



EDUCATION  
TRAINING  
YOUTH

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**European handbook  
for guidance counsellors  
Complementary  
version**

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EUROPEAN  
COMMISSION



**European handbook  
for guidance counsellors  
Complementary  
version**

Cataloguing data can be found at the end of this publication

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 1996

ISBN 92-827-5387-5

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*Printed in Belgium*

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The Commission of European Communities acknowledges with gratitude, the assistance which it has received from many individuals and organisations in the preparation of this Complementary Version of the European Handbook for Guidance Counsellors. This acknowledgement includes all of the organisations which provided information, the Stichting Uitwisseling in Bergen which organised the translation of this Handbook, and the EURYDICE network which supplied the diagrams of the Member States' education and training systems.

Special thanks are also due to the following organisations which coordinated the drafting of the various country chapters:

Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs, Vienna;  
Centre for International Mobility, Helsinki;  
Intercom, University of Iceland, Reykjavik;  
The Directorate of Labour, Oslo;  
Ministry of Education and Science, Stockholm.





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## INTRODUCTION

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The European Union (EU) has for several years promoted the transnational mobility of young people through many measures across a range of programmes. The common objective of these activities has been to make Europe something real to young people, to improve their understanding of the various peoples and cultures which it embraces, and to enable them to make best use of the opportunities for education, training and work which are available throughout the Union.

The barriers, which have separated the different national systems of education and training, are now giving way under the pressure of rapidly increasing transnational collaboration and the same phenomenon is also apparent in the labour market. The re-organisation of the training and educational programmes of the EU from 1995 onwards, to develop proven practice and improve cooperation, and the clear definition of the competencies of the EU in the fields of education and training, as outlined in Articles 126 and 127 of the Treaty of Maastricht, provide an additional stimulus to mobility and enhance possibilities for European citizens to explore opportunities in Member States other than their own.

Young Europeans, who are at an age where they want to discover the world for themselves, need no second invitation to take advantage of every possibility, and those whose task it is to advise them have already seen their growing enthusiasm for the different types of transnational experiences which are available. There is a high level of demand for opportunities to study, to train, to take part in work experience, or even to find a job, in another Member State. Whilst in the past a considerable number of workers simply had to become mobile to find employment, we now see the emergence of a new positive form of mobility, as young people seek transnational experience to complete or extend their training.

In such a situation, it is extremely important that professional information and guidance staff can find out about the new possibilities which are emerging.

This was why the Commission of European Communities decided to produce the European Handbook for Guidance Counsellors. After a pilot edition, the definitive text was published in 1994 and covered education, training and work experience opportunities in the twelve Member States which, at that time, formed the European Union.

With the accession of Austria, Finland and Sweden at the beginning of 1995, it was decided to produce a Complementary Version of the Handbook. In addition, to these three new Member States, this Complementary Version also includes relevant information about Iceland and Norway which are the other EFTA/European Economic Area countries.

The format of this Handbook is the result of a compromise between two contradictory imperatives: producing a publication which gives exhaustive information on all relevant topics, versus the need to offer a handy working tool which provides absolutely accurate information. The Handbook tries to resolve this dilemma by combining basic information, which is assumed to be relatively stable, with a "directory" of those resource services which can provide access to reliable and exhaustive data.

The Handbook tends to concentrate on non-university vocational training and to access to employment for the types of young people who are normally the beneficiaries of such training. This is because counsellors whose work is concerned with schools or higher education have access to many documents which have already been published by the European Commission and which cover their area of interest, in particular, the European Guide for Students and the different publications available from the EURYDICE Network. Also counsellors who are concerned with the world of work,

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can use the network of Employment Services Euroadvisers and through these Euroadvisers, they may gain access to the EURES data bases. The first of these is on job offers and the second provides much more information on living and working conditions in the Member States of the EU plus Iceland and Norway than could be included in a Handbook such as this one.

## The Structure of the Handbook

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This publication has six chapters: a chapter on the EU Education, Training and Guidance activities, followed by a chapter on each of the five countries.

The European Handbook for Guidance Counsellors published last year gives an overview of the main actions in the field of education and training which have been initiated by the European Community since the signing of the Treaty of Rome. It also describes the work on recognition and comparability of qualifications, developments in Community policy in relation to guidance and the different Community networks and services which provide information which can be useful to guidance counsellors. This information is not repeated in this Complementary Version and thus, this chapter concentrates on the new Community programmes and actions which will operate till the year 2000 and, in particular, their guidance elements.

The national chapters are all structured in an identical way. A general introduction provides basic data on the country (geographical area, population etc.) and then the information is organised in five sections:

- A: Initial Reference Points* which provides the addresses of the services which can be contacted in that country to obtain information or to find out about possible contacts;
- B: The Education and Training System* which includes an overview of the system presented in diagrammatic form (B1), and subsequent sub-sections focusing on general education (B2), initial vocational training (B3), further education (B4) and recognition of qualifications (B5) which gives details on the national services which deal with this topic;
- C: Careers Guidance Services* which contains a description of the services which are involved in the field of educational and careers guidance and explains either their legal status, or under which auspices they operate. Information is also provided on the possibilities of young people from foreign countries having access to these national guidance services;
- D: Transnational education, training and work experience* which describes the different possibilities for placements in the country (D1), the legislative and administrative arrangements which apply to such placements (D2) and the organisations which manage placements (D3), whether these are the national agencies for Community programmes or other services;
- E: Living and working conditions* which presents brief data on the pay-levels for apprentices and minimum wages of workers (E1), the possibilities for paid educational leave (E2), social security (E3) and job placement agencies (E4).

In order to avoid confusion or misinterpretation, the names of the organisations or institutions and the terms applied in each section have been translated between brackets the first time that they are used in particular national chapters. Thereafter, they appear in the original language. In order to simplify the text, all the addresses of organisations mentioned are listed at the end of each national chapter, in alphabetical order.

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## How to use the Handbook

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*If you are looking for precise information to answer questions from young people and you cannot immediately find the answer to a question about another country, use the Handbook as a “directory” of resource services because one of the agencies listed may be able to help you. However, it can sometimes be quicker and more effective to turn first of all, to the services in your own country whose task it is to provide information on the European dimension and which are listed in Section A of each National Chapter.*

*If you are looking for information on the European Union and its programmes and actions, then the chapter on the EU provides a summary of these. Additional information is available from:*

- the office of the Commission of European Communities or its related documentation centres;
- the units responsible in each country for the implementation of the various Community Programmes.

The addresses of these services can be found in Sections A and D of each national chapter.

*If you are looking for partners or opportunities for exchanges in other countries, details of services to contact can be found in sections A and C of the national chapters.*

*If you want to gain an understanding of education and training in these five countries, for your general information rather than for a specific purpose, you can content yourself with reading the synthesis texts presented in the different chapters and you need not worry about the rest. The texts which are particularly relevant are and sections B and C of each national chapter.*

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## Some advice about dealing with information

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It is useful to be aware of a certain number of issues which arise when you are dealing with information about foreign countries and perhaps the most important of these is the *perishable nature of information*. This Handbook does not completely escape this risk even if by concentrating on a base of stable information and by providing a method of up-dating information through national sources, that risk has been limited.

You might also experience some *difficulty in understanding certain foreign concepts in relation to your own culture*. Education and training systems in, are in many ways, an expression or reflection of individual national cultures. As a result, the differences in systems can not be illustrated by a simple organisational description and they can easily lead to misunderstandings. You need to be very careful in handling the vocabulary of training and education or even in using everyday terms such as rector, college, grade, faculty, academy, as they may have similar sounding words in other languages which are used in other countries to mean totally different things.

There are also *local or regional differences which exist within each country*. The differences in the level of development between regions in the same country are all well-known and recognised. But the differences in the fields of education and training must also be taken into account and even more so, as these differences continue to increase in the majority of countries. If you wish to pursue your research beyond the basic data produced in the Handbook, be aware of the fact that the situation observed in one part of a given country will not necessarily be true for the whole of that country.

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We hope that, for whatever purpose you use this Complementary Version of the Handbook, you will find it to be a valuable additional information resource. We intend to integrate the information which it contains into a new edition of the European Handbook which will be published in 1996/97 and will then cover all 17 countries. If you have any comments or suggestions which you feel should be taken into account in producing this new version, or if you would like to receive a copy of the European Handbook which was published in 1994, please write to:

European Commission  
*DG XXII - Education, Training and Youth*  
Rue de la Loi 200  
B-1049 Brussels

**EUROPEAN UNION**



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## THE EUROPEAN UNION PROGRAMMES FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH

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In December 1994, all ten existing programmes in the field of education, training and youth came to an end. Between that December and March 1995, three new programmes were adopted as part of the Commission's policy of rationalising its programmes and making them more open and understandable. The new programmes, which will last until December 1999, are:

LEONARDO - the framework programme for training;  
SOCRATES - the framework programme for education;  
YOUTH FOR EUROPE III - an extension of the second phase of that programme.

This chapter explains something about each of these programmes and, in the case of LEONARDO, how the vocational guidance activities which were launched under *PETRA*, will be developed, in the future.

Two principles will be of special significance in the implementation of LEONARDO DA VINCI, SOCRATES and the Third Phase of Youth for Europe. The first is that of co-funding. In the case of virtually all measures or projects under the three programmes, it is expected that EU support should be accompanied by a minimum - and in many cases substantial - financial contribution from the participating countries.

Secondly, although all three programmes are comprehensive and self-contained, every effort will be made in implementing them to ensure that their measures interrelate appropriately and do not duplicate those of other Community provisions and programmes with a bearing on education and training. Foremost in this respect, are the Community initiatives (most notably "Employment and the Development of Human Resources" and "Adapt") and other forms of support available under the structural funds, as well as sectors or sub-sectors of the Fourth Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development (1994-98), including "training and mobility of researchers", "telematics for knowledge", and "research on education and training".

To assist in the implementation of these programmes the Commission HAS established two Community-level Technical Assistance Offices, one for LEONARDO and one for SOCRATES and YOUTH FOR EUROPE III. Also, Member States and other eligible countries, designated agencies to help run each of these programmes at national level (See Section D of each national chapter). Further information about the national agencies and a vademecum and an applicants' or promoters' guide for each of these three new programmes are available directly from:

LEONARDO European Office for Programme Support  
Avenue de l'Astronomie 9  
B - 1030 Bruxelles

&

SOCRATES and YOUTH FOR EUROPE III Office for Programme Support  
Rue Montoyer 14  
B - 1040 Bruxelles

The chapter ends with a description of the Youthstart element of the Employment Community Initiative. This Initiative will also operate during the period 1995-199. National Support Structures will soon be established in all 15 Member States and a Community-level Technical Assistance Office has just been set up in Brussels. Further information may be obtained from:

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Adapt & Employment European Office for Programme Support  
Place du Luxembourg 2-3  
B-1050 Brussels

## The LEONARDO da VINCI Programme

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On 6 December 1994, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted the LEONARDO da Vinci programme for the implementation of a Community vocational training policy. The complete text of the Council Decision is published in OJ L/340 of 29 December 1994.

This programme has a key objective of supporting the development of policies and innovative action in the Member States, by promoting projects and other activities in the context of transnational partnerships which involve different organisations with an interest in training.

LEONARDO is open to partnerships of those actively involved in training: enterprises, social partners (at national and Community level), universities, public authorities, public and private training bodies and providers in the EU Member States and the European Economic Area. Subject to agreement on procedures and finances, it is intended that LEONARDO be opened up to organisations in the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to Cyprus and Malta.

The programme's goal is to prepare for the 21st century by improving quality and innovation in vocational training. These are key factors for mastering technological and industrial change and its impact upon work organisation and the competitiveness of enterprise. LEONARDO is concerned with enabling vocational training to prepare for the professions of tomorrow, to anticipate change, to visualize the future, to prepare and experiment with new ways and new methods.

The adoption of the LEONARDO programme also represents a rationalisation of Community action in the area of vocational training, providing the basis to enhance the value of the acquired experience of earlier initiatives. LEONARDO will take forward initiatives successfully developed under COMETT, *PETRA*, FORCE and EUROTECNET, as well as the IRIS network and also add certain new dimensions.

### LEONARDO Actions

LEONARDO establishes a common framework of objectives for Community action designed to support and complement Member States' initiatives in the field of training. It also provides for a set of practical measures to contribute towards the implementation of those objectives which include:

- devising, developing and testing **transnational pilot projects** concerning, in particular, the development of common training modules, the anticipation of training needs, the adaptation of content and methods, the training of trainers and language training;
- **transnational placement and exchange programmes**, which will enable different groups (young people in initial training, university students, managers of human resources) to receive part of their training in another Member State and enable trainers and specialists in the area of training to improve the quality of their work through the opportunity of an exchange;
- the development of knowledge in the areas of vocational training through **surveys and analyses** undertaken on the basis of a Community work plan, concerning in particular, the fields of the anticipation of training needs, transparency of qualifications, new types of apprenticeship and training, quality, investment in training, incentives for training as well as statistics on training provision, finance and beneficiaries.



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## LEONARDO Strands

- **Strand 1** concerns projects which aim to have an impact on the improvement of systems and arrangements for initial or continuing vocational training in Member States (for example, the development and/or wider application of a training module developed with partners, or the development of a method for the validation of work experience or key competencies);
- **Strand 2** concerns projects which aim to have an impact on training practices and actions within enterprises, involving the social partners and/or universities (for example, the development of a multimedia product for the transfer of technology to Small and Medium sized Enterprises (SMEs), or the implementation of a regional or sectoral European network);
- **Strand 3** focuses on the development of linguistic competencies in the field of initial or continuing training, on transnational surveys and analyses and on the transnational transfer of methodologies, results/training products in the framework of training systems and arrangements (dissemination or multiplier-effect projects).

## LEONARDO Eligibility Conditions

Projects implemented under LEONARDO must bring a European dimension to Member States training activity, characterised by:

- the contribution to the realization of the common framework of objectives and the priorities of the programme;
- transnationality: each action will be associated with operators and actors in the training field from several Member States or participating countries;

In addition, projects must seek to promote:

- co-operation between different types of organisation: actions will be carried out by partnerships or networks bringing together different actors and operators, such as public authorities, enterprises, training organisations, social partners, universities and training schools;
- links between the different areas of training, to contribute to overcoming outdated conventions or compartmentalisation of actions and facilitate the transfer of innovations;
- the anticipation of training needs and the dissemination of innovation.

## Vocational guidance in LEONARDO

“Life-long learning” is a central idea of the LEONARDO programme. Initial training and continuing training must no longer be isolated phases in the development of the individual. They must merge into a general concept of training as an on-going process, aiming to ensure, at the same time, the personal development of the individual, as well as their professional integration and progression.

Vocational guidance is defined as “the provision of advice and information on the choice of an occupation and changes of occupation, both in the field of education courses and vocational training and through individual information initiatives”.

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There are also two objectives within the programme's Common Framework of Objectives which refer directly to vocational guidance, namely:

- "developing the European dimension in vocational training and vocational guidance";
- "promoting the development of vocational guidance facilities with a view to providing every individual with the opportunity to have lifelong high-quality vocational guidance".

One immediate implication is that the vocational guidance activities which were launched under **PETRA** will be extended to take account of the requirements of continuing training.

Within the **PETRA** programme, a European Network of Guidance Resource Centres was established. Currently, some 34 Centres have been set up in 12 Member States. These Centres produce national information on education, training and work experience placement opportunities which are available to young people from other Member States. They provide this information to other Centres in the Network and are also directly involved in the exchange and development of good guidance practice.

Through LEONARDO, these Centres will continue to receive a financial contribution from the Commission as they are seen as part of the structures and mechanisms which are necessary to ensure the implementation of the programme at national level. The three new Member States and Iceland and Norway will also receive a grant to enable them to set up Centres and become part of the European Network of Guidance Resource Centres.

The other LEONARDO measures mentioned above, which refer to transnational partnerships (Strand I) and multiplier-effect projects (Strand III), can also be used to continue, and disseminate the results of, the training of guidance counsellors and the development projects which were launched under **PETRA**. However, as is the case for the work of the Centres, the scope of such activity will be enlarged to take account of the needs of the continuing training field.

## The SOCRATES Programme

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Requiring the joint approval of the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers, the EU Education Programme SOCRATES and the Third Phase of the Youth for Europe Programme (see below) were formally agreed on 14 March 1995. The complete text of the Decision of the Parliament and Council establishing SOCRATES is published in OJ L 87 dated 20.4.1995.

In accordance with the terms of the Maastricht Treaty (Article 126) and in a way similar to LEONARDO da Vinci in the field of training, SOCRATES links the aim of upgrading quality in education to Community-supported cooperation initiatives, mainly involving transnational networks of educational establishments at all levels. Initially, it covers the European Economic Area (EEA), including Iceland and Norway in addition to the present 15 EU Member countries. But, subject to agreements similar to those required under Leonardo, SOCRATES too should be extended to organisations in the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe, as well as Cyprus and Malta.

Just as LEONARDO to some extent amounts to a fresh synthesis of the aims of the former separate training programmes with the purpose of rationalizing and further developing their achievements, so the best of ERASMUS (the European Community Action Scheme for the Mobility of University Students) and most of LINGUA (the former EC Programme to promote knowledge of foreign languages in the Community) will be consolidated within SOCRATES. However, SOCRATES stands as a more radical, innovative and all-embracing initiative than either ERASMUS or LINGUA in several important respects.

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SOCRATES provides support for measures such as the foregoing under three main formal headings: higher education (retaining the name ERASMUS); school education (COMENIUS); and a set of “horizontal measures” with a specific focus on the promotion of language skills, open and distance learning and the exchange of information and experience.

## **ERASMUS**

The resources for transnational cooperation in **higher education** will, in many instances, be used to fund a continuation of activities similar to those conducted within the ERASMUS inter-university cooperation programmes (ICPs) and the European Community Course Credit Transfer System (ECTS), among them student mobility (with full academic recognition for satisfactory study abroad), staff mobility, and study visits the joint development of curricula, and the controlled expansion of ECTS itself on a voluntary basis. In addition, however, SOCRATES may also support higher education establishments intending to devise curricula which, for example, enhance awareness and understanding of other EU Member States or aspects of European integration, or boost the learning of Community languages as an integral part of studies.

## **COMENIUS**

Projects supported within the schools sector and will be of three main types: transnational school partnerships for European Education Projects (EEPs), including teacher exchanges and visits; transnational projects for inter-cultural education; and European projects to update and improve the skills of educational staff.

Community support will go to **multilateral EEPs** (schools from at least three participating countries) selected on the basis of a coordinated decision by specially-appointed national agencies. Projects will be an integral part of regular school activities, with an impact on a wide cross-section of the participating schools, and with the full backing of their senior management. Besides sharing the results of project activity among themselves, schools will also be encouraged to circulate the results of their partnership further afield, for example, locally among other establishments not formally participating.

In order to receive EU support, **transnational projects for intercultural education** will be expected either to focus on the special schooling needs of groups such as the children of migrant workers, occupational travellers, travellers and gypsies, or contribute to the intercultural education of all schoolchildren particularly through innovatory teaching practices. Grants will also be available for preliminary visits, study visits and participation in seminars and courses linked to project development.

**Updating and improving the skills of educational staff** involved in the teaching or guidance of pupils will be the main objective of a third category of transnational projects. The latter may therefore mobilise any approved establishment active in developing the proficiency not only of teachers but **careers or curriculum advisers, inspectors and counsellors**. And, once again, grants will be available for preliminary visits to enable staff to make initial preparations for the projects.

## **HORIZONTAL MEASURES**

The “horizontal measures”, the third major heading of SOCRATES, are intended to provide a more specific focus on three themes with positive applications in projects supported under the first two. Thus in addition to language learning as a part of European dimension activities in school and university courses, the “**LINGUA**” **horizontal measure** will sustain many elements of the former LINGUA Programme, including priority for lesser used and taught EU languages. Community support will go to European Cooperation Programmes (ECPs) for initial or continuing training of language teachers, immersion courses abroad for those teaching or required to teach a foreign

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language, assistantships for student language teachers and the development and exchange of curricula, teaching materials, methods and tools for the recognition of linguistic experience. A limited number of grants are also to be earmarked for pupil/student exchanges general, vocational or technical education.

Similarly, the novel emphasis attached to **open and distance learning** in Community-supported European cooperation projects has its counterpart in encouragement to make use of it in the higher education and school curricula projects already discussed. "Horizontal measure" projects likely to receive support will take the form of either European partnership projects involving producers and providers of educational software and programmes, as well as end-users, or "observatory projects" to get a better view of the development of specific aspects of open and distance learning.

As regards the final "horizontal measure", the **exchange of information, experience and innovatory practice** (again a potentially significant component in many of the higher education and school activities), two novel areas will receive special consideration alongside the continued development of EURYDICE, the NARICs and ARION. The first will target questions of broad Community or common educational policy interest for which money may be available to encourage transnational studies, the organisation of colloquia and the exchange of experts. The second will be the use of transnational projects for the promotion of a European dimension in adult education through the Europe-wide pooling of experience and good practice leading to the development of courses which boost understanding of EU political, economic and administrative affairs.

Finally, in addition to the three main headings, the Commission may support a number of complementary measures related in particular to the European-level activities of associations (involving, for example, students, teachers and parents) and other awareness raising initiatives.

## **The YOUTH FOR EUROPE III Programme**

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On 14 March 1995, the Council of Ministers of the European Union adopted the third phase of the Youth for Europe programme. This third phase has been developed on the basis of experience gained during the first two phases of Youth for Europe, through the Priority Actions in the Youth Field, and, in part, the *Petra* Programme and the Tempus Scheme. The complete text of the Decision is published in OJ L 87 dated 20.4.1995.

The Actions of the Programme are addressed to young people aged between 15 and 25 years, residing in the European Union, with no discrimination with regard to their situation in terms of education, training, employment or unemployment, or cultural background; the Programme is also open to young people residing in Iceland and Norway. As with the other two programmes, it is intended that Youth for Europe III will be opened up to the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe and to Cyprus and Malta.

Although projects carried out in the context of formal educational or professional training structures are excluded from the Programme's scope of activities, Youth for Europe provides an opportunity for launching activities which in themselves may potentially lead into the fields of education and training.

As was the case in the previous two phases, specific measures exist to promote the involvement of disadvantaged young people in the activities of the programme.

Youth for Europe III provides, at European level, a broader scope for learning, experimentation and innovation for young people, youth workers and others holding positions of responsibility in the youth field. It consolidates and acknowledges the experience gained, encouraging the pursuit and development of innovative activities, and, more generally, quality activities within the framework of the five Actions of the programme as described below.

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### **Action A: Intra-Community activities directly involving young people**

Under this Action support will be offered to:

- Youth exchanges which remain the main thrust of the activities proposed for the third phase of the Programme and which provide young people outside formal education and training structures with an opportunity for initial contact with other young Europeans from different countries;
- Youth initiatives which are projects set up and managed by young people and which enable them to develop their initiative and creativity;
- Periods of voluntary service which provide young people with the opportunity to take part in projects in another country which benefit the host community, thus developing their creativity and fostering a sense of solidarity.

### **Action B: Youth workers**

There are two main elements in this Action:

- Activities such as study visits and training activities enabling youth workers to better prepare themselves for their work with young people in assisting them with the development of their projects under Action A of the programme;
- European cooperation on training youth workers including the exchange of experience and the joint development and implementation of training modules, enabling those responsible to develop a European dimension in the training of youth workers.

### **Action C: Cooperation between Member States' structures**

The activities under Action C, including the exchange of experience and the creation of partnerships and networks, aim to strengthen cooperation between youth structures in the Member States, which is essential to the development of genuine Community action in the youth field. Particular attention will be paid to those responsible for youth matters in regional and local structures, who have little or no opportunity for contact at European level, and for whom action of this type clearly constitutes added value.

### **Action D: Exchanges with non-member countries**

Exchanges with non-member countries will enable the young people involved to better understand their respective situations and cultures and thus, to develop a sense of mutual solidarity. They provide an opportunity for these young people to become actively involved in different forms of democratic participation. Preparatory activities, such as study visits and training activities, will enable youth workers and those responsible for youth matters in the eligible countries to lay the foundations for the full development of youth exchanges.

### **Action E: Information for young people and youth research**

The exchange of experience, the design and dissemination of youth information products and the creation of networks, are all means of stimulating cooperation in this field, enabling young people to better understand the objectives of the Programme, facilitating their access to its activities and informing them of other Community activities which may interest them. Studies will be launched to

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contribute to a better understanding of the situation of young Europeans, thus promoting a more effective response to their expectations and their needs .

At a time when countries are confronted with a resurgence of racism and xenophobia, Youth for Europe III is particularly important in terms of promoting active citizenship among young people in the European Union and developing mutual understanding and solidarity by bringing them nearer and transcending their cultural differences. The largely decentralised management of the programme will make it possible to respond as effectively as possible to the requirements of young Europeans.

