADAPT partnership OSPRACT (Observatoire Syndical des Pratiques et des Conséquences du Télétravail) involves French, Belgian and Italian trade union research centres in establishing a European Observatory of telework practice and its implications. It provides social partners with data, analysis and consultancy on the organisation of telework and its impact in terms of work organisation. It is establishing a database on telework in Europe, guides for trade unions and workers, and an analysis of activities capable of being organised through telework. The purpose of the project is to remove some of the existing barriers to the use of telework by involving key workers, employers, decision-makers and trade unionists in the whole process, having first raised their levels of awareness of the importance of the issues involved. It sees the encouragement of informed social dialogue as key to future harmony and collaboration. According to Mr. Marc Vandercammen, director of IWERF

(one of the OSPRACT partners), an innovative aspect of the project is that it does not limit its boundaries to the trade unions in the countries involved, but involves other trade unions around Europe and a series of key actors. It establishes an open space for reflection, where institutions not usually in contact like trade unions, universities, technological research institutes, social economic councils, NGOs of handicapped, Internet designers, etc. can meet, discuss and reach solutions for telework implementation.

Teleworkers and prospective teleworkers must be individually prepared and trained. This applies equally to teleworkers working alone, and to those working in companies or teams. And it is by no means only confined to training for the use of new technologies. The behavioural and social changes essential to its success are just as important. Issues like time-management, work efficiency, social isolation, boundaries between working and living environments must be addressed.

Selection of tasks for teleworking and individual teleworkers must be done with care. Experience suggests that, if it is to be accepted, telework must be seen to increase companies' competitiveness, and it must be felt by workers to enhance their satisfaction and well-being. If the wrong jobs and the wrong people are selected, this is unlikely to be possible.

Problems faced by all teleworkers can become even larger issues for women. Examples are social isolation, lack of childcare facilities, insecurity of employment, low wages and lack of training. Aware that these issues must be tackled if teleworking is to be attractive to women, a Belgian EMPLOYMENT-NOW project, "ECO FORM", led by the Flemish Manpower Service, is preparing a range of facilities and tools. A teleworker job profile is being designed, and a training package, particularly focused on learning-by-doing, and on non-technical skills (time management, self-reliance, negotiation skills), is being developed. Women trainees are also being provided with an element of social coaching, preparing them for their entry into this new part of the labour market.



Companies considering using telework need encouragement and help to exploit its potential.

This is especially important while so few managers currently understand it and have experience of being teleworkers. Small firms need to be prepared to change their use of information technology, and often to change the hardware and software itself. They must be able to identify which of their functions and activities can be improved if done by teleworking. They need better information about the flexibility and the competitive advantages which telework can offer, if properly applied.

Tele • Tools

A Danish project, "TELE TOOLS", is developing tools to help small firms use telework. These will not only cover technology, but also teleworkers' personal development, work organisation and legal and safety issues. Case studies highlighting problems and successes are being developed, and, based on them, a set of analysis and evaluation tools are being developed. These are to be tested in pilot projects. Based on their experiences, teaching materials will be developed, and instructor training courses suitable for remote working will be designed and offered.

<http://www.org.hha.dk/org/telework/teletools/default.html>

Companies actually using telework also need support.

In most cases, the introduction of telework means radical changes in working methods and attitudes for managers and workers. The companies' whole business environment, service providers, training institutions, competitors, suppliers, clients, may change. Some ADAPT projects are developing support for companies and their workers, doing practical experiments in the use of telework, and working on its technical, communication, psychological, organisational and legal implications.

Telework is evolving rapidly, and its future commercial and employment potential require careful and scientific study. Anticipation is a key part of the ADAPT approach. Projects are analysing the spread of telework, and its potential for further exploitation in specific regions or sectors, and for workers in particular occupations, and are using their information to raise awareness of its benefits.

An Italian project "Creation of a network of telecentres in Emilia Romagna", is using a large sample of companies to research potential for telework. A series of awareness-raising seminars will be offered to managers and technicians responsible for company decisions on the use of teleworking. A network of telecentres is being set up to support experiments in teleworking, and to promote new forms of cooperation and communication between companies. According to Mr. Setti, the project leader, a cost-benefit analysis was carried out in companies willing to consider initiating telework, and the results of this were to be discussed not only with employers and trade unions, but also with the workers potentially affected.

<http://www.ifoa.it>



Centro di Formazione e Servizi delle C.C.I.A.A.

Training for telework

Training is the key investment in preparing people for telework. New ways of working always lead to new training demands. Rapid and continuous changes both in markets, and in the work place, have been widely described, and make the case for life-long learning. As have the facts that individuals need to make deeper commitments to taking responsibility for their own learning, and that companies must learn to treat training as an investment, not as a cost, and must increase the resources they commit to it. To get the best from their investment, they also need to enhance their relationships with the education and training providers upon whose support they depend.

