

CEDEFOP

INFO

about Vocational Training in the European Union

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Co-operation in vocational education and training

“A window of opportunity”

'A window of opportunity' was the phrase used by Mr Gordon Clark, Head of Unit for the development of vocational training policy in the European Commission, when speaking at the European Training Forum in Brussels in November. This training forum was organised within the framework of the 10th Employment Week conference and exhibition.

Mr Clark was referring to the adoption on 12 November by the Ministers of Education, Youth and Culture of the European Union of a resolution on enhanced co-operation at European level in the field of vocational education and training. This Council Resolution (1) puts a seal on the progress made in what has become known as the Bruges process (see *Cedefop Info 2/2002* page 2) and which was itself a follow up to the March 2000 Lisbon European Council meeting. Within the overall framework set by the work of the Commission and the Council on lifelong learning (2) and the common objectives of the education and vocational training systems(3), this resolution asserts the key role of vocational education and training.

The Council stressed that:
 it is necessary to strengthen and develop closer European co-operation in vocational education and training to support the idea that citizens can move freely between different jobs, regions, sectors and countries in Europe;
 there is a need to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training in Europe

It agreed that enhanced co-operation should be based *inter alia* on the following working principles,
 Co-operation should be based on the target of 2010, set by the European Council in accordance with the detailed work programme and the follow-up of the Objectives report in order to ensure coherence with the objectives set by the Council (Education).

Measures should be voluntary and principally developed through bottom-up co-operation.

Initiatives must be focused on the needs of citizens and user organisations.

Co-operation should be inclusive and involve Member States, the Commission, candidate countries, EFTA-EEA-countries and the social partners.

The Council reaffirmed its commitment to enhanced co-operation in vocational education

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Greek EU presidency:

Goals and activities

In January, Greece took over the Presidency of the European Union for the first semester of 2003. In the field of education, the Presidency has scheduled a number of activities, including twelve supporting seminars and conferences on a variety of topics.

The main theme will be *new information and communication technologies - lifelong learning*. This theme will be used to point the way to modernisation of the whole education and training system, including formal and informal education, teachers' mobility, vocational education, education of specific target groups, etc.

The programme is based on this theme and is designed to support the general targets of the Greek Presidency developing the follow-up to the

Lisbon and Barcelona summits and the enlargement of the EU. Its intention is to:

Increase the role of educators and schools in the promotion and integration of science, focusing on the new information and communication technologies (ICT).

Open the discussion on the continuing training and professionalisation of educators in the countries of Eastern and South-eastern Europe,
 Continued on page 3

A quantum leap in quality concerns

A conference organised by the Danish presidency on „A European approach to quality in Vocational Education and Training“ took place in Helsingor on 19 and 20 September 2002. Its motto was „create a co-operation platform and build trust“.

The meeting was attended by about 90 participants from member states and candidate countries. It was addressed by the Danish Minister of Education Ms U. Tornaes, Mr R. S. Osterlund the Director General for Vocational Education and Training (VET) in Denmark and by Mr Klaus Van Der Pas, Director General for Education and Culture at the European Commission. At the centre of the discussions was the interim report (Quality development in vocational education and training) of the European Forum on Quality in VET. The forum was set up within a co-operative framework established between the European Commission, the member states and Cedefop. The report(1) was presented to the meeting by the Deputy-Director of Cedefop, Mr Stavros Stavrou.

After lively discussions in working groups and a final reporting session, Mr Gordon Clark, Head

of Unit for the Development of Vocational Training Policy within the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, drew conclusions from the conference. These included:

1. General conclusions

The improvement of quality in VET and raising its status at all levels, is essential to improve competitiveness and to meet labour market needs. Furthermore, it is necessary to reach the policy goals of improving employability, increased access to training and matching training supply and demand.

The work of the European Forum on Quality in VET should be taken forward and built upon under the 'Bruges process' and in the context of
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Letter of the Director

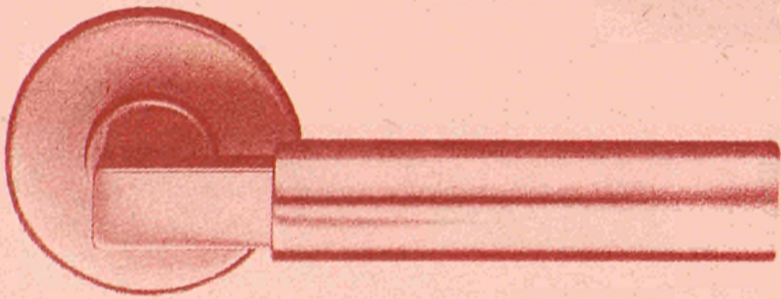
This issue of Cedefop Info is different from previous ones, in that it contains more news and information about activities at European level. This reflects the fact that there have been major steps forward in European co-operation in the field of vocational education and training (VET). It is clear from the terms of the resolution, approved by the Council in November (see the article on pages 1 and 5 for most of the text of that resolution), that Cedefop can be proud to have played a part in bringing about some of those developments. We will also face new challenges in supporting the Commission and the member states in implementing the priority actions that the resolution foresees.

Cedefop will be supporting the work of this technical working group and of others on the transparency of vocational qualifications, mobility and the creation of a credit transfer system. The Commission has also asked us to develop virtual platforms to support the working groups. In conformity with the new Medium Term Priorities (2003-2006), approved at the November meeting of our Management Board, we will develop a knowledge management system (KMS), which will provide a more coherent and comprehensive framework for reporting on VET activities and systems than we have achieved up to now. We will report on the KMS in one of the next issues of Cedefop Info.

In this issue, you will also find information and reference to Leonardo da Vinci projects. Cedefop will continue to support the Commission's activities to ensure valorisation of the Leonardo da Vinci programme by reporting on interesting projects not only in Cedefop Info, but also, for example, in its database of good lifelong learning practice.

The November Management Board meeting also approved our 2003 work programme. This and the medium term priorities are available on our web site (www.cedefop.eu.int) and they will also be published in hard copy in a number of languages.

Johan van Rens
November 2002



Europe Scenarios and strategies for vocational training and lifelong learning policy and practice in Europe

Cedefop and the European Training Foundation have commissioned research institutes in several European countries (1) to devise training scenarios and strategies for a joint research project. Their work has produced a series of priority strategies for the next ten years. Over 1000 players and decision-makers from the ten EU nations and candidate countries participating highlighted these strategies as being particularly important.

To conclude the project in autumn 2001 the partners and the Estonian Ministry of Education jointly organised a European conference in Tallinn to discuss the research findings. The conference presented the results of a two-phase scenario project on the future of vocational training and lifelong learning begun in 1998 to over 70 delegates from 20 European countries. Specialists, government representatives and social partners from EU states and Central and Eastern Europe took active part in assessing and promoting the proposed country-specific and Europe-wide strategies and scenarios.

Delegates agreed that we must reinforce the social and ecological dimensions of vocational training and lifelong learning and focus on encouraging closer partnerships between public and private vocational training providers. Experts interviewed during the project believe that creating coordinated national and European structures for general and vocational qualifications and developing European standards for certain central areas, sectors and levels also constitute important strategies. Another point they consider vital is the modernisation of work and working conditions com-

bined with an improvement in quality of life. This involves forging closer links between working life and training throughout careers.

In addition, the project partners presented three alternative European-level scenarios. "Europe on the edge of the precipice" depicts a gloomy picture of a Europe plagued by uncertainty and unsolved problems. Unemployment and recession predominate. Few training positions are available and high worker turnover prevails. "A protective and expanding Europe" can offer tailored training programmes and training accounts and access for all but still has to fight unemployment in the face of continuing privatisation and mounting social inequality. Lifelong learning supported by broad-ranging specialist networks is a major feature of "A sustainable and competitive Europe". Other aspects of this scenario include a reduction in unemployment, an increase in the need for foreign labour and independent organisation of training programmes - but also continued social inequality.

The project partners have refined the scenarios further in tandem with players throughout Europe. All three concepts are designed to run for ten

years, to allow us to ascertain probable trends and variables. (2) These scenarios have enabled the experts to pinpoint the strategies which need to be tackled at different levels. Following the project's conclusion, the players will need to decide who is to implement the strategies and what tools are the most appropriate for the task. The specialists working on the project therefore propose maintaining strategic dialogue between players, politicians, social partners and practitioners. At best researchers can only assist in this procedure. The onus for actually making the decisions is on politicians and practitioners.

Cedefop published the project findings in its Panorama series in September 2002 (see page 12). The article contains a detailed presentation of the results and a bibliography of published national studies and final reports. See also the Scenario window on the interactive website www.trainingvillage.gr.

(1) Austria, Belgium/Luxembourg, Germany, Greece, the UK; and the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia.

(2) We will report on relevant findings shortly. Further information from Burkart Sellin, Cedefop/Thessaloniki
E-mail: bs@cedefop.eu.int
Tel. (30) 2310 490 121/118
Fax (30) 2310 490117

Source: Burkart Sellin, Cedefop

Your views are wanted

The present European education (Socrates), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and youth programmes are due to end in 2006. However, in November 2002, Mme Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Education and Culture launched a public consultation procedure for the next generation of programmes. She had previously announced that the Commission intended to present detailed proposals to the Council and the European Parliament in early 2004. The consultation process is addressed to all those involved, or with an interest, in the programmes. Consultees are invited to respond to thirteen key questions, which are divided into three sections:

1. The type of action to be supported through European programmes in the period after 2006.
2. The geographical coverage of the programmes - which countries should be involved in which actions?
3. The design and structure of the new generation of programmes.

The Commission has fixed the date of 28 February 2003 for the conclusion of this public consultation process. The document is now available in all the official languages of the Union at the following web site address: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/newprogconsult>

Responses may also be sent to:
New programmes consultation
European Commission - DG EAC
rue de la Loi 200 (B-7 7/64)
B-1049 Brussels

Source: European Commission/Cedefop (JMA)

European Curriculum Vitae now online

In March 2002 the European Commission adopted a recommendation on the European curriculum vitae format (CV)(1). The format was designed in conjunction with Member States and the social partners in the context of the European Forum on transparency of vocational qualifications (2).

Developed in close collaboration with Cedefop, the European CV offers European citizens an original format giving a comprehensive overview of their skills and qualifications.

The European CV has already proved a considerable success: more than 160 000 people have already downloaded the CV format from the Cedefop website since it became accessible online in April 2002.

An original format

The CV format offers more value than traditional CV formats:

Firstly, to encourage worker mobility, it is available in all the official languages of the European Union and the European Economic Area (EEA). The Cedefop website (details below) provides examples of CVs as well as a page of instructions to guide citizens on how to use the format.

Secondly, the European CV offers more than the traditional description of work experience and training: it includes information on general and other skills acquired from education/training, in the workplace or through personal experience: linguistic, social, organisational, technical, artistic and other skills.

Finally, the European CV's format is modular, which guarantees some flexibility in its use.

Access to the electronic format:

(1) The European Curriculum Vitae format - along with examples and instructions - can be downloaded in 13 languages from the Cedefop website at: <http://www.cedefop.eu.int/transparency/cv.asp>.

(2) The European Forum on transparency of vocational qualifications is a working party jointly established by the Commission and Cedefop. Cf.: <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/transparency/index.asp>

Further information from:
Philippe Tissot, Cedefop, e-mail: pht@cedefop.eu.int

Source: Cedefop/PHT

Danish EU presidency: Education and training policy

In the second semester of 2002, Denmark held the EU presidency and therefore could play a leading role in setting the European agenda in the field of education, training and youth.

European cooperation in education and training is subject to constant development. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, action in the area focused on the development of instruments to encourage increased mobility, more transparency and new pedagogical approaches. This was mainly implemented through a number of programmes (for example Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates), the activities of which have had a direct impact on the education and training courses and from which many European citizens have benefited.