## YOUTHSTART

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At its meeting on 15 June 1994, the Commission decided to introduce a framework initiative on "Employment and Development of Human Resources" for the period 1995-99. This initiative has three inter-related strands:

- **Employment - Now:** to promote equal employment opportunities for women, in particular with regard to training measures, access to future oriented occupations and management positions;
- **Employment - Horizon:** to improve the employment prospects of the disabled and other disadvantaged groups;
- **Employment - Youthstart:** to promote labour market integration of young people under 20, in particular those without basic qualifications or training.

The framework initiative is a direct follow-up to the Commission's White Paper on Growth, Competitiveness and Employment. Under all three strands, it will support transnational pilot projects for Community-wide innovation, transfer of expertise and the dissemination of good practice between the Member States. It will be run in conjunction with other Member State actions, especially those implemented under the Community support frameworks with financial help from the European Social Fund. Thus, Iceland and Norway are not eligible for this Employment Initiative. In partnership with the Member States, the Commission will aim to ensure that measures assisted under this initiative and those supported under the fund and the newly proposed Community programmes, particularly LEONARDO, are appropriately coordinated to complement each other.

There are four main types of activities which will be supported under Youthstart:

- measures in the public and, where appropriate, private sectors to complement other ESF measures and the LEONARDO programme including: the definition of objectives and standards for guidance, training and apprenticeship, placement or assessment; innovative measures for the integration of young people and transfer of models of good practice; links between education, vocational training and the labour market;
- measures based primarily on experience of pilot projects or Community programmes such as LEONARDO and including programmes for the training and placement of young people which stress a spirit of initiative and are coordinated with local schemes; training of instructors and staff in placement services; acquisition of special experience in certain areas (art, heritage, environment, urban renewal, assistance to individuals); application of innovative models of local development;

- 
- assistance for job creation, particularly as part of mutual assistance networks, commercial transnational bodies and relations with young business people in other Member States; transnational exchanges between local development agencies and local employment initiatives to integrate young people;
  - support for regional and local information services; promotion of Employment-Youthstart among young people.

On the basis of their operational programmes, Member States receive a global grant which they then allocate to projects. Project selection procedures have already been completed for 1995 but there will be further selections, in subsequent years.





**AUSTRIA**



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## **General information**

Austria is a predominantly Alpine country bordered to the North by the Czech Republic, to the East by the Slovak Republic and Hungary, to the South by Slovenia and Italy and to the West by Switzerland, Liechtenstein and Germany. The national flag has three equal horizontal stripes of red, white and red. The language is German, with Slovene, Croatian and Hungarian as minority languages in the South and East of Austria.

## **Area and population**

Area (sq km): 83.855

Population (1991 census): 7.795.786

(1993 provisional projection): 7.988.000

Population density: 95 per sq km

Capital: Vienna (1.58 m inhabitants in 1993)

## **Political System**

Austria is a democratic republic re-established as a sovereign nation after the liberation from Nazi-occupation in 1945 on the basis of the Constitution of 1920. The Head of State is a President elected directly by the people for a period of 6 years. Parliament consists of 2 legislative bodies: the *Nationalrat*, elected for terms of 4 years, and the *Bundesrat*, the second chamber, whose members are delegated by the parliaments of Austria's 9 provinces.



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## A. INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

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### A.1 Principal contact point

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*Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

Schreyvogelgasse 2

A-1010 Wien

The "Bureau for European Educational Cooperation" is the major Austrian information and coordination centre for EU programmes on vocational education, training and higher education.

### A.2 Other contact points and information sources

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#### A.2.1 Organisations

AK - *Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte* (Chamber for Workers and Employees);

BFI - *Berufsförderungsinstitut* (Institute for the Advancement of Employment);

BMAS - *Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales* (Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs);

BMUKA - *Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten* (Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs);

BMWFK - *Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst* (Federal Ministry of Research, Science and Art);

ÖAD - *Österreichischer Akademischer Austauschdienst* (Austrian Academic Exchange Service);

*Schulservice des BMUKA* - The educational advisory service of the BMUKA operates a network of regional offices attached to the provincial school authorities;

WIFI - *Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute der Wirtschaftskammern*.

The Institutes for the Advancement of the Economy are agencies of the Chambers of Trade and Industry providing advice and support on initial and continuing vocational training.

#### A.2.2. Handbooks and Publications

(All of these documents are in German unless otherwise indicated)

*ABC des berufsbildenden Schulwesens* (ABC of vocational education). A comprehensive guide to the system of vocational education covering the whole range from short courses and apprenticeships to full-time, 5 year, upper secondary schools;

*Bildungswege zur AHS-Matura* (Educational pathways to the general "Matura", i.e. the secondary school leaving certificate which provides access to university studies);

*CAREER '95* and *Die Chance: Schule oder Lehre?* Two guides to the job market and educational career choice published annually by "Braintrust", a commercial publisher;

*Die Schüler - und Bildungsberatung*. (Educational guidance and counselling). An overview of the Austrian system of vocational guidance and personal counselling in schools;

*Bildungswege in Österreich*. A concise prospectus on the education system published by the school psychology - educational counselling service of the BMUKA (available in English and French);

*Universitäten, Hochschulen '94* (Universities and Higher Education) An annually updated compendium on all aspects of higher education published by the BMWFK, BMAS and BMUKA;

*Wegweiser durch das Dickicht der Beratungsinstitutionen*. (A guide through the thicket of guidance institutions.). Produced for the annual "Study and Job Information Fairs" for the post-secondary sector by the BMAS, BMUKA and BMWFK.

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## **B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM**

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### **B.1 General overview**

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#### **B.1.1 Diagram of the structure of the education and initial training system**

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##### **Key to the diagram**

1. The pre-primary year precedes primary school, and is for children of compulsory school age who are not yet mature enough to attend primary school proper.
2. Special schools are not described in the text.
3. The upper stage of primary school. It is a type of school at the lower stage of secondary education, but the number of pupils now attending such schools is negligible.
4. Academic secondary school comprises 4 years at the lower stage and 4 years at the upper stage.
5. Pre-vocational year. This mainly concerns fourteen to fifteen year olds wishing to learn an occupation immediately after completing their compulsory schooling.
6. Separate upper stage of academic secondary school, begun following 8 years of general education.
7. Post-secondary special-subject colleges. These have been established in the 1995 - 1995 academic year as an alternative to existing university studies.





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## B.1.2 General statistics

- Of the 1,153,700 Austrian pupils who attended schools in 1993/94, approximately 7% went to private schools; private school attendance was 4% at primary level, 14% in 8-year academic secondary schools.
- Nationally, an average of about 30% of primary school leavers transfer to a lower stage of an academic secondary school, 70% move on to a *Hauptschule*; in the larger cities the transfer rate to the academic secondary school can exceed 60%.
- At the age of fifteen, when compulsory education ends, more than half of the age group continue education in full-time schools, the rest enter the "dual system" of vocational part-time education.
- In 1989, a long established pattern changed and since then more pupils attain their *Matura* (matriculation examination) from vocational upper secondary schools than from the academic upper secondary schools which traditionally dominated.
- The number of male *Maturanten* (pupils gaining the *Matura*) rose from 13,357 in 1980 to 14,111 in 1994; in the same period the number of female *Maturantinnen* rose from 12,970 to 16,698.

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## B.2 General education

### B.2.1 Structure, duration and aims of education

#### Pre-school and primary education

Pre-school education (*Kindergarten*) is not compulsory, and legally and administratively not part of the education system. Compulsory education begins at the age of 6 and lasts for 9 years (primary school is for 4 years). The *Vorschulstufe* (pre-primary year) was established to facilitate the entry of children, deemed insufficiently mature to attend regular primary school, into the school system proper. Special schools exist for children with various physical and mental handicaps, although the present tendency is to integrate these children into regular schools as much as possible.

#### Lower secondary education

At the age of 10, children move on to one of the 2 main types of lower secondary education:

- the *Hauptschule* (general secondary school) after which the majority of pupils enter vocational education at the age of 14/15;
- the lower stage of the *Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schule - AHS* (the 8-year "academic" secondary school which is divided into 2 stages of 4 years each).

For many pupils the completion of the lower stage of secondary education, i.e., the age of 14, has become a decisive benchmark and crucial point in their school careers.

#### Upper secondary education

At the age of fourteen, pupils are offered a range of general and vocational options of varying duration:

- the *Polytechnische Lehrgang*, a pre-vocational year which for the majority of the *Hauptschule*-leavers is their final year of compulsory education before they start an apprenticeship;
- full-time technical and vocational schools of 1 to 5 years' duration (see below);
- continuation of or transfer to one of the 3 types of the upper stage of the *AHS*:  
the *Gymnasium* with an emphasis on languages;

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the *Realgymnasium*, giving more weight to science subjects;  
the *wirtschaftskundliche Realgymnasium* with an economy-related mix of subjects.  
Furthermore, there is a separate upper stage of the *Realgymnasium* which provides an opportunity for *Hauptschule*-leavers to continue their general education to university entrance level. The final qualification of all types of *AHS* is the *Matura*, the matriculation qualification which entitles all holders to study at university.

## B.2.2 Institutions providing information

The *BMUKA* and its *Schulservicestelle*.

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## B.3 Initial vocational education and training

### B.3.1 Structure, duration and the levels of qualification attainable

#### **Lehre (Apprenticeship) - *Duales System* (Dual System)**

Apprenticeships are the dominant form of initial vocational training, combining “on the job” training in a firm, with vocational tuition at a *Berufsschule* (vocational school). This so called *Duales System* (dual system) takes 2 forms: either on a day-release basis (at least 1 day per week at the vocational school) or on a block-release basis (courses of a minimum 8 weeks full-time schooling per year). The length of training - 2 to 4 years - depends on the demands of a given trade or occupation. There are no formal entry requirements for an apprenticeship, beyond the completion of the 9 years of compulsory education. Applicants approach the employers either directly or use the services of the *Arbeitsmarktverwaltung* (employment offices). Once they have passed the final examinations set by the employers’ trade associations, apprentices are awarded a *Gesellenbrief* (journeyman’s certificate).

#### **Full-time school-based vocational training.**

A broad range of intermediate vocational schools of 2 to 4 years duration award qualifications which include the professional entitlements of the dual system. Entrants must have successfully completed the lower secondary stage and passed a standardised vocational aptitude test. Training for medical and auxiliary nursing professions at this level starts at a later age, owing to youth employment legislation.

5-year upper secondary technical and commercial schools (*Berufsbildende Höhere Schule*) combine general education with vocational training for a wide range of technical, commercial, business and agricultural occupations, awarding both the qualifications and professional entitlements of the dual system and the *Matura* which gives access to university studies. Secondary school leavers with a *Matura*, looking for alternatives to degree courses at universities, can choose between 3 types of “added-on” initial vocational training:

- a (shortened) apprenticeship in one of the trades;
- a so called *Kolleg*, i.e., 3 or 4 semesters of condensed vocational training as offered by the *BHS*;
- Fachhochschulstudiengänge*. This new type of short-cycle, non-university higher education was introduced in 1994 and offers practice-oriented courses of 8 semesters duration in an (as yet) limited number of occupational fields.

### **B.3.2. Initial training schemes for students with special needs**

For physically, mentally or otherwise handicapped people who want to be trained within the regular dual system a range of special assistance (extra financial support for transport, special equipment etc.) is available. For those who need a more sheltered or purpose-built environment, public and private organisations operate *geschützte Ausbildungswerkstätten* (protected workshops). A number of intermediate and upper secondary vocational schools - some with attached boarding facilities - provide vocational training for those with special needs.

### **B.3.3. Institutions providing information (see also A.2.1.)**

*AK-Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte;*

*BMAS* - The Federal Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs provides the addresses of the *Arbeitsämter* (employment offices) and of the *Landesinvalidenämter* (Provincial Offices for Invalids); the latter have a special responsibility for people with special needs;

*Schulservice des BMUKA;*

*WIFI-Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute.*

### **B.3.4. Publications**

(All of these documents are in German unless otherwise indicated)

*ABC des berufsbildenden Schulwesens* (see A.2.2.) 24th edition;

*Berufs- und Studieninformation.* A series of study and career-choice brochures for all major fields of study published by the BMWF, available from the BMWF and all employment offices;

*Fingerzeige für behinderte Menschen.* 8 booklets for handicapped people, published by the *BMAS*;

*ÖAD-Information 94/95.* A booklet for foreign students intending to study at an Austrian institute of higher education, published annually by the Austrian Academic Exchange Service;

*Tips zur Berufswahl.* A career-choice manual for school leavers, published by the *BMAS*, available from all employment offices;

3 careers advice booklets published by the school psychology - educational counselling service of the *BMUKA*:

*Bildungswege zur Matura* (a guide to upper secondary education);

*Bildungswege im helfenden Bereich* (a guide to the caring and nursing professions );

*Bildungswege nach dem 18. Lebensjahr* (Educational careers after the age of 18) Published and updated regularly by the *BMUKA*;

*Education in Austria.* A brief prospectus in English on the Austrian education system which lists all institutions and provides information on adult and continuing education. Published by the *BMUKA*;

*Weiterbildung an Universitäten und Hochschulen.* (Continuing education at universities and colleges). Published annually by the *BMWFK*.

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## B.4 Continuing training

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### B.4.1 Links between initial training and continuing training for adults

The Austrian education system offers people with incomplete secondary education, and adults willing to upgrade their general and vocational qualifications and the job entitlements that go with them, a spectrum of possibilities beginning with short specific vocational courses (e.g. computer skills) and can be as comprehensive as complete 5-year programmes of general or vocational upper secondary education:

- Most types of schools run different forms of schools for people at work (usually with a minimum age limit of 17);
- People who want to become qualified, but who prefer to study independently or use private preparatory institutions can sit the Externistenprüfung, an examination for those not attending school;
- Major providers of personal and job-related adult education are the *Volkshochschulen* (communal institutes of further education) and the *WIFI*. There are a number of targeted re-training schemes for adults, particularly in regions where the closure of industries creates unemployment;
- Many university departments offer continuing vocational courses at pre- and postgraduate level.

### B.4.2 Institutions providing information

- BMUKA*;
- BMWFK*;
- EBIS* (a national adult and further education database operated on a non-profit basis; it is only accessible through the Vienna telephone number);
- Landeschulräte* (the provincial education authorities, addresses from the *BMUKA*);
- Verband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen*;
- WIFI*.

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## B.5 Recognition and comparability of qualifications

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### B.5.1 National Academic Recognition Information Centre (NARIC)

Department I/B/15 of the Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Art (*BMWFK*) acts as the Austrian NARIC.

### B.5.2 Organisations concerned with comparability of vocational training

*AK*;  
*BMUKA*;  
*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten* (Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs);  
*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich* (Federal Chamber of Trade and Industry).

### B.5.3 Bilateral regulations

Agreements regulating the bilateral recognition of vocational qualifications exist between Austria, Germany and Switzerland.

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## C. CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES

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### C.1. Structure and target groups of public and private careers guidance services

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The Austrian system of careers guidance consists of two cooperating sub-systems: one within the framework of educational institutions, the other one closer to the employment sector.

#### C.1.1. Careers guidance within the school system

All secondary schools have at least 1 *Schüler- und Bildungsberater* (educational counsellor), an experienced teacher who has undergone in-service training in guidance and counselling. The advisory and counselling responsibilities of these teachers, which are performed alongside a partly reduced teaching load, have 2 aspects: a pastoral one, caring for the well-being of pupils in schools, and a vocational one, with an emphasis on careers guidance. Educational counsellors use varying approaches and materials: individual sessions, guidance classes, videos and booklets on career choice and specific occupations.

Two agencies support schools in their pastoral and vocational guidance efforts:

The *Schulpsychologische Dienst* (school psychology- educational counselling service), a nationwide network of university-trained educational psychologists. They look after “problem cases” referred to them from schools and they test young people with special needs or individuals who want their vocational aptitude assessed. The school psychology service is also responsible for training and supervising educational counsellors;

The *Schulservicestellen* (school service centres), provincial guidance and counselling offices which advise parents on a broad range of school choice and other school related matters. Much of their business is conducted on the telephone, but clients can call in-person and centre personnel frequently talking to parents’ meetings in schools.

#### C.1.2. Careers guidance by the employment services

In all provincial capitals and in many cities, the BMAS has set up *Berufsinformationszentren* (vocational information centres). Through individual counselling by experts, publications and computerised databanks, they provide information on jobs, job requirements, regional training opportunities and job vacancies. This public service is supplemented by two private vocational information networks: the regional offices of the *WIFI* run by the *Wirtschaftskammern* (Employers Federation) and the regional offices of the *AK*, the Chamber of Workers and Employees.

### C.2 Guidance services provided specifically for foreigners

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All guidance services can be used by foreigners in the same way as by Austrian citizens. The *Landesarbeitsämter* (provincial employment offices) have special desks for foreigners.

### C.3 Institutions providing information

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see B.3.3

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## D. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

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### D.1 Coordinating units for EU programmes:

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ERASMUS (SOCRATES): *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation;*

EURES: *Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, Bundesgeschäftsstelle*  
(Austrian Labour Market Service: Federal Office);

EURYDICE: *BMUKA-Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten, Abteilung I/6b;*

LEONARDO (COMETT, FORCE, EUROTECNET, **PETRA**): *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation;*

LINGUA: *Interkulturelles Zentrum and Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation;*

TEMPUS: *BAMO-Büro für Austauschprogramme mit Mittel- und Osteuropa;*

YOUTH FOR EUROPE: *Interkulturelles Zentrum.*

### D.2 Other transtational programmes:

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CEEPUS: The Central European Exchange Programme for University Studies encourages international academic mobility by coordinating multilateral networks, workshops, language courses and summer schools between universities in Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Ukraine.

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## **E. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

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### **E.1 Minimum pay for workers and trainees**

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Minimum wages and remuneration for apprentices are negotiated for each of the major employment sectors separately between the relevant member union of the Austrian Federation of Trade Unions and the corresponding organisation of the Federal Chamber of Trade and Industry. Individual or company employment contracts may be above the collective minimum wage agreements.

### **E.2 Availability of educational leave**

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There is no legal entitlement to educational leave; it has to be negotiated individually between the employee and the employer.

### **E.3 Social security and employment benefits**

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Austria has a comprehensive system of social security which includes social insurance (health, accident and pension insurance) and protective measures in the case of inability to work, maternity, death of the family breadwinner and unemployment.

A prerequisite for a first time unemployment benefit claim is that the claimant must have been continuously insured for a period of at least 52 weeks in the 2 years prior to his/her claim. For any further claims a total of at least 20 weeks of insurance payments must be proved in the year prior to the claim. Unemployment benefit is paid out for the period from 20 to 52 weeks (which is increased by the time an unemployed person is undergoing re-training.)

Further information:

*BMAS-Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales;*

*AK-Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte;*

*The Federal Press Service publishes (also in English) the brochure "Social Security in Austria" (latest edition 1994).*

### **E.4 Employment services**

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Austrian citizens and foreigners seeking employment, can use the services of the *Arbeitsämter* (employment offices) situated in all the provincial capitals and many bigger towns. The addresses of the *Arbeitsämter* can be obtained from the *BMAS*.



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## F. LIST OF ADDRESSES

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Abteilung für Schulpsychologie  
Bildungsberatung des BMUK  
Minoritenplatz 5  
A-1014 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120-2580  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-2599

*AK- Kammer für Arbeiter und Angestellte-Bildungsberatung*  
Prinz-Eugen-Straße 20-22  
A-1040 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-50 165-0  
Fax: (+43) 1-50 165-3186

*Arbeitsgemeinschaft Wirtschaft und Schule*  
Wiedner Hauptstraße 63  
A-1045 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-504 34 52  
Fax: (+43) 1-502 06 261

*BAMO- Büro für Austauschprogramme mit Mittel- und Osteuropa*  
Berggasse 21/7  
A-1090 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-317 27 93  
Fax: (+43) 1-317 27 95

*BFI - Berufsförderungsinstitut Österreich*  
Kaunitzgasse 2/8  
A-1060 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-586 37 03  
Fax: (+43) 1-586 33 06

*Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*  
Schreyvogelgasse 2  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 408  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 408-30

*BMAS - Bundesministerium für Arbeit und Soziales*  
Stubenring  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-71 100-0  
Fax: (+43) 1-715 82 58

*Bundesministerium für Jugend und Familie*  
Gonzagagasse 13  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-533 66 06

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*BMWFK - Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft, Forschung und Kunst*

Minoritenplatz 5  
A-1014 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-5155

*BMUKA - Bundesministerium für Unterricht und kulturelle Angelegenheiten*

Minoritenplatz 5  
A-1014 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-4499

*Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Angelegenheiten*

Stubenring 1/3/III  
A-1011 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-71 100-5831  
Fax: (+43) 1-71 427-18

*Bundesverband Österreichischer Volkshochschulen*

Weintraubengasse 13  
A-1020 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-216 91 56  
Fax: (+43) 1-214 38 91

**EBIS Erwachsenenbildungs-Informationen-Service**

Mayerhofgasse 6  
A-1040 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-504 58 88  
Fax: (+43) 1-504 58 92

**EURES - European Employment Service**

*Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich, Bundesgeschäftsstelle*

Treustr. 35 - 43  
A-1200 Wien  
Tel: (+43) 1-333 205 93 14  
Fax: (+49) 1-332 059 91 32

**CEEPUS- Central European Exchange Program for University Studies**

Porzellangasse 2/2/3/34  
A-1090 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-319 48 50  
Fax: (+43) 1-319 48 50-10

**Club International Universitaire**

Schottengasse 1a  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-533 65 33  
Fax: (+43) 1-533 65 33-9

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COMETT see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

ERASMUS see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

*Erwachsenen-Bildungs-Informationen-System EBIS*

Mayerhofgasse 6/III

A-1040 Wien

Tel.: (+43) 1-50 45 888

Fax: (+43) 1-50 45 8914

EUROTECNET see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

EURYDICE Information Centre

BMUKA, Abteilung I/6b

Wipplingerstraße 28, 6. St.

A-1014 Wien

Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120-3520

Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-3535

EURO-BIZ + Job Center International

Südtiroler Platz 14-16

A-6020 Innsbruck

Tel.: (+43) 512-58 63 00

Fax: (+43) 512-58 49 27

*Europäische Kommission; Vertretung in Österreich*

Hoyosgasse 5

A-1040 Wien

Tel.: (+43) 1-505 33 79-12

Fax: (+43) 1-505 33 79-7

FORCE see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

*Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft*

Rainergasse 38

A-1050 Wien

Tel.: (+43) 1-545 16 71-15

Fax: (+43) 1-545 16 71-22

*Interkulturelles Zentrum*

Kettenbrückengasse 23

A-1050 Wien

Tel.: (+43) 1-586 75 44-0

Fax: (+43) 1-586 75 44-9

LEONARDO see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

LINGUA see *Interkulturelles Zentrum*

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NARIC  
BMWFK, Abteilung I/B/15  
Rosengasse 2-6  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120-5920  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-6205

*ÖAD- Österreichischer Akademischer Austauschdienst*  
Zentrale Geschäftsstelle  
Universität Wien  
Dr. Karl Lueger-Ring 1  
A-1010 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-401 03-2876  
Fax: (+43) 1-408 17 77

*Österreichisches Institut für Berufsbildungsforschung*  
Kolingasse 15  
A-1090 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-310 33 34  
Fax: (+43) 1-319 77 72

*Schulservice des BMUK*  
Minoritenplatz 5  
A-1014 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-53 120-4278  
Fax: (+43) 1-53 120-2207

SOCRATES see *Büro für Europäische Bildungskooperation*

TEMPUS see BAMO

*WIFI- Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut Wien - Bildungsberatung*  
Währinger Gürtel 97  
Tel.: (+43) 1-47 677-523  
Fax: (+43) 1-47 967 57

*Wirtschaftskammer Österreich*  
Wiedner Hauptstraße 63  
A-1045 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-50 105-4080  
Fax: (+43) 1-50 206-261

YOUTH FOR EUROPE see *Interkulturelles Zentrum*

*Zentralausschuß der Österreichischen Hochschülerschaft - Maturantenberatung*  
Liechtensteinstraße 13  
A-1090 Wien  
Tel.: (+43) 1-310 88 80-24  
Fax: (+43) 1-310 88 80 36

**FINLAND**



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## General information

Finland is the Northernmost Member State of the European Union. It is bounded by Russia to the East and by Sweden and Norway to the West and North, and is separated by the Gulf of Finland from Estonia to the South. Åland Province is part of Finland but enjoys extensive autonomy.

The national flag is a blue cross on a white background. The official languages are Finnish and Swedish (the mother tongue of 6% of the population) and the capital is Helsinki.