Telework completely changes the internal organisation of small firms. It also alters their relationships with each other. In some ADAPT projects training has become a means of empowering small firm managers, enabling them to predict and plan the changes needed. Training designed to help small firms plan for and use telework must take account not only changes in skill requirements, but also changes in working structures, management structures and techniques, geographical and logistical changes and altered working hours.

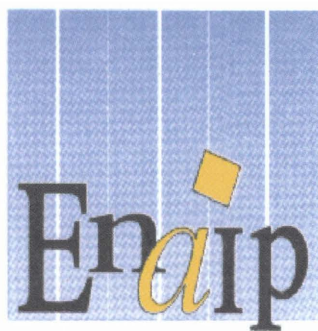
A number of ADAPT projects are involved in analysing these new tasks and identifying the skills and know-how needed on all levels to perform them.

Telework demands both hard and soft skills:

- the hard skills of computer literacy and familiarity with the hardware and software selected for a specific occupation or job are, these days, readily available; they are increasingly taught in schools, they are widely available in colleges, and updating is normally provided either by manufacturers and suppliers themselves, or by consultants;
- the soft skills associated with telework are less well-defined, and normally not so readily available. They may cover areas like personal effectiveness, autonomy, flexibility, interpersonal skills, creativity, organisation, management, teamwork and leadership.

ADAPT projects are particularly active in identifying and providing for these soft skills needs.

Some are researching the skills and know-how required for successful teleworking. Others are combining analysis with development and delivery of learning modules in the soft skill area.



An Italian project "TOOLS – Innovative and Telematics Tools" is researching business activities, and occupations and jobs in which telework can be a potentially important development factor. It is also researching the new skills required, and is developing guidance support for individuals to identify their own training needs. It is also creating flexible, distance learning programmes for teleworkers supported by tutors.



QUALIFIZIERUNG
TELEARBEIT
MITTELSTAND

"...Training is being given on...interface management, co-operation management, process organisation, corporate culture, intercultural matters, basic knowledge of industrial and social security law as it affects telework, and the criteria for selecting appropriate tasks to be undertaken by telework, and the best forms of organisation". The German project "Qualifizierung zur standortunabhängigen telekooperativen Arbeit"

<http://www.bg.bib.de>

The telework environment makes it necessary, but also possible, for an organisation to introduce individualised learning, and to give workers access to it, and responsibility for their own use of it.

The role of teletraining is becoming very important. As with telework, the big issues are not the hardware and the software, but how work and learning are designed and integrated, and the relationship between the worker or learner the invisible supervisor or instructor.

The Regional Council in the Franche Comté is promoting an ADAPT-project: "Constitution d'une Plate-forme Transnationale de Compétence sur le Télétravail". The project, working in a network of local and European partners, is developing a pilot programme in distance training and teleworking. A significant number of local people have been teleworkers for some years, and have been using the new technologies to give them access to training. This has now developed to the point where Internet teletraining is already linking them with many other beneficiaries throughout Europe. The Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM), which is a partner in the project, is also offering courses which can be accessed at home, at work, or through audio conferences, at appropriate meeting points.

Trainees obtain replies to their questions through an appropriate message system. Current training schemes will be improved by new, tested, learning materials. "Teletraining is a first step for telework. Before it was necessary to travel in order to learn, now it is the knowledge which travels", says the project manager.

Teletraining makes training a double-value activity, preparing and updating the workers for the substance of the work they will have to do, and also for the new way of working that telework involves.

ADAPT projects are experimenting in and developing a wide range of new processes, business opportunities and learning systems.

These include personalised training plans, new approaches to individual learning, coaching and tutoring support tools and systems, and the development of virtual learning teams capable of adapting to workers' specific needs.

The key to the success of training for teleworkers is that it should be integrated into their working processes.

It must also be continuously available. ADAPT projects are designing both virtual and actual telework support services. In these, learning modules enable workers to address difficulties as they are encountered. The training itself is therefore being adapted to differing needs and situations as it is delivered.



**I.A.T. Institut
Arbeitswissenschaft und
Technologiemanagement
Universität Stuttgart**

A German project "PEOVILU - Personal- und Organisationsentwicklung im Virtuellen Unternehmen" is seeking to exploit to the full the personal development possibilities of workplace learning and organisation supported by information and communication technologies. These will allow both teleworking and teletraining to take place at the same workstation.

<http://www.iao.fhg.de/projects-de.html>

These new combinations of learning activities, mainly exploiting multimedia and new communication learning systems, backed up by additional online assistance, are mixing and integrating:

- training sessions,
- help systems,
- training materials and equipment,
- on-line learning sessions,
- and simulation games.

The result is that workers learn during working time, using the same equipment on which they work.

They are connected to networks, and often directly supported by experts. Both parts of the business process – learning and working – are reinforced. CD-ROM expands the potential for simulation of company processes, offers vast banks of resources, and enables users to take on a wide range of independent studies.

Training, however closely focused it is on specific individual needs and development plans, always requires further back up.