In recent years, European cooperation has taken new forms. The annual meetings of the Ministers of Education underline that there is a common European agenda in the field of education and training. The invitees to these meetings now

count representatives from 35 countries.

The implementation of the Bologna process in higher education contributes on the one hand to the integration of the applicant countries into European cooperation and, on the other hand, to a strengthening of cooperation in this field by all participating countries.

The work on the implementation of the report on the future objectives of education and training systems up to 2010⁽¹⁾ is seen by Denmark as the focal point of cooperation in the field of education and training since the meeting of the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000.

Due to the priority given to education and training in the European

employment strategy, the principle of lifelong learning exerts an increasing influence on the framework for development of the entire education system.

The increasing need for an effort to be made in relation to cooperation in the field of vocational education and training, including the issues of quality assurance, transparency and recognition of qualifications and competencies, led the European Council, at its meeting in Barcelona in March 2002, to call for the implementation of a Bologna-like process in the field of vocational education and training.

The main objective of the Danish Presidency has therefore been to carry on the work on the European agenda by continuing the construc-

tive cooperation with the European Commission and the other Member States. This includes involving players from the field, especially the social partners.

In the light of the Council's conclusions on lifelong learning⁽²⁾, Denmark has contributed to concretising both the vision of creating a European area of knowledge and the need for establishing a basis for cooperation with third countries.

Activities during the Presidency
One of the main topics discussed during the Presidency has been a declaration on strengthened European cooperation in the field of vocational education and training. A resolution on this topic was adopted at the Council meeting on 12 November. At the meeting of European

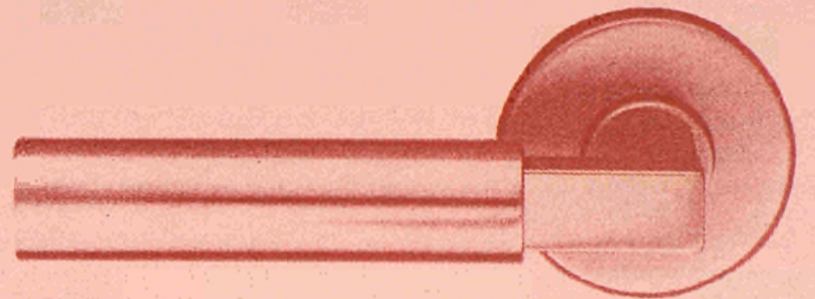
Ministers of Education on 29/30 November in Copenhagen, a declaration on vocational training was agreed (see separate article on pages 1 and 5)

In addition three presidency conferences were held on lifelong learning, science and technology, and quality, of which the last one was specifically aimed at vocational education and training. Several other conferences were organised in cooperation with various national and international bodies, such as the European Commission and Cedefop.

⁽¹⁾ Detailed work programme on the "Follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe", Council document 6365/02 of 20 February 2002.

⁽²⁾ Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning, OJ C 163/1 of 9 July 2002.

Source: Cirius, Denmark



Greek EU presidency: Goals and activities

Continued from page 1

as well as on the improvement of the quality of the educational systems of these countries, and the promotion of change in them

□ Create a common educational area between the EU and the candidate countries, with the potential of including the rest of the countries of South-eastern Europe focusing on the development of ICT skills and competencies.

In the field of ICT, there will be a workshop on new technologies in education with special focus on the production of new educational software in May in Athens. The workshop aims at promoting the exchange of experience among the EU

countries in the field of ICT in education. The focus will be on the development of relevant material (educational software, educational services through the Net) and the creation in the future of a group of specialists dealing with issues of production, economies of scale, etc. Supplementary actions around the workshop will include the support of a "web based exhibition" of material relevant to ICT. It will present available material and will be constantly updated.

Another activity linked to the ICT will be a workshop concerning the creation of networks of one-teacher schools throughout Europe. The workshop will focus on the ways

such schools can use the new technologies to develop and communicate with each other and to prevent depopulation of rural and other remote areas.

Central issues of the conference on "Quality of education and vocational education and development prospects of educators in the European Union and South-eastern European countries" (in June in Athens) are the training of teachers and trainers in the EU, the candidate and the South-eastern European countries.

The conference on "The role of the Open University and distance learning in the promotion of lifelong learning" (May in Athens) will be organised by the Greek Open University. The discussion will focus on the current needs of lifelong learning systems in the EU, the quality of the distance learning programmes of the open universities compared to the

quality of "conventional" universities' programmes, and systems of distance and lifelong learning in general.

The Presidency activities also include a seminar on the ARION programme coinciding with the 25th anniversary of the programme, a meeting on the follow-up group of the Bologna process and a conference on the Bologna process ("Exploring the Social Dimensions in the European Higher Education Area").

Cedefop will support the Greek Presidency as it has done those of other countries. Due to its location, it expects to be asked to make a special contribution particularly in relation to vocational training elements in the programme and will host a number of meetings. In particular it will organise in early June a major conference on lifelong learning and will host the meeting of

Directors General for Vocational Training. Cedefop will also be a co-organiser of the conference on "The European democratic state as a factor for the development of local societies", in Thessaloniki in March. The conference will discuss the issues of how the democratic state can promote education today and the interrelation and synergies between local/ regional development and lifelong learning. Cedefop will also contribute to the above conference on the training of teachers and trainers the experience it has gained through the work of its training of trainers network (TTnet).

For further information and details on the activities and programme of the Greek Presidency, see: <http://www.eu2003.gr/en/cat/0/index.asp?>

Source: Cedefop (STS, JMA, PKA) on the basis of documents available

A quantum leap in quality concerns

Continued from page 1

the work programme on the objectives of education and training systems⁽²⁾.

□ Future work on quality at European level should aim to promote the development of systematic quality approaches in the Member States, according to the model of learning logic of quality developed by the Forum. This model is applicable to quality approaches at all levels, and focuses on learning outcomes. Mechanisms should be identified for the involvement of VET stakeholders in the design, implementation and review of quality cycles in VET.

□ Quality should be emphasised as a priority in the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

□ Synergy should be ensured with other instruments at European level,

such as the European Employment Strategy, as well as with the activities of bodies such as CEDEFOP and Eurydice.

2. Concrete proposals for immediate follow-up

□ The work of the European Forum on Quality in VET should be published and disseminated to relevant actors at all levels. In countries where they have been created, the national *mini-fora* should continue and should assist in the dissemination of information.

□ Ways and means for promoting the further exchange of experience, models and methods for quality assurance (including experience from the Leonardo programme) should be established. This should

increase dissemination of good practice between member states, EEA countries, candidate countries and social partners.

□ A limited number of quality indicators for VET should be selected on the basis of good practice and tested, for example through pilot projects under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.

□ A further clarification and refinement of quality principles and criteria (with a particular focus on output criteria) should be completed, and linked to the three major European policy objectives⁽²⁾.

□ A review of existing national and international standards and norms (for example ISO / EN 45013), their application and their strengths and weaknesses, should also be undertaken. On this basis, work should begin as soon as possible on the definition of a common core or framework of quality criteria at European level, in order to promote

mutual trust and facilitate the transfer of competences (including non-formal and informal learning) and qualifications.

□ Transnational partnerships between bodies willing to develop quality assurance approaches should be encouraged, for example the French '*Professionalisation durable*' project.

□ Inter-institutional co-operation arrangements (including peer review) should be developed on a bi- or multilateral basis, where appropriate.

3. Medium- to long-term objectives

These might include:

□ a European Quality label

□ a European Quality model

□ voluntary and independent testing / accreditation (developed at European level) of providers, offers, and training of trainers.

For more information on the results of the European Forum on VET quality, please contact either: Ms Fernanda Oliveira Reis, DG EAC, B.1 (fernanda.oliveira-reis@cec.eu.int) or Ms Tina Bertzeletou in Cedefop (tb@cedefop.eu.int)

⁽¹⁾ The conference documents (in French, English, German and Danish) are available at www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/quality/.

⁽²⁾ Detailed work programme on the "Follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe", Council document 6365/02 of 20 February 2002.

Source: European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture/ CEDEFOP (JMA/STS)

Eurydice report focuses on teachers and their training

Maintaining a motivated and highly qualified teaching force is an essential prerequisite to the provision of quality education. The challenges facing teachers and the new demands that are placed on them are therefore central to the education debate.



A major new Eurydice study provides an in-depth investigation into the teaching profession in Europe. It identifies a number of key issues, looking for example at the extent to which teacher training is providing a solid grounding in the types of skills teachers need in order to carry out their job effectively. It also looks at the subject of teacher shortages, an important area of concern in a number of European countries today, as well as conditions of service for

teachers, including their job security, salaries and workload.

The wide-ranging comparative analysis prepared on the basis of information provided by the Eurydice network, takes the 2000/01 school year as a reference point. The study focuses on the situation of teachers at general lower secondary level, as this is perceived to be a decisive stage in compulsory schooling which has been particularly susceptible to new trends, most notably those inherent in the growth in mass enrolment over the last decades of the twentieth century.

The study is made up of four reports, the first two of which are now available on the Eurydice website (see below). These look at the topics of initial training for teachers and their

transition into working life (report I) and teacher supply and demand in Europe (report II). Two more reports, one on conditions of service in the teaching profession and a final one in the form of a general overview and synthesis of the study, are due out by the first quarter of 2003.

The analysis of teacher training shows that five types of skills are generally perceived as being increasingly necessary:

- information and communication technology,
- management and administration,
- integration of pupils with special needs,
- working with multicultural groups of pupils,
- behaviour management.

However, only one of them - information and communication technology - almost everywhere forms part of training programmes either as a compulsory subject or as an optional one. By contrast, it is rare that

trainee teachers are taught skills in behaviour management.

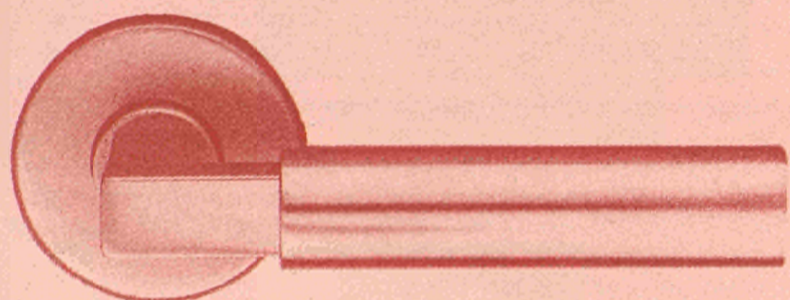
Concern over the number of teachers leaving the profession at a very early stage in their career has led policy-makers to introduce measures for new teachers, either in the form of an 'on-the-job' qualifying phase for prospective teachers, giving them direct experience of school life before they become fully qualified, or special support for newly-qualified teachers, helping them to adjust to their chosen career. The study shows that these measures are a relatively new trend in many countries although they are becoming more common.

The report on supply and demand looks at current or anticipated teacher shortages or surplus and sets this against demographic projections over the next ten years, forward planning policies and the main models of teacher selection and replacement in Europe.

It shows that a direct comparison of the extent of teacher shortages or surplus in different European countries is not feasible. The main reason for this is that harmonised indicators on teacher supply and demand do not yet exist. The way in which shortage is measured and defined differs significantly between education systems. However, most countries have a range of so-called 'emergency measures' at their disposal. Non-qualified (or not appropriately qualified) teachers may work under certain conditions, usually relating to their academic achievement or professional experience. Several countries facing teacher shortages have also introduced a range of measures designed to open up teacher training and improve teacher supply, for example by offering more flexible training programmes or financial incentives to trainees.