## Area and population

Area: 338.000 km<sup>2</sup>

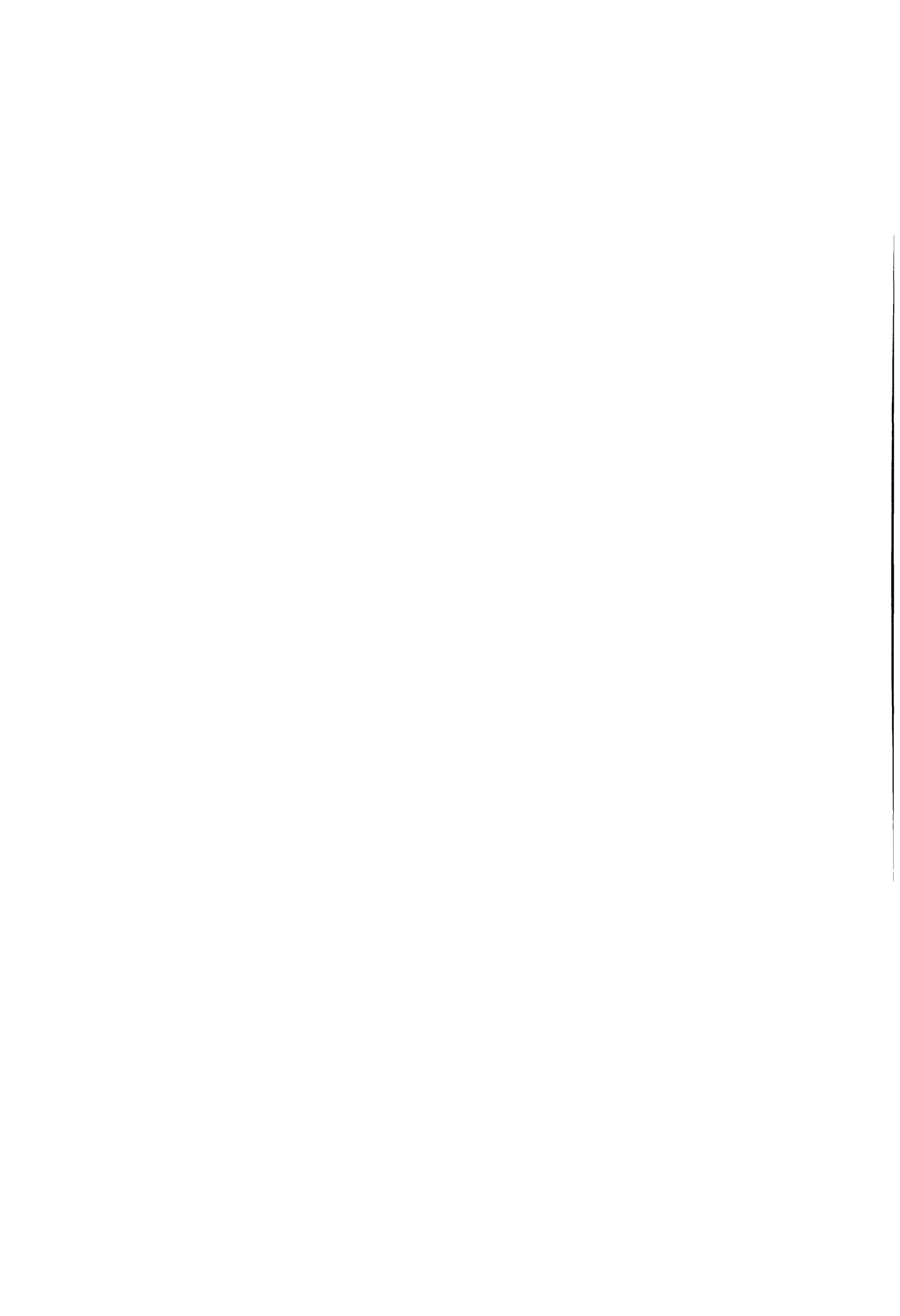
Population (1.1.1995): 5.099.000

Population density per sq.km: 16

## Political system

Finland declared independence in 1917 and passed the Constitution, laying down a republican form of government in 1919. The Head of State is the President, elected by direct popular vote for a 6 year term. The current President, Martti Ahtisaari, took office in February 1994. The Presidency is limited to 2 terms of office. Supreme legislative authority is vested in the *Eduskunta*, the elected Parliament, and supreme executive authority in the *Hallitus* (Government), which enjoys the confidence of the *Eduskunta*. Finland has close relations with its neighbouring countries, particularly the other 4 Nordic countries.

Finland has a long tradition of free education, vocational guidance and counselling, paid for by the State and local Governments.





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## A. INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

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### A.1 Principal contact point

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*CIMO - Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO)

CIMO, an operational agency under the *opetusministeriö* (Ministry of Education), promotes the internationalisation of education and the working life by means of international mobility and exchanges. It designs and runs international exchange programmes for trainees, students and researchers and offers related communication and information services.

CIMO acts as the national contact point for Finland for National Guidance Resource Centres networking under the *PETRA/LEONARDO* programmes.

CIMO's client services include a library and an information desk plus a helpline and publishing services. CIMO works closely with the *työministeriö* (Ministry of Labour) and with other *opetusministeriö* units involved with EU programmes and networks, such as the *opetushallitus* (National Board of Education).

### A.2 Other contact points and principal information sources

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#### A.2.1 *Opetusministeriö* (Ministry of Education)

The *opetusministeriö* is responsible for education policy and planning. Its sphere of responsibility includes general, vocational, adult and higher education. Its *korkeakoulu- ja tiedeosasto* (Department for Higher Education and Research), together with the Finnish NARIC, which is part of it, provides information and counselling on the recognition of international qualifications in Finland for academic and occupational purposes.

#### A.2.2 *Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education)

The *opetushallitus* is an expert agency, under the Ministry of Education. It is responsible for developing and evaluating primary and general secondary education, vocational education and training, adult education and continuing training. The *opetushallitus* issues national curricular guidelines for these levels of education, and contributes to the evaluation of the Finnish education system and to the development of vocational qualifications.

*Opetushallitus* is also the national body responsible for a number of international activities, e.g. the EU LEONARDO DA VINCI and COMENIUS programmes, the EURYDICE educational network and CEDEFOP. It also runs a private company, FTP International, which provides services and assists in joint education and training projects in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Central and Eastern Europe.

#### A.2.3 *Työministeriö* (Ministry of Labour)

The *työministeriö* serves the labour market and its objective is to attain full employment in a productive, safe and satisfying environment.

The aim of full employment remains paramount even when the economic climate is difficult.

The *työministeriö* pursues an active labour market policy of helping to develop skills and of supporting permanent employment.

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The key aims of the labour administration are:

- to improve the operation of the labour market;
- to improve the quality of working life and the working environment;
- to develop the functioning of the labour administration.

### A.3 Handbooks and publications

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These documents are available in English and in some cases available in other languages as indicated.

- Adult Education*, published by the *opetusministeriö* (OPM) 1993;
- Adult Education for Foreigners in Finland*, published by the *opetushallitus* (OPH) 1992;
- Colleges of Further Education in Finland*, OPH 1994;
- Education in Finland 1994: Tilastokeskus* (Statistics Finland) 1994;
- Finnish Higher Education: our expertise, your success!*, Centre for International Mobility CIMO 1994;
- Finnish Know-how at Your Service*, CIMO 1993;
- Finnish Polytechnics*, OPM 1994;
- Guide for Young Visitors to Finland*, Youth Co-operation Alliance 1994;
- Higher Education Policy in Finland*, OPH 1994;
- The Immigrant's Guide to Education in Finland*, OPH 1993;
- An Introduction to Higher Education in Finland* (available in several languages), CIMO 1994;
- KOTA, the Database on Higher Education Statistics* (also available in Finnish, French, German and Swedish), OPM 1992;
- Living in Finland*, CIMO 1994;
- Study in Finland, International Programmes in Finnish Higher Education 1995 - 1996*, CIMO 1995;
- Study in Finland - you'll be surprised!* (leaflet on higher education in Finland), CIMO 1994;
- Vocational Education in Finland* (available in several languages), OPH 1993;
- Working in the EEA - What About Finland?*, published by the *työministeriö* (TM), *KASI-UNIT* 1994;
- Working in Finland* (available in several languages), *työsuojelehallitus* (National Board of Labour Protection) and TM.



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## B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

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This section provides an overview of the Finnish education and training system, covering the education of both young people and adults leading to the attainment of qualifications. It does not, however, cover all areas of adult education, such as employment training, vocational qualifications and special vocational qualifications.

### B.1 General overview

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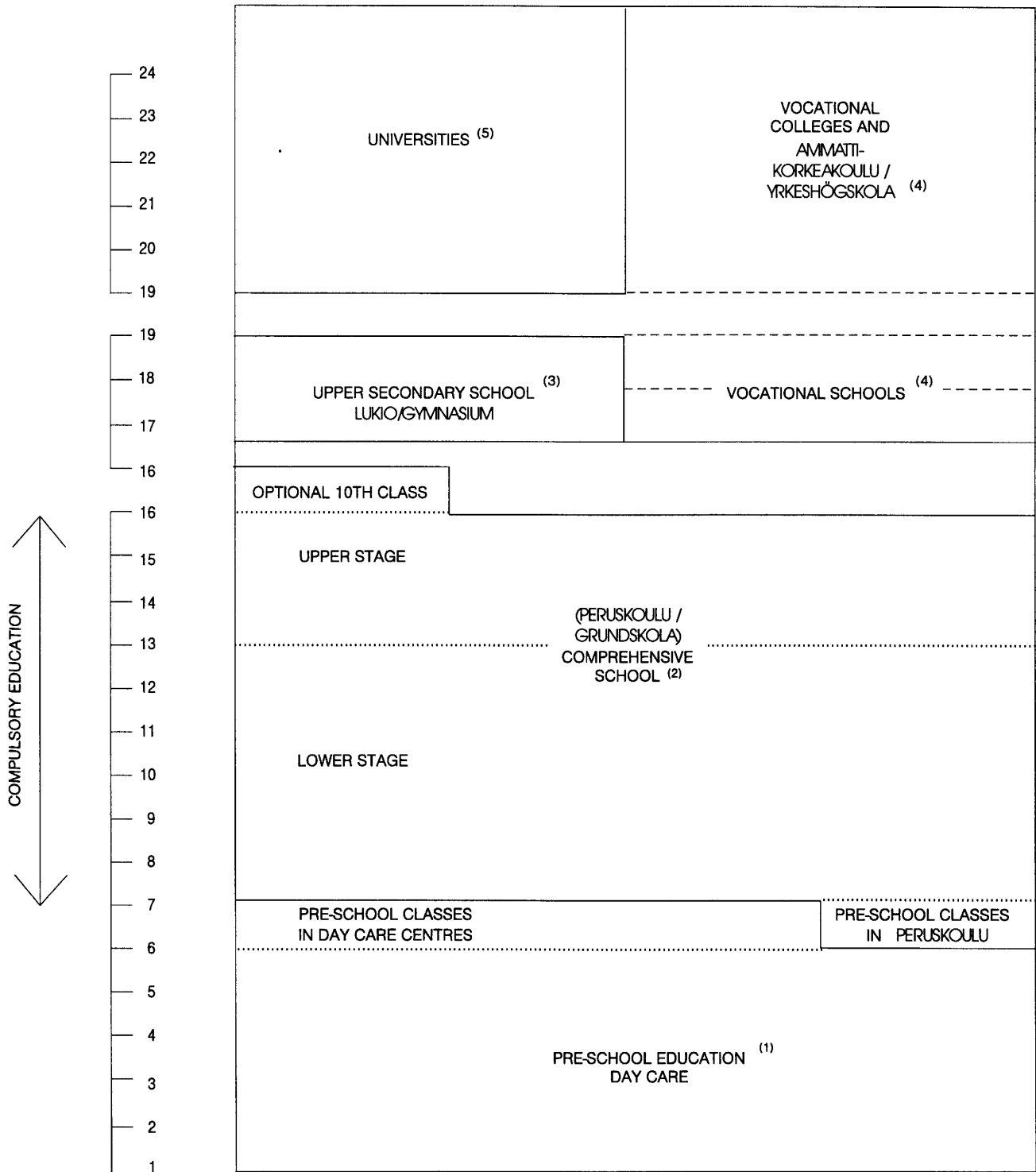
#### B.1.1 Diagram of the structure of the education and initial training system

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##### Key to diagram:

1. The main forms of day care consist of *Päiväkoti/Daghem* (kindergartens/day-care centres) for children up to the age of 6. Then 6 - 7 year olds can have pre-school education in day-care centres or comprehensive schools.
2. *Peruskoulu* (comprehensive school) lasts for 9 years, but can also offer pre-school education for 6 year olds and an optional tenth grade for those who have completed their compulsory education.
3. *Lukio* (upper secondary school) provides 3 years of general education leading to the national matriculation examination.
4. Basic vocational training (2 - 3 years) is given in multi-disciplinary or specialised vocational schools. Higher vocational education (3 - 5 years) is usually given in specialised colleges which students can enter either after finishing comprehensive school or (more usually) after completing their secondary-level studies. Apprenticeships are offered as an alternative route to these qualifications. *Ammattikorkeakoulu* is a new *Fachhochschule* type of institution of higher vocational education offering 3 - 4 year programmes leading to an academic degree.
5. The basic university degree (candidate, master) comprises 3 stages and takes 5 - 6 years to complete.

# FINLAND



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## **B.1.2 Special language arrangements**

Students in Finland can be educated in either Finnish or Swedish. Sámi is only used as the language of tuition in Lapland. English language tuition is also provided in educational institutions in all fields. Special language instruction is available for immigrants.

## **B.1.3 Fees and grants**

Tuition is generally free. Students studying full-time for at least 2 months without a break can apply for State financial aid for extraneous costs (such as study materials and housing). The aid scheme consists of straight grants, housing allowances and State-subsidised student loans. Adult students who qualify for aid receive a special grant as compensation for the loss of income.

Study grants, housing allowances and adult students' grants are financed by the State and paid monthly into the student's bank account. The grants are regarded as taxable income. The question of where and with whom a student lives determines whether the housing allowance is the allowance which is paid to students or the amount available to the general population.

Banks pay student loans from their own funds, following the submission of an application. Repayment usually begins after graduation. The loans are guaranteed by the State, so no other security is needed.

Foreign students living permanently in Finland qualify for student aid.

Applications for aid by students in secondary education are processed by *Kansaneläkelaitoksen Opintotukikeskus* (Student Aid Centre of the Social Insurance Institution) and applications by university students are processed by the student aid committees.

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## **B.2 General education**

The principal objective of Finnish education policy is to provide the highest possible standard of education for the whole population. The education system has an open structure to enable everyone, regardless of place of residence, income, gender or mother tongue, to fulfil his/her potential and choose an appropriate form of education and branch of study. In most parts of the country, the education system is bilingual (Finnish/Swedish); in Lapland, however, instruction is also given in Sámi, the language of the Lapps.

### **B.2.1 *Esikoulu* (pre-school)**

Pre-school education, which is not obligatory, is provided by the welfare authorities in day-care centres. Some 35,000 children receive pre-school education in day-care centres annually, and another 2,000 in schools.

### **B.2.2 *Peruskoulu* (comprehensive school)**

Children normally start school at the age of 7. The annual intake comprises 60,000 to 65,000 children. Children who are mature enough can start school at the age of 6. Compulsory education lasts for 10 years. Comprehensive school is divided into a 6 year lower stage and a 3 year upper stage. In the lower stage, pupils are taught mainly by class teachers; in the upper stage they are taught by subject teachers.



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Comprehensive schools may also offer a voluntary tenth class, which is primarily aimed at those pupils who have not secured a place in post-comprehensive studies. A total of 3,800 pupils attended the extra tenth year in 1992.

Altogether, there were 4734 comprehensive schools in 1992, 625 of which were upper stage schools. The total register of pupils in comprehensive schools was 590,000; upper stage pupils numbered 195,000. Most comprehensive school leavers go on to secondary education; more than half of the age group enter upper secondary school and less than a half go into vocational training.

The objectives of comprehensive school education are to enhance pupils' all-round personal development and help them find their place in society and working life; to provide vocational guidance and prepare them for further studies; to educate them and raise their awareness about nature conservation and the environment and to familiarise them with national culture and values, international cooperation and to promote peace and sexual equality.

### **B.2.3 Lukio (Upper secondary school)**

Upper secondary schools offer a 3 year programme which takes up where comprehensive school leaves off. It provides the general education necessary to prepare for university studies and other studies for which the matriculation examination is required. Its objective is to help pupils grow into well-balanced, healthy, responsible, independent, creative, cooperative and peace-loving members of society.

There were 464 upper secondary day schools and 50 evening schools in 1992, with an overall roll of 112,000 students. Upper secondary education leads to the national matriculation examination, which 26,000 students took and passed in 1992. Less than half of the pupils leaving upper secondary school proceed to university or other tertiary institutions (including polytechnics); the remainder go on to study at vocational institutions or find a job.

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## **B.3 Initial vocational education and training**

### **B.3.1 Structure, duration and the levels of qualification attainable**

The Ministry of Education is in charge of *ammattillinen koulutus*, the vocational education and training (VET) system. VET for young students from 16 to 18 is generally provided on a full-time basis. Apprenticeship training has also been popular in recent years. The number of student places exceeds the size of the age group.

Vocational education in Finland is divided into 7 training segments: natural resources, technology and transport, administration and commerce, catering, health and social services, cultural affairs, and humanities and teacher training.

Up to 1995, there were 26 basic vocational education programmes providing a total of 220 specialisations. Reforms in secondary-level VET in 1995, and in college-level VET in 1996, will bring the number of programmes to 30 and that of qualifications to 157 (77 at secondary level and 80 at college level).

Secondary-level VET programmes last for 2 - 3 years and are followed by on-the-job induction training, after which students are fully qualified as skilled workers. College-level studies last 2 - 4 years and prepare students for supervisory and planning jobs or for setting up in businesses.

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### **B.3.2 Initial training schemes for students with special needs**

Special training is available to students with special needs in terms of tuition, vocational guidance and student health care services as a result of illness, disability, mental development, emotional disorders, speech problems, reading, writing or other learning difficulties.

Vocational institutions train students with special needs either in the same groups as other students or in separate groups or special schools. The primary aim is to have students with special needs study together with their peers.

### **B.3.3 Institutions providing information**

The *opetusministeriö* (Ministry of Education) provides information on general and vocational education and, in particular, higher education;

The *opetushallitus* (National Board of Education) maintains the OPTI database on the education programmes for young people and adults which the Board itself supervises; this database can be consulted freely by the public at *työvoimatoimistot* (employment offices);

The *työministeriö* (Ministry of Labour) maintains a database on adult education, which is also available in employment offices.

### **B.3.4 Publications**

*Koulutusopas* (Guide to Education) published annually by the National Board of Education and intended for students seeking admission to secondary or vocational studies. The guide provides information on *ammattilliset oppilaitokset* (vocational institutions), *ammattikorkeakoulut* (polytechnics), *kansanopistot* (folk high schools) and *lukiot* (upper secondary schools) and on selection criteria and admission applications;

*Aikuiskoulutus* (Guide to Adult Education) is published annually by the National Board of Education and covers all adult education supervised by the Board;

*Korkeakoulujen valintaopas* (Guide to University Selections) and *Korkeakouluopinnot* (University Studies) are published annually by the Ministry of Education.

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## **B.4 Continuing training**

### **B.4.1 Vocational qualifications**

Students display the vocational skills they have acquired by means of basic, standard and special vocational examinations. Basic vocational examinations lead to secondary-level qualifications; standard and special vocational examinations call for more extensive and more highly trained vocational skills or specialisations. The system does not, however, extend to post-graduate studies. The path by which vocational skills have been attained has no bearing on obtaining the qualifications, and no conditions related to prior work experience or education are attached to taking the examination.

### **B.4.2 Labour market adult education**

Cf. E.4.3: Labour market training

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## B.5 Recognition and comparability of qualifications

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### B.5.1 NARIC - the National Academic Recognition Information Centre

The Ministry of Education acts as the Finnish NARIC and as the contact point required under the EU directive on a general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas awarded on completion of professional education and training of at least 3 years' duration (89/48/EEC) and the supplementary directive on a second general system for the recognition of professional education and training (92/51/EEC). The Ministry of Education decides on the vocational skills standards provided by the non-Finnish qualifications of citizens of EEA countries and on the comparability of foreign academic degrees with Finnish degrees. Individual schools and universities make their own decisions about the academic recognition of qualifications and studies.

### B.5.2 Organisations concerned with the recognition and comparability of qualifications

- Opetusministeriö* (Ministry of Education)/NARIC;
- Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education) issues opinions on the comparability of vocational qualifications for non-regulated occupations awarded both in and outside the EEA with Finnish qualifications;
- Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus* (National Board of Medico-Legal Affairs) decides on the comparability of health care professions and their related qualifications;
- Merenkulkuhallitus* (the National Board of Navigation) decides on the comparability of maritime professions and qualifications;
- Individual schools and universities are responsible for the academic recognition of qualifications and studies.

### B.5.3 Existing bilateral and multilateral agreements

Finland has acceded to a number of international conventions and agreements on academic recognition:

The UNESCO Regional Convention for the European Region, on the Recognition of Academic Studies, Diplomas and Degrees;

Convention on the Recognition of Study Attainments in the Nordic Countries;

An Agreement between Finland and Austria on the Mutual Recognition of the Matriculation Examination;

The Council of Europe conventions on university admission and the comparability of academic credits and degrees.

The Nordic countries also have mutual agreements on professional activities.

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## **C. CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES**

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Finland has 2 guidance schemes: the careers guidance and educational and vocational information services provided in employment offices; and the counselling service provided in educational institutions. Both systems seek to offer individuals advice and support.

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### **C.1 Counselling in school**

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#### **C.1.1 Counselling in comprehensive schools**

Counselling services in comprehensive schools are provided by a total of some 700 student advisers, most of whom are qualified teachers with 1 year's specialised training, in addition to their teacher training.

Counselling is provided in the upper stage of comprehensive school, to pupils in classes 7 - 9. The focus in counselling is on advising pupils on course selection and providing guidance on further studies and career choices.

Counselling classes discuss study skills, self-knowledge, careers and working life, and the options for further studies.

Upper-stage comprehensive school pupils are given a perspective on working life through visits to workplaces and vocational training institutions.

Pupils also have the opportunity to discuss study and career choices personally with these student advisers.

#### **C.1.2 Counselling in upper secondary schools**

Upper secondary schools have around 450 student advisers providing guidance on study and career choices. They also help students adjust to the working methods used in upper secondary schools and to advise them on developing their study skills.

The curriculum includes a total of 38 hours of careers guidance classes during the pupils' school life, which cover matters relating to study techniques, self-knowledge, careers, working life and further studies. Upper secondary students can also discuss their personal problems and plans with the student adviser. The student adviser and group adviser are jointly responsible for upper secondary counselling. The advisers are teachers with specialised training.

#### **C.1.3 Counselling in vocational institutions**

Counselling in vocational institutions is more closely integrated into the general curriculum than it is in comprehensive or upper secondary schools. All the teachers provide careers guidance; only a small proportion of counselling is provided in separate classes.

A specialised student adviser is responsible for personal counselling in most institutions, and is also responsible for liaising with employment offices and other interested parties. There are some 550 student advisers at vocational institutions.

In the early stages of VET, counselling can help to prevent unnecessary drop-outs. In the final stage, students need information on further education opportunities and work placements.

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### **C.1.4 Counselling in universities**

All Finnish universities offer structured counselling services, run by a total of 100 student advisers who are responsible for providing students, and those planning to enter university, with personal consultations, written advice and telephone counselling on all study-related problems.

Counselling in universities comprises 3 phases: guidance on the choice of study programme and on applications for admission to university; practical advice and counselling for new students on problems arising during the course of studies; and questions related to graduation and work placements.

Most universities now have careers services responsible for ensuring optimum work placements for new graduates. These services also support the placement schemes of the various faculties, departments and student bodies by building bridges between universities, students and employers.

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## **C.2 Counselling and guidance provided by the Labour Administration**

### **C.2.1 Educational and vocational information services**

Every employment office offers an educational and vocational information service providing extensive data on education, finance for studies and careers. The information is available to the entire staff in computer, book and videotape format. Each of the larger employment offices has a full-time information officer who answers clients' enquiries and provides advice on using the data. The employment offices employ some 130 full-time information officers.

The clients of some employment offices may also consult the information material independently in reading rooms designated for the purpose. Some material can also be loaned to clients.

### **C.2.2 Vocational guidance**

The objective of vocational guidance is to help people resolve issues relating to career choice, placements and vocational development. The client's personal abilities and the opportunities available in various occupational and educational sectors are taken into account.

The principal method of vocational guidance is personal consultation. Depending on the client's situation, 1 or more consultations may be needed. Psychological testing can be used as an aid if necessary. Other studies and tests, charting the client's health and ability to cope, may also be used. There are some 250 vocational guidance psychologists in Finland.

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## **C.3 Institutions providing information**

- Ministry of Labour, Employment Services Division;
- Unit for Employment Service and Vocational Guidance;
- Unit for Information Services and Vocational Information;
- Unit for International Employment Services and Migration.