ADAPT projects operating in the telework field are confirming that this is just as true of distance and self-learning as it is of any other kind. Skills are being developed through self-learning modules and telecoaching. But success depends significantly on the availability of instructors, able to operate in the role of tutors, coach, consultant, mentor, animator; e.g. one who encourage and stimulate the individual to become an even more effective learner. In partnership with them, entrepreneurs, SME managers and their workforces can be linked into so-called virtual enterprises. In this way they can be supplied with expertise and counselling when they need it through an intensive process of telecoaching.

Successful support for both independent and in-company teleworkers calls for new partnerships between educational institutes, regional training centres, employment bodies, local government, and social organisations, developing links between them and the companies who need to use their services.

Grampian



Enterprise

The British ADAPT project "AEGIS: The European Study Centre Project", is developing a flexible framework of virtual learning opportunities for the growing number of teleworkers, as well as for small firms, outsourcers and subcontractors. The project, based in the City of Aberdeen, but covering a wider region, recognises that teleworkers, who often work in rural parts of the region, share with small firms difficulties of gaining access to training and other learning resources. The local consortium behind the project involves colleges, universities, and the economic development agency, which includes the Chamber of Commerce. These partners are establishing a linked network of virtual learning centres offering training and learning which can be accessed on line, and which will be linked to the UK system of National Records of Achievement. It will provide teleworkers with a service enabling them to develop and follow programmes of lifelong learning.

<http://www.aegis.org.uk>

Equal access and equal opportunities

Telework can have a positive impact on equal opportunities. **It can ensure equal access to employment for a variety of different types of workers who are frequently excluded from the labour market: women, older workers, people with disabilities, disadvantaged.**

Telework has a great deal to offer to women. It is often cited as having a positive effect on reconciling family and working life, but it also provides:

- opportunities to train for new jobs and occupations;
- opportunities to become self-employed, and to create businesses (notably when accompanied by means of reducing social isolation, providing child care, ensuring social protection, and providing good wage levels).



The German project "Teletraining for women in multimedia, telematic services for SMEs" in Berlin is training women employed by small firms in planning, design, and production and marketing of multimedia products. Without multimedia, these small firms have difficulty competing. Technically and financially the technology is affordable, but they lack expertise in fields like the production of learning and commercial materials and visual presentations. The programme uses interactive CD-ROM and on-line training, as well as email tutoring. On-the-job training is backed-up by sessions at a training centre. The project promoters feel that, for the first time, they can produce a new job profile which fully reflects equality of opportunity, and are therefore seeking to recruit women. A group of unemployed women will also be trained to set up their own teleservice centre business, which will advise other small firms on planning and production.

<http://www.kombi.regiocom.net>

The Information Society offers a range of new opportunities to women who have previously been confined to traditional female jobs.

Women need guidance, counselling and training services to help them broaden and diversify their career choices. This is particularly the case in sectors which depend on the new information technologies, since many women who have not previously worked in them react against what they assume to be a technical culture.



Creating a teleworking and teleservice centre where women can drop in, meet regularly and follow modular training programmes in telematics and multimedia is at the core of the Spanish "C-TEST" project. In collaboration with the Women's Institute, the Polytechnic University of Madrid is running C-TEST based on a former NOW experience in teleworking involving a group of qualified unemployed young women. Apart from the theoretical courses covering telecommunications and various aspects of teleworking, the women trainees acquired practical experience through the organisation of fairs and conferences. Most of the trainees have become self-employed teleworkers. In the meantime, a teleservice centre is functioning as a support structure used for linking teleworkers and potential clients. The centre is offering a space for formal and informal communication for the women teleworkers allowing for problems to be solved by a team and reducing the isolation teleworkers might experience.

Also, the women teleworkers can test some of the new software and are stimulated to establish networks. This approach contributes to identifying, at an early stage, new training needs and interesting employment opportunities. It also helps the women teleworkers who are associated with the centre to maintain a competitive position on the market. The centre will provide analyses and surveys on issues related to improving the situation of women working in this sector. In conjunction with other universities and technological centres, C-TEST is also run in three other regions of Spain.

Telework also offers significant opportunities to people who are unable to travel to traditional workplaces because they are confined to their homes, or to institutions. If these groups want to join the labour market, they often have no other choice than to use telematics.

- In **EMPLOYMENT-INTEGRA**, projects are organising teletraining or telelearning for prisoners in jails, enabling them to acquire skills which will help them reintegrate into the labour market at the end of their sentences. Some may pursue telework. Others will simply have used teletraining to access training which would otherwise have been closed to them.
- In **EMPLOYMENT-HORIZON** telework is being used to provide employment for people with disabilities, whose mobility is limited because of physical or mental handicaps.



The Greek project "DISNET STEP BY STEP", promoted by DIMITRA, sees the development of telecentres providing direct access to teletraining as a key factor in developing opportunities for people with disabilities. The centres are also enabling them to take the further step of working directly with companies via the Internet. They are also supporting them in the initial stages of self-employment. The project has also set up a pan-Hellenic database of information on training and employment opportunities for people with disabilities.