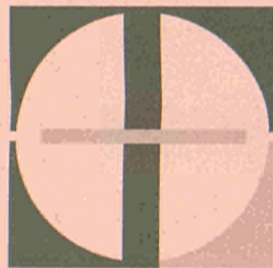
Reports I and II may now be accessed on the Eurydice website (<http://www.eurydice.org>) and are also to be made available as printed publications.

Source: Eurydice



Closing the gap

Future Member States embrace the concept of lifelong learning but lack the required infrastructure



The concept of lifelong learning has won a firm foothold in the future member states, but the development of the required infrastructure still lags considerably behind that of most EU countries. Much progress has been made, but none of the countries is fully pre-

pared for a future in which continued training may come to have as much significance as initial training.

These are the core conclusions of recent studies by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin, supporting input to its latest *Review of progress in VET reforms*⁽¹⁾ for the European Commission's Directorate General (DG) for Enlargement and a set of country monographs⁽²⁾ which are being compiled for the DG for Employment.

Preparing an education system for a culture of **lifelong learning** requires changes to accessibility, resources and governance of education. Zooming in on these three areas, the ETF found that impressive progress had been made in the past years in different countries for each of them.

As far as **access** to education is concerned, a major pitfall continues to be the lack of horizontal connections between vocational and tertiary education. This effectively closes the door on further education for those who reach upper secondary education via the vocational path. On a more positive note, the provision of continuing vocational training by companies is steadily increasing in all countries.

generally considered to be spent less efficiently because the state of material equipment is often still poor and, critically, because teachers have been largely overlooked in reform measures implemented to date. According to the ETF, increased funding is particularly needed for training as a part of active labour market measures.

In the field of **governance**, impressive headway has been made in the legal arena, with most crucial employment and education legislation now in place. Remaining problems in this field are related to partnership. Although promoted heavily, the involvement of social partners in education development has got off the ground very slowly, not least because social partners have needed time to get themselves organised in the early and mid 1990s. Locally, poor collaboration among different ministries is still a major problem. Also decentralising the administration of education has proven to be a difficult issue to tackle with all countries except Hungary Malta, Cyprus and Turkey having to start from scratch in this area.

Although much remains to be done in the above areas, the process of change has been set in motion everywhere and full implementation of reforms now seems to be a matter of time. According to the ETF, current development priorities must therefore concentrate on areas, which also in the EU have needed a thorough check against the new learning culture. Such issues include transparency in the VET system and the certificates it awards, quality assurance, improved access for vulnerable groups, and the

promotion of a learning culture in general.

(1) <http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/downloadvetreform>
(2) <http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/downloadccpubgen>

Source and more information: Arjen Vos, European Training Foundation, Villa Gualino, Viale Settimio Severo, 65, Tel.: (39) 011 630 2308, Fax: (39) 011 630 2200. E-mail: arjen.vos@etf.eu.int

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

People with special needs - School to employment transition

During the past two years the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education has been working on the topic of Transition from School to Employment: problems, possibilities and issues faced by young people with special educational needs.

At the end of 1999, the European Agency carried out a review and analysis of the existing information regarding training and employment of young people with special educational needs. This review provided the basis for an analysis in 16 European countries. by experts nominated by the Ministries of Education. These experts were asked to provide relevant national information related to issues such as:

- access to educational opportunities for young people with disabilities following compulsory education;
- the existence of transition programmes;
- the situation of employment/unemployment for people with disabilities;
- both sensitive and positive elements at the national levels.

In order to complete this information, a number of significant projects/practices were selected for analysis.. These cover initiatives in secondary schools, vocational training centres and other similar types of educational settings, dealing with young people with any type of special need. In total, more than 60 projects, at least one to two per country, were involved. No specific target group was aimed at, as the purpose of the study was to have the widest possible overview of the situation in different countries.

The summary report⁽¹⁾ synthesises the main issues discussed by all

those involved and addresses the following three areas:

- the main **problems** faced by young people with special needs, their families and professionals regarding transition from school to employment (e.g. how to reduce or prevent the high number of education drop outs; how to improve the access to quality education and training, etc.)
- the key **aspects** to be considered in the field of transition, taking into account the existing problems
- the main **factors** which seem to either facilitate or prevent the implementation of a successful transition process at the practical level.

Results are presented through a comprehensive Internet-based transition information database providing comparative national data, as well as information from European and international sources. It is available at: <http://www.european-agency.org/>.

(1) The summary report with the main findings has been published in English (ISBN: 87-90591-49-6). It will be published in 13 languages both as an e-book and in hard copy form over the next few months. For further information, please visit the European Agency web site: www.european-agency.org or contact

European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education
Teglgaardsparken, 100
DK - Middelfart 5500
Tel. (45-64) 41 00 20
Fax (45-64) 41 00 23
e-mail: adm@european-agency.org

Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

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Social partners and the development of competences and qualifications in Europe

Cedefop, together with the European Economic and Social Committee (ECOSOC), the European Monitoring Centre for Change (EMCC) of the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), organised, in September, a conference focusing on social partner involvement in education and training practice.

The policy framework and motivation behind the organisation of this conference were outlined in presentations from the Danish Presidency, DG EAC, Cedefop and the European Foundation. This was followed by presentations from the main social partner organisations at European level. The focus of the conference was set by the perspectives and positions outlined by the social partners in their document "*Framework*

of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications" of March 2002 (see Cedefop Info 2/2002).

130 participants took part in the conference hosted by ECOSOC. More than 30 speakers representing social partner organisations, research institutes, the European Commission and other authorities presented a number of actions and approaches

by social partners. The framework agreed by the social partners proved to have solid backing in terms of actions undertaken at national and sectoral level. Examples of actions at the level of the enterprise, national actions for single branches and inter-professional agreements provided a varied and practical input for the meeting.

Learning and education initiatives are often given impetus at company or local level by the need to take account of industrial change. The Rover Longbridge case is a typical example of this. From the *Europêche* and agricultural sector presentation, participants learned about primary industries' need to

keep abreast of technological change and development. Education and training programmes are often introduced in order to improve the image of a branch, increase recruitment or meet the needs of a changing market. Social partner involvement varies between the European countries. However, there is undoubtedly an increased awareness, on both sides of the table, of the need for a pre-emptive and active training and education policy. The Bruges initiative and process was seen as an interesting and welcome contribution to the varied activities of social partner organisations and as a complementary and supportive action to the 'framework'.

The conference provided an insight into the wide range of initiatives related to learning taken by social partners at various levels. However, it was not clear how these could be structured and further developed, so as to lead to recognised sectoral qualifications at European level. Accordingly, further more focused work will need to be carried out with a view to establishing how to support these sectoral initiatives.

More information on the conference, including the background papers and presentations given and conclusions drawn during the final session by DG EAC, EMCC and Cedefop, can be found at: <http://www.cedefop.eu.int/events.asp#9>.

For further information on Cedefop's activities in this field, contact Ms Bodil Lovas in Cedefop (Tel (30) 2310 490 098 - mail: bul@cedefop.eu.int).

Source: Cedefop/JL

Co-operation in vocational education and training "A window of opportunity"

Continued from page 1

and training in order to remove obstacles to occupational and geographic mobility and promote access to lifelong learning. This involves taking steps to increase transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications within vocational education and training systems and to promote closer co-operation regarding quality in European vocational education and training systems as a sound basis for mutual trust.

That further co-operation in vocational education and training should be enhanced by the actions and policies developed primarily in the context of the report on the Concrete Future Objectives of Education and Training Systems', taking into account the Resolution on Lifelong Learning, but also in the context of the European Employment Strategy. Important means to achieve these ends are the Community education and training instruments in particular the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, the European Social Fund, and initiatives for eLearning and foreign languages.

The Council acknowledged that priority should be given to the following:

European dimension

Strengthening the European dimension in vocational education and training with the aim of improving closer co-operation in order to facilitate and promote mobility and the development of inter-institutional co-operation, partnerships and other transnational initiatives, all in order to raise the profile of the European education and training area in an international context so that Europe will be recognised as a world-wide reference for learners.

Transparency, information and guidance

Increasing transparency in vocational education and training through the implementation and rationalisation of information tools and networks, including the integration of existing instruments such as the European CV, certificate and diploma supplements, the Common European framework of reference for languages and the EUROPASS into one single framework.

Strengthening policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and counselling in the Member States, at all levels of education, training and employment, particularly on issues concerning access to learning vocational education and training and the transferability and recognition of competences and qualifications, in order to support occupational and geographical mobility of citizens in Europe.

Recognition of competences and qualifications

Investigating how transparency, comparability, transferability and recognition of competences and/or qualifications, between different countries and at different levels, could be promoted by developing reference levels, common principles for certification, and common measures, including a credit transfer system for vocational education and training.

Increasing support to the development of competences and qualifications at sectoral level, by reinforcing co-operation and co-ordination especially involving the social partners. Several initiatives on a Community, bilateral and multi-lateral basis, including those already identified

in various sectors aiming at mutually recognised qualifications, illustrate this approach.

Developing a set of common principles regarding validation of non-formal and informal learning with the aim of ensuring greater compatibility between approaches in different countries and at different levels.

Quality assurance

Promoting co-operation in quality assurance with particular focus on exchange of models and methods, as well as common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training.

Giving attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers within all forms of vocational education and training

Finally the Council invited the Members States and the Commission within the framework of their responsibilities:

to take the appropriate steps to initiate the implementation of the priorities set out in this resolution,
to build on and adapt existing structures and instruments in Europe relevant to the above priorities, and establish, where appropriate, links with work in the context of the Bologna declaration;

to fully involve the key players, particularly the social partners, and the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training;
to involve, in accordance with existing objectives and agreements, the candidate and EFTA-EEA countries in this process;
to enhance co-operation, where appropriate, with relevant international organisations

in particular, the OECD, UNESCO, ILO and the Council of Europe in the development of vocational education and training policy and concrete actions;

to submit a progress report as part of the report on the follow-up of the future objectives of education and training systems as requested by the European Council for its Spring meeting of 2004.

At a meeting in Copenhagen on 29/30 November, attended by ministers from 31 countries, a Declaration (to be known as *the Copenhagen Declaration*) was agreed by the European Ministers of Vocational Education and Training and the European Commission. The text of this repeats the priorities contained in the Council Resolution and listed above.

Work on implementing the Council resolution has already commenced. The European Commission has established technical working groups to work on some of the priority areas, in particular the transparency of qualifications, a credit transfer system and VET quality. These groups will replace and use the results of the European fora on the transparency of vocational qualifications and VET quality (see separate article on page 1 and 3 of this issue). Other priority subjects will be dealt with by existing working groups within the framework of the objectives of education and training systems exercise.

(¹) Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training, OJ C 13 of 18 January 2003.

(²) Council Resolution of 27 June 2002 on lifelong learning, OJ C 163/1 of 9 July 2002.

(³) Detailed work programme on the "Follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe", Council document 6365/02 of 20 February 2002.

A history of vocational education and training in Europe

The first international conference on the history of vocational education and training in Europe in a comparative perspective, organised by the University of Florence and the European University Institute (EC Archives) under the aegis of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), was held in Florence, Italy on 11-12 October 2002.

The purpose was to promote a better understanding of present-day vocational education and training by pointing to the historical development at national and international levels as well as at the influence of VET on European integration. The conference brought together researchers with an interest in the historical development of vocational education and training systems as well as those interested in EC/EU social policies. Also practitioners with an interest in these matters took part, bringing the total number of participants to about 60. Three sessions were held.