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## D. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

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The following EU programmes, services and networks have national agencies or units in Finland:

COMENIUS

*Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education);

ERASMUS

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

EURES

*Työministeriö* (Ministry of Labour);

EUROTHLON

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

EURYDICE

*Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education);

LEONARDO

*Opetushallitus/Suomen Leonardo-keskus* (Finnish Leonardo Centre);

LINGUA Action I: *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

Action II: *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

Action IV: *Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education);

Action V: *Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education);

NARIC

*Opetusministeriö* (Ministry of Education, Department for Higher Education and Research);

SOCRATES

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

*Opetushallitus* (National Board of Education);

TEMPUS

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO);

YOUTH FOR EUROPE

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO* (Centre for International Mobility CIMO).

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## **E. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

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### **E.1 Minimum pay for workers and trainees**

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The Employment Contracts Act does not contain specific provisions on minimum pay, which is usually determined on the basis of the collective agreement for the relevant sector. The act in question does, however, contain a provision requiring the employer to respect at least the provisions on minimum wages and other terms laid down in the national collective agreement for the job in question and similar work. Rather than any specific legislation, these generally binding collective agreements thus determine the minimum terms to be applied in employment contracts, and guarantee employees in non-union businesses the same level of wages and benefits as those to which union workers are entitled. If there is no generally binding collective agreement and the business is not unionised, pay will depend entirely on the employment contract.

### **E.2 Availability of educational leave**

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Under the Study Leave Act, an employee who has held a full-time job with the same employer for a total period of 12 months, in 1 stretch or several periods, is entitled to educational leave. The purpose of the arrangement is to facilitate further studies for employed people. The studies need not be related to the employer's field and can be freely chosen by the employee.

Study leave is granted on the basis of the employee's application. While on study leave, the employee is not required to perform duties connected with his/her job. He/she is not entitled to a salary for the time he/she is on leave unless otherwise agreed with the employer, but he/she may apply for various forms of public support.

A maximum of 2 years of study leave can be granted during a 5 year period. This leave can be taken either in a single stretch or in several periods.

### **E.3 Social security and unemployment benefits**

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The Unemployment Allowances Act and the Unemployment Funds Act contain provisions on social security benefits. Unemployment benefits are paid either in the form of basic daily allowances, or earnings-related daily allowances, or as daily allowances for the layoff period.

These allowances can be paid for a maximum of 500 days of unemployment during 4 consecutive calendar years.

The Labour Market Subsidy Act came into force in 1994. Under this Act, subsidies are paid to people who have never been employed and thus do not meet the criteria for receiving a daily unemployment allowance. Labour market subsidies may also be granted to those who have reached the limit for receiving a daily unemployment allowance.

A person who has reached 60 and has been unemployed for a protracted period may qualify for early retirement. The precondition for this is that he/she has received a daily unemployment allowance for the statutory maximum period of 500 days.

### **E.4 Employment services**

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The Ministry of Labour is responsible for providing public employment services in Finland. The objective of these services is to support individual employees in their vocational development and

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job placements and to promote employers' access to the labour force. Services are provided by over 200 *työvoimatoimistot* (employment offices). Services are available to private clients free of charge; some of the services provided for employers are subject to a charge.

Employment services provided include:

- Employment exchange;
- International employment services;
- Labour market training;
- Educational and vocational data services;
- Vocational guidance;
- Vocational rehabilitation.

#### **E.4.1 Job placements**

The employment service provides private clients with information on job vacancies in their home districts and employment areas, and throughout Finland and other countries. Labour consultants also provide expert advice on job seeking.

Clients can discuss their career hopes and their skills with the labour consultants. Data on jobseekers and vacant jobs is entered into the employment offices' computer system, which can be used to match jobseekers with vacancies.

Information services are also available. Jobseekers can consult the employment offices' notice boards and job advertisements in order to conduct their own job searches. The largest cities have 'job marketplaces' for self-service and fast data access. Vacancies can also be scanned electronically on self-service terminals in the employment offices or via public data networks or the Labour Administration's telephone service.

#### **E.4.2 International employment services**

Finnish employment offices also serve clients seeking work abroad. The largest employment offices have special international labour consultants who generally look after services for both emigrants and immigrants, and also assist those seeking jobs or traineeships abroad.

Vacant jobs in Sweden and Norway are shown on the employment services' computers. Fifteen employment offices have labour consultants who specialise in Euroemployment services and who also have access to information on job vacancies in other countries are based in 15 of the employment offices.

#### **E.4.3 Labour market training**

Labour market training is a service which the labour authorities provide for the adult workforce. Its objective is to help people acquire, maintain and develop vocational skills. Training is provided to promote job placements or assist with job retention. Labour market training is offered primarily to the unemployed and to those whose jobs are threatened.

People undertaking labour market training are given financial assistance. The allowance paid during training courses is of the same order as the unemployment benefits.



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Educational and vocational information services (cf. C.2.1)

Vocational guidance (cf. C.2.2)

#### **E.4.4 Vocational rehabilitation**

Customised vocational guidance, counselling on job placements and training and labour market training are services which are specially designed for disabled people. Various check-ups, rehabilitation examinations, expert consultations and job experiments and training in vocational institutions and on the job training are also available. Support for workplace arrangements facilitating job placements and job retention is available to employers.

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## F. LIST OF ADDRESSES

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### ADAPT

(Adaptation of the Workforce to Industrial Change)

Yhteisöaloiteteimi

See under *Työministeriö*

### AKAVA

(Confederation of Unions for Academic Professionals)

Rautatieläisenkatu 6

FI-00520 Helsinki

Tel: (+358) 0-141 822

Fax: (+358) 0-141 595

### COMENIUS

See under *Opetushallitus*

Employment and the Development of Human Resources

Employment-NOW

Employment-HORIZON

Employment-YOUTHSTART

See under *Työministeriö*

### ERASMUS

See under *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*

European Commission Office in Finland

Pohjois-Esplanadi 31

P.O. Box 234

FI-00131 Helsinki

Tel: (+358) 0-656 420

Fax: (+358) 0-626 871

### EURATHLON

See under *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*

### EURYDICE

See under *Opetushallitus*

*Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*

(Centre for International Mobility CIMO)

Hakaniemenkatu 2

P.O. Box 343

FI-00531 Helsinki

Tel: (+358) 0-7747 7677

Fax: (+358) 0-7747 7064

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*Kansaneläkelaitos KELA*  
(Social Insurance Institution)  
Nordenskiöldinkatu 12  
P.O. Box 450  
FI-00101 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-434 11  
Fax: (+358) 0-412 358

*Kansaneläkelaitoksen Opintotukikeskus*  
(Student Aid Centre of the Social Insurance Institution)  
Vapaudenkatu 48-50  
P.O. Box 228  
FI-40101 Jyväskylä  
Tel: (+358) 41-698 710  
Fax: (+358) 41-698 710

LEONARDO  
*Suomen Leonardo -keskus*  
Hakaniemenkatu 2  
FI-00531 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-7747 7218  
Fax: (+358) 0-7747 7213

LINGUA  
*See Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO and also Opetushallitus*

*Maa- ja metsätaloustuottajain keskusliitto MTK*  
(Central Union of Agricultural Producers)  
Simonkatu 6  
P.O. Box 510  
FI-00101 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-131 151  
Fax: (+358) 0-1311 5425

*Merenkulkuhallitus MKH*  
(National Board of Navigation)  
Vuorimiehenkatu 1  
P.O. Box 158  
FI-00141 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-18 081  
Fax: (+358) 0-180 8355

NARIC  
*see under Opetusministeriö*

*Opetushallitus*  
(National Board of Education)  
Division for International Education Services  
Hakaniemenkatu 2  
FI-00531 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-774 775  
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*Opetusministeriö*  
(Ministry of Education)  
Meritullinkatu 10  
P.O. Box 293  
FI-00171 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-134 171  
Fax: (+358) 0-135 9335

**SOCRATES**

See under *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*

*Sosiaali- ja terveystieteiden ministeriö*  
(Ministry for Social Affairs and Health)  
Division of International Affairs  
Kirkkokatu 14  
P.O. Box 267-268  
FI-00171 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-16 01  
Fax: (+358) 0-650 442

*Suomen Ammattiliittojen Keskusjärjestö SAK*  
(Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions)  
International Department  
Siltasaarenkatu 3 A  
FI-00530 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-77 211  
Fax: (+358) 0-772 13 19

*Suomen Nuorisoyhteistyö Allianssi ry*  
(Finnish Youth Co-operation Alliance)  
Olympiastadion  
Paavo Nurmentie 1  
FI-00250 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-490 255  
Fax: (+358) 0-491 290

*Suomen Toimihenkilökeskusjärjestö STTK*  
(Confederation of Technical Employee Organisations in Finland)  
Pohjoisranta 4  
FI-00170 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-490 255  
Fax: (+358) 0-491 290

**TEMPUS**

See under *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*

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Teollisuuden ja Työnantajain Keskusliitto TT  
(Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers)  
Trade Policy Department  
Eteläranta 10  
FI-00130 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-68 681  
Fax: (+358) 0-6868 2708

*Terveystieteiden tutkimuskeskus*  
see under *Opetusministeriö*

*Työministeriö*  
International Employment Services Division:  
Employment Service and Vocational Guidance  
Information Services and Vocational Information  
International Employment Services and Migration  
Fabianinkatu 32  
FI-00100 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-185 61  
Fax: (+358) 0-185 62 19

*Ulkomaalaisvaltuutetun toimisto*  
(Ombudsman for Aliens)  
Ministry of Social Affairs and Health  
Kalevankatu 30  
P.O. Box 267-268  
FI-00171 Helsinki  
Tel: (+358) 0-16 01  
Fax: (+358) 0-160 57 63

YOUTH FOR EUROPE  
See under *Kansainvälisen henkilövaihdon keskus CIMO*



**ICELAND**





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## General Information

Iceland, which is the second largest island in Europe, lies in the North Atlantic Ocean. The country is crossed by the Arctic Circle, which passes through the island Grímsey, Iceland's Northernmost point. Distances from Iceland include Greenland (287 km), Faroe Islands (425km), Norway (970km), Scotland (798km). Glaciers cover about 11.5% of Iceland's total land area.

Iceland is a part of the The European Economic Area (EEA) but not a member of the European Union.

The Icelandic national flag has an ultra-marine background and a white cross and red cross in the foreground. The language is Icelandic and the capital of the country is Reykjavik.

## Area and Population

Area(sq. km.): 103.000

Population (1994): 265.000 inhabitants

Population density per sq. km: 22

## Political System

The official name of the country is *Lýðveldið Ísland* (the Republic of Iceland). The Head of State is the President, who is elected by popular vote for a 4 year term. The executive power lies with the Cabinet, which is made up of the various political parties after parliamentary elections. The Government sits for 4 years, and must have the support, direct or indirect, of the majority of the Icelandic parliament, the *Alþingi*. Legislative power is vested in the *Alþingi*, which now has sixty three members. The *Alþingi* is one of the oldest parliaments in Europe, founded in 930 AD.

The Judiciary consists of district and county magistrates appointed by the Minister of Justice. Their decisions are subject to appeal to the Supreme Court, which has 9 permanent members.

Iceland has a long tradition of free education and free educational and of vocational guidance, financed by the State.



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## A. INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

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### A.1 Principal contact point

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Iceland has not participated in European collaboration under the *PETRA* and *FORCE* programmes, and consequently has no national centre. It is, however, anticipated that the National Coordination Unit (NCU) for the *LEONARDO* programme may become such a centre. It is further expected that the Research Liaison Office of the University of Iceland, which has been responsible for Iceland's participation in the *COMETT* programme, will host the *LEONARDO* NCU. It will be based on an existing partnership between schools and industry, governed by an independent board which will consist of representatives from different school/university levels, industry and trade and business organisations.

### A.2 Other contact points and principal information sources

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*Menntamálaráðuneytið* (Ministry of Culture and Education):

- Alþjóðasvið* (Department of International Relations) This division is responsible for organising Icelandic participation in European collaboration on education and training matters, in particular for the *ERASMUS/SOCRATES* and *LEONARDO* programmes;
- Framhaldsskóla og fullorðinsfræðsludeild* (Division of Secondary and Adult Education) This division is responsible for, amongst other things, the vocational education and training system in Iceland. It works in collaboration with relevant industry sectors and trade unions;
- Gunnskóla og leikskóladeild* (Division for Pre-school and Compulsory Education) This division is responsible for planning and administration of Pre-schools and compulsory education in Iceland;
- Háskóla- og vísindadeild* (Division of Higher Education and Research) This division is responsible for matters pertaining to institutes of higher education in Iceland and the independent research institutes and organisations;
- Iðnfræðsluráð* (Industrial Training Board) This board acts as an advisory body for vocational training at upper secondary level. Its purpose is to advise the Ministry of Culture and Education on the general policy and organisation of industrial instruction, trade certification, and factory training. The Industrial Training Board comments on proposals regarding the syllabus for both practical and theoretical vocational training and proposals for standards concerning equipment and facilities, as well as submitting its own proposals regarding the organisation of supervision and the control of industrial instruction. The Board submits proposals to the Ministry of Culture and Education on the implementation of apprenticeship agreements. Interested parties in industry appoint eight members of the board, and the Ministry selects a chairperson.
- Alþjóðaskrifstofa háskólastigsins* (The Office of International Education). This independent office, which is the joint responsibility of the main universities and the Ministry of Education, is responsible for *ERASMUS* in Iceland. It also runs *Upplýsingastofa um nám erlendis* (Information Office for International Study) which provides Icelandic students with information on education opportunities in different countries. It is this office which will be responsible for the *SOCRATES* programme in the future.

### A.3 Handbooks and publications

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- Námskrá handa framhaldsskólum* (Curriculum Guidelines for Upper Secondary Schools) 3rd ed., Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1990;
- Aðalnámskrá Grunnskóla* (National Curriculum Guidelines), Menntamálaráðuneytið, 1989;
- Menntun og atvinnulíf* (Education and Industry), Research Liaison Office, 1992;
- Próun starfsmenntunar á framhaldsskólastigi* (The Changing Rate of Vocational and Technical Education and Training), Ministry of Education and the Research Liaison Office, 1993;
- Destination Iceland* (a handbook for students coming to Iceland), International Office.

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## B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

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### B.1 General overview

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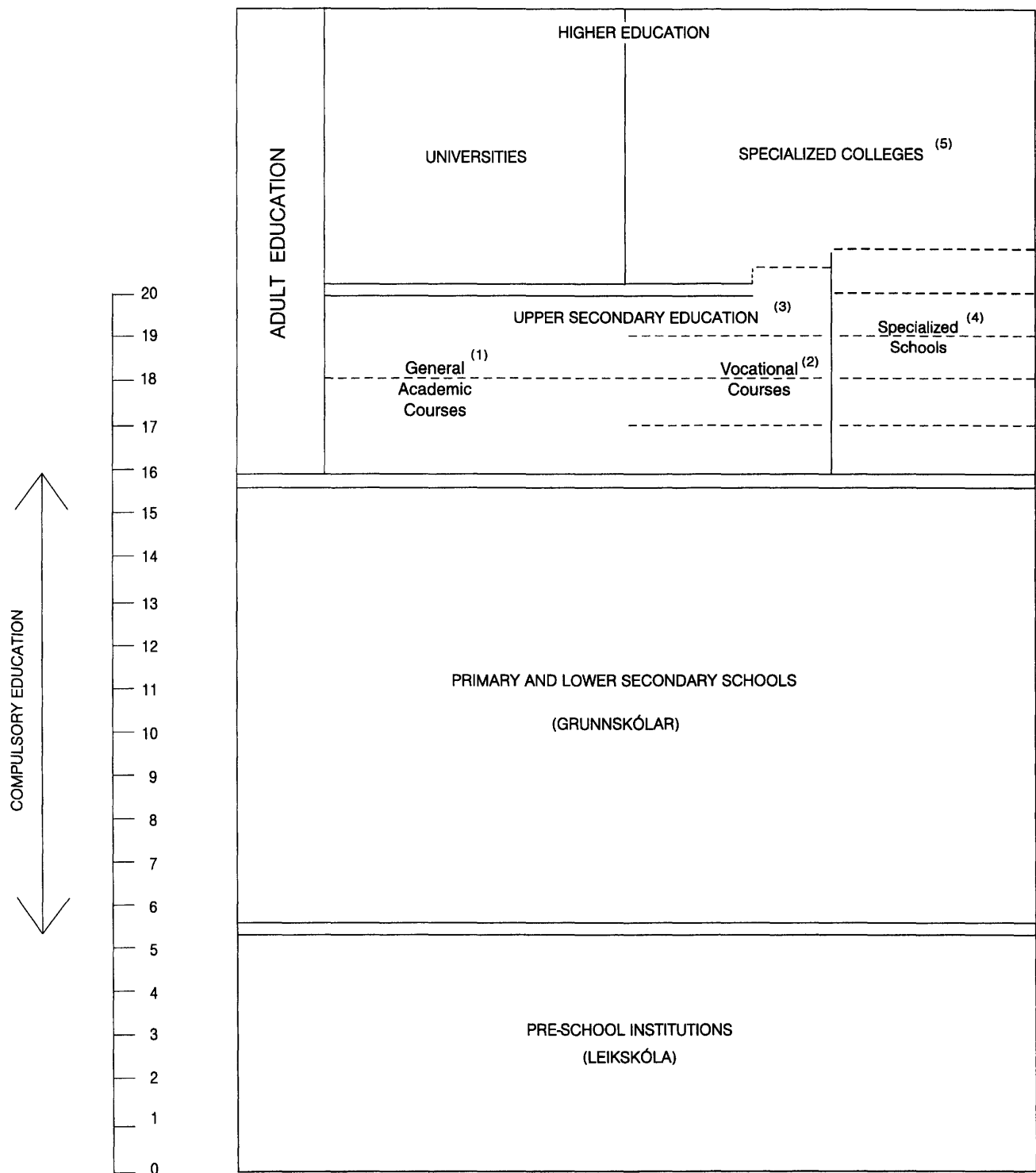
#### B.1.1 Diagram of the education system in Iceland

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##### Key to diagram:

1. Courses conclude with the matriculation examination (*studentsprof*) in both grammar schools and comprehensive schools. Two-year courses are also offered in preparation for specialized study requiring general qualifications for admission. Completion of the *studentprof* entitles students to commence study at higher level.
2. Vocational courses may last 1/2 to 4 years and are offered at comprehensive, vocational and specialized schools. Courses generally include practical training in a workplace.
3. Master craftsman course of 1 to 2 years after completion of the journeyman's certificate.
4. According to existing legislation these schools operate at upper secondary level, but the courses offered by some of them correspond to higher level.
5. Colleges of higher education that do not have research obligations.

# ICELAND



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## **B.1.2 Fundamental principles and basic references**

A fundamental principle of Icelandic education is that everyone should have the an equal opportunity to acquire education irrespective of their gender, economic status, geographic location and cultural or social background.

Education in Iceland has traditionally been organised within the public sector, and consequently, there are very few private institutions in the school system.

One of the aims of Icelandic education policy in recent decades has been to raise the general level of education by extending the duration of schooling.

According to the laws which govern different educational levels, pupils who are handicapped are, at all school levels, entitled to the same education as other pupils. Today, the main policy is integration rather than segregation. Schools are expected to provide handicapped pupils with appropriate opportunities. Only the most severely handicapped pupils attend special schools.

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## **B.2 General education**

### **B.2.1 Pre-school and basic school education**

As stipulated by law, pre-school education is the first educational level of the school system and is for children who have not reached the age at which compulsory school begins. Compulsory schooling begins on 1 September in the year in which the child reaches the age of 6. The choice of pre-school is normally determined by the place in which the parents live or work.

Private organisations may run pre-schools if they have the permission of the local municipality in question. Almost all private pre-schools receive financial support from their local municipality. Approximately 4% of all children attend privately run pre-schools.

Private pre-schools operate in various forms. There are, for example, parent-operated pre-schools where a special association is formed to run the school, and there are also parochial pre-schools.

### **B.2.2 *Grunnskólar* (Primary and lower secondary education)**

Compulsory education is from the ages of 6 to sixteen when all pupils have to attend school full-time. The law concerning compulsory education makes parents responsible for ensuring that their children register for, and attend, school. It also specifies that it is the duty of the State and local municipalities to make sure that children are educated as decreed by law. The Regional Educational Offices and the school boards have to ensure that all children receive tuition as the law requires.

The school the child attends is usually determined by where the child lives. In local municipalities, where there is more than one compulsory school, parents may request that their children be allowed to attend a school that is not in the school district where they live. Furthermore, parents may send their children to a school in another municipality, but in such cases they are required to meet any extra costs that their decision may incur.

Compulsory schooling has recently been extended from 9 to 10 years, i.e. it is now mandatory for all children to start school at the age of 6 and finish at the age of sixteen.

Compulsory schools which are established and owned by individuals or institutions must be accredited by the Ministry of Culture and Education.



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There are 6 private schools at compulsory level in Iceland. 1% of the pupil population of the 1994-95 school year attended these schools. All these schools receive considerable financial assistance from the State.

### **B.2.3 Upper secondary education**

Laws which permitted the establishment of upper secondary comprehensive schools were passed in 1973. A new type of school was established throughout Iceland. At the same time the number of traditional grammar schools also increased. New legislation concerning grammar schools was passed in 1970. Most of the upper secondary comprehensive schools started with the merging of *gagnfræðaskóli* (general secondary schools) with trade schools. The new schools were intended to provide traditional grammar school education, as well as general and more specialised forms of vocational training, and a variety of new branches of study, all within the same school.

The laws concerning upper secondary schools specify that the education they offer is divided into defined course units which count towards a different number of credits, depending on the size of the course. The law also suggests that the each course unit is organised in such a way that a course unit can be a part of various branches of study. This means that students can easily access different branches of study. The content of basic academic training at upper secondary level is therefore the same for all pupils, regardless of whether they are involved in general academic studies or are undertaking a vocational type of study. Furthermore, the law specifies that all branches of study must lead to further education, either directly, or after a defined number of additional credits.

In a unit-credit system, the educational content of each subject is divided into a number of defined course units which last for one *önn* (semester). During the semester, each course unit represents a fixed number of hours of instruction per week. At the end of every semester, the pupil chooses courses for the following semester according to certain rules and in accordance with his/her own study plans and results. Thus, each pupil is given a personal timetable. Pupils in a given course form a group for that course unit only and classes, or forms, in the traditional sense of the word, do not exist.

In a unit-credit system pupils are given a certain number of credits for each course unit they complete. The pupils' progress is thus measured in credits. Generally one credit is the equivalent of two lessons of instruction, per week, for one semester.

There is 1 State-supported private school at upper secondary level.

### **B.2.4 General adult education and continuing training**

In 1971, the Hamrahlíð Grammar School began to offer *öldungadeild* (evening courses for adults) at upper secondary level to prepare them for the matriculation examination. The target group consisted of adults, i.e., people over twenty years of age. Gradually, more and more upper secondary schools have started offering adult education programmes, most of them leading to a matriculation examination. These kind of programmes have made it possible for adults to combine a job and studies.

In 1981, when the Breiðholt Upper secondary Comprehensive School began to offer programmes in adult education, vocational education became accessible to adult students. In 1985 the Vocational School in Reykjavík also started to offer vocational courses for adult students.

Since 1989, the Institute of Continuing Education of the University of Iceland has offered formal education to adults in several areas.

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There are various kinds of private schools in which pupils can acquire knowledge in a number of different fields. Some courses provide preparation for a particular kind of work, for example, office work. The owners of these schools are entirely responsible for their operation.

## **B.3 Initial vocational education and training**

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Vocational training takes place in upper secondary comprehensive schools, general vocational schools and specialised vocational schools. The length of the courses on offer varies and can be anywhere between 1 and 10 semesters. Many forms of vocational training give the pupils legal certification for certain types of employment. This applies to studies in the skilled trades, and also, for example, in the training of auxiliary nurses and sea-captains.

### **B.3.1 Types of institutions**

The main types of vocational secondary schools are the following:

- iðnskólar* (general vocational schools), which offer theoretical and practical studies in *löggiltar iðngreinar* (skilled) and a certain number of non-skilled trades;
- fjölbrautaskólar* (upper secondary comprehensive schools) which offer theoretical and practical training as do the general vocational schools, but offer a greater variety of vocational branches of study. Upper secondary comprehensive schools also offer academic branches of study comparable to that of grammar schools;
- sérskólar* (specialised vocational schools) which offer specialised branches of study as preparation for specialised employment.

### **B.3.2 Admission requirements**

After completing their compulsory education at the age of sixteen, pupils may commence upper secondary level studies.