Awareness-raising strategies aimed at employers and young people entering the work force is another feature of the project. The awareness-raising campaigns will also be extended to family members and the general public.

Experiments are showing that appropriate mixtures of teletraining and telework can help older workers acquire the new skills they need to prevent them being excluded from the labour market, or at best being relegated to low-skilled jobs. They are often handicapped in taking advantage of the new information and communication technologies because they have neither grown up with them, nor have they received any introductory education or training in them.



In Finland, the project "45+" is setting up a combined training and consulting methodology for small firm employees over 45 years of age. A special study is being made of their information technology training needs, and a training programme aimed at increasing their teleworking ability put in place. The project will help small firms to capitalise on the new information technology driven opportunities, whilst at the same time preventing their older employees from becoming marginalised by giving them the skills to operate in an environment based on information and the utilisation of information technology. It is developing and testing learning and development approaches, having conducted needs analyses and individual development plans for targeted workers in a number of pilot small firms. The resulting experiences drawn from the three national partner projects – in Belgium, the United Kingdom and Finland – will form the basis of a guide on best processes, methods, means and practices.

Telework – the networks

The importance of cooperation and networking cannot be too firmly stressed. Before planning an initiative on telework in an area, all key actors and potential contributors should be brought together (local authorities, representatives of business and trade unions, service providers, training institutions and universities and employment services) in order to remove all barriers and to grasp all opportunities for co-operation.

Advances in information and communication technology affect almost all fields of activity.

The relatively simple technologies of e-mail, and the more complex ones of video-conferencing now enable us to work together in virtual workgroups. This opens up new possibilities for entrepreneurs and for small firms. But individuals who want to benefit from them need to be proactive, and to have inquiring minds. They also need to think differently about the relationship between business and networking, and they must learn new communication skills.

A number of ADAPT projects are actively creating new electronic co-operation methods and means, and are using them to enable entrepreneurs and small firms to expand and develop their activities.

EVENT – European Virtual Enterprise Network is a transnational partnership between projects from Belgium, France, Finland and United Kingdom. It aims at "harnessing technology to entrepreneurship for the creation of new job opportunities" by creating virtual enterprises, computer-linked networks of self-employed people or small firms formed to exploit collectively markets and commercial opportunities which are beyond the reach of any one of them individually. A transnational network using the Internet and providing information and services to a global market supports these new enterprises. The partnership also aims to develop and test a transnational model to train people for the new virtual style of working.

The training and learning in EVENT is strongly connected to other development activities. It consists of modular courses supporting the participants as they set up virtual companies. Training is based on the participants' personal development plans. Some is in the form of ready-made courses - especially at the start-up phase - and some is to be developed with the participants to meet individual needs for knowledge and support as they arise.

The Virtual Business Programme – examples of modules:

Group technologies introduces the idea and possibilities of distributed group work. Main focus on technical tools and software solutions for distributed group work.

Networking - from idea to practice investigates some theoretical foundations of networking. This networking module also presents EVENT as an Intranet for support and product development, and networking as a tool for penetrating the market.



Electronic commerce and network marketing introduces the emerging electronic commerce activities and electronic marketing. Includes a hands-on workshop with practical examples.

Business plan workshop initiates business plan development by the participants, helping them discover possibilities in the use of information technology and networking for their own business ideas.

This European Virtual Enterprise Network has become the starting point for a number of activities and new projects under development by all the participating partners. An example is the Virtual Gateway, which gives participating entrepreneurs and SMEs the possibility to introduce their services and products at the international market and to give them visibility through the Internet. The partners say, "Virtual working is a skill of its own kind, that cannot be mastered by reading any manuals or guides. To adopt virtual working method requires practical training and active search of new virtual working experiences".

Finnish project: <http://event.jyu.fi>



The Virtual Workplace project is another first generation ADAPT partnership set up to help small firms explore the use of electronic networking. Partner projects are from Germany, Finland and Ireland.

It aims to increase the productivity, flexibility and competitiveness of self-employed and small firms, and to help them predict and adapt to market changes. Qualified unemployed people as well as small firms staff are being trained to become teleworkers. It is a virtual school model using the latest learning technology, including video-conferencing, Internet and computer-based learning. A support centre for telework has been established, providing training, technical support, tutoring and counselling to teleworkers. It is also a forum for business contacts within the EU. The training methods (open and distance learning) and the learning environment (on the Internet) are designed so to provide a student with the essential skills needed by a teleworker. The results are encouraging. The Virtual Workplace projects have not only identified and developed the physical environment for support of virtual work but also a number of new and vital roles in the electronic networking environment. Distance learning experiences, models and packages for Virtual Entrepreneurs, Telework-Tutors, Coaches for Telework, Tele-Consulting, Networks of Tele-Consultants, have been developed and implemented with success.

German project: <http://www.ipc-ag.com>

Finnish project: <http://www.amiedu.net>

Product promotion, business contacts and business deals are of prime importance to small firms.