The first session dealt with the development of VET systems in a comparative perspective. Three basic models - the liberal market oriented, the state-governed bureaucratic and the dual corporate model - were outlined in the keynote introduction by professor Wolf-Dietrich Greinert. Subsequently, six papers were presented by authors from Finland, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom representing various angles to the overall topic of the theme. To a certain extent, the papers provided support to the exist-

ence of the three basic models, but they also offered insights into the complexity and variety between and within countries. As professor Greinert pointed out in his concluding remarks, the papers are in fact suggesting an even more basic 'European' model where apprenticeship and theoretical schooling are merged, albeit in different proportions in various countries. In concluding the session, Professor Ulf P. Lundgren struck a similar chord pointing out among other things an ongoing theorisation and 'academisation' of vocational education and training. He also stressed that systems should not be compared only in terms of structures, but also in terms of governance.

In the second session, on Vocational education and training in retrospective, key players in the 1970's and 1980's presented personal views on the development of policies and institutions related to vocational education and training. Three distinguished persons gave different perspectives and experiences: Mr Domenico Lenarduzzi, former Deputy Director General of the European Commission's Directo-

rate General for Education and Culture (EAC) gave an overall view of developments since the mid-sixties. Professor George Wedell, former member of Cedefop's management board representing the European Commission referred in particular to the creation of Cedefop and the parties involved, whereas Mr Vincenzo Romano, also former member of Cedefop's management board representing the Italian Employers' Organisation stressed the important role of the social partners.

The final session dealt with the role of VET in EC/EU social policy and had a special focus on Cedefop. The keynote introduction, presented by professor Antonio Varsori, put the

development of Cedefop in a broader frame where the weight attached to vocational education and training in formulating a European social policy was stressed. His contribution was followed by four others from a research team at the University of Florence, describing and analysing certain periods and certain key actors, again with a focus on Cedefop. This session was rounded up by a paper on the role of vocational education and training in Francois Mitterrand's idea of a European social space.

The contributions at the conference demonstrated the fruitfulness of making comparative long-term studies since national 'stories' are no

longer sufficient in a rapidly changing world. To progress, it will be useful to apply a broad framework where the convergence or divergence between vocational and other forms of education and training is studied. There are innumerable possibilities for interesting studies and there is no difficulty to formulate themes for the next conference. It is important that Cedefop, as one of a very few European institutions in this field, to take an active part in that process also in the future.

For more information:
<http://history.cedefop.eu.int/international.asp>

Source: Cedefop/Anders Nilsson
 (anders.nilsson@ekh.lu.se)

Cedefop – reaching out for the young

The evening of the 7th November saw the convergence of 48 Ministers responsible for youth and more than 120 representatives of youth groups and organisations. The reason for this? The 6th Conference of European Ministers responsible for Youth and a pre-conference meeting for young adults. Cedefop, with much help from some lively animators, provided an Internet café open for business throughout the youth event. The café was in many ways different to a regular internet café, it was not merely about supplying the youth delegates and representative with internet access and coffee. Over the two days that

the internet café was open, the youth representatives and a large number of students invited from local vocational colleges and schools were able to visit and obtain information on a range of vocational education and training issues including youth mobility programmes and the European C.V. Formal talks, workshops and games were used to highlight these issues. More information regarding this event will probably be available in the next edition of Cedefop Info, but if you can't wait till then, visit <http://youth.trainingvillage.gr> for more information about the event, newsletters and much more.

Source:eda/jcl/vpe/ews Cedefop

Internationalisation of VET

Iceland/Austria/Sweden/Spain/Greece

The Learning Community project (LearnCom)

In a recent survey of Leonardo da Vinci programme projects, the Greek-based Lambrakis Research Foundation considered a project carried out in Iceland, Austria, Sweden, Spain and Greece to be a good example of one which provides innovative and effective solutions for the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in learning systems.

Called LearnCom, it is a three year pilot project (2001 to 2003) involving 8 partners (see box) operating in small communities which have suffered a decline in traditional employment sectors (farming and fisheries).

The project's primary goal is to restore self-esteem among the participants. Other objectives are to create a positive attitude in the participating communities towards changes on the labour market and the acquisition of new skills (computer skills, language skills, knowledge of rural tourism), which will hopefully result in generally increased competence and employability. An added value would be the experience of teaching/studying languages and computer skills by interactive communication between participants in different countries and the development of materials for this purpose.

The project has several innovative features, in both the local and global context:

a) It focuses concurrently on attitude change as well as learning skills. It uses a group dynamic approach to motivate the communities into helping themselves. Using ICTs in acquiring computer and language skills

provides parallel opportunities to exercise new skills and to learn. b) In Iceland a whole community of some 500 people, whether in work or unemployment, aged between 18 and 77 and with different educational backgrounds, is more or less involved.

c) There is a deliberate attempt to weave together three fundamental aspects of modern economy, self esteem, information and computer skills and substantive industrial skills (here rural tourism). d) It involves working in transnational cooperation. e) The project results are looked upon as a first step in a process in which adjustments and revision will be needed by future users. The results of the research and the evaluation will be used to facilitate the dissemination and transfer of results to other sectors and the development of the project itself.

The project not only uses information technologies to promote lifelong learning among individuals and organisations, but the emergence of a Learning Community is a final goal. It also provides opportunities for teachers and trainers to develop and experiment with new teaching

material and methods, making use of information technology and computers.

So far the experience of the project in the participating countries has been different. In Iceland, there is great enthusiasm and more participation than originally bargained for,

while in Greece it has proved difficult to find participants, as they do not get specially paid for doing so. In Sweden, the fact that unemployed people were obliged to participate, influences their attitude towards the project. In Austria and Spain there has been more emphasis on people working in the tourism sector than

on general participation. Nevertheless, overall the participants seem happy and excited to enter the last phase of the project in which communication between participating countries is high on the agenda
 For further information: www.learncom.eu.org

Source: Anna Kristín Gunnarsdóttir
 FSNV – miðstöð símenntunar

Promotor: Farskóli Norðurlands vestra (FSNV) – Miðstöð símenntunar (Regional Institution of Lifelong Learning), responsible person Anna Kristín Gunnarsdóttir: anna@fnv.is: Administration, financial management and responsibility. Coordination and preparation of the partners common meetings and tasks such as curriculum development and testing, dissemination at national level.

Other partners and their responsibilities:

1. Austria: Lungauer Zentrum für Beruf und Bildung, responsible person Kisa Aste: info@lungauerbildungsverbund.at: Preparation and coordination of rural tourism programme and language module;
2. Spain: M.T. Formación S.L., responsible person Charo Lazaro: charo@mtservicios.com: Preparation and coordination of language material and teaching methods;
3. Greece: Computer Technology Institute, responsible person Maria Rigou: rigou@ceid.upatras.gr: Specification of user technical requirements, designing of the system, supervision of equipment;
4. Iceland: Hólaskóli College, responsible person, Gudrun Helgadóttir: gudr@holar.is: Preparation and coordination of rural tourism module;
5. Iceland: Social Science Research Institute of the University of Iceland, responsible person, Prof. Jon Torfi Jonasson: jtj@hi.is: Evaluation of the project, its impact, implementation strategy and dissemination;
6. Sankviken Lärcentrum, responsible person Carl Göran Bjurman: carl-goran.bjurman@sankviken.se: Preparation and supervision of self-esteem and attitude module;
7. Sweden: Encounter AB, responsible person Inger Danilda: inger.danilda@chello.se: Evaluation, dissemination and transfer of results.

Germany Stocks are high for transnational mobility

Two surveys show that both young people and training enterprises have had positive experience of placements abroad. Two surveys on the "transnational exchange of trainees and young specialised workers" show that both trainees and training enterprises regard placements abroad, effected in the course of vocational training, as an advantage.

The surveys in question were carried out by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) among some 760 enterprises at the beginning of 2002 and by *Infratest Sozialforschung* Munich among 18-24-year-old trainees and skilled workers in the framework of a multiple indicator telephone survey from February to April 2002.

Young people who opt for a placement abroad are principally interested in improving their language skills, specialised qualifications and career prospects. Some 60 % of those interviewed say that they are very interested in a placement abroad whereas 20 % have in fact already effected a transnational placement. Among the surveyed enterprises, 46 % have practical experience in the exchange of specialised personnel. About 20 % of firms send young people on foreign placements in exchange for specialised personnel or trainees from abroad. A total of 92 % of enterprises participating in exchange schemes give a positive rating of their experience with the transnational mobility of their young employees and workers and their guests.

Of the young people who have been on a placement abroad, three-quar-

ters of whom would like to repeat the experience, young women are clearly a minority. One reason for this is that evidently enterprises tend to suggest transnational mobility to young men. This is confirmed by the company survey: of the 174 young people who went abroad upon the initiative of their employer, only 35 % of the trainees and no more than 18 % of the specialised personnel were women.

Young people who have so far not been on a work placement abroad indicate three main arguments against transnational mobility: a lack of the necessary financial resources, inadequate language skills or no appropriate contact. These are above all the main obstacles for compulsory school students (*Hauptschule*). The readiness of 18 to 24-year-olds to go abroad largely depends on the extent to which the placement will offer them an opportunity to improve their language skills, their further qualifications and their overall career prospects. The young people interviewed would like to have more encouragement from the enterprises in this respect, e.g. arrangements to facilitate release from their normal activities to go abroad, specific company preparation schemes and career-promoting credit points as a reward.

Those enterprises loth to participate in exchange programmes indicate the related financial burdens as the decisive reason. The BIBB therefore recommends financial support for the enterprises, as well as counselling and organisational assistance from chambers and associations, as a means of promoting companies' motivation to participate in transnational placements.

The survey findings are also reflected by the results of a conference on the theme "Take your Chance in Europe - mobility in vocational education and training" held in Aachen in June 2002 upon the initiative of Germany and the Netherlands. The concrete recommendations for further improvements in the field of VET drawn up by governmental representatives, social partners, chamber of commerce representatives, training managers, vocational school teachers and trainees from the five participating countries (Belgium, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and Austria) in the course of the conference are to be published in the near future by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (see article below).

Further information: <http://www.ausbildunginternational.de/chance>
Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Germany Integration through qualification

BIBB service introduces new measures to promote the vocational training of young migrants

Young people from a migrant background still encounter problems in entry to the German training place market. The "Initiativstelle Berufliche Qualifizierung von Migrantinnen und Migranten - IBQM" (Initiative unit for vocational skilling of migrants) within the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) wishes to improve the opportunities of this target group by specifically targeting existing skill potentials, e.g. multilingualism and intercultural experience, and taking advantage of integrative capacity these skills imply. The magic formula, entitled "Integration through Qualification", opens up new routes to vocational training for this target group. Opening up the entire spectrum of the 345 recognised training occupations in Germany to this group requires not only better support structures and a critical analysis, but also the development of vocational preparation and vocational training programmes. This would allow youngsters and young adults from a migrant background to access mainstream vocational training provision for youngsters and young adults.

The IBQM, set up by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research at the end of 2001 as part of the programme entitled "Promoting competences. Vocational skilling of target groups in need of special assistance", is restructuring the

vocational preparation and vocational training programmes for young foreigners in Germany and thereby also developing innovative approaches to their social integration. Particular importance is attached to the promotion of local and regional networks for the vocational skilling of migrants.

These networks are to provide vocational training players a platform for cooperation, offer an opportunity for the precise examination of the local training and job market situation and improve opportunities of access to mainstream, second-chance and continuing training provision for the target group of young migrants. Parents are also to be reached by the organisation of information events. The IBQM, which is responsible for counselling and monitoring the networks, operates in close collaboration with the BIBB *Good Practice Centre* in the dissemination of models of good practice.

Further information at: <http://www.bibb.de/ibqm>
Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Netherlands Take your chance in Europe!