### **B.3.3 Training for skilled trades**

Training for *löggiltar iðngreinar* (skilled trades) takes 3 to 4 years. It involves taking a vocational branch of study at an upper secondary school and a study contract with a master craftsman, or an industrial firm. The pupil has to choose of one of the following avenues:

- An apprenticeship agreement with a master craftsman;
- Grunndeild* (a 1 year programme of basic academic and practical studies) at a general vocational school or an upper secondary comprehensive school, followed by an apprenticeship agreement with a master craftsman;
- Firstly, *grunndeild* (a 1 year programme of basic academic and practical studies), followed by *framhaldsdeild* (a 1 year programme of specialised academic and practical studies) at a general vocational school or an upper secondary comprehensive school, followed by an apprenticeship agreement with a master craftsman.

A pupil who has completed his/her journeyman's examination can become a master craftsman after a certain amount of work experience and after taking advanced studies at a vocational school. A master craftsman has the right to supervise work in his/her field.

Those who have completed their education for the skilled trades have the option of further study if they complete a technical matriculation examination (about 2 years) or if they enrol in other branches of study leading to matriculation.

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### **B.3.4 Other forms of vocational training within the general school system**

Vocational training within the general school system is organised in different ways depending on the subject, and can take anywhere from 1 to 10 semesters. In most cases, training takes place in the school and in the work place. Studies in certain branches of vocational training give pupils professional rights to do particular work, for instance, to work as a nurse's auxiliary.

### **B.3.5 Vocational studies in specialised vocational schools**

The following vocational schools specialise in a particular field. Entry to some of these schools is only open to those who have completed 1 to 2 years of general education in an upper secondary school. Most of these schools operate according to laws that apply to each of them individually.

- Sjómannna- og stýrimannaskólar* (Fishermen's and Seamen's Colleges) prepare pupils for work as officers aboard fishing and merchant navy vessels;
- The Fish Processing College educates and trains skilled workers in the field of fish processing, and qualifies them as inspectors or floor production managers;
- Vélstjórnarskólar* (Marine Engineering Colleges) prepare pupils for work as engineers on fishing and merchant navy vessels as well as other machine engineering work;
- Bændaskólar* (Agricultural Colleges) prepare pupils for employment in agriculture, horticulture and, increasingly, in aquaculture;
- Garðyrkjuskóli ríkisins* (State Horticultural School) prepares pupils for work in market gardening, greenhouse cultivation and flower decoration;
- Hótel- og veitingaskóli Íslands* (Hotel and Catering School of Iceland) provides theoretical courses for trainees who have a contract with a master, in the preparation and serving of food;
- Fósturskóli Íslands* (Icelandic College for Pre-School Teachers) prepares pupils to teach at the pre-school level;
- Proskajálfaskóli Íslands* (Icelandic College of Social Pedagogy) prepares pupils for work in the field of social pedagogy and other forms of education;
- listaskólar* (fine arts colleges). This involves a number of schools in the fields of music, drama, dance and art;
- Tækniskóli Íslands* (Icelandic College of Engineering and Technology) offers education and training in many different fields. This school is only partly at upper secondary level, with most of its operations run at university level.

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## **B.4 Higher education**

Today the higher education system in Iceland consists of 1 conventional university, the University of Iceland, and 2 smaller and more specialised universities, the University of Akureyri and the University College of Education. In addition there are several technical, vocational and art colleges which offer programmes at higher education level.

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Students have a choice as to which institute of higher education they attend. A matriculation examination is an entrance requirement for all institutes at higher education level. Art schools also have entrance examinations which students must pass.

There are 3 privately run higher education institutions in Iceland. These institutions receive considerable financial assistance from the State.

## **B.5 Recognition and comparability of qualifications**

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The different departments of *Menntamálaráðuneytið* (The Ministry of Culture and Education) compare and evaluate the qualifications, diplomas and degrees of foreigners. People who apply to the Ministry to have their qualifications evaluated receive an official report which states how many academic credits the diploma is worth, according to the Icelandic system of assessment. Vocational qualifications are mutually recognised by the Scandinavian countries.

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## **C. CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES**

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The kind of relationship which exists between a particular school and the labour market varies from one school to another. The University of Iceland has a Development Committee on which there are representatives from industry.

### **C.1 *Rannsóknþjónusta Háskólans* (The Research Liaison Office at the University of Iceland)**

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The role of the Research Liaison Office at the University of Iceland is to strengthen ties between the university and Icelandic industry. The Office maintains a register of the university staff's fields of expertise and distributes information on university research activities to Icelandic enterprises and organisations. The Office also negotiates and draws up contracts between the university and businesses.

The Research Liaison Office has been largely responsible for Iceland's integration into the European Community programmes concerning vocational training and cooperation between university and industry.

#### **C.1.1 Educational guidance services**

Pupils may choose a branch of study at least twice during their educational career: on completing compulsory education at the age of sixteen and again on completing upper secondary education.

#### **C.1.2 Educational guidance services at the first defining moment in guidance**

It is not common for educational counsellors to be employed in compulsory schools. However, many compulsory schools make an effort to introduce pupils, in their last year of compulsory school, to the options they have for continuing their education. This orientation takes place mainly under the guidance of their form teacher. However, the implementation of this orientation varies considerably from one school to another, as in some schools, courses or projects are organised so as to bring together upper secondary education and the labour market.

#### **C.1.3 Educational guidance services at the second moment in guidance**

Most upper secondary schools offer educational counselling, which includes assistance in choosing a branch of study, assistance to pupils in organising their studies and making a study plan and also special counselling when study-related problems arise.

At higher education level, student counselling centres exist in 2 universities and provide guidance for students on the choice of programmes, the organisation of their studies, as well as offering assistance with individual problems. Professors and other permanent staff have regular office hours for students and are available, during these hours, for educational guidance. No set rules apply to educational guidance by teachers, in regard to the referral of students to educational counsellors.

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## D. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

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Some of the Community programmes, services and networks described in the chapter on the EU have national agencies, or units, in Iceland and these are as follows:

COMETT Information Centre: *Alþjóðaskrifstofa Háskólans* (International Office of the University of Iceland);

ERASMUS: *Alþjóðaskrifstofa Háskólans* (International Office of the University of Iceland);

EUROTECNET: *Menntamálaráðuneytið* (Ministry of Culture and Education);

EURYDICE National Coordination Unit: *Menntamálaráðuneytið* (Ministry of Culture and Education);

LEONARDO DA VINCI: *Menntamálaráðuneytið* (Ministry of Culture and Education) and *Rannsóknþjónusta Háskólans* (Research Liaison Office, University of Iceland);

YOUTH FOR EUROPE: *Hitt húsið* (Cultural Advisory Centre for Young People).

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## **E. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

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Although a free market economy predominates in Iceland, Government-owned industry increased in the early 1980s. Despite serious and persistent inflation, the gross national product (GNP) experienced steady growth in the '70s and '80s. This has been changing, and during the last 4 years or so, Iceland has enjoyed very low inflation (less than 5% in 1995). However, unemployment has also been growing steadily, something that today's Icelanders are not used to at all. The unemployment rate was about 4.8 % in 1994. This was partly due to a great decline in fishing stocks, which has been met by reducing the catch to almost half of what it was formerly.

Iceland's limited agricultural land, which requires heavy fertilisation, is primarily used to raise livestock (sheep and cattle). Though Iceland is self-sufficient in meat and milk products, the wool industry, which developed rapidly here, has, like many other parts of industry, declined seriously.

Greenhouse farming has been growing steadily during the last few decades. The greenhouses are heated entirely by geothermal sources. Geothermal heat is unexploited in many areas, however, and is likely to become much more important for electricity generation in the future.

The fishing industry accounts for approximately one-seventh of the GNP and employs about one-eighth of the work force. About three-quarters of all exports in recent years, have been fish products. Approximately two-thirds of the total catch, which amounted to more than 1 million tonnes annually, was comprised of cod and capelin. The concern over declining fish stocks, however, has brought about a system whereby each fishing vessel is allocated a quota stipulating the amount of fish it can catch.

After fish, Iceland's most significant resource is its vast natural energy potential. The production of electricity (generated almost entirely from water power) amounted to more than 4.400 MkW-hr in 1991.

Iceland is one of the smallest European countries, with a population of 265 000. A large percentage of the population - 81% of the total number of people of working age - is active in the labour market. Over 50% of women are active in the labour market. The work force is well educated and flexible, due to the small size of the labour market and traditional seasonal variations.

More than 90% of the work force in Iceland belongs to a trade union or employment organisation.

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### **E.1. Minimum pay for workers and trainees**

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#### **E.1.1 Legal regulations of wages**

In Iceland the employment regulations are formulated via collective agreements between the trade unions and employers' associations, and then acknowledged by all the authorities concerned.

#### **E.1.2 Salaries for apprentices**

Apprentices who have completed their theoretical education receive the following percentage of a journeyman's salary, paid only for hours worked:

- the first 3 months - 75%;
- the next 3 months - 85%;
- after 6 months of training - 95% .

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### **E.1.3 Sickness benefits**

Every employer is obliged to provide accident insurance for his/her employees. The salary level does not affect the insurance coverage. The employer has to register under the accident insurance scheme.

Foreign citizens with a valid work permit and a legal domicile for six months or more are entitled to the same health insurance benefits as Icelandic citizens. If EU-citizens bring the E-106 document with them, they do not have to wait for 6 months. They are also entitled to the same rights with regard to sickness benefits as other wage earners in the country. Thus, if an employee is absent from work as a result of illness or accident at work, he/she is entitled to receive wages from his/her employer for a specific time which may vary according to the length of time he/she has worked for the employer. If the time served is not enough to secure sickness benefits from the employer, the State Social Security Institute pays benefits instead. Employees are entitled to sickness benefits:

- if they are over the age of sixteen;
- if they have been unable to work for at least twenty one days;
- if they are not students.

The benefits are paid for a period of no longer than fifty two weeks in each twenty four months.

### **E.1.4 Working hours**

The average working week in Iceland is 40 hours. This applies to industry, as well as to the agricultural and service sectors.

### **E.1.5 Paid holidays**

Icelandic workers are entitled to 2 working days paid holiday, per each month of work i.e., up to twenty four working days annual leave. Paid holiday increases in relation to the length of time the worker is employed, to a maximum thirty working days per annum.

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## **E.2. Availability of educational leave**

The regulations concerning educational leave differ depending on the sector, the employee's education and the trade union to which he/she belongs. Some trade unions have signed contracts with companies and enterprises which entitle their members to a certain amount of paid educational leave. However, every person who has been unemployed for a certain period of time, and has received unemployment benefits, is eligible for paid education in the form of temporary courses or some kind of vocational education.

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## **E.3 Social security, tax and unemployment benefits**

### **E.3.1 Social security system**

Iceland has a well developed social security system. For visiting a family doctor or a specialist, there are certain minimal fees which the patient must pay; the rest of the charges are covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme. However, if a person has a serious accident, is taken into hospital, or has to undergo an operation which involves staying in hospital overnight, the patient does not have to pay anything at all. Dentists' charges, however, are not covered by the National Health Insurance Scheme, and the patient has to pay the full amount of dentist's charges.



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### **E.3.2. Tax system**

Taxes in Iceland are considered to be rather high. Everybody wage earner in Iceland has to pay income tax. There is a minimum salary, of around 700 ECU per month, which is not taxable. Anything above that is taxed at a rate of 41.34%. The employer is responsible for paying taxes and deducts the respective amount from the salary of the employee. In order for the employer to deduct taxes, the employee has to obtain a tax-card from the *Skattstofa Reykjavíkur* (Internal Revenue Office) and to present it to his/her employer. Scholarships are not usually taxable.

### **E.3.3. Unemployment and unemployment benefits**

People who are unemployed and looking for a job are eligible for unemployment benefits:

- if they have reached the age of sixteen and are younger than seventy;
- if they live in Iceland or are looking for a job in a European Union country;
- if they have worked at least four hundred and twenty five working hours in the last twelve months;
- if they can prove with a certificate from their employer that they have been unemployed for 3 or more successive working days.

Unemployment benefits are paid for every day, except Saturdays and Sundays, for a period of up to two hundred and sixty days. The lowest amount paid is a quarter of the salary. 4% of the salary is added on for each child younger than eighteen who lives with the unemployed person.

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## **E.4 Employment services**

Information about local employment agencies can be obtained from *Vinnumálaskrifstofa Félagsmálaráðuneytisins* (Labour Office of the Ministry of Social Affairs).

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## F. LIST OF ADDRESSES

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*Alþjóðaskrifstofa Háskólans*  
(International Office of the University of Iceland)  
Háskóli Íslands  
Aðalbyggingu  
IS-107 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5694311  
Fax: (+354) 5521331

COMETT Information Centre  
*Háskóli Íslands*  
Aðalbyggingu  
IS-107 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5694311  
Fax: (+354) 5521331

EUROTECNET  
EURYDICE National Coordination Unit  
*Menntamálaráðuneytið*  
(Ministry of Culture and Education)  
Sölvhólgötu 4  
IS-101 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5609500  
Fax: (+354) 5623068

*Háskóli Íslands*  
(University of Iceland)  
v/Suðurgötu  
IS-107 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5694000  
Fax: (+354) 521331

LEONARDO DA VINCI  
*Rannsóknþjónusta Háskólans*  
(Research Liaison Office)  
Technology Court  
Dunhagi 5  
IS-107 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5694900  
Fax: (+354) 5694905

*Menntamálaráðuneytið*  
(Ministry of Culture and Education)  
Sölvhólgötu 4  
IS-101 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5609500  
Fax: (+354) 5623068

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*Skattstofa Reykjavíkur*  
(Ministry of Culture and Education)  
Tryggvagötu 19  
IS-101 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5603600  
Fax: (+354) 5529576

*Tryggingastofnun ríkisins*  
(The State Social Security Institute)  
Laugavegi 114  
IS-105 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5604400  
Fax: (+354) 5624535

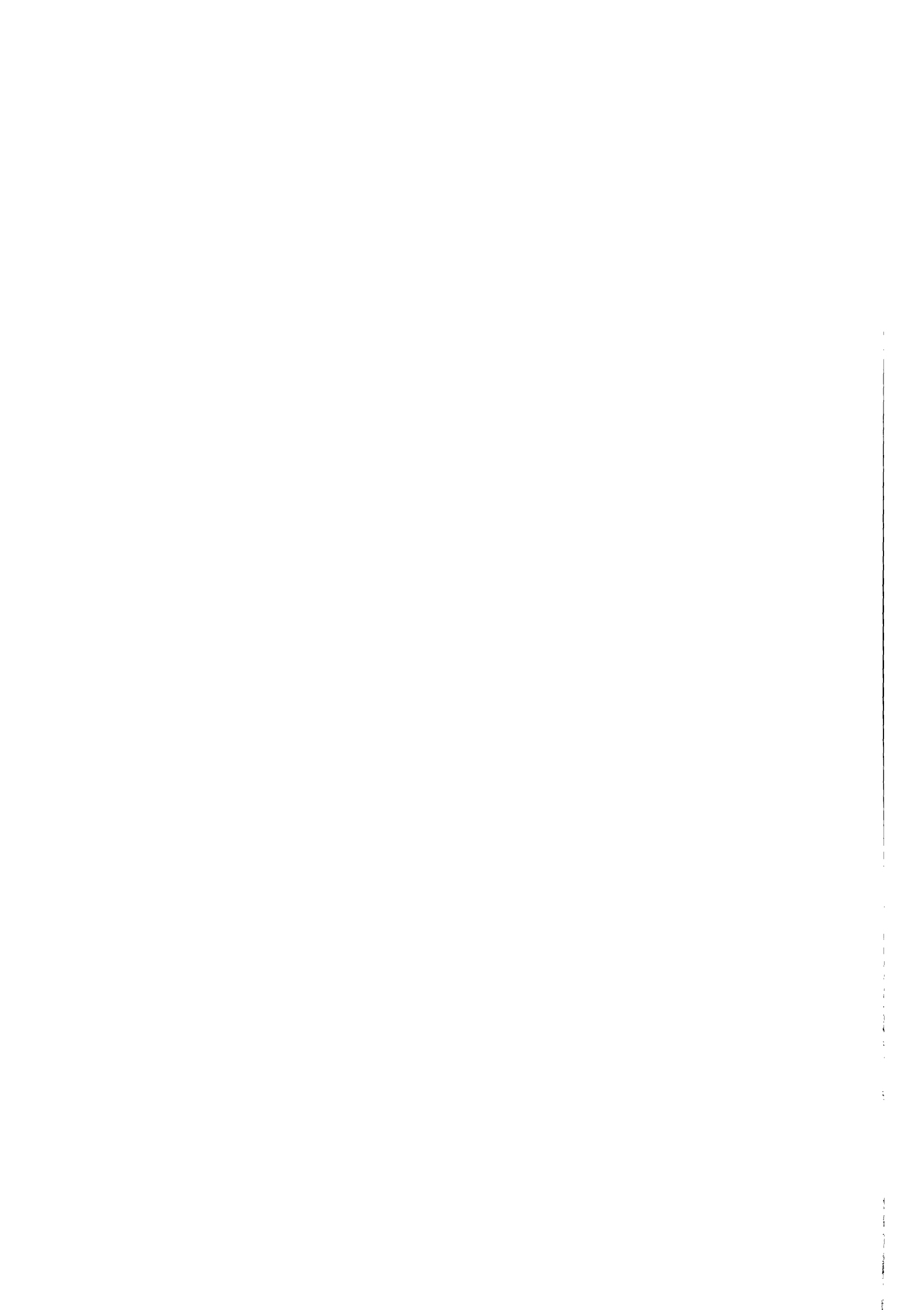
*Vinnumálaskrifstofa Félagsmálaráðuneytisins*  
(Labour Office of the Ministry of Social Affairs)  
Suðurlandsbraut 24  
IS-108 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5882500  
Fax: (+354) 5882520

YOUTH FOR EUROPE

*Hitt húsið*  
(Cultural Advisory Centre for Young People)  
Brautarholti 20  
IS-105 Reykjavík  
Tel: (+354) 5624320  
Fax: (+354) 5624341



**NORWAY**



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## **General information**

Norway occupies the Western half of the Scandinavian peninsula. Common borders with Sweden, Finland and Russia extend for 2,542 km. The coastline is dotted with 50,000 large and small islands.

The country has 2 official written languages which are fairly similar. Bokmål, which is used by more than 80 % of the population, has evolved from dialects used in urban areas, influenced for centuries by Danish. Nynorsk is derived from dialects of more rural areas. A third language, Sami, is spoken by the indigenous Sami population.

The national flag is red, with a blue cross outlined in white.

## **Area and population**

Area (sq. km.): 386,958

Population (1994): 4,324,815 inhabitants

Population density per sq. km: 13

Capital: Oslo - 477,781 inhabitants (1994)

Number of people born in a foreign country: 216,177 (1994)

## **Political system**

Norway is a constitutional democracy with a parliamentary form of Government, and has a multi-party system. General elections take place every fourth year. Legislative power rests with the Parliament (Storting), executive power with the Government and judiciary authority with the Supreme Court. The country is a constitutional and hereditary monarchy, of which the King is the Head of State.

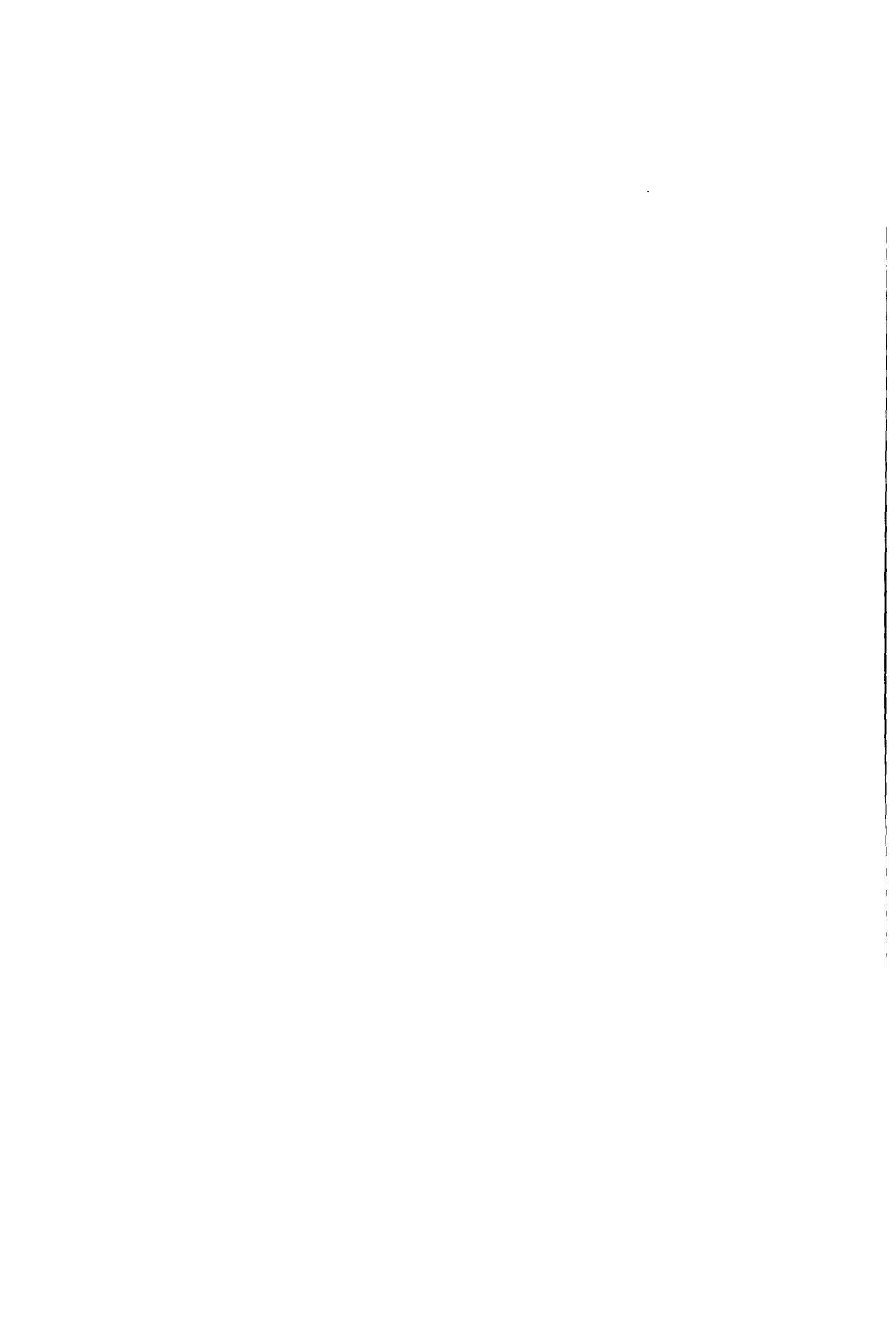
In 1387 Norway was absorbed into a union with Denmark which lasted until 1814 (from 1536 Norway was a Danish province ruled by a governor). After Napoleon's defeat, Denmark was compelled, under the Treaty of Kiel, to cede Norway to Sweden. A national referendum decided in favour of dissolving the union of Norway and Sweden in 1905. The Norwegian Constitution dates from 1814. Norway has close relations with the other Nordic countries.

## **Additional information**

Norway has a long tradition of free education and free educational and vocational guidance, financed by the State, the counties or the municipalities.

Norway has a State church. 88% of the population are members of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Norway. 3% belong to other Christian denominations. 0.3% are Muslims.