They guarantee the prosperity of a firm, and the jobs of its employees. To date there has been no clear example of the use of information technologies to this end. There are no completely operative information systems to help small firms that lack the ability to take their own large-scale initiatives in these fields.

The results of the development work done in the Virtual Workplace project have formed the basis for the creation of a VIRTUAL EXPO & BUSINESS CENTER – VEBC. A transnational partnership made up by ADAPT projects from Belgium, Germany, Finland, Italy and United Kingdom aims to cover this gap and develop an operative VEBC via the World Wide Web. This will give the opportunity to a number of SMEs to promote their products with the use of a powerful media, to have a business contact point and eventually generate business and close deals through the VEBC with the help of Internet utilities and video conferencing.

The project is focusing on the commercial activities and business contacts of companies. The partners wish to anticipate both the evolutions in the way business is conducted and the training needed. It might create an impact on the economic activities and market positions of SMEs in Europe. The project will also focus on the adaptation of employees to the new technological settings, the improvement of their qualifications, the guarantee of their jobs, and the creation of new jobs.

The project is:

- creating a local network with SMEs which will use and support the VEBC;
- defining the new tasks and functions of the SME employees connected to the VEBC and the development of tailor made Self Learning Multimedia Training Material for training provision in Internet services, in marketing on Internet and generating business over the Internet;
- training employees and managers of SMEs in these areas to make them able to use and promote the VEBC services;
- designing, organising and developing a Virtual Expo and Business Center over the Internet with the participation of all transnational partners.

At the end of 1999, the European VIRTUAL EXPO & BUSINESS CENTRE will be operational and be opened up for the use of other interested SMEs in Europe.

“The partners in VEBC commit themselves to developing a framework for a VEBC on both the local and transnational level which will remain operational after the termination of the current project and which can be further extended to the other Member States of the EU”.



German project: <http://www.ipc-ag.com>

Finnish project: <http://www.amiedu.net>

The key to regional and local development is the creation of successful networks and partnerships between the institutions, the organisations and the individuals who hold, but often fail to share, power and resources. The availability of information and communication technologies makes it easier for these partnerships to emerge, and, once they have emerged, greatly increase their scope for sharing information, co-operating in the delivery of their services, and designing new joint activities.

Nutzergemeinschaft

TELEMATIK

The German project "Nutzergemeinschaft Telematik" is strengthening small firms, particularly farming businesses, in rural areas of Brandenburg by introducing their management to the advantages of telematic procedures. These go much further than simple telephone communication and include electronic data processing and direction of processes from a distance. The project is also introducing them to applied telematics (video-conferencing, shared use of computer software, local area networks, regional networks, Internet applications).

Local telecentres are the backbone of these electronic communication networks linking firms, public bodies, individuals and projects. They provide small firms with both services and whole business functions. The regional telecentres in Teltow, Görtsdorf, and Wusterhausen function as regional market-places for know-how in the use of media and technology for small firms. There is clear evidence that they stimulate both take-up of training and virtual and real networking activities.

The key partners are small firms themselves and their representative bodies, local service providers, private and public training bodies, labour market organisations and welfare bodies. A number of ADAPT projects are exploiting these partnerships to pilot telecentres or (in rural areas) telecottages. Their purpose is to identify and provide services for local or regional enterprise networks. The services vary according to needs. Some are new Internet-based services offering small firms and entrepreneurs help with administration, marketing, and taxation. Others provide more classical mixtures of consultancy and support from one-stop shops. Both the types of centre are providing full-time and freelance employment to others who themselves function as teleworkers - supporting other teleworkers.

Teleworkers making use of such centres retain the benefits of flexible hours and easy travel-to-work, but, because they work with others, avoid isolation. They also benefit from fully-equipped, supported and maintained offices. In most cases they also benefit from training via teleteaching and tutoring, using distance learning and interactive self-learning materials.



An Italian ADAPT project "SME and Micro-Business Adaptation via European Superhighway Technology" has set up a pilot experiment in a rural mountain area, enabling a company organised on a number of dispersed sites to resolve its workers' travel to work problems. Strong local traditions made it difficult to introduce new multimedia and telecommunication technology, but the company has succeeded in making its work organisation more flexible, allowing a proportion of the workers to work from home, using teleconference facilities instead of travelling. New living and working styles are emerging. Both the employees' quality of life and the company's performance have improved.

The foundation of such regional telecentres also opens up a range of new job opportunities for telematic experts, as well as for service providers in different software applications and in training.

Pegasus

The Greek project "Pegasus" is promoting teleworking by setting up telecottages in isolated areas where employment opportunities are scarce. These provide services and networking facilities to widely dispersed companies, training bodies, business consultants and entrepreneurs. The project provides training in the management and use of the Internet-based network, as well as in the organisation of telecottages, and in the skills and techniques required for telework. Each of the three telecottages involved in the pilot project will set up a team made up of young people who have recently begun their own enterprises, and others who are unemployed and wish to be entrepreneurs. They will be invited to use the telecottages' services. The final product of the project will be a concrete model proposal for establishing telework in the regions involved.