Practical recommendations for multilateral co-operation on mobility

Mobility in vocational education and training achieved further impetus at a conference 'Take your Chance in Europe! Mobility in vocational education and training' held in June in the EU regional city of Aachen. Initiated within the framework of the *Gemeinsame Erklärung (Joint Declaration)* (see Cedefop Info 1/2002) of the Ministers from the Netherlands and Germany participants from these two countries and from Austria, Belgium (Flanders) and Denmark took part.

A political window of opportunity

The Directors-General from the Ministries of Education in the Netherlands and in Germany pointed out that both the themes and the timing of the conference were perfect. The five workshop subjects were

- transparency and recognition
- mobility and quality,
- concepts for individual mobility,
- co-operation of educational institutions: structures and networks
- students and apprentices

A mix of actors, from management in the educational system and industry to teachers, students and social partners, gave their view on the basis of their practical experiences.

The 'Ten Aachen Recommendations'

The final result of the conference consists of two recommendations per theme.

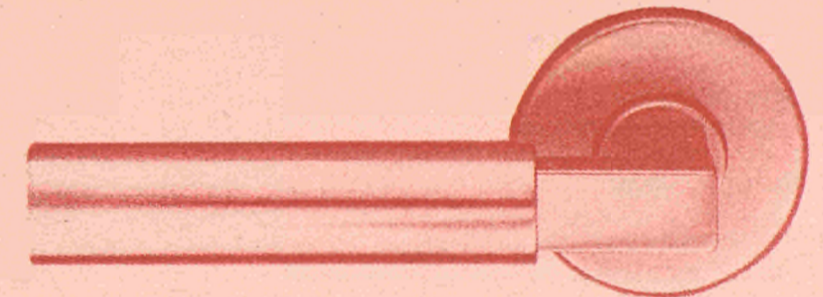
On the topic of **transparency and recognition**, a framework should be designed which supplies the necessary information and allows for standards to reveal quality as regards the outcome, the process and the structure of VET. Having reviewed several existing methods and instruments, the recommendation was to test whether the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) could be the framework.

There is a need for further co-operation between the five countries on the topic of **quality** and priority should be given to the sustainable effects of mobility schemes. Such an initiative should go beyond the

Leonardo da Vinci programme and be based on the experience already existing in various countries and at European level. Future mobility schemes at European and at national levels should guarantee sustainable effects.

On **individual mobility**, it was concluded that the fundamental thing to start with, is to encourage countries to integrate the possibility for individual mobility at national level and at the level of school and company policies. The latter is regarded as the critical level for success. Secondly, a policy should be developed at national level for receiving organisations to define the conditions for receiving foreign apprentices and students.

The fourth workshop discussed **co-operation between institutions** in the framework of mobility projects. Strategies backed by budg-



ets at all levels are essential if internationalisation is to become an integrated part of vocational education and training. In addition, there is a need to recognise the costs of establishing and maintaining partnerships for mobility. This could be taken into account when revising and evaluating the existing European programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci.

The **students and apprentices workshop** concluded that a structure should be ensured for promotion and information, via a team of 'key persons' at school and company level. Furthermore, they argued that not only they, but also companies need financial incentives.

Research

In the framework of this conference, research was carried out by CINOP providing a quantitative and qualitative analysis of mobility in these five countries⁽¹⁾. Søren Kristensen, project manager at Cedefop, commented on this research during the conference and added his view on the topic in the paper *The use of*

mobility in the context of VET in Europe⁽²⁾.

Follow-up

The ministries from Germany and the Netherlands invited their Danish, Austrian and Flemish colleagues to join the steering committee to discuss the follow-up activities of this conference. This will take the form of national as well as multilateral activities. Other countries might join this initiative⁽³⁾ at a later stage.

⁽¹⁾ Jan Neuvel, International mobility in five European countries: A first impression (research report), CINOP, 2002. The report can be downloaded in English from the website www.cinopinternational.nl (please choose the English section).

⁽²⁾ Søren Kristensen, The use of mobility in the context of VET in Europe, Cedefop, 2002. Available from Cedefop or CINOP. For an abstract of the presentation, see the official conference report.

⁽³⁾ For up to date information, consult the English section of the website www.cinopinternational.nl

Further information: Martine Maes, mmaes@cinop.nl, or www.cinopinternational.nl (English section)

Source: CINOP/Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science/German Federal Ministry for Education and Research.

Monitoring mobility: data and indicators

In order to get a clear view on the volume of, and the trends and developments in, mobility in Dutch education, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science commissions a yearly monitor, called the BISON-monitor⁽¹⁾.

Quantitative results

The 2001 edition⁽²⁾ gives the mobility statistics within the official programmes in the three educational sectors (primary, secondary vocational and higher). In 2001, 32 000 Dutch students went abroad by means of funds from European or national programmes in all sectors, while 8 200 foreign students came to the Netherlands. In the secondary vocational sector, 5 379 students went abroad, and in the higher vocational one the figure was 5 545. This means that 2.5 % of the students in the secondary vocational sector go abroad as do 5.3 % of those in higher

education. This is nearly the same level as in 1999/2000.

Special attention in this edition was given to the Europass. In 2000/2001, the first Europasses were distributed to 275 students. In the subsequent year, nearly 700 students received Europasses. During the coming year, the use of Europass as an instrument for more transparency will be promoted extensively in the Netherlands, by means of an updated website, a national conference and the introduction of a set of free cards to be distributed amongst students. A more centralised system of registration is also proposed.

Developing indicators

Indicators for mobility will be developed further in the framework of this monitor. Last year, a start was made by an international working group in the higher education sector and in January 2002, a follow-up conference, organised by the Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation (Nuffic), produced the following results and recommendations:

- Introduce credit mobility and degree mobility as key words in statistical overviews.
- Distinguish between census data (relevant data from a cohort of students) and survey data (representative data collection by a random test).
- Determine the choice of indicators by the various aims for the use of the database:

- academic goals (effect on academic results and quality of education)
- socio-economic goals (effect on the economy, investment versus return on investment)
- political goals (effect on the image of a country or course)

Recommendations are made to enhance the data sources and to maintain the data collection on mobility in existing UNESCO and OECD statistics. Furthermore, the comparability of data and concepts should be developed, for example using ISCED or Eurostat codes. Last, but not least, a list of essential indicators should be drawn up. Future activities include an English glossary of terms used on this topic, while co-operation with the University of Kassel and the OECD in relation to the

project Statistics on Student Mobility in Europe (SSME) will be started.

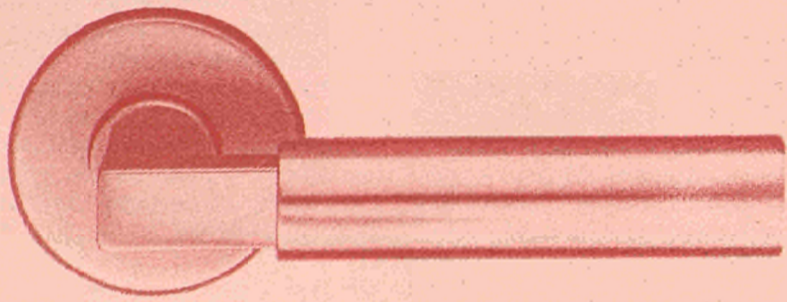
⁽¹⁾ This is prepared by The Council of International Cooperation for Education in the Netherlands, whose members are NUFFIC, CINOP and the European Platform. See also Cedefop Info numbers 2/2000 and 2/2001.

⁽²⁾ BISON Monitor van internationale mobiliteit in het onderwijs - 2001. (BISON Monitor of international mobility in education - 2001 edition, published in Dutch and English). Europees Platform, CINOP, Nuffic (commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). Den Haag. Juni 2002.

To order: contact internationaal@cinop.nl (free of charge)

Further information: Ms Fleur Dinjens, fdinjens@cinop.nl

Source: CINOP/Nuffic/Europees Platform



Lifelong learning

New organisation promotes adult learning

A national structure for the provision of adult learning in Ireland has been finalised with the recent establishment of the National Adult Learning Council. The establishment of the Council was one of the central recommendations of the White Paper 'Learning for Life' (see Cedefop Info 3/2000).

The Council represents education and training providers, social partners, community and voluntary interests and learners. Its principal functions will be to:

- promote the development of the adult education sector and advise Government on policy priorities in line with national social and economic needs;
- promote the co-ordination of the work of participating bodies within an agreed national strategy and policy framework, and to monitor the implementation of this strategy;

- liaise with the wide variety of stakeholders in the field;
- advise on quality standards in consultation with the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, and to facilitate the dissemination of good practice;
- engage in research and evaluation in the field of adult education;
- promote cross border and international co-operation in adult education.

It will also have a specific remit to advance such issues as workplace learning, community

education, and an equality strategy, and to establish an advisory group on the integration of people with physical and learning disabilities into adult education. The Council will oversee the establishment of the Local Education Learning Boards, the other major structural reform recommended in the White Paper.

The establishment of the Council builds on earlier initiatives to increase participation of adults in further education and training. Extra places have been provided under a *Back to Education* initiative for adults and young people with less than upper secondary education. An Adult ICT Skills programme will be implemented as part of the measure. The appointment of community education facilitators throughout the country to support the devel-

opment of new community-based learning groups, further funding for adult literacy programmes and an extension of the emerging adult educational guidance service have also been announced. In addition a feasibility study is underway to develop a publicly accessible database of adult learning options, integrated with a national telephone helpline to address difficulties in accessing information which is currently fragmented over a range of providers.

For more information, contact: Ms Marie Barriscala, National Adult Learning Council, Department of Education and Science, Tyrone House, Marlborough Street, IRL-Dublin 1. Tel. (353-1) 873 4700 Fax (353-1) 878 7932

Source: FÁS

Vocational guidance

Skills auditing (*bilan de compétences*): an instrument to combat unemployment

Institutionalised in France in the 1990s, the skills auditing method is beginning to prove itself in Luxembourg as an increasing number of enterprises apply it for selection and promotion purposes. This method enables analysis of individuals' personal and vocational skills (knowledge and know-how acquired in initial/continuing vocational training or through work experience), aptitudes, interests and motivations.

The employment services have recognised the advantage of this tool, which they now systematically apply in formulating psycho-social guidance plans for job seekers.

The advantage of skills auditing for job seekers is that it offers them an opportunity to evaluate their current situation and to position themselves clearly against the demands of the job market. This allows them to plan their

occupational future by defining an individual career or training project. A further advantage is that skills auditing markedly improves motivation and self-esteem.

For employment services, the skills auditing helps to create a better match between labour market supply (the required job profile) and demand (the requisite skills to match the profile). By offering individuals a job commensu-

rate with their qualifications and motivations, they can hope to reduce cases of repeated unemployment.

How does the system work?

The skills auditing approach applied in Luxembourg is implemented in five phases over a period of approximately one month:

- Personality tests and occupational questionnaires to identify clients' skills and aptitudes.
- A series of interviews to analyse candidates' past, present and future careers; joint elaboration of a plan of action (training project or career plan).
- Identification of the match between job

seekers' knowledge and skills and the requirements of a specific job (this phase is carried out with the aid of a standardised inventory of jobs and trades).

- Data analysis and drafting of the skills auditing report (test results, recommendations, training project and/or career plan).
- Notification of the results to participants and sponsors.