Unemployment: approx. 5 - 6%



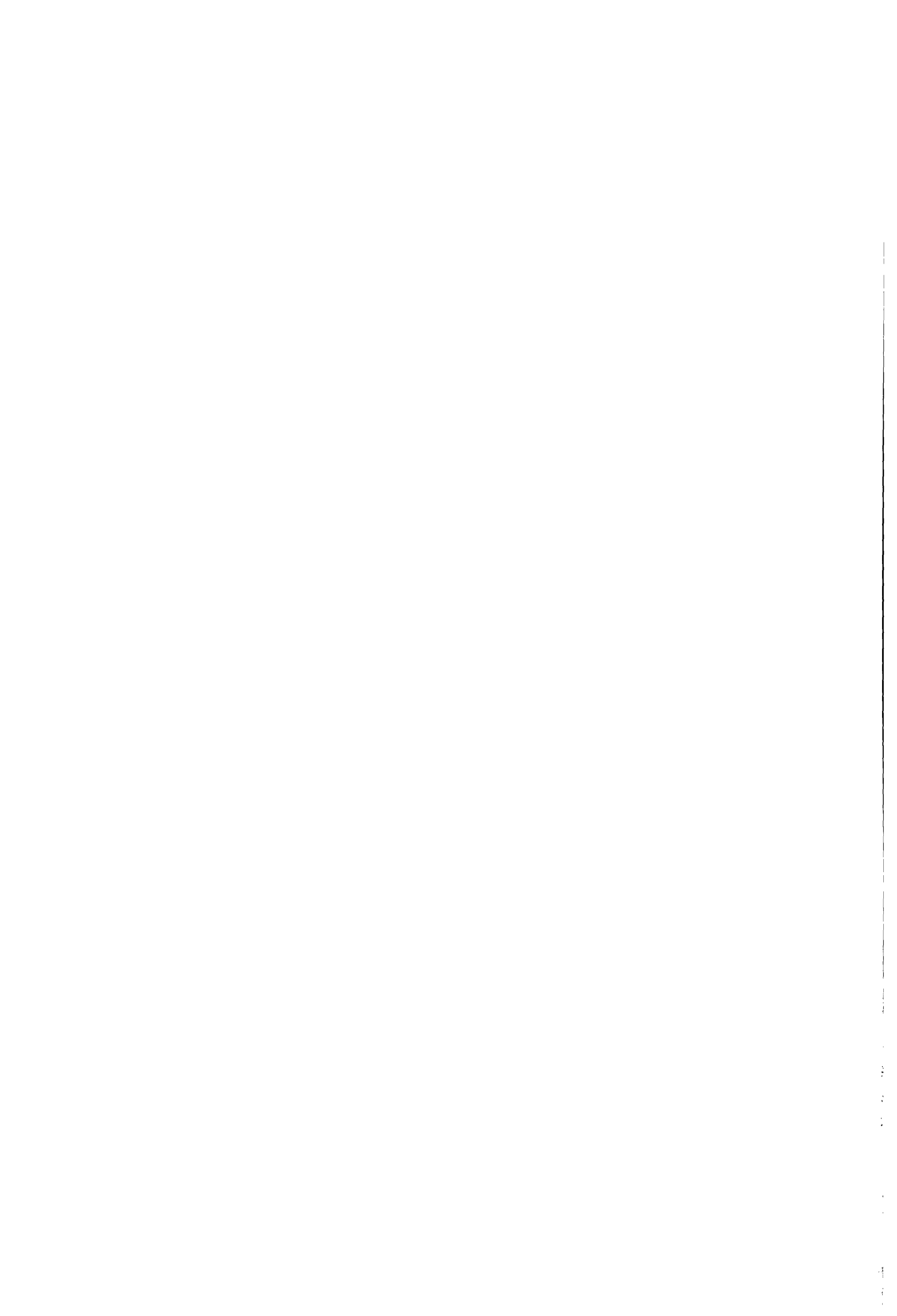


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## A. INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

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### A.1 Principal contact point

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A national centre in the network of European guidance resource centres is being established. No final decision has yet been taken.

### A.2 Other contact points and principal information sources

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*Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs) is responsible for the general direction of vocational guidance in schools, as far as this is mediated through the curricula. The regional authority and the individual schools are responsible for following up their own pupils;

*Arbeidsdirektoratet* (the Directorate of Labour) is responsible for managing vocational guidance for young people and others, and also for the coordination of public activities connected with vocational guidance.

### A.3 Handbooks and publications

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*Aktiv arbeidsmarkedspolitik og langtidsledighet i Norge* (Active Labour Market Policy and Long-term Unemployment in Norway) published by the Directorate of Labour.  
Norwegian/English/French/German;

*Arbeidsmarkedet i Norge - tall og fakta* (The Labour Market Policy in Norway - Facts and Figures) published by the Directorate of Labour. Norwegian/English/French/German;

*Arbeidssøkeren* (The Job-seeker) published by the Directorate of Labour (available in Norwegian only);

*Education in Norway (Utdanning i Norge)* published by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. Norwegian/ English/French/German;

*EURES*. Norway's Euroadvisers at the Public Employment Service's European service in Oslo have access to this database;

*EURO-service. Looking for work in Norway (EUROPA-formidling. Søke arbeid i Norge)*. Published by the Directorate of Labour. Norwegian/English/French/German;

*EURO-service. Unemployment in the EEA. (EUROPA-formidling. Dagpenger i EØS-land.)* Published by the Directorate of Labour. Norwegian/English;

*Grants and loans for foreign citizens (Stipend og lån til utenlandske statsborgere)*. Published by *Statens lånekasse for utdanning (the State Educational Loan Fund)*. Information for political refugees, students from Nordic countries, immigrants, students from developing countries and Eastern Europe and students from the EEA countries. Norwegian/English;

*Høgskoleutdanning. Oversikt over utdanning ved de statlige høgskolene* (College education, an outline of courses offered by the Norwegian colleges of higher education) published by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church affairs (available in Norwegian only);

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*Informasjonssenter for internasjonal utdanning* - NAIC (Information centre for International Education) published by University of Oslo. Norwegian/English;

*Mer utdanning?* (General prospectus for further and higher education) published by the Directorate of Labour, contains information on educational opportunities, mainly in Norway and primarily for young people (available in Norwegian only);

*Minifakta om Norge* (Minifacts about Norway) published by Statistics Norway in cooperation with Utenriksdepartementet (The Ministry of Foreign Affairs). Norwegian/English/French/German;

Registration of Medical Practitioners in Norway (*Godkjenning som lege i Norge*) published jointly by the Norwegian Board of Health (*Helsetilsynet*), the Faculty of Medicine, University of Oslo and the Norwegian Medical Association. Norwegian/English;

Residence permits in Norway for people from EEA-countries, published by the *Utlendingsdirektoratet* (UDI) (Directorate of Immigration). Norwegian/English/French/German;

*Stipend- og legatboken håndboken* (Grants and Scholarships Handbook) published by Market Information Services AS, (available in Norwegian only);

*Student* (Student) published by *Universitetsforlaget* (Norwegian University Press) has information on higher education (available in Norwegian only);

*SØKERAVISA* (The Job-seekers' Bulletin) published by *Samordnet opptak* (Coordinated Admission), Postboks 1133 Blindern, N-0317 Oslo, gives information on higher education except at the universities (available in Norwegian only);

*Søknadsfrister. Adresseliste* (Application deadlines. Address List) published by the Directorate of Labour, contains deadlines for applications and a list of addresses (available in Norwegian only);

The Folk High Schools in Norway (*Folkehøgskolen in Norway*). Published by *Informasjonkontor for kristen folkehøgskole* (Information office for Christian Folk High Schools), Gråkamveien 10 A, 0386 Oslo, and by *Informasjonkontoret for folkehøgskolen* (Information office for Folk High Schools), Sentrum, 0154 Oslo. This booklet gives information about Norwegian folk high schools, which are optional boarding schools offering 33 week courses, primarily for young adults. The schools have no set curriculum and no formal examinations. The minimum age is 17;

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*Til deg som skal søke videregående opplæring* (information for applicants to upper secondary schools) published by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (available in Norwegian only);

*TOTAL-systemet*. This is a database run by the Directorate of Labour to register job-seekers and offers and vacancies within the education system in Norway. The entire Government Employment Service has on-line access to the database;

*Utdanning i utlandet* (Education Abroad) published by Market information services AS, Kjørbokollen 1,N-1300, Sandvika, Norway (available in Norwegian only);

*VEIVALG* (Which way to go) is a PC-operated programme run by the Directorate of Labour, available to subscribers on diskettes (available in Norwegian only);

*Årsmelding* (Annual Report), published by the Directorate of Labour. Norwegian/English.

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## **B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM**

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This section presents an overview of the structure of education in Norway and gives details about the different structures and paths of initial vocational education and training. The diagram in the following subsection illustrates the current education system, from nursery school to higher education. The diagram reflects the changes in the structure of upper secondary education which were introduced in August 1994.

### **B.1 General overview**

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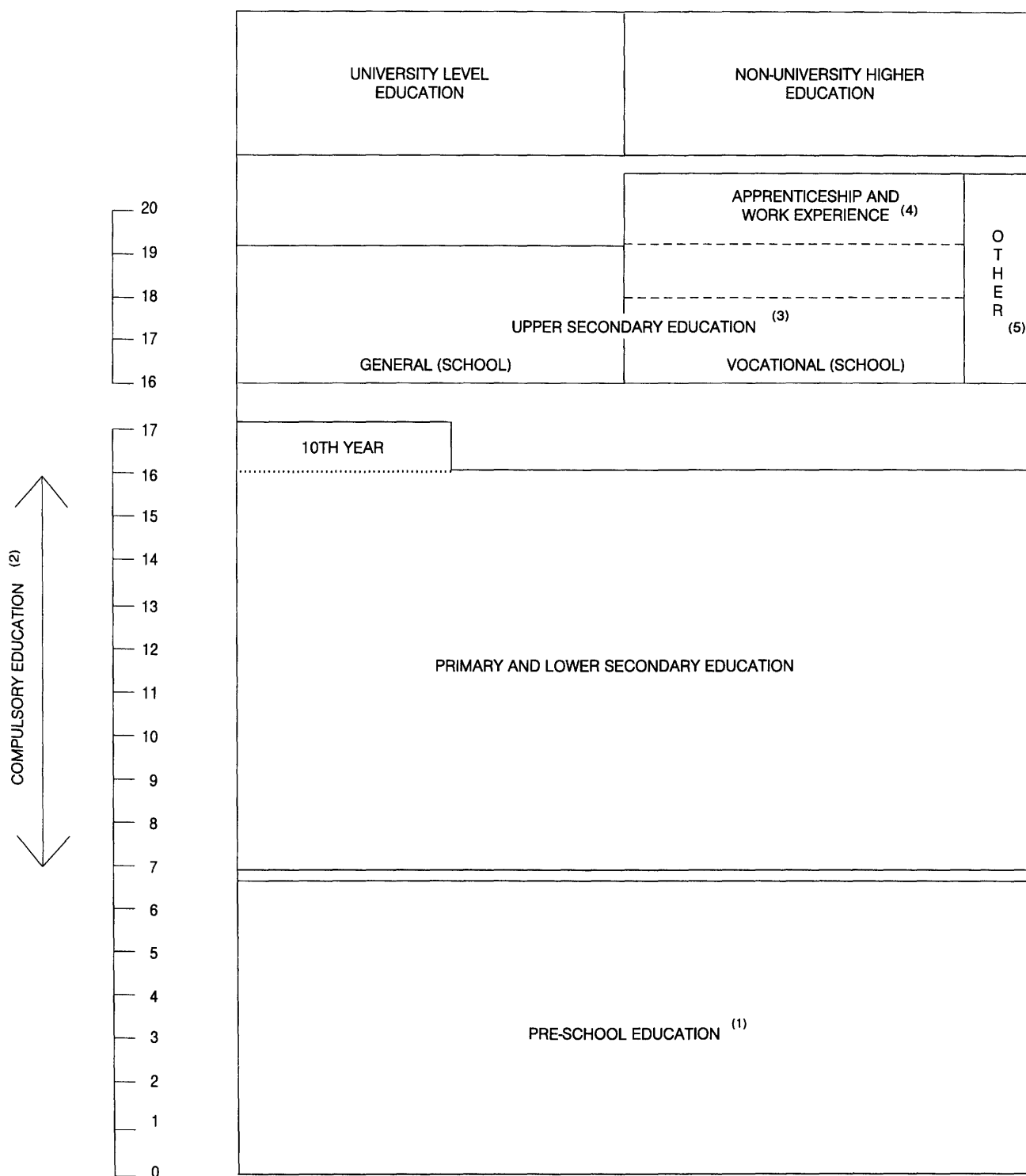
#### **B.1.1 Diagram illustrating the structure of the education and initial training system**

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##### **Key to diagram**

1. School entry age will be lowered to 6 years.
2. There are 9 years of full-time compulsory education, to be extended to 10 years within a few years.
3. Upper secondary schools provide 3 years of general and vocational education after the 9th or 10th year of lower secondary education, with the final examination qualifying for higher education.
4. The norm for apprenticeship training is 2 years of vocational training in upper secondary school followed by 1 or 2 years of practical training in industry.
5. Courses not included in the Act concerning upper secondary education.

# NORWAY



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## **B.1.2 General sources of information**

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs

The Directorate of Labour

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## **B.2 General education**

### **B.2.1 Structure, duration and aims of education**

9 years' compulsory schooling was introduced in 1969. Compulsory school is divided into 2 stages: primary, from age 7 to 13 (the school entry age is currently being lowered to 6 years), and lower secondary, from 13 to 16. Compulsory school is completely comprehensive. Mixed ability classes study the same subjects throughout the period of compulsory education, with a few exceptions, particularly in the last 2 years, when optional subjects include a second foreign language. Vocational courses are not part of compulsory education.

At 16, young people who have completed their compulsory schooling, or an equivalent, have a statutory right to 3 years' upper secondary education. It is the responsibility of the county authorities to ensure that a sufficient number of school places exist to meet the demand. Each 16 year old chooses 3 foundation courses, in order of preference, from the 13 available options, and the authorities are legally obliged to offer applicants 1 of the 3 choices. The foundation courses provide a general introduction to the subjects and trades that will be studied in greater depth in the following years; in effect, specialisation is postponed to the second year of upper secondary education.

The aim is to give all young people education and training which lead to university entrance, vocational qualifications, documented partial competence, or some other recognised qualification. To achieve this objective, the following practical steps have been taken:

- capacity has been increased;
- progress from one stage of education to the next has been facilitated, which in turn has led to a more efficient use of resources;
- the foundation course level offers a broader range of courses than was formerly the case;
- better contacts have been established between schools and industry;
- opportunities have been enhanced for recruitment from vocational training to higher education.

The curriculum for upper secondary education consists of:

- a core curriculum setting out the overall objectives for primary, secondary and adult education;
- subject syllabi which establish the attainment targets and focal issues of the individual courses.

The core curriculum, which is based on the statement of aims in the current education acts, is a binding document of fundamental importance for all education, including vocational education and training. It emphasises the fact that education should lead to the attainment of broad competences which satisfy the requirements of both society and industry.

The subject and course syllabi are divided into modules so as to meet the needs certain pupils have for linking together sections of their education in order to gain recognised qualifications. This applies to adults as well as to individual pupils and also to groups of pupils who, for various reasons, cannot undertake a full course of training. The module system also makes it easier for schools to relate their courses to the needs of industry.

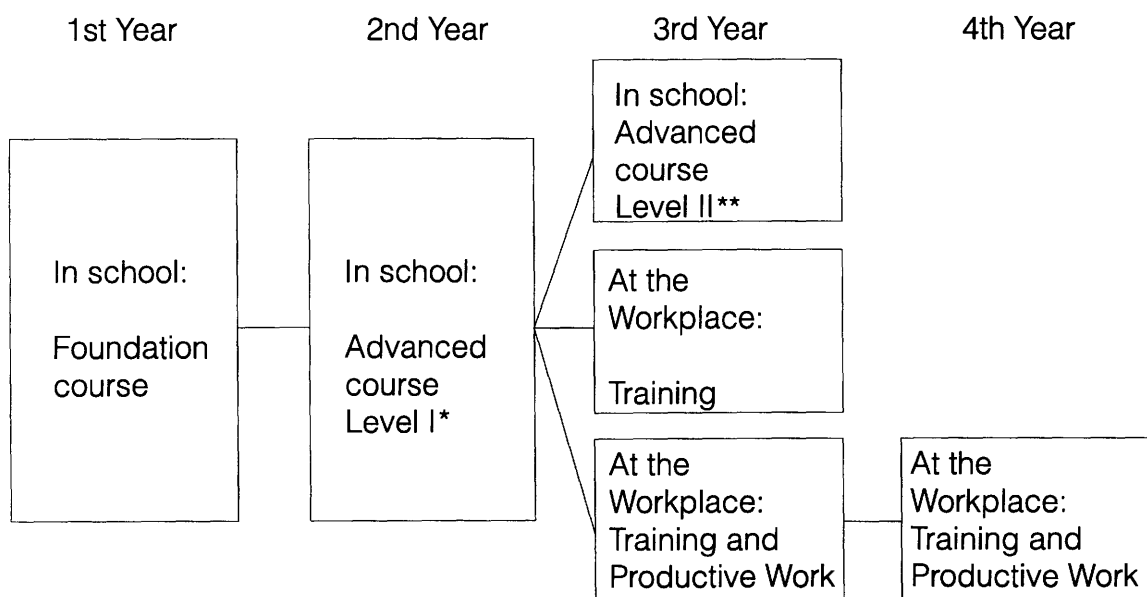


## B.3 Initial vocational education and training

### B.3.1 Structure, duration and the levels of qualification attainable

The main vocational training model, i.e., trades covered by the Act Relating to Vocational Training, consists of the first 2 years (Foundation Course and Advanced Course Level I) in school and the final training (Advanced Course Level II) in business and industry. This is called the “2+” model.

As indicated above, the first year provides a broad introduction to the general area into which specific trades are grouped. The number of foundation courses is reduced from well over 100 to 13, and specialisation postponed. The basic pattern of initial vocational education and training can be illustrated by the following diagram:



\* In some trades, education and training at Advanced course Level I is provided at the workplace

\*\* Vocational education and training in school at Advanced course Level II is an exception to the general rule

Admission to Advanced Course Level I within an area of study is normally based on a satisfactory attendance at the relevant Foundation Course. Training in industry and in the workplace is generally expected to last 1 year, but it may be supplemented by productive work over a period of up to 2 years. Trainees receive no wages during the training period, but for the productive work stage they receive wages which are agreed by the parties within the industry. The training organisation receives a Government grant for the vocational training period.

Employers' and employees' organisations play an active role in:

- estimating how many skilled workers are needed in various areas;
- securing the requisite number of apprenticeship places.

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If a sufficient number of apprenticeship places in industry cannot be ensured, the county authorities are obliged to offer the trainees the option of completing their training in school.

All upper secondary education leads to full qualification; either a vocational qualification or a university entrance qualification. Craft certificates and journeymen's certificates indicate competence in apprenticeship trades and are issued on the basis of the craft or journeyman's test completed with an approved result at the end of the education and training period.

Both those who take their final training in industry, and those who complete their vocational training in school, take the same craft or journeyman's test and receive the same craft or journeyman's certificate when they pass the test.

In vocational subjects not covered by the Act Relating to Vocational Training, education takes place in school. The level achieved is shown on a certificate issued by the school authorities when the requisite examinations have been successfully taken. Adults may take these examinations as external candidates.

### **B.3.2 A service to students with special needs**

County authorities are responsible for providing places for pupils and apprentices, in addition to those with statutory rights, in order to provide opportunities for applicants with special needs, for whom 3 years' education and training are not sufficient. Those whose need for special educational provision is professionally recognised may receive up to 5 years' of training. Such pupils are also given priority admission to the course of their choice, provided that their need is acknowledged by approved experts.

County authorities are also responsible for establishing a follow-up service for young people between the ages of 16 and 19 years, who have a statutory right to upper secondary education, and who are neither employed nor undergoing education or training. The follow-up service also keeps track of those who drop out or fail to complete the courses which they have begun. The aim of the service is, as stated, to ensure that all young people receive an education leading to a recognised qualification.

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## **B.4 Continuing Training**

### **B.4.1 Adult Education**

The Norwegian Adult Education Act embraces the following areas of education with relevance to working life:

- adult education arranged by upper secondary schools;
- educational courses arranged by non-Governmental study associations and distance education institutions;
- post-graduate and further education for adults in universities and higher education institutions;
- labour market courses.

### **B.4.2 Upper Secondary Education for Adults**

Upper secondary education for adults encompasses both general education and vocational training. This education is primarily arranged by upper secondary schools, in some cases in cooperation with the other above-mentioned institutions.

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Adults may attend ordinary classes or classes specially arranged for them. Teaching in special classes allows for compressed courses as well as tuition which is organised in modules.

Adult students usually take examinations in individual subjects as external candidates. However, special rules exist for adult education, which correspond to the rules for the marking and the administration of examinations in the regular upper secondary education system.

Study associations and distance education institutions also offer courses unrestricted by the set curricula and examinations of the public education system. Many of these courses are relevant to working life.

Further information can be obtained from:

- The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs Department of Adult Education;
- Voksenopplæringsforbundet* (The Norwegian Association for Adult Education);
- Norsk Forbund for Fjernundervisning* (The Norwegian Association for Distance Education);
- Norsk Fjernundervisning (NFU)* (The Norwegian State Institution for Distance Education).

### **B.4.3 Labour Market Training**

The purpose of labour market courses is to qualify job-seekers for ordinary work, while at the same time ensuring that the needs for various kinds of manpower are met.

The Labour Market Administration buys courses from various course organisers, such as public and private schools, and also from independent arrangers and private companies. There are also approximately 30 Labour Market Training Centres which offer a wide range of both practical and theoretical training.

The Labour Market Administration arranges courses in a number of fields. Several types of courses are structured as a series of steps, enabling students to obtain formal qualifications aimed at university entrance or at a trade certificate. Other courses are intended to qualify job-seekers for jobs which do not necessarily demand formal qualifications. Job-seekers with a poor standard of education may be given special courses at lower secondary level.

Labour Market Training may also be offered to foreign job-seekers in Norway. However, a candidate's knowledge of Norwegian is often tested before admission is granted.

Participants are given economic support by the Labour Market Administration on the basis of special regulations. More information is available from the local employment offices.

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## **B.5 Recognition and comparability of qualifications**

### **B.5.1 NAIC - National Academic Recognition Information Centre (Norwegian NARIC)**

The Norwegian NAIC is part of a European network of similar centres. NAIC provides schools, colleges, universities, careers services and other institutions and organisations, with information and advice on the recognition of academic qualifications (post-secondary education) gained outside Norway. NAIC facilitates and coordinates the evaluation of individual applications for the recognition

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of foreign credentials, by reviewing applications for recognition and forwarding them to the appropriate higher education institutions. For further information contact: NAIC.

### **B.5.2 Organisations/agencies concerned with the professional recognition of qualifications**

*Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet* (Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs): teacher training, vocational training - evaluation of qualifications;  
Information can also be obtained from *Statens utdanningskontor i fylkene* (the State Education Office in the Counties);

*Fylkeslegen i Oslo* (Chief County Medical Officer in Oslo): medical and paramedical training;

*Yrkesopplæringsnemndene/ fagopplæringskontorene* (County Vocational Training Boards) in the counties, give guidance to Citizens of EEA countries about recognition of foreign vocational training in Norway. Further details can be obtained from the local employment offices.

Others: contact NAIC.

### **B.5.3 Bilateral or multilateral agreements**

Special regulations exist between the Scandinavian countries. Vocational qualifications are usually mutually recognised in these countries. In the case of further education programmes lasting more than 3 years, the Scandinavian countries have an agreement concerning the mutual recognition of vocational qualifications.

Further information: Nordisk Ministerråd (Nordic Council of Ministers).

The NORDPLUS collaboration is a network for the exchange of students between higher education institutions in the Nordic countries. For further details, contact the individual institutions.

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## **C. CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES**

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### **C.1 Structure and target groups of public and private careers guidance services**

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The 1947 Law relating to Measures for Promoting Employment, subsection 1(f), requires the Directorate of Labour to provide careers guidance services with a view to helping young people and adults in their choice of occupation and education, and in adapting to working life. The Directorate of Labour is also responsible for coordinating all Government services concerned with careers guidance.

The labour market administration gives as much cooperation and support as possible to school authorities and teachers in terms of the vocational guidance offered by schools, and assists them in providing vocational guidance courses for teachers.

The schools sector and the labour market administration are both responsible for offering vocational guidance; the schools to their pupils and the labour market administration to all those who seek their services.

The provision of free vocational guidance is a Government responsibility.

A few private companies offer careers guidance services. These companies charge for their services.

#### **C.1.1 Educational and vocational guidance in the education system**

In compulsory schools and in upper secondary schools, counsellors and teachers are responsible for providing careers-oriented teaching and guidance. In the universities, this service is provided by study counsellors.

#### **C.1.2 Careers guidance structures of the employment service**

The target groups are all categories of applicants for employment or education who ask for the assistance of the employment service. The responsibility for careers guidance lies with all those staff who are in contact with the public, primarily via employment and occupational guidance offices. Employment offices carry a stock of information material for the general public concerning occupations and training.

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## **C.2 Guidance services provided specifically for foreigners**

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*Arbeidsdirektoratet* (Directorate of Labour);

*Arbeidsformidlingens EUROPA service* (the Norwegian Public Employment Service's European service);

*Informasjonssenter for internasjonal utdanning - NAIC*  
(NAIC - National Academic Information Centre (Norwegian NARIC));

*Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet*  
(Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs);

*Senter for internasjonalt universitetssamarbeid (SIU)*  
(Centre for International University Cooperation);

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*Statens lånekasse for utdanning* (The State Educational Loan Fund);

*Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI)* (Directorate of Immigration) can supply detailed information about residence permits;

*Yrkesopplæringsnemndene/ fagopplæringskontorene* (Vocational Training Boards) in the counties, give guidance to EEA citizens about the recognition of foreign vocational training qualifications in Norway.