Telework – new jobs

Telework helps create employment in two ways. One is through the emergence of completely new jobs, often in entirely new settings. The other is the result of the process of changing existing jobs so radically that they in fact become new jobs themselves. **ADAPT projects show both processes at work.**

Rapid changes in many sectors are resulting in growing demands from companies for new services designed to help them adapt further and remain competitive.

This provides new market opportunities and niches, leading to the creation of new activities and jobs in a variety of sectors, providing employment opportunities for all kinds of workers, including many of those who traditionally have the greatest difficulties in finding their way onto the labour market.



Amongst sectors particularly affected by change, the telecommunications industry is one of the most altered. The Belgian Flemish project "Call-Ware" demonstrates how the liberalisation of telecommunications throughout Europe has been the catalyst for the creation of new services for consumers and businesses. It is working by establishing a network of small firms wishing to capitalise on this liberalisation. Within the network they receive the information, know-how and training they need to exploit the change. An international call-centre is being set up, but the project's innovation goes far beyond the typical telesales that usually make up call-centre activities. The project is concerned to adapt the technology itself to the small firms' needs. In this case telework is the optimum answer to companies' needs. It is turning a potential danger into an opportunity, and is resulting in the creation of a new sector of activities.

Often, proactive and detailed research is required to identify new job opportunities. Market change does not always result in them emerging spontaneously and visibly. More research is certainly needed in the new technologies sector itself.

Nuevas Trabajadoras

Telework as a potential source of new jobs to fight unemployment is the starting point for the Spanish project "Nuevas Trabajadoras", located in Andalucía, where the unemployment rate amongst women gives particular cause for concern. The regional authorities have set out to investigate new sources of employment which make use of the new technologies to address small firms' needs. They will be analysing companies' requirements in relation to telework, using the Business Innovation Centre (BIC), whose wide experience enables it to carry out analyses, to map new job profiles, and to develop training material.

The public and private institutions each bring their own skills and resources to the research, making it more effective, and enabling trainees to target their job searches very precisely. The project is covering the whole region, and takes in all sectors.

The new job opportunities telework brings to the service sector also has a positive influence on more traditional sectors.

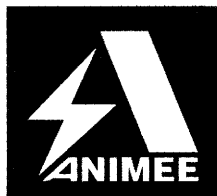
In the service sector, telework tends to expand rapidly, especially where workers are already familiar with information and communication technologies. More traditional sectors can be much slower to react, having a drag effect on job development in whole regions. Here again, public authorities have a very positive role to play in stimulating the emergence and the spread of telework.



In Catalonia, the steady expansion of teleworking in the newspaper industry has stimulated interest in applying it to other traditional industries like textiles, metallurgy, and mining. In the Spanish project "Dispositivo de Intervencion Comarcal para Teletrabajo Comarca des Bages", the local authority is setting up an initiative to create telework.

It is part of the plan to develop the region, stimulating the emergence of new jobs and occupations. This will involve researching the region's potential for telework, exploiting new business opportunities, supporting cultural change and adaptation to new forms of distance working, and encouraging the creation of businesses experimenting in new forms of teleworking. According to Miquel Inglès, a member of the project team, only with the involvement of public authorities could so many sectors within an entire region be drawn into the work; as there is no tradition of teleworking in the region, the risk would have been too great for the private sector to take the lead.

Telework can itself be a factor of change, transforming an existing job or business into a completely new one, by changing both job content and working methods. Introducing telework as a means of remaining competitive can have important and unforeseen results.



The Portuguese project "Telemanutenção" has the objective of introducing telework into highly traditional maintenance occupations. This will radically change workers' job profiles. They will require training to adapt their skills to new ways of working. The project is carrying out a survey of training needs, offering training sessions, including training of trainers, in the new skills involved.

Entrepreneurs and managers are being offered information on the advantages of telework. Its introduction creates opportunities for further business development through telemaintenance networks, and the use of distance control processes. This will ultimately lead to the emergence of a completely new occupation.

Where the adoption of new information and communication technologies, and the introduction of telework are widespread, new types of jobs are certain to emerge as a direct result. This must be prepared for; otherwise skill gaps will appear amongst existing workers, and they will find it difficult to qualify for these new jobs.



The whole banking and finance sector has adopted on-line services and virtual banking, and is beginning to exploit the huge possibilities of the Internet. The French project "Services Bancaires en Ligne sur Internet et Formation" was conceived to respond to demands for training and expertise as it became obvious that existing skills and ways of working were no longer effective. The Italian project will analyse the development of banking activities on the Internet and its impact on skills, occupations and work organisation in order to be in a position to provide appropriate skill-training for these new types of activities. An important aspect of the project is its emphasis on capacity to anticipate future changes. Changes in jobs and ways of working are becoming a more or less permanent process, in contrast to the previously stable character of these occupations. Francois-Xavier Noir, director of the Europe-Asia department of the CFPB (the Banking Industry Training Centre) says, '.....training provision and skills acquisition have not, up until now, been matched with each other. In any case, the very nature of these skills is closely dependent on the rapid and continuous changes in the use of the Internet.