Further details from: Marc Ant, e-mail: marcant@etform.lu and http://www.etform.lu/le_bilan_de_compences.htm

Source: Études et Formation

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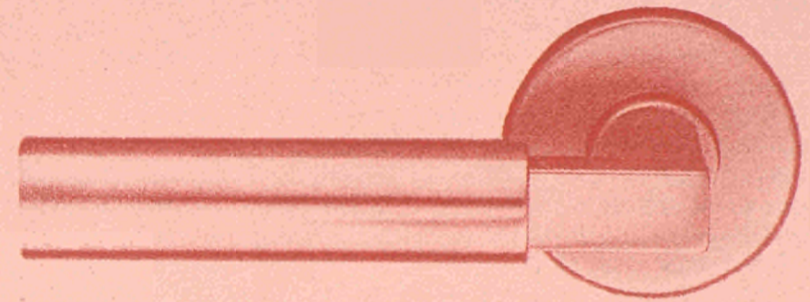
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Education policy

United Kingdom

Hard-hitting report on education in England

In June 2002, the Institute of Directors (IoD) published a policy paper⁽¹⁾ on education by its Head of Policy Ruth Lea, an influential pundit on issues concerning the workforce. The IoD offers training, support, and representation to government etc, and has over 55 000 members.

The report claims too many school leavers go onto Higher Education (HE) rather than "tough and challenging vocational training", leaving a skills shortage that will worsen if the government reaches a "ludicrous 50% target" of school leavers entering HE. The UK is "short of skilled craftspeople such as plumbers and people with intermediate engineering and ICT skills. It is not short of media studies graduates."

It claims that the UK falls behind on literacy and numeracy and in vocational qualifications.

Data from the Learning and Skills Council in 2001 shows the proportion of the labour force holding vocational qualifications at National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels 2 and 3 in the UK lags behind Germany and France. The report states that "Vocational training has failed and [is] inferior to the continental equivalents".

The report also argues that a "mix and match approach" to academic and vocational education is confusing, and that they should be

separate. On parity of esteem Lea states, "A vocational qualification should be an important and respected mark of practical skills. Too many people view them as intrinsically inferior to academic qualifications – they should not be", and she argues the case for a greater emphasis on craft skills.

At the age of 14, Lea suggests there should be a selective bipartite system of vocational education including general courses and paid work placements, to prepare pupils for apprenticeships, together with academically-based education for 25 – 30% of the cohort, with selection by teachers in discussion with parents and pupils. Post-school vocational education should be based on "toughened up"

NVQs (National Vocational Qualifications) and Modern Apprenticeships. Graduate Apprenticeships should be introduced. Only 15 – 20% of any cohort should enter HE, where the emphasis should be on academic, "heavy vocational" (i.e. medicine, engineering) and "top-class vocational" degrees.

⁽¹⁾ Education and training; A business blueprint for reform. IoD Policy Paper. Ruth Lea. June 2002, ISBN 1901580830, priced at UKL 10.00, available from Institute of Directors, 116 Pall Mall, London SW1Y 5ED. Tel. (44-20) 7839 1233. email info@iod.com.

It can be downloaded from the Policy, Research Papers page at the IoD website: <http://www.iod.com>

Source: QCA

Ireland

Review of post-secondary educational provision

The numbers of students participating in the Post Leaving Certificate (PLC) programme in Ireland have doubled in the last 10 years to over 24 000 in 1999/2000, according to a recent review⁽¹⁾.

The PLC programme was introduced in 1985 to provide appropriate education and training for young people to bridge the gap between school and work, focusing on disciplines directly related to industry. It also provides an alternative route to higher education in the Institutes of Technology. The programme is delivered in second level schools and vocational colleges under the auspices of Vocational Education Committees. Students are drawn from school leavers, mature learners, some of whom have no Leaving Certificate (the final secondary school certificate) and participants on the *Back-to-Education* initiative.

This comprehensive review of PLC provision was requested in the White Paper on Adult Education (see Cedefop Info 3/2000). It exam-

ines the "organisational, support, development, technical and administrative structures and resources required in schools and colleges with large scale provision having regard to good practice in related areas across the system and in other countries". Overall the report finds considerable under-resourcing in the sector and a lack of management co-ordination in catering for the diverse range of students and course type. It presents an extensive list of recommendations underpinned by four main objectives:

- To transform the student experience of undertaking courses through addressing under-resourcing and undesirable features of PLC provision that have persisted from its second level origins. The main recommendation of the report is that further education should be formally established as a distinct sector of

education, separate from second level provision. This would include a name change from "PLC College" to "College of Further Education" to more accurately reflect the diverse range of students.

- To change PLC colleges sufficiently to allow them to play their proper role in lifelong learning, and in supporting economic development. A diversity of delivery methods is required to maximise access to lifelong learning opportunities, and to facilitate employers that may wish to use education and training services provided by FE Colleges. Difficulties concerning progression of PLC students to third level represent one of the main issues facing the FE sector. They have been articulated in the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) discussion document⁽²⁾ (see Cedefop Info 2/2002). A recent survey showed that 22.6% of students progress to third level.
- To relieve the strains within PLC colleges caused by endeavouring to deliver economically relevant courses that respond to chang-

ing industrial needs, with very limited management resources, very few support staff and a heavy teaching load.

- To overcome the limitations in the sector that arise from the relatively small scale of most PLC providers, while avoiding undermining the benefits derived from local initiative and local relationships. This will be achieved by providing support services and mechanisms for co-operation and co-ordination. All but the largest colleges in the PLC sector are small by the standards of FE colleges in other countries reviewed.

⁽¹⁾ Interim Review of the Steering Group to the PLC Review established by the Department of Education and Science, prepared by McIver Consulting - draft March 2002. Available only on the following website: <http://www.ivea.ie/plcreview.htm>. A final report is expected before the end of 2002.

⁽²⁾ National Qualifications Authority of Ireland: Towards a national framework of qualifications, a discussion document. Dublin 2001. Available: NQAI, 4th Floor, 6-9 Trinity Street, IRL-Dublin 2. Tel. (353-1) 612 7080, Fax (353-1) 612 7095. Email: info@nqai.ie. Download address: <http://www.nqai.ie/NQAI%20Framework%20Report.pdf>

Source: FÁS

Vocational training policy

Spain

Law on qualifications and vocational training

The Law on Qualifications and Vocational Training, enacted on 20 June 2002 [cf. Cedefop Info No°1/2002 "Vocational Training: integration is on the agenda"], is designed to establish a comprehensive vocational training system matching the standards of the European Union job market, coordinating the various forms of training provision and encompassing initial vocational training, (re-)integration of unemployed workers and in-company continuing training.

This law must be seen as part of the employment promotion strategies coordinated by the European Union in response to market globalisation and the advance of the information society. The aim is to provide a skilled, active working population fit for mobility and free circulation.

The new law establishes a national qualifications system encompassing all vocational training programmes, within a National Catalogue of Qualifications. It also includes the evaluation and accreditation of corresponding job skills. The National Catalogue of Qualifications will be made up of the skills identified in the workplace and related training provisions, preferably organised in the form of modules. The technical concept of skill is defined in the legislation as "the sum of vocational

skills of significance for employment, attainable in modular or other forms of training and work experience". The law also establishes that vocational training certificates, and certificates of vocational aptitude, (*certificados de profesionalidad*) constitute the training provision referenced in the National Catalogue of Qualifications.

The involvement of the various stakeholders in the national qualifications and vocational training system will be guaranteed by the General Vocational Training Council, representing the central government, the autonomous communities and the social partners, with the National Qualifications Institute acting as its technical agency. It is planned also to invite the participation of companies especially regard-

ing the training of trainers, and training as part of work placement schemes.

In training provision, a series of specialised sectoral training centres are to be set up to deliver training programmes of an innovative and experimental character. The public administration, especially the employment services, are to adapt their provision to the specific needs of young people who have failed at school, live with disabilities and more generally are at risk of social exclusion.

Finally, the national qualifications and vocational training system deals with two important issues, namely career guidance and ongoing evaluation for quality assurance. In guidance, the focus will be on the need to learn about opportunities for access to employment and training provision in order to promote vocational (re-)integration. The aim of quality evaluation will be to ensure a continuous match between the training system and the requirements of the job market.

Source: Inem, <http://www.inem.es>

Austria

Good marks for the education system

Austrians award their education system an average mark of 2.0. The increasingly popular *Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen* (higher vocational schools) are top of the class with a mark of 1.8.⁽¹⁾

Austrians are happy with their education and training systems. In a study conducted by the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK), 75 % of the 2 000 respondents considered the national education system "good" or "very good". Only five per cent chose "sufficient" or "insufficient". This average overall rating of 2.0 shows that the education system has clearly improved in the eyes of the population: in 1993 only one half of Austrians rated the school system "good" or "very good".

Of the various types of school, the *Berufsbildende Höhere Schulen/BHS* (secondary technical and vocational colleges) came in top of the class at 1.8 on average, followed by the *Volksschulen* (primary schools) rated 1.9. The *Polytechnische Schulen* (pre-vocational schools) were bottom of the class at 2.5. The *Allgemeinbildende Höhere Schulen/AHS* (secondary academic schools) and the *Berufsbildende Mittlere Schulen/*

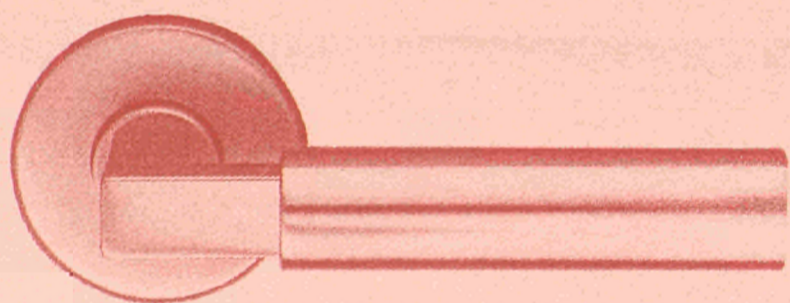
BMS (secondary technical and vocational schools) scored an average of 2.0, ahead of the *Berufsschulen* (vocational schools for apprentices) and *Sonderschulen* (special needs schools) both awarded 2.1.

The outstanding performance of the BHS reflects the inflow of students forecast for the new academic year. While an overall decline in enrolment, above all at primary school level of -1 % (some 3 800 fewer students) is to be expected, experts in the BHS expect enrolment to rise 2.1 % to a total of 129 207 students. However the BMS can also expect to increase numbers (+0.6 %), whereas the number of students enrolled at *Berufsschulen* is expected to drop by 1.3 % to 130 889.

(¹) These marks follow the grades awarded within the Austrian education system: Very good = 1, Good = 2, Satisfactory = 3, Sufficient = 4, Insufficient = 5

Further information at: <http://www.bmbwk.gv.at>

Source: BMBWK/Cedefop/SK



Financing of VET

Belgium

Harmonisation of the administrative and financial status of trainees

From 1 January 2002 onwards, all job-seekers and part-time workers in the Walloon Region engaged in a training programme delivered by an authorised provider will receive a flat-rate allowance of EUR 1 per hour of training, and the same entitlements for travel expenses and child care allowances.

This initiative is designed to create a level playing field for all job-seekers and to attract greater numbers to training programmes. Previously, the different legal provisions in force tended to be prejudicial to those at greatest risk. As a result, some cli-

ents dropped out of otherwise suitable training courses on account of financial constraints.

Source: Decree of the Walloon government on the granting of certain advantages to trainees in the course of vocational training (Moniteur Belge, 1 March 2002)/FOREM CIDOC

Belgium

Improving the management of European financial aid

A decree dated 28 February 2002 gives the French-speaking community a new tool for the coordination and management of European funding.

This coordination and management centre includes the European Social Fund (ESF) agency. It will therefore reinforce the action of European programmes and projects which promote vocational education and training.

Target groups

The centre's target groups are young people below 25 within the education/training system: students of secondary, technical and vocational education and those engaged in alternance training, courses for social advancement or higher education (*Hautes Écoles*).

Mission: to act as an inter-institutional broker

The centre is to act as an inter-institutional broker, establishing contact between the various educational and

training players and the European Commission and regional integration and employment policies.