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## D. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE

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Contact units, currently:

*SOCRATES - Senter for internasjonalt universitetssamarbeid SIU, UiB* (Centre for International University Cooperation, University of Bergen);

*ERASMUS - Senter for internasjonalt universitetssamarbeid SIU, UiB* (Centre for International University Cooperation, University of Bergen);

*LINGUA - Senter for internasjonalt universitetssamarbeid SIU, UiB* (Centre for International University Cooperation, University of Bergen);

*EURYDICE - Kirke-, utdannings-, og forskningsdepartementet, IS-seksjonen;*

*LEONARDO DA VINCI - Kirke-, utdannings-, og forskningsdepartementet*

Information about this programme can be obtained from *Statens utdanningskontor i fylkene* (the State Education Office in the Counties);

*YOUTH FOR EUROPE - Atlantis ungdomsutveksling* (Atlantis Youth Exchange scheme);

*EURES - Arbeidsformidlingens EUROPA-service* (The Public Employment Service's European service).

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## **E. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS**

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Norway is a highly developed industrial country. The most important exports are petroleum, non-ferrous metals, chemicals, fish and fish products, ferro-alloys, paper and cardboard.

More than 60% of the workforce is employed in service industries, while approximately 6% is employed in primary industries. A large proportion of employees work in public administration and services.

Approximately 3.2 million people are aged between 16 and 74. Of these, something over 2 million are in active employment. The rate of unemployment is 5 - 6%.

The standard of living, state of health, general level of nutrition and standard of accommodation is high. Public welfare schemes include among other areas: education (including university education); hospital treatment and old-age pensions.

Approximately 80% of the population lives in towns and urban settlements.

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### **E.1 Minimum pay for workers and trainees**

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#### **E.1.1 Legal regulation of wages**

In Norway there is no statutory wage regulation. The regulations are formulated through collective agreements between the trade unions and employers' associations.

#### **E.1.2 Sick pay**

Employees are entitled to sick pay equivalent to 100% of their normal salary (up to a limit of 6 times the basic amount) under the following conditions:

- the employment must have lasted for at least 14 days;
- the employer pays for the first 14 days of sick leave.

Full sick pay can be given for a maximum period of 1 year. For periods in excess of this, a lower rehabilitation payment can be granted.

#### **E.1.3 Working hours**

Normal working hours are 37.5 hours per week in both the public and the private sector.

#### **E.1.4 Paid holidays**

All employees are entitled to twenty five days (4 weeks and 1 day) of paid holidays. It is expected that employees take 3 weeks during the summer months unless otherwise agreed between the employer and the employee.

Once employees reach sixty years of age, they are entitled to an extra week of paid holiday.



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## E.2 Availability of educational leave

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In 1994, the Basic Agreement between the Landsorganisasjon i Norge, LO (Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions) and Næringslivets Hovedorganisasjon, NHO (Confederation of Norwegian Business and Industry) was renegotiated. The new agreement gives employees the right to full or partial leave of absence if this is necessary for education which benefits both the person concerned, and the enterprise. In cases where there is a gap between the existing competence within the enterprise and the future needs, this should be covered by appropriate training measures or other by means. The cost of supplementary and further education which meet the needs of the enterprise are then borne by the enterprise itself.

## E.3 Social security and unemployment benefits

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The Norwegian social security system is based on the National Insurance Act of 1966. It is a comprehensive system, including a wide selection of benefits: old-age pension; survivors' and disability pensions; rehabilitation benefits; occupational injury benefits; benefits to single parents; cash benefits in case of sickness and maternity and funeral grants. All people resident or working in Norway have to be insured under the National Insurance Scheme.

The National Insurance Scheme is financed via taxation, by contributions from employees, self-employed people and other members, employers' contributions and contributions from the State. The taxes are considered to be rather heavy.

In order to qualify for daily cash benefits during a period of unemployment, insured people must satisfy all of the following conditions. They must:

- be unemployed;
- be registered at an unemployment office;
- be able to work;
- be bona fide applicants for work;
- have had an annual income from work of at least 75% of the basic amount (*grunnbeløpet*) either during the previous calendar year or as an average of the previous 3 years.

Daily cash benefits are paid when the person concerned has been unemployed for 3 of the last 10 days whilst being registered at the unemployment office. Benefits are paid for 6 days a week and for a continuous period of eighty weeks.

5 - 6% cent of the working population is registered as unemployed. In some areas the unemployment rate is quite high.

## E.4 Employment Services

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In Norway, job placements are the responsibility of the Public Employment Service. Private agencies are only allowed to work on job placements in collaboration with the Public Employment Service. The ban on private agencies organising job placements was partly amended in 1993 (Employment Act, section 2).

*Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet* (The Ministry of Local Government and Labour) has the overall responsibility for Norwegian labour policy.

The Directorate of Labour is responsible for the implementation of labour market policy. Efforts are focused on:

- 
- helping unemployed people to find work;
  - helping employers to fill vacancies;
  - preventing and reducing the negative effects of unemployment.

The Directorate of Labour administers the Public Employment Service by means of:

- 18 county employment offices;
- 165 district employment offices;
- 18 counselling offices.

The services of the public employment offices are free of charge.

The Public Employment Service places great emphasis on giving job-seekers the best possible basis for taking active steps themselves. They receive information and guidance at the employment offices. Job clubs are options designed to motivate them and improve their ability to look for work.

*The Håndbok for arbeidssøkere* (Handbook for Job-Seekers (Norwegian only)) contains tips and hints for job-seekers, and is used as a tool by employment offices when dealing with individual job-seekers.

Job-seekers and job vacancies are registered in databases maintained by the public employment service. In addition to permanent posts, these databases hold information about short-term and temporary stand-in vacancies, and about people interested in vacancies of this type. All the district employment offices throughout the country have on-line access to these databases.

Information from the vacancy database is distributed in different ways:

- The Employment Service's free telephone service (*Arbeidsformidlingens Grønne-linje*) is open for twelve hours from Monday to Friday;
- The newsletter *Arbeidssøkeren* (The Job-Seeker) with job advertisements, news, tips and ideas is published forty times a year in 3 regional versions which job-seekers can subscribe to free of charge. The newsletter is distributed to a number of Government offices;
- The Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation's Text TV has daily information about the labour market for job-seekers and employers. This medium is also used for job placements. It has turned out to be useful when a demand for manpower has to be met swiftly and this cannot be achieved on the basis of local labour resources;
- Two hundred job terminals provide information about vacancies, labour market courses and courses available in secondary schools and regional colleges. Job terminals can be found in district employment offices, shopping centres, civic centres and libraries. They are updated daily with new information. Job terminals can also be accessed via modem.

The agreement on the European Economic Area opens up a free labour market within the EEA. The Norwegian Public Employment Service participates in EURES (the EUROpean Employment Service) which enables job-seekers and employers to obtain information about the labour market in other EEA countries. Basic information is provided by the local employment offices. The Public Employment Service also offers more specialised services at the EUROPA Service in Oslo, where specially trained Euroadvisers with access to the EURES system can assist mobile job-seekers and employers. Written information about the rules for work, education and training, and unemployment benefits, and about setting up businesses in Norway and other EEA countries is available in Norwegian, English, French and German. Further information can be obtained from:

- The Directorate of Labour;
- The Public Employment Service's EUROPA Service;
- District employment offices.

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## F. LIST OF ADDRESSES

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*Arbeidsdirektoratet*

(The Directorate of Labour)

Postboks 8127 Dep.

N-0032 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 94 24 00

Fax: (+47) 22 20 81 81

EUROPA service

(The Public Employment Service's EUROPA service)

Akers gaten 1-5

N-0104 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 42 41 41

Fax: (+47) 22 42 44 38

Some major Government Employment offices:

*Arbeidskontoret Oslo sentrum*

(Employment office in Oslo city centre)

Akersgaten 1-5

Postboks 450 Sentrum

N-0104 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 42 08 80

Fax: (+47) 22 42 49 08

*Arbeidskontoret i Stavanger*

(Employment office in Stavanger)

Sverdrupsgate 27

Postboks 119

N-4007 Stavanger

Tel: (+47) 51 50 10 00

Fax: (+47) 51 53 58 20

*Arbeidskontoret for Bergen Sentrum*

(Employment office in Bergen city centre)

Nygårdsgate 6-8

Postboks 279

N-5002 Bergen

Tel: (+47) 55 54 33 00

Fax: (+47) 55 32 74 39

*Arbeidskontoret i Trondheim sentrum*

(Employment office in Trondheim city centre)

Munkegaten 48

N-7004 Trondheim

Tel: (+47) 73 52 50 00

Fax: (+47) 73 53 52 65

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*Arbeidskontoret i Tromsø*  
(Employment office in Tromsø)  
Storgaten 148  
Postboks 503  
N-9001 Tromsø  
Tel: (+47) 77 68 75 90  
Fax: (+47) 77 68 57 18

*Arbeidsformidlingens Grønne-linje*  
(The Employment Service's free service telephone)  
Postboks 500  
N-8601 Mo  
Tel: (+47) 80 03 31 66  
Fax: (+47) 75 15 77 90

Other institutions:

*EU-kommisjonens informasjonskontor*  
(European Commission Delegation)  
Haakon VII's gate 6  
N-0161 Oslo  
Tel: (+47) 22 83 35 83  
Fax: (+47) 22 83 40 55

*EURES*  
Øvre Slottsgate 11  
N-0101 Oslo  
Tel: (+47) 22 42 41 41  
Fax: (+47) 22 42 44 38

New address from autumn 1995:  
Akers gaten 1-5  
N-0104 Oslo

*Folketrygdkontor for utenlandssaker*  
(National Insurance office for matters concerning EEA, etc.)  
Postboks 8138 Dep.  
N-0033 Oslo  
Tel: (+47) 22 92 76 00  
Fax: (+47) 22 41 82 20

*Fylkeslegen i Oslo*  
(Chief County Medical Officer in Oslo)  
(Responsible authority for mutual authorization of medical personnel in accordance with the EEA agreement)  
Postboks 8041 Dep.  
N-0031 Oslo  
Tel: (+47) 22 00 39 00  
Fax: (+47) 22 00 39 10

*Informasjonssenter for internasjonal utdanning - NAIC*

(Authorisation/evaluation of equivalence of foreign academic qualifications in Norway)

Postboks 1081 Blindern

N-0317 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 85 88 60

Fax (+47) 22 85 88 69

*Kirke-, utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet*

(The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs)

N-0032 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 34 74 39

Fax: (+47) 22 34 95 40

*Kommunal- og arbeidsdepartementet*

(The Ministry of Local Government and Labour)

Postboks 8112 Dep.

N-0032 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 34 69 49

Fax: (+47) 22 34 95 46

(Social rights)

Tel: (+47) 22 34 69 31

Fax: (+47) 22 34 95 46

*Landsorganisasjonen i Norge (LO)*

(Norwegian Confederation of Trade Unions)

Youngs gate 11

N-0181 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 03 10 50

Fax: (+47) 22 03 17 53

**LEONARDO DA VINCI**

*Teknologisk institutt*

(National Institute of Technology)

Postboks 2608 St. Hanshaugen

N-0131 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 86 50 00

Fax: (+47) 22 11 49 25

*Nordisk Ministerråd*

(Nordic Council of Ministers)

Store Strandstrøede 18

DK-1255 København K

Tel: (+45) 33 11 47 11

Fax: (+45) 33 96 02 02

*Norsk Fjernundervisning (NFU)*

(Norwegian State Institution for Distance Education)

Pilestredet 56

Postboks 8197 Dep.

N-0034 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 56 43 10

Fax: (+47) 22 56 43 11

*Rikstrygdeverket*

(The National Insurance Administration)

Drammensveien 60

N-0271 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 92 70 00

Fax: (+47) 22 55 70 88

*Skattedirektoratet*

(Directorate of Taxes)

Postboks 6300 Etterstad

N-0603 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 07 70 00

Fax: (+47) 22 07 71 08

SOCRATES, ERASMUS, LINGUA

*Senter for internasjonalt universitetssamarbeid (SIU)*

(Centre for International University Cooperation)

*Det Norske Universitetsråd*

(Norwegian Council of Universities)

Landes gate 3

N-5020 Bergen

Tel: (+47) 55 23 33 58

Fax: (+47) 55 23 15 90

*Statens lånekasse for utdanning*

(The State Educational Loan Fund)

Østre Aker vei 20

Postboks 195 Økern

N-0510 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 72 67 00

Fax: (+47) 22 64 26 36

*Statens utdanningskontor for Oslo og Akershus*

(The State Educational Office, Oslo og Akershus)

There are similar offices in all the counties)

Postboks 8105 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 00 38 00

Fax: (+47) 22 00 38 90

*Utenriksdepartementet*

(The Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

Informasjonsseksjonen

*(Generell informasjon om EØS-avtalen)*

(General information about the EEA agreement)

Postboks 8114 Dep.

N-0032 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 34 36 27

Fax: (+47) 22 34 27 87

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*Utlendingsdirektoratet (UDI)*

(The Directorate of Immigration)  
(Spørsmål om oppholdstillatelse)  
(Information about residence permits)

Elveveien 75, Lysaker

Postboks 8108 Dep.

N-0032 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 67 53 08 90

Fax:(+47) 67 12 52 72

*Voksenopplæringsforbundet*

(The Norwegian Association for Adult Education)  
The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs

Postboks 8119 Dep

N-0032 Oslo

*Yrkesopplæringsnemda i Oslo*

(County Vocational Training Board in Oslo)  
(There are similar institutions in all the counties)

Strømsveien 110

N-0663 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 17 33 55

*YOUTH FOR EUROPE*

ATLANTIS Youth Exchange

(Arrangement of au-pair and practice posts, "Youth for Europe" contact)

Rolf Hofmos gate 18

N-0655 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 67 00 43

Fax: (+47) 22 68 68 08

Associations:

**AIESEC**

(Arrangement of practice posts for Norwegians abroad and for foreign citizens in Norway for students of economics/management/business administration)

Karlsborgveien 4

N-0193 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 67 99 40

Fax: (+47) 22 67 99 70

**ANSA**

(Association of Norwegian Students Abroad)

Storgaten 3

N-0155 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 42 36 53

Fax: (+47) 22 33 51 77

*ATLANTIS Youth Exchange*

(Arrangement of au-pair and practice posts, "Youth for Europe" contact)

Rolf Hofmos gate 18

N-0655 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 67 00 43

Fax: (+47) 22 68 68 08

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*ELSA Norge*

(Norwegian branch of European Law Student's Association)

Universitetet i Oslo

Karl Johans gate 47

N-0162 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 85 98 16

*Foreningen Norden*

(Arrange summer jobs for young Norwegians within the Nordic area)

Abbediengen Hovedgård

Harbitzalleen 24

N-0275 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 50 69 00

Tel: (+47) 22 50 90 70 (Nordjobb)

Fax: (+47) 22 73 17 63

*IAESTE Norge*

(The International Association for the Exchange of Students for Technical Experience)

Gamle Kjemi, NTH

N-7034 Trondheim

Tel: (+47) 73 59 32 57

Fax: (+47) 73 59 32 33

*Norsk Forbund for Fjernundervisning*

(The Norwegian Association for Distance Education)

Gjerdrums vei 12

N-0486 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 95 06 30

Fax: (+47) 22 95 07 19

*Voksenopplæringsforbundet*

(The Norwegian Association for Adult Education)

Dronningens gate 17

Postboks 560 Sentrum

N-0105 Oslo

Tel: (+47) 22 41 00 00

Fax: (+47) 22 33 40 85



**SWEDEN**



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## **General information**

Sweden is part of Scandinavia. It borders Norway to the West, and Finland to the Northeast. To the East and South of Sweden is the Baltic Sea, across which lie Russia, Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. Across the Baltic to the South lie Poland and Germany, and to the West is Denmark. The national flag is blue with a yellow cross. The official language is Swedish. The capital is Stockholm.

## **Area and population**

Area (sq. km.): 450,000

Population (1994): 8,815,000

Population density/sq.km: 19

## **Political system**

Sweden is a constitutional monarchy with the Monarch as Head of State. The country is governed by a democratically elected Government and a *Riksdagen* (Parliament) in a multi-party system. Sweden has close relationships with the other 4 Nordic countries.

Sweden has a long tradition of free education, and of free educational and vocational guidance, financed either by the State or by the municipalities.



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## A. INITIAL REFERENCE POINTS

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### A.1 Principal contact points

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*Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet* (The Ministry of Labour) has overall responsibility for the labour market policy;

*Utbildningsdepartementet* (The Ministry of Education and Science) has overall responsibility for issues concerning education.

### A.2 Other contact points and principal information sources

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#### A.2.1 Organisations

In the Spring of 1995, Sweden will decide how to share out responsibility for information provision on the different parts of the EU's new educational programme structure, between various authorities and institutions.

*Skolverket* (National Agency for Education);

*Verket för högskoleservice* (VHS) (National Agency for Higher Education);

*Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* (National Labour Market Board);

*AMU gruppen* (National Employment Training Board);

*Svenska Institutet* (Swedish Institute) supplies certain printed information about the Swedish school system.

#### A.2.2 Handbooks and publications

*1994 curriculum for compulsory schools (Lpo94)* *Utbildningsdepartementet* (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science);

*1994 curriculum for the non-compulsory school system (Lpf94)* *Utbildningsdepartementet* (Swedish Ministry of Education and Science);

Information from *Arbetsmarknadsverket* (National Labour Market Agency). Information from *Verket för Högskoleservice (VHS)* (National Agency for Higher Education);

List of information sheets on compulsory school, upper secondary school and higher education (English, German, French, and Spanish). Information sheet on higher education (Italian). All information sheets may be obtained from *Svenska Institutet* (The Swedish Institute);

*Skolan i Sverige* (Schools in Sweden) by *Skolverket* (The National Agency for Education) is a folder containing information sheets on:

*Det svenska skolsystemet* (The Swedish school system); *Grundskolan* (Compulsory school); *Gymnasieskolan* (Upper secondary school); *Vuxenutbildning* (Adult education); *Invandrarelever* (Immigrant pupils); *Specialskolan* (Schools for pupils with impaired hearing/vision and physical disabilities); *Särskolan och särvux* (Schools and adult education for people with severe learning difficulties); *Elevvård* (Pupil welfare) (English).

All the above books are available from Liber Distribution.

Swedish study support for non-Swedish nationals by *Centrala studiestödsnämnden (CSN)* (National Board of Student Aid);

Training for a world of change. Information from *AMU* (National Employment Training Board).

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## B. EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEM

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### B.1 General overview

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This section gives a general overview of the structure of the Swedish education system. *Grundskolan* (compulsory school) is obligatory, whilst *Gymnasieskolan* (upper secondary school) is voluntary, though a great majority of students in the compulsory school seek admission to upper secondary school. Initial vocational education takes place in the upper secondary school's 13 vocationally oriented programmes.

The municipality makes decisions about the organisation and working methods of the public school system, including municipal adult education. The State exercises its authority via the School Act, the curricula, time-tables, and syllabi, as well as through teacher training. The National Agency for Education supervises, follows-up and evaluates. The Agency provides Parliament and the Government with basic documentation necessary for making decisions about changes in schools.

#### B.1.1 Diagram of the structure of the education and initial training system

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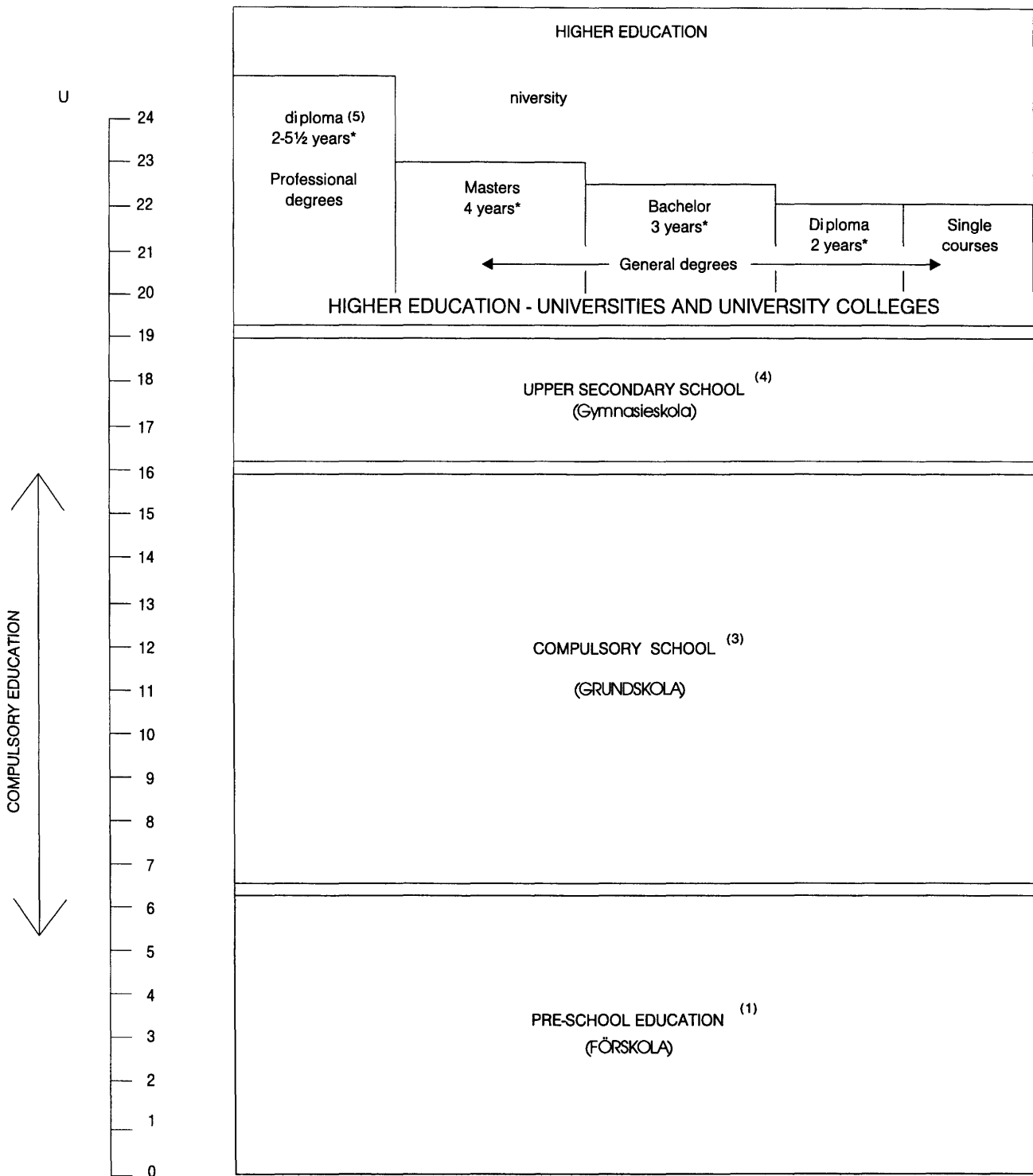
##### Key to diagram

1. In pre-school education there are various institutions catering for the pre 6 - 7 age range: *daghem* (day care centres), *deltidsgrupper* (part-time groups), and *öppen förskola* (open pre-schools).
2. Since 1991, children have been able to start *grundskolan* (compulsory school) at the age of 6 if their parents wish and if the municipality has the space for them. This option should be available in all municipalities by the 1997-1998 school year.
3. The 9 year compulsory schools are attended by children aged 6/7 to 15/16 years. It is a comprehensive, co-educational, school designed to accommodate all the children each year.
4. All education is organised into study programmes which last for 3 years, under a system introduced in 1992 for upper secondary schools. The system is being fully implemented at the beginning of the 1995 - 1996 school year. There are 16 nationally determined programmes, 13 of which are primarily vocationally oriented, 2 of which are geared mainly toward university studies, and the final one is an arts programme.
5. The professional degrees awarded by *universitet* (universities) and *högskolor* (university colleges) are obtained when students complete the programmes of varying lengths (2 to 5\_ years). The programmes lead to both general degrees and professional degrees, e.g., University Diploma in Medicine or in Education (for upper secondary school).

In addition to the provision shown in the diagram, there is also *Det offentliga skolväsendet för vuxna* (the public adult education system). This system includes *grundläggande vuxenutbildning* (basic adult education), *gymnasial vuxenutbildning* (upper secondary adult education), *påbyggnadsutbildningar* (supplementary education), *vuxenutbildning för psykiskt utvecklingsstörda (sär vux)* (adult education for people with severe learning difficulties) and *svenskundervisning för invandrare* (Swedish language tuition for adult immigrants).



# SWEDEN



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### **B.1.2 General statistics**

In 1994, in forms within compulsory schools, there were about 926.000 registered students; in upper secondary schools there were about 310.000, and in higher education there were about 272.000. (Statistics Sweden).

### **B.1.3 Special terms**

It should be noted that in Sweden, the term "student" is normally applied only to people who have passed the upper secondary level. However, for the purposes of this chapter, the term student will be applied to all people in education. In Swedish this is "*studerande*".

### **B.1.4 Special language arrangements**

Swedish education is open to foreign students at all levels. In compulsory schools, home language instruction is available. It is important to note, though, that in education and training above compulsory level there are some requirements for an ability to communicate in Swedish. The student's comprehension of Swedish is often tested before admission to a programme or course. There are, however, many well-established public and private courses in Swedish available for foreigners.