In other activities, telework can be used to raise the quality of service, and to extend access to services.

When this occurs, job creation may be both direct and indirect, but the indirect impact may be the greatest.



Telework and telecooperation can be used to help a wide range of services modernise and raise the quality of what they provide. The Italian project "NET-TELEMED - European network on telemedicine" is setting up a new telemedicine service, helping patients assistance through a computer-based system giving access to qualified personnel. This highly qualified and highly technical profession will require that all personnel involved are trained in essential technological know-how and practice. They will have to learn new ways of working and new technical skills. The project is likely to define a range of new tasks and activities, and to lead to a new profession - a tele-doctor.

Innovation points

ADAPT projects are selected for their capacity to innovate, and they are required to make their experiences available to others. Innovation covers policy – European Union, national, regional, local, and practice – applied by individuals, companies, sectors, trainers and business advisors. It covers the activities of those who plan for business, and those who carry it out. Those who provide services in the labour market, and those who make use of them.

Telework has wide relevance. Many of the factors which affect its use also touch other issues and activities. The Innovation Points which follow underline aspects of ADAPT project work and experience which can be of particular and immediate value either in policy debates, or for good practice, or for both.

The information required to follow them up is referred to in the report, and can be accessed in greater detail by taking up the references and examining the Web sites indicated. Very few projects had completed their work at the time of publication. Therefore, those looking to them for information and experience must expect to see their work evolving rapidly and considerably over a period of time.

The links with European employment policy are highlighted by grouping the Innovation Points around the pillars of the employment policy adopted at the 1997 Luxembourg Summit to which they relate.

Employability

- **Self-learning** is the rule for present and future teleworkers. The role of training providers is gradually shifting from that of suppliers of learning material, to that of coaches and tutors. Teleworkers potentially have access to vast resources of information and training material, but they cannot use it without help and support. ADAPT projects are widely exploring and developing the roles of **work coaches, mentors, and new types of trainers**.
- Teleworkers need **learning material accessible from the place of work, tailor-made, just in time**. **Teletraining** is one of the developments leading to a fundamental shift from supply-led to demand-led provision. The relationship between businesses and training providers is changing, and must result in training providers making radical changes to their products, and their ways of delivering them.
- Massive changes in work organisation are placing great strains on management, and are elevating **the importance of soft skills** – co-operation, team building, leadership, inter-personal relations. ADAPT projects are working widely on the new skills required for teleworkers, and for those who manage teleworkers.
- **The quality of training**, for everybody, but especially for those involved as teleworkers in virtual organisations, is of prime importance. It must be easily accessed as required. It must be both job-specific and broad enough to extend future opportunities. It must be related to understood and transparent qualifications, and it must be well-supported.

Entrepreneurship

- The creation of **virtual enterprises** between a number of SMEs, enable these to compete with larger firms. ADAPT projects are focusing the creation of such virtual companies, thereby having an impact both on small business creation, and on extending self-employment.
- **Regional telework initiatives** can create new opportunities for business, particularly in remote areas. **Telecentres or telecottages delivering services to SMEs**, enabling young entrepreneurs to share some services, support the creation and development of new companies.
- Entrepreneurs need a great deal of support and help in anticipating market changes and opportunities, and technological change. **Support systems for small firms and entrepreneurs have a major impact on the spread of telework**. ADAPT projects in almost all Member States are involved in supporting the spread of telework, and in predicting its future.
- Both telework and teletraining are already having an impact on the **modernisation of traditional sectors** - banking, maintenance and medicine are examples - and as a consequence on the emergence of new jobs in these sectors, and in companies supporting them.

Adaptability

- The introduction of **telework can in itself be a factor of change**: an existing job can be turned into a completely new one, by changing job contents and working methods. Its development is a sign of both business and individuals becoming more adaptable.

- **Telework offers many new opportunities for the creation of new types of jobs**, as well as for the transformation of existing ones. Small firms are much better placed to realise these fully where they enjoy strong local support from public authorities, and where they are able to benefit from the products of steadily improving techniques for anticipating future labour market opportunities, and business and skills needs. Many ADAPT projects are producing innovations, and demonstrating good practice in both these fields.
- **Teletrade and electronic commerce** present small firms with fresh opportunities to participate in supply chains and trading networks. These relationships generally improve the quality and efficiency of all that they do.

- ADAPT projects are developing **new instruments and tools to help small firms use telework**. Via Internet, most of these products will be available to those who wish to make use of them.
- The ability of small firms, and especially their managers, to respond to opportunities is being significantly advanced by the **availability of networks of experts** who can deliver new on-line services and advice. Business and training consultants are also becoming teleworkers.

Equal Opportunities

- **Teleworking can be tailor-made to be gender-fair**, creating opportunities for women and men to gain access to all types jobs. IT programming, staffing help-desks, data compilation, providing training support, selling goods and services, are just a small number of examples.