Action: optimal use of European funding

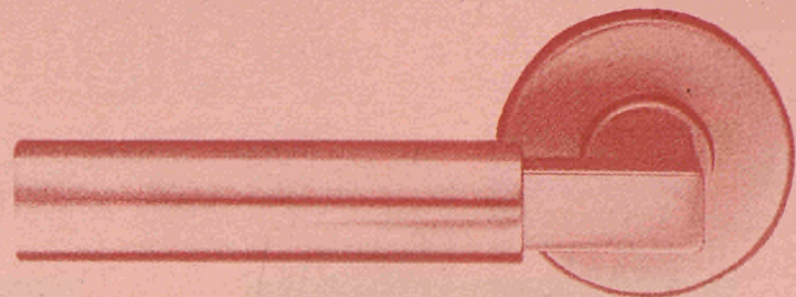
The coordination and management centre is to reinforce European activity in the French-speaking community by upstream and downstream action. Providing this coherence aims to make the best possible use of European funding.

Focusing on the broader European dimension

The centre will forge closer links with:

- the promotion of European programmes
- the linkage between regional and alternance training policies
- the improvement of (technical, vocational, alternance) education.

Source: Paul COTTON/Espace alternance cottonpaul@skynet.be
<http://www.espace-alternance.be/presentation.htm>



Initial training policy

Netherlands

Perspectives for vocational school leavers

What is the market position of school leavers with a secondary vocational education diploma? The Research Institute Education and Labour Market (*Researchcentrum Onderwijs en Arbeidsmarkt, ROA*) ⁽¹⁾ answers this question, on the basis of data from two other research projects.

One of them is the yearly RUBS research (registration of the numbers and destination of school leavers), which forms part of a monitoring instrument for the transition from education to work for all education sectors. The second is the *Project Onderwijs-Arbeidsmarkt* (Education-Labour market project), which aims to give insights to the current and future labour market situation of various occupations and courses. The target group of the ROA research is former secondary VET students who finished school about one and a half years previously.

Transition from education to work

The fast growing economy of the past five years has led to a very low unemployment rate, less than 2%, amongst secondary vocational education school leavers. Wages have grown substantially (by 30% from 1997 to 2001), partly because of high inflation. Flexible labour contracts have given way to more fixed contracts: only 11% of the contracts were flexible in 2001, against 23% in 1997.

Remarkable differences on the labour market can be traced to the different learning pathways: students from the dual pathway (*BBL-beroepsbegeleidende leerweg*) find a job quicker, get more fixed contracts initially and earn more. Apparently, the work experience they gained during their studies pays off when starting their career. However, the research shows that it doesn't take long for students from the theoretical pathway to catch up.

Differences in level and sector

From the four levels in the Dutch educational system, the two higher levels (3 and 4) ⁽²⁾ give excellent prospects on the labour market. Low unemployment rates and high wages are quite normal, especially for technical and health care professions. Most former students have found a job that corresponds to their education. The education levels 1 and 2 are also marked by a low unemployment rate (less than 4%), but the employees more often have a flexible contract and work below their skill level. Particularly school leavers from the two lower levels of the

theoretical pathway with an economic or agricultural background have more difficulties finding a job in their own sector.

In general, employees with a secondary vocational education diploma are satisfied with their current situation and their choice of occupation. About 20% of the target group is currently looking out for a (another) job.

The medium term perspectives (until 2006) for former VET-students range from reasonable to very good and vary by sector by sector.

⁽¹⁾ Patrick van Eijs. *De arbeidsmarkt voor MBO-schoolverlaters: nu en straks*. (The labour market for school leavers from secondary vocational education: now and in the future), ISBN: 90-5321-331-7. In Dutch, also in electronic format. Research centre for Education and Labour market (ROA). Maastricht. April 2002.

⁽²⁾ The Dutch education system has four levels. Level 1 corresponds to ISCED level 2. The second and third level correspond to ISCED level 3. The specialist level 4 corresponds to ISCED level 4. More information on the Dutch educational system can be found on the English section of www.cinopininternationaal.nl or www.dutch-vet.nl

Further information: <http://www.fdeuw.unimaas.nl/roa/> or mmaes@cinop.nl

Source: ROA/CINOP

Denmark

Reform of the commercial training programmes

The government has reached an agreement with the social partners, the Confederation of Trade Unions (LO) and the Danish Employers' Confederation (DA), on the framework of a reform of the content and structure of the commercial vocational education and training VET programmes. The annual intake of these programmes is around 10 000. The agreement is the result of committee work with participants from organisations representing employees, employers, schools, teachers, and the Ministry of Education.

The parties agreed that a reform of the commercial VET programmes should build on:

- An increased flexibility in the training programmes to the benefit of both students and companies. This implies a streamlining of the programmes in terms of content and the possibility for trainees to enter the labour market after having completed just a short training programme. Trainees wishing to do this are provided with a so-called "access card", listing vocational competencies that may be extended at a later stage. In real terms, this implies that the training programmes in the clerical, retail, wholesale, and financial trades vary in detail and length.
- A strengthened vocational element, which relates to both content and quality, in the programmes by focusing on the specialities, length and vocational levels of each training programme. There will be an improved introduction to the subjects of the basic course, better general and continuing guidance, and differing admission requirements for the various main courses. Some of the new programmes may contain

elements with a higher level than in existing ones.

- More focus on lifelong learning and real competencies to give the trainee direct access to the appropriate level in the educational system and to open up for a return to further education and training at a later stage in life. It is suggested dividing training programmes into levels where access is possible at any time. However, it is up to the trade committees for each sector (composed of representatives of the trade unions and employers), to decide this. A base for lifelong learning is thus formed and the stage for a reform of the principle of alternance is set.

The reform maintains the principle of alternance and the structure of basic and main courses in each training programme. It will come into force in 2003 or early 2004.

For more information, please contact: Per Clausen, Head of the trade committee for education and training in the commercial and clerical trades (Uddannelsesnævnet).
E-mail: pc@uddannelsesnaevnet.dk
Tel. (45-33) 36 66 00
Web site: www.uddannelsesnaevnet.dk (in Danish only)

Source: Cirijs

Norway

Short vocational courses integrated in the education system

To meet the need for a workforce with constantly updated skills in different trades, the Ministry of Education and Research has proposed integrating a variety of short vocational training courses (*tekniske fagskole*) into the education system at post-secondary level.

These courses cover education and training in areas such as technical subjects, adult training for health personnel, information and communication technologies (ICT), marketing, administration and tourism. If the proposal is accepted by parliament, students in these areas will receive increased financial support and acquire qualifications that will be recognised throughout the country. The new structure will not replace existing vocational training, but will be an alternative to longer vocational education and training programmes.

A 1999 survey showed that approximately 14 000 students were partici-

pating in vocational training courses designed to meet specific needs for competences in different trades. The number of these courses, organised by both private and public training institutions, has been growing rapidly in order to meet these needs. With the exception of technical subjects, this type of vocational training has, until now, neither been regulated by law nor integrated in the Norwegian VET system.

By proposing to integrate this type of short course into the education system, the Ministry of Education and Research is not only assuring the quality of the training, but also that the courses become available to

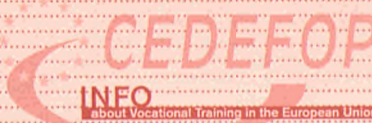
a larger number of students. The minimum duration of the courses will be six months and the maximum no longer than the equivalent of two years of full-time study. The new regulations will cover both private and public institutions.

According to the Ministry's proposal, a new and independent evaluation institution, NOKU (National Institute for Quality in Education), to be operative from January 2003, will be responsible for evaluating the quality of the courses.

For further information: <http://www.dep.no/ufd/engelsk/>

Source: Norwegian National Institute of Technology (<http://www.leonardodavinci.no>)

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Cedefop – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Europe 123
GR-57001 THESSALONIKI (Pylea)
Postal address: PO Box 22427
GR-55102 THESSALONIKI
Tel. (30) 2310 490 111
Fax (30) 2310 490 020
E-mail: info@cedefop.eu.int
Homepage: www.cedefop.eu.int
Interactive website: www.trainingvillage.gr

Brussels Office
20, Av. d'Auderghem
B-1040 Brussels
Tel. (32-2) 230 19 78
Fax (32-2) 230 58 24
E-mail: info.be@cedefop.eu.int

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Eric Fries Guggenheim, efg@cedefop.eu.int
Eleonora Schmid, ews@cedefop.eu.int
Dóra Stefánsdóttir, dst@cedefop.eu.int with the support of Simone Kops – Journalist
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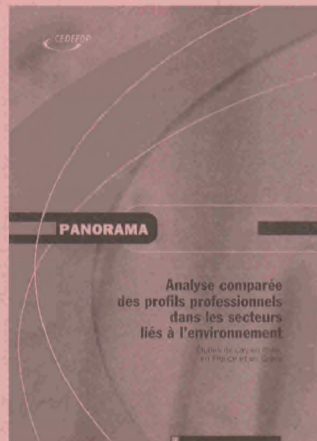
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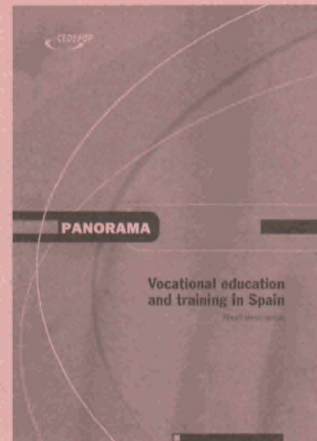
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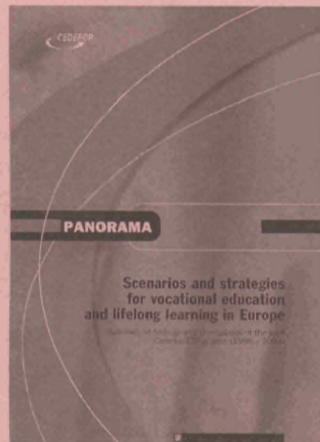
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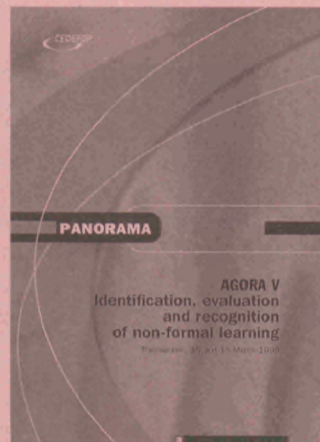
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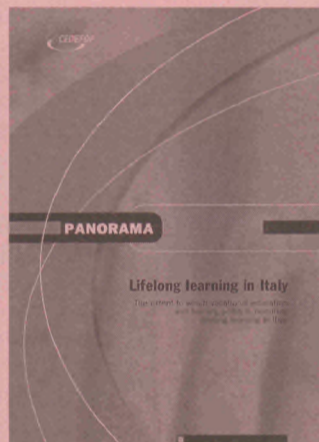
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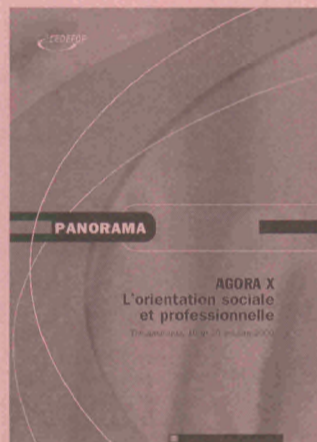
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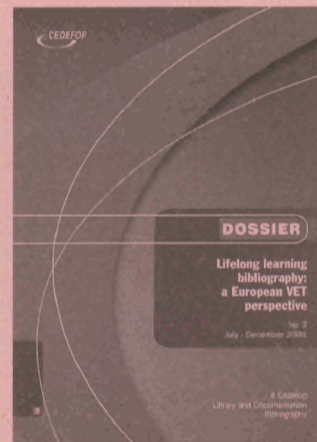
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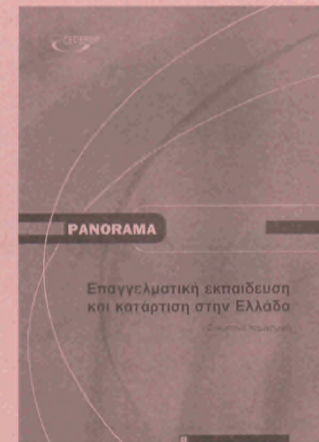
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Επαγγελματική εκπαίδευση και κατάρτιση στην Ελλάδα
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In brief

Germany

Improving the quality of continuing vocational training

The Confederation of German Employers' Associations (BDA) has warned against limiting the debate on upgrading continuing training to the issue of certification alone. The BDA believes that a state training test is not enough to improve quality: the real test of a continuing vocational training programme is whether the skills it imparts can be used in the workplace. The BDA calls for sustained quality improvements, by means such as:

- reinforced quality assurance under the responsibility of providers and clients,
- voluntary certification of continuing training providers,
- user-friendly databases and
- meaningful participation certificates.