### **B.1.5 Fees and grants**

General education is free in Sweden. There are also independent compulsory schools and upper secondary schools which charge fees, as well as certain independent institutes which provide vocational training at the post-upper secondary school level. Swedish students in compulsory school receive *barnbidrag* (a monetary child allowance) and students in upper secondary school receive *studiehjälp* (student aid). Students over the age of 20 in adult upper secondary education can also receive *studiemedel* (study assistance) which consists partly of a grant and partly of a State guaranteed loan. Students at universities and university colleges are entitled to study assistance. (See also B.2.3) There are scholarship grants available from various foundations; these are listed in scholarship handbooks.

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## **B.2 General education**

### **B.2.1 Structure, duration, and aims of education**

#### **B.2.1.1 Pre-school**

In pre-school education there are a number of institutions which are responsible for children in the pre 6 - 7 age group: day care centres, part-time groups and open pre-schools. The authority responsible for pre-schools is usually the municipality, but in recent years some pre-schools have been started and run by parent co-operatives, by personnel co-operatives, by companies or by individuals. The municipality decides, for example, how pre-schools and compulsory schools should co-operate.

#### **B.2.1.2 Basic school education**

In 1991, the municipalities were given complete responsibility for organising their school system (compulsory and upper secondary schools).

Parliament and the Government have laid down the goals and guidelines which should be applied to all school activities. From the ages of 6/7 to to 15/16 years, (grades 1-9) schooling is obligatory. The

---

municipality has an obligation to offer upper secondary education to all its young people up to the age of 20.

A new curriculum for the compulsory school system will come into effect on 1 July, 1995. Tuition in the compulsory school system is aimed at providing general education and a basis for continued studies. The content should be structured so that there will be a balance between conveying cultural heritage, supplying the knowledge necessary for the society in which the student lives, and will also motivate the student to want to learn more. The syllabus for each subject gives:

- goals;
- the structure and character of the subject;
- goals to be reached after the fifth school year;
- goals to be reached at the conclusion of compulsory school.

Students have the right to choose which compulsory school to attend within their municipality. Under certain circumstances, they can choose to attend a compulsory school in another municipality, or an independent school, providing the school is approved for compulsory school attendance and has room for the student. In the higher grades particularly, the student is offered a degree of choice in deciding on his/her own courses.

For students who choose to attend approved independent schools, the municipality must, as of 1995, pay 75% of the yearly costs, as compared to the average yearly cost for a student in the municipal school system.

From 15 October 1994, the compulsory school system has contained about 916,000 students. The State Samic school (a nomadic school for the Lapps) contained about 115 students in grades 1 - 6 (grades 7 - 9 are counted in the figures for compulsory school, above). The State remedial school for students with serious vision, hearing or speech impairments, contained about 700 students in grades 1 - 10 (ages 6/7 - 16/17). The municipal compulsory school for the students with learning difficulties (including elementary school and training school), grades 1 - 9, contained about 9,000 students.

### **B.2.1.3 Upper secondary education**

*Gymnasieskola* (Upper secondary school)

The municipality is responsible for providing upper secondary education for students up to the age of 20. Students are allowed to start at the age of 20 and to finish a 3 year programme.

A new curriculum and new time tables and syllabi came into effect in the 1994/95 school year for non-compulsory school forms, i.e. *gymnasieskolan* (upper secondary school), *gymnasiesärskolan* (upper secondary school for students with learning difficulties), *den kommunala vuxenutbildningen* (municipal adult education), *statens skolor för vuxna* (national adult education), and *vuxenutbildning för utvecklingsstörda* (adult education for people with learning difficulties).

Upper secondary school should prepare all students for continued studies and/or for a profession.

Upper secondary schools consist of sixteen national programmes. Of these 13 are primarily vocational, 2 act primarily as preparation for further studies and the arts programme is both vocational and preparatory. Each programme lasts for 3 years. All programmes have a common core of subjects: Swedish, English, civics, religious studies, mathematics, natural science, physical education and health and artistic activities.

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From the second year the programme may consist of one or more branches. The municipality can guarantee that a student who has applied for a certain programme will be admitted during the second year to the option he/she has chosen. In addition to the national programme branches, each municipality may create local branches, adapted to local conditions and needs.

Upper secondary schools include courses in different subjects. By combining courses from 2 or more programmes, the student can create a personal study path. This can be done within the framework of a specially designed programme, equivalent to the national programmes. Upper secondary school education can also be tailored to the student's desire for an individual programme. Such a programme may vary in length and in content. The primary goal is to motivate the student to enter a national programme. Apprenticeships have, since 1992, been structured like individual programmes. As of 15 October, 1994, about 310,000 students registered in upper secondary school. Of these about 32,500 were in special courses, which are now being phased out.

#### *Folkhögskola* (Folk High School)

*Folkhögskola* (Folk High School) is part of a unique Nordic educational tradition. These schools admit both younger and older students, and are owned by the municipalities, and in particular by county council districts, or by different popular movements and organisations. They offer a wide variety of courses of varying lengths. Some of them award both compulsory school certificates and upper secondary school certificates. About 40,000 people attended courses of at least 15 weeks' duration in folk high school in 1994.

#### **B.2.1.4 Higher education - universities and university colleges**

Universities and certain institutes in Sweden have complete research resources and can offer research training culminating in a doctor's degree. Moreover, they also offer both professional and general degrees. University colleges offer general degrees and often professional degrees, confirmed by diplomas.

A person is entitled to enter a university college if he/she has obtained a diploma from upper secondary school with the requisite grades, or if he/she is over twenty five and has at least 4 years of work experience. Universities and university colleges decide what other special requirements should be met. Admission is usually made on the basis of upper secondary school grades or on the results of a national university aptitude test, which is given twice a year. Work experience can mean additional points.

About 271,700 students enrolled in higher education in 1993.

#### **B.2.2 Institutions providing information**

*Folkhögskolornas Informationstjänst* (Folk High School Information Service);

*Skolverket* (National Agency for Education);

*Verket för Högskoleservice* (National Agency for Higher Education).

#### **B.2.3 Information on fees and grant opportunities for foreigners**

Swedish *studiestöd* (study support) comprises loans and grants of various kinds. The type of support for which the student applies depends, amongst other things, on how old he/she is and what kind of education the student is applying for. Study support can be given to those between 16 and 20, who are attending upper secondary school or national or municipal adult education. Study assistance comprises a study grant with supplements. Supplements can be given depending on the student's own financial circumstances and those of his/her parents.

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*Studiemedel* (study assistance) is made up of grants and student loans. These can be received for up to 12 semesters of university-level studies. Study assistance can be granted for upper secondary level and adult education, from the autumn semester of the year of a student's twentieth birthday. The maximum period a student can receive this is 6 semesters. There are many other forms of educational grants. Information on them can be obtained from *Centrala Studiestödsnämnden* (The National Board of Student Aid).

## **B.3 Initial vocational education and training**

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### **B.3.1 Structure, duration, and the levels of qualifications available**

*Grundläggande yrkesutbildning* (initial vocational education and training) takes place in upper secondary school, generally in 3 year programmes. The 3 year apprenticeship programme also takes place within upper secondary school.

#### **B.3.1.1 *Gymnasieskola* (Upper secondary school)**

*Grundläggande yrkesutbildning* (initial vocational education and training) is given in 13 of the upper secondary school's 16 programmes. Each one has a programme goal set by the Government. Several of the programmes are divided into optional branches in the second year. *Den arbetsförlagda utbildningen (APU)* (work-place training) consists of at least 15% (15 weeks) of the total education time.

The vocational programmes are: business programme; child and recreation programme; construction programme; electrical engineering programme; energy programme; food programme; handicraft programme; health care programme; hotel, restaurant, and catering programme; industry programme; media programme; natural resource use programme; vehicle engineering programme. The county council is responsible for 2 of the programmes (health care programme and natural resource programme) and the municipality is the mandator for the other programmes. In 1992, the Swedish Parliament decided to introduce a new 3 year apprenticeship system. The apprenticeship system is a combination of vocational training organised within the framework of a relationship between employment and certain subject courses in upper secondary school. As a result, responsibility for apprenticeship training is shared by the school and the company involved.

### **B.3.2 Initial training schemes for students with special needs**

#### **B.3.2.1 *Gymnasiesärskolan* (Upper secondary school for students with severe learning difficulties)**

Students with severe learning difficulties have the right to initial vocational training in upper secondary schools for people with severe learning difficulties. The School Act states that instruction should be adapted to each student's abilities, and should follow to as great an extent as possible the instruction given in ordinary upper secondary schools. This education takes 4 years. It is based upon the obligatory school for people with learning difficulties. The municipality is the authority responsible, and is obliged to provide vocational training via a national or an individual programme for those who need it. The municipal board of education decides, however, what kind of education should be provided. The student has the right to complete the education for which he/she has been accepted. An individual plan is created for each student.

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### **B.3.2.2 Young people with physical functional impairments**

The municipality has an obligation to offer physically and medically handicapped young people upper secondary school education. Young people should be integrated into mainstream schooling, and receive support in adapting, according to the type and degree of their handicaps. Specially adapted training is available for those with serious physical handicaps, as well as for deaf and seriously hearing-impaired students at schools which admit students from all over the country. *Statens Institut för Handikappade i Skolan (SIH)* (Swedish Agency for Special Education) is responsible for ensuring that the needs for support measures for handicapped young people are met, so that they can pursue studies to prepare for both a profession and/or further studies.

### **B.3.3 Institutions providing information**

- Skolverket* (National Agency for Education);
- Statens Institut för handikappfrågor i skolan (SIH)* (Swedish Agency for Special Education).

### **B.3.4 Publications**

See A.2.2

### **B.3.5 Indicative participation rates in post-compulsory education and training**

On 15 October, 1994, 70 % of students aged between 16 and 19 were registered in upper secondary schools. In 1993, 106,800 students enrolled on vocational programmes; 142,500 students were in preparatory programmes for further studies and 5000 students in art programmes. There were also 1000 students involved in specially designed programmes, and 12,500 were on individual programmes.

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## **B.4 Continuing training**

### **B.4.1 Links between initial and continuing training for adults**

One of the intentions of the Swedish education system is to stimulate lifelong learning, at all levels. A student who has gone through *grundskolan* (compulsory school) is expected to continue his/her education in *gymnasieskolan* (upper secondary school). After upper secondary school, the student can go on to vocational training or to general higher education at university or a university college.

### **B.4.2 Continuing training and retraining for adults**

#### **B.4.2.1 Competence development**

Anyone who has passed through upper secondary school with satisfactory grades (or earlier forms of initial vocational training such as vocational school, or has been in apprenticeship, or has received a recognised vocational training), and who is vocationally active can receive in-service training or supplementary training in his/her profession. The employer takes responsibility for competence development, either by organising training or by paying for courses given by other institutions. In this area, private companies compete with *kommunal vuxenutbildning (Komvux)* (municipal adult education) for which the municipality is responsible, and with *arbetsmarknadsutbildning (AMU)* (National employment training).

At an academic level it is mainly the universities and university colleges which provide competence development. This can involve shorter courses or programmes leading to completed degrees. If the employer does not pay for this, the student usually has the right to receive State study assistance.

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#### **B.4.2.2 National employment training**

A complete vocational training course or a competence development training course can be financed by *arbetsmarknadsutbildning (AMU)* (National employment training) for anyone who is 20 years of age or over and unemployed or at risk of being unemployed. A training allowance is offered in conjunction with this course.

#### **B.4.2.3 Competence developing adult education**

Competence-developing adult education is organised by *kommunala vuxenutbildning (kom vux)* (municipal adult education), by *statens skolor för vuxna (SSV)* (national schools for adults), by *folkhögskolan* (folk high school) and by *studieförbund* (adult education association). The latter has different trade unions and other organisations as responsible bodies. The municipal adult education aims to:

- close the educational gaps in society;
- offer the individual the opportunity to complement his/her earlier education;
- raise the competence level of the working population.

In the *grundläggande vuxenutbildningen* (basic adult education), compulsory school competence is attained. In *gymnasial vuxenutbildning* (upper secondary adult education), the student can attain either full upper secondary school competence or competence in only certain subjects.

In *påbyggnadsutbildningen* (supplementary training) people can gain either increased vocational competence or training for a new profession.

Other parts of municipal adult education are *vuxenutbildning för psykisk utvecklingsstörda (särvux)* (adult education for people with learning difficulties), and *svenskundervisning för invandrare (sfi)* (Swedish tuition for immigrants).

#### **B.4.3 Institutions providing information**

*AMU Gruppen* (National Employment Training Board);  
*Folkhögskolornas Informationstjänst* (Folk High School Information Service);  
*Skolverket* (National Agency for Education).

#### **B.4.4 Publications**

See A.2.2

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### **B.5 Recognition and comparability of qualifications**

See A.2

#### **B.5.1 NARIC (The National Academic Recognition Information Centre)**

*Internationella avdelningen, Verket för högskoleservice (VHS)* (The international department of The National Agency for Higher Education) is the contact point for NARIC.

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### **B.5.2 Organisations concerned with comparability of vocational training**

*Internationella avdelningen, Verket för högskoleservice (VHS)* (The international department of The National Agency for Higher Education) sets qualification equivalencies with foreign education. Local school authorities are responsible for admitting foreign students to upper secondary schools and to other post-compulsory education. Student admission to universities and university colleges is done locally by the respective university college, depending upon which type of education is required.

### **B.5.3 Bilateral regulations and multilateral regulations**

Information can be obtained from *Nordiska ministerrådet* (the Nordic Council of Ministers).



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## C. CAREERS GUIDANCE SERVICES

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### C.1 Structure and target groups of public and private careers guidance services

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Careers guidance has existed in Sweden since the mid-forties. It operates within the State employment agency, as well as the schools, universities and university colleges. There are also a few private institutes for recruitment, staff development and guidance.

#### C.1.1 Educational and vocational guidance within the municipal school system

It is the duty of the municipalities to organise and implement the educational and vocational guidance system. The State formulates overall goals and guidelines for the compulsory schools and compulsory schools for people with learning difficulties in *Lpo94 (Läroplaner för det obligatoriska skolväsendet 1994)* (Curricula for compulsory schools 1994). Goals and guidelines are set for upper secondary schools, upper secondary schools for people with learning difficulties, municipal adult education, and adult education for people with learning difficulties in *Lpf 94 (Läroplan för de frivilliga skolformerna 1994)* (Curriculum for non-compulsory school forms 1994).

Careers guidance is integrated into the school subjects, and the teacher is responsible for the instruction. The university college-trained guidance counsellors act as special guidance administrators and are present in every school form. There are also careers teachers in schools for people with learning difficulties.

The municipality sets out the structure of the guidance system in the school plan. The heads of individual, compulsory schools are responsible for the organisation of guidance, and also for seeing that students receive guidance on the different choices offered by the school, as well as on choices about further education. In each local upper secondary school and in municipal adult education, the head of the school is responsible for seeing that students receive guidance about different courses, options and education choices, as well as about options with regard to professions and jobs.

Most municipalities have some kind of organisation, often in the form of a centre and sometimes together with the employment agency, which offers guidance and support to unemployed young people. They are offered training or work experience placements for a limited time. Guidance counsellors, social workers, and others work in these centres.

#### C.1.2 Educational and vocational guidance in universities and university colleges.

Each university and university college makes its own decisions about the aims and organisation of its educational and vocational guidance. This is usually referred to as educational guidance.

In individual education departments, for example in English or mathematics departments, there are often educational counsellors who help students with matters concerning subject studies, such as combining courses or explaining to beginners what the studies mean and require. The position of institutional guidance counsellor is often given to a teacher in the subject, or to a student who has finished at least one and a half years of study. There are usually centrally based educational and vocational guidance counsellors who can provide external information on what their university college offers, and about the course requirements and opportunities. Within the university college, they can help students to combine subjects and courses so that they lead to a degree. A certain measure of vocational guidance is also involved in doing this. Centrally active educational counsellors have generally undergone training in careers guidance and counselling at teacher training college.

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### **C.1.3 Educational and vocational guidance in the employment service**

The State employment agency supplies employment guidance and counselling for adults, and in some cases even for young people, via employment services all over the country. The definition of guidance is broad, and also includes support measures such as training with grants, or forms of job placement where a salary or an allowance is paid. Employment agencies also have information centres where printed information materials such as brochures and handbooks are available together with computerised guidance, videos and multimedia services. The normal, individual, guidance interviews and guidance and job-seeking groups are, of course, also part of the service.

For those with more complicated problems, there is the *arbetsmarknadsinstitut* (labour market institute) where industrial psychologists are employed, together with employment counsellors, to carry out investigations, assessments of working capacities, and placements. Employment counsellors are trained internally after being employed in the State employment agency. Employees there usually have some kind of social science and/or behavioural science training.

### **C.1.4 Private institutes**

There are no restrictions on establishing guidance services in Sweden. Attempts in this area have so far not been overly successful, probably because of the long tradition of publicly-financed guidance. There are, however, a number of institutes which deal mainly in staff development and in the recruitment of higher level executives.

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## **C.2 Guidance services provided specifically for foreigners**

There is no specific organisation within the Swedish municipal school system for information and guidance for foreign students. The local school's guidance counsellor is the one who is primarily responsible for information on the municipality's educational provision. Within university colleges, there are sometimes international liaison services in central study guidance which deal with questions about foreign universities and university college courses in Sweden.

The national employment agency has a special service for citizens of other EU countries who are seeking employment in Sweden. Since everyone from an EU country has the right to seek employment in another EU country and to retain the right to his/her unemployment benefits, the national employment agency should be able to give a full service to these "3 month employment-seekers".

In many Swedish counties, the Labour market institute has special agencies for foreign countries, *AF Utland* (International Employment Office) .

The Swedish Labour Market Board's international secretariat co-ordinates work with EU issues.

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## **C.3 Institutions providing information**

*Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* (The Swedish Labour Market Board);

*Svenska kommunförbundet* ( The Swedish Association of Local Authorities);

*Landstingsförbundet* (*Federation of County Councils*).

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## **D. TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION, TRAINING AND WORK EXPERIENCE**

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In September last year, two working groups were set up - one for LEONARDO and one for SOCRATES. The groups are organised and chaired by the Ministry of Education and Science.

A secretariat with a staff of 3 administrative officers has been set up to assist and support the work of the 2 working groups. The secretariat is at present located in the Ministry of Education and Science.

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## E. LIVING AND WORKING CONDITIONS

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Sweden is an industrialised society, with highly developed technology. The degree of added value is high in Swedish products. The number of farmers and industrial workers is constantly decreasing. The number of salaried employees in the private and public sectors is constantly increasing. The number of women in the labour market is very high (77.2 % in 1993, and 75.7 % in 1994).

The adaptation to an economy based on industry and service activity has been made possible because of an efficient and flexible education system. Sweden has a large area of land in proportion to its population of about 9 million people. It has significant amounts of raw materials in the form of forests, metal ore and hydraulic power, but the most important resource is its human resources. The labour force is well-educated and sufficiently flexible to adapt to the needs of industry. The rate of unemployment is about on a par with that of the rest of Europe.

Trade unions play a large role in Sweden, and it is therefore advisable to contact the relevant trade union for further information, as many workers' rights are related to membership of a trade union.

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### E.1 Minimum pay for workers and trainees

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#### E.1.1 Legal regulations for wages and working conditions

There are no laws in Sweden regulating wages. For the majority of employees, wages are set through collective agreements between the unions of both the employers and the employees. Therefore a standard can be set for an entire branch. In some instances, agreements are made directly between the individual employee and the employer; this is usually the case for higher-level employees in the private sector.

There are, however, the following legally binding regulations on all employers:

- Dismissal or discrimination in hiring on the grounds of race, gender, or pregnancy is prohibited;
- Improper treatment of job applicants on the basis of ethnic origin is prohibited;
- Since 1 July, 1955, Sweden has had a law on parental leave, giving parents the right to leave in connection with the birth of a child. One has the right to 1 \_ years of leave without pay, or to 450 days with pay. A mother has an inalienable right to maternity leave 6 weeks before the birth is due, and for 6 weeks afterwards;
- The employment and duties of young people between the ages of 14 and 18 has certain special conditions;
- When shortage of work affects a company, the rule for dismissal - with some exceptions - is that those hired last must be dismissed first.

#### E.1.2 Wages for apprentices and trainees

Wages for apprentices and trainees are regulated via collective agreements between the respective trade unions of the employer and the employees, and thus may vary from one agreement area to another. In each individual case, the relevant trade union, (central or local) should be contacted for information.

#### E.1.3 Sick pay

Employees have the right to sickness benefits:

- if they are *folkbokförd* (registered with the Swedish national registration);
- if they have an employment contract of 6 months or more with an employer;
- if they are unemployed and have the right to unemployment benefits.

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Signing up with the Swedish national registration is done at the local tax office. As the rules for exchange of unemployment benefits for sickness benefits are quite complicated, one should contact the local *försäkringskassa* (regional social insurance office) for information on each individual case. These regional social insurance offices are coordinated by the ... (National Social Insurance Board).

#### **E.1.4 Working hours**

There is a law in Sweden on working hours, which states that no one should work more than forty hours per week. The working hours law is, however, optional, and agreements on variations may be made between employers and trade unions. Exceptions may be made for paid overtime, with a maximum of two hundred hours, or for shorter working hours.

According to *Statistiska Centralbyrån* (Statistics Sweden), the average number of working hours for a full-time employee in Sweden in 1994 was 36.3 hours per week, and for part-time workers the number was 32.6 hours per week. This gives an overall average of 35.8 hours per week. This applies to industry, as well as to the agricultural and service sectors.

#### **E.1.5 Paid holidays**

Employees have the right to take 5 weeks (twenty five working days) of paid holidays per year, after they have completed a full year of work. If a job is for no longer than 3 months, monetary holiday compensation is paid instead. If the job is longer than 3 months but not a whole year, then the employee is entitled to 2.4 days of holiday per month.

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### **E.2 Availability of educational leave**

According to law, the fundamental principle is that a person has the right to take leave from work in order to obtain education as long as the person has been employed for 6 working months. The employer, however, has the right to postpone the leave for a period of up to 6 months. Should the employer wish to postpone the leave for more than 6 months, the employee's labour union must give its permission. Should the leave only be for up to 1 working week, permission can be postponed for up to 2 working weeks.

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### **E.3 Social security and unemployment benefits**

#### **E.3.1 Social security system**

The safety net of Swedish social protection is very well-developed. The greater part of social protection and medical care is paid via taxes, or, alternatively, via mandatory fees collected together with taxes. For the individual, this constitutes a high degree of financial protection in the matter of costs for medical care. Employers must pay accident insurance for their employees. All employees are entitled to retirement pensions when they turn sixty five.

#### **E.3.2 Unemployment and unemployment benefits**

The unemployment rate in Sweden in January, 1995, was 8.2 %. The system for unemployment benefits in Sweden is based on *arbetslöshetskassor* (*A-kassor*) (recognised unemployment insurance funds), which are administered by the trade unions. Employees who work at least seventeen hours per week have the right to membership of recognised unemployment insurance funds. Non-members may receive a basic insurance, *kontant arbetslöshetsstöd* (*KAS*) (cash labour market allowance).

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## E.4 Employment services

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In addition to independent job seeking, job seekers can contact local employment offices. There are about three hundred and sixty of these offices, and sixty that are specialists in certain professions. If job seekers are not registered in the Swedish national registration, they need to be able to show an address as well as identification papers, for example a passport, to use the service.

The addresses of local employment agencies can be obtained from *Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen* (The National Labour Market Board).

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## F. LIST OF ADDRESSES

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### *AMU Gruppen*

(National Employment Training Board)

Box 1181

S-111 91 Stockholm

Tel: (+46) 8-701 65 00

Fax: (+46) 8-701 65 00

### *Arbetsförmedlingen Utland*

(International Employment Office)

Box 7763

S-103 96 Stockholm

Tel: (+46) 8-20 03 50

Fax: (+46) 8-27 83 68

### *Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen, AMS*

(National Labour Market Board)

S-171 99 Solna

Tel: (+46) 8-730 60 00

Fax: (+46) 8-27 83 68

### *Centrala Studiestödnämnden, CSN*

(National Board of Student Aid)

S-851 82 Sundsvall

Tel: (+46) 60-18 60 00

Fax: (+46) 60-12 47 43

### *Arbetsmarknadsdepartementet*

(Ministry of Labour)

S-103 33 Stockholm

Tel: (+46) 8-405 10 00

### *EURES*

Arbetsmarknadsstyrelsen

Sundbybergsvagen 9

S-171 99 Solna

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### *Folkhögskolornas informationstjänst*

(Folk High School Information Service)

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(National Agency for Education)  
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*Svenska kommunförbundet*

(Swedish Association of Local Authorities)

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Youth for Europe

Ministry of Public Administration

S-103 33 Stockholm

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**European handbook for guidance counsellors — Complementary version**

Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities

1996 – 143 pp. – 21.0 x 29.7 cm

ISBN 92-827-5387-5

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