- ADAPT and EMPLOYMENT-NOW projects show how telework is also providing **women with access to the labour market** through self-employment and business creation. The flexibility of this form of work does, however, also have to be accompanied by measures to tackle social isolation, to provide child-care, to assure social protection and to protect wage levels.
- **Telework is proving an effective means of providing jobs for people with disabilities**, and for others who are immobile or disadvantaged. EMPLOYMENT-HORIZON and EMPLOYMENT-INTEGRA projects show two strategies at work. Well-designed and targeted awareness raising campaigns can open up some job opportunities in existing firms, and individuals are also being supported in creating their own businesses.



Final word

Until recently, telework was a way of life affecting only a very few individuals. Beneficial because it allowed them to work even when they were isolated by distance or disability.

Today it is also visibly changing the way in which millions work in their offices, factories and workshops. It brings improvements in efficiency, new opportunities, and changes in working methods and conditions. Some are welcome and others present difficulties.

Tomorrow, telework will just be work.

Annex I:

List of projects

OSPRACT (ADAPT-1997-Bfr527)

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VIRTUAL WORKPLACE (ADAPT-1995-D002) VIRTUAL EXPO & BUSINESS CENTRE (ADAPT-1997-D505) IPC International Project Center AG

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TELETRAINING FOR WOMEN IN MULTIMEDIA (ADAPT-1995-D007) Kombi Consult GmbH

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QUALIFIZIERUNG ZUR STANDORTUNABHÄNGIGEN TELEKOOPERATIVEN ARBEIT (ADAPT-1997- D553)

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PEOVILU (ADAPT-1997-D764)

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CONSTITUTION D'UNE PLATE- FORME TRANSNATIONALE DE COMPÉTENCES SUR LE TÉLÉTRAVAIL (ADAPT-1997-F619)

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**CREATION OF A NETWORK OF
TELECENTRES IN EMILIA ROMAGNA
(ADAPT-1997-IT802)**
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**NET-TELEMED - EUROPEAN
NETWORK ON TELEMEDICINE
(ADAPT-1997-IT826)**
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Annex 2:

The ADAPT Initiative

ADAPT aims to help the workforce adapt to industrial change, and to promote growth, employment and the competitiveness of companies in the European Union. It does this by co-financing innovative projects in each Member State. These join in transnational partnerships to develop, transfer and disseminate designs, solutions to problems, materials and products. These are all concerned with the preservation of existing jobs and the creation of new ones. The ADAPT Initiative is adopted by the European Commission for the period 1995-1999 and financed by the European Social Fund. The total budget of the ADAPT Initiative, including both European Union and Member State contributions is 3.275 billion ECU.

The people who benefit from the ADAPT Initiative are men and women who:

- are at risk of unemployment in private sector companies, especially small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), which are strongly affected by industrial change;
- have recently lost their jobs, as a result of restructuring within companies or sectors;
- have had their employment contracts temporarily suspended, as a result of industrial change;
- may be threatened with unemployment, as a result of re-organisation at their work places;
- have prospects of employment in newly created jobs.

How ADAPT works

The objective of the ADAPT Initiative is to transform the way in which small firms, the organisations which support them, and workers themselves, respond to industrial change. ADAPT designs and tests new ways of tackling these changes and this development work goes on in projects throughout Europe. National and regional authorities all over Europe selected about 4000 pilot projects. The final task of these ADAPT projects is to make others aware of their results and of how to use them.

ADAPT funds projects that are innovative, have a high degree of local involvement and are able to show how they intend to help others to gain from their experience, results and products. The impact of these projects is reinforced by grouping them in transnational partnerships so that the lessons learnt in one Member State or country can be taken up and used throughout the European Union.

Priority is given to experimental projects that help workers and firms cope with change by:

- developing new ways to anticipate its effects;
- raising awareness about the consequences;
- providing workers with additional forms of training, counselling and guidance;
- setting up networks to help companies;
- adapting existing support structures;
- promoting job creation;

In the second phase of ADAPT (1997-1999), an additional priority has been added to the Initiative, providing supplementary funding and focusing on the employment implications of the development of the Information Society. (ADAPT-Building the Information Society)

The Outcomes

ADAPT is now entering a new phase which will explore, and use, the products and outcomes of the innovative projects and transnational partnerships. Member States and the European Commission will identify, highlight and disseminate these positive outcomes and decide on how they can best be used to influence current policies and practice at both European and national level.

ADAPT projects cover the four pillars of the European Employment Guidelines agreed at the Luxembourg Job Summit: employability, entrepreneurship, adaptability, equal opportunities. They will contribute to national employment policy by demonstrating good practices and new ways of doing. Simultaneously, ADAPT projects will contribute to the adaptation of the workforce, and will provide a source of new insights and new tools, enhancing the ability of European small firms to grow and to become more competitive.

Annex 3: Addresses of ESF National Administrations and National Support Structures

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