The employers' confederation also advocates common European guidelines for the concept of quality in the field of continuing training.

Further details from: <http://www.bda-online.de>
Position paper: "Qualität in der Weiterbildung" (17 July 2002)
<http://www.bda-online.de/www/bdaonline.nsf/MainFrameSet>
E-Mail: bildung@bda-online.de

Source: BDA/Cedefop/SK

Master craftsman qualification goes online

With the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), a project has been launched to develop a uniform nationwide eLearning programme leading to the master craftsman qualification. Some EUR 1.6 million have been set aside by the BMBF from the support programme "New Media in Education Funding" for the network project entitled "Master craftsman qualification online" (<http://www.gmd.de/PT-NMB/>). Alongside the material effort, the enormous double time burden has so far been an obstacle on the path to the master craftsman qualification. eLearning programmes are to offer a solution to this problem by providing learning opportunities independent of time and space constraints. In the course of the next two years, the central office for Continuing Training in Crafts (ZWH) and the Bildungs-GmbH of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Trade (DIHK) are to jointly develop quality standards, training software and eLearning models with a view to the creation of a common standard for the overall master qualification.

Further details from: <http://www.zwh.de/>
<http://www.dihk-bildungs-gmbh.de/Produkte/Meister.html>

Source: BMBF PUBLIK/Cedefop/SK

National qualification levels should be respected

The seventh continuing training congress of the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Trade (DIHK) was held in Cologne in September. This year's theme was "Making inroads into the knowledge society". DIHK President Ludwig Georg Braun called for more weight to be given to vocational continuing training, pointing out that universal continuing training opportunities should be a matter of course in a country on the threshold of the knowledge society, such as Germany. In his address to the congress, Braun also supported the view that in Europe-wide comparisons, national qualification levels be respected.

Further details from: <http://www.dihk.de>
<http://www.dihk-bildungskongress.de/produkte/start.htm>

Source: DIHK/Cedefop/SK

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Continuing education and training

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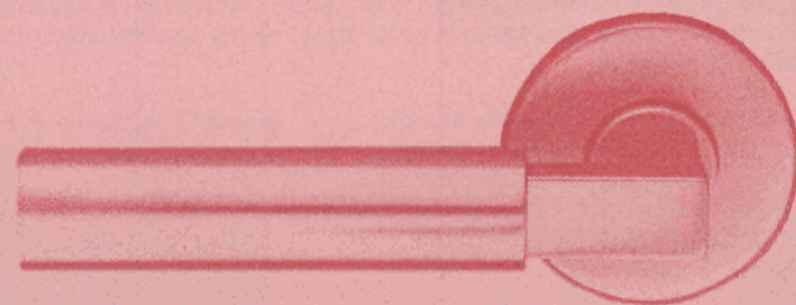
Employment policy

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Continuing education and training

Belgium

New training agreement: cooperation between education and industry

At the end of June 2002, a new training agreement was signed between the Flemish government and the social partners in the context of the joint national auxiliary committee for employees (CPNAE). A total of 225 000 employees may benefit from it.

This is the first time the Flemish employment services (VDAB), the education system and the Flemish institute for lifelong training of the self-employed and SMEs (VIZO) have collaborated in order to improve the conditions to find suitable candidates for job vacancies which are difficult to fill. The sectoral training institute, Cevora (the CPNAE training centre), is responsible for the design of the training programmes. More than ever before, the focus is to be on providing opportunities for young people, older members of the workforce, the under-educated, women, ethnic minorities, the long-term unemployed and the occupationally disabled. Further advantages are to be achieved from the collaboration and exchange of know how between enterprises, business sectors and the education system.

As indicated by the Flemish Minister for Employment at the official signing of the agreement, young people will thus be better pre-

pared for working life. The Flemish Minister for Education, for his part, underlined the importance of in-company placements and the enhancement of the status of technical and vocational education and lifelong training.

The 225 000 wage-earners in Flanders falling under the scope of the CPNAE will henceforth benefit from the "right to training". The agreement is applicable to 55 000 companies from 35 different sectors, including the automotive, construction, wholesale, IT and tourist industries. A previous agreement already provided re-training opportunities for 89 000 workers, either via Cevora or by means of internal training schemes. The Flemish Minister for Employment hopes that this new agreement, which is more comprehensive than its predecessor, will step up training provision.

Further details at: <http://www.vdab.be>

Source: VDAB Gestion média and bibliothèque/codoc

Luxembourg

Imminent launch of continuing vocational training portal

Continuing vocational training requirements have multiplied in recent years, and Luxembourg is no exception to the general trend. However, information on continuing vocational training (CVT) is not yet coordinated at a central location.

For this reason, the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport (MENFPS) has decided to set up an Internet portal through the intermediary of the National Institute for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training (INFPC) as a logical follow-up to the framework law on vocational training of 22 June 1999.

The Internet continuing vocational training portal, to be launched in the immediate future, has a clearly defined mission statement:

1. Preparation and management of applications for co-funding filed by companies under the framework law on vocational training of 22 June 1999:

Enterprises will be able to download application forms for co-funding of their CVT actions from the Internet portal.

The INFPC team will provide pedagogical support (organisation of specific training programmes) and information resources to enterprises encountering difficulties in completing their applications for co-funding in compliance with the legal requirements.

2. Promotion of CVT

The CVT portal will help to promote CVT in the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg by means of marketing strategies.

3. Design of CVT concepts

The INFPC team will seek answers to the new needs emerging from the application of the framework law of 22 June 1999. The design of a training programme leading to a qualification or even a diploma for those responsible for CVT in enterprises is also a possibility in this context.

4. Matching supply and demand

The Internet portal is designed to ease compilation and general dissemination of CVT-related information. It will disseminate information on the supply side (training providers, publication of training catalogues, a list of training agencies, etc.); and, on the demand side (information on those seeking training opportunities) by means of publication of their training requirements and calls to tender.

The CVT portal will also publish information on legislation and data on the rental of training premises and materials.

Further details at:
<http://www.infpc.lu/>
2001 Annual report of the National Institute for the Development of Continuing Vocational Training: http://www.infpc.lu/pdf/rapport_annuel_2001.pdf
Framework law on vocational training of 22 June 1999
http://www.etat.lu/legilux/DOCUMENTS_PDF/MEMORIAL/memorial/a/1999/a0921407.pdf

Source: Études et Training

Belgium

Summer school for adult trainers

The summer school for adult trainers, organised by the University Centre of Charleroi (CUNIC) over the last seven years, attracts a large number of players from the field of adult training, training programme management and training agencies every year.

The summer school features a two-day conference and a series of some 20 seminars spread over a period of a fortnight.

The summer school, co-sponsored by the Walloon Region and the European Social Fund, is a lively success, with over 450 participants every year. Indeed, some of the seminars have to be repeated later on in the year to cater for the overwhelming demand.

It must be said that the conference speakers are active practitioners and competent in their specific fields and that a variety of methodological and didactic approaches are applied by the seminar facilitators.

This year's opening session focused on skills recognition, with presentations on theory, opinions from politicians and contributions from the social partners. Two experts from

AFFA, the French national association for vocational training, and the University of Sheffield respectively, presented the experience of France and the UK. The day's final session focused on how skills are recognised in francophone Belgium.

The closing session addressed the multi-cultural character of the adult training public. The different parameters imposed by the host culture on those who are different and the way we regard the conditions of the social and occupational integration of minorities indeed present a challenge for trainers.

As every year, the seminars addressed issues of interest to a large number of trainers, e.g. "coaching in training", "training programme design, management and evaluation", "methods of diagnosis for situations with a view to vocational integration".

Further details from:
Michel Stievenart, programme director, Tel. (32-71) 31 46 10
e-mail: michel.stievenart@cifop.be or cunic@cunic.be

Source: FOREM CIDOC

Belgium

Forum to give a voice to trainees and job-seekers in training

The subregional committee for employment and training (CSEF) of Liège has set up a joint trainee/training agency coordinating committee as a platform for the exchange of views, opinions and suggestions of job-seekers engaged in training with training agencies.

The consultation committee has drawn up a "charter of the trainee and the job-seeker engaged in training". It has also proposed a mediation service to overcome the difficulties encountered during integration into the job market.

The CSEF team and the members of the committee organised an 'Open Forum' which was

an enormous success, attracting over 500 active participants.

Following a presentation of the committee, the charter of the trainee and the mediation instrument by the trainee members of the consultation committee, five themes for round table discussion were presented in theatrical form.

1. Is training still a right?
2. Are we properly informed of our training rights and obligations?
3. Is the democratic representation of trainees encouraged?
4. Are safety and health requirements for trainees respected?
5. Training - what next?

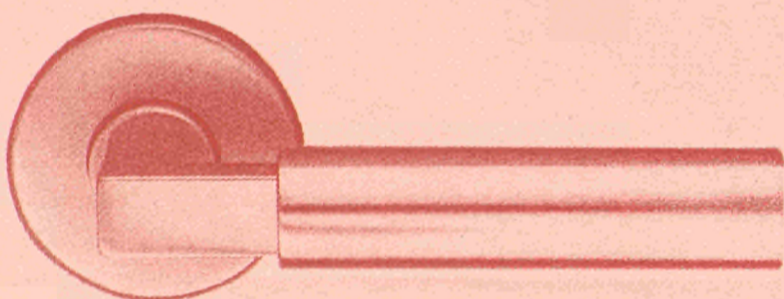
Each round table (of some 20 trainees) was asked to select a topic of discussion from the five themes presented, and, following a good hour's debate, to present a single sentence to the plenary, reflecting their comments, de-

mands or proposals on the theme in question in a few words. None of the round tables chose themes 3 or 4.

The complete minutes of the Forum, published with the support of the Walloon Region and the European Social Fund, are available on request from the CSEF.

Further details from:
CSEF, 4, quai Banning, B-4000 Liège
Tel. (32-4) 229 11 91, Fax (32-4) 254 57 22
info@csef-liege.org
http://www.csef-liege.org

Source: FOREM CIDOC



Ireland

Continuing training in small and medium-sized enterprises

Company training in Ireland has been the focus of two recent publications. The first is a comparative study of the Irish results from the second EU Continuing Vocational Training Survey (CVTS 2) (1) and the second, a comprehensive study of training in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Ireland (2).

The comparative study shows that while Ireland ranks fairly well in respect of training activity, it is below the 'top flight' of countries, which typically includes the Nordic ones.

The research into SME training comprised three strands:

- an economic analysis;
- a large-scale survey to establish the current level of training in Irish SMEs and,
- interviews with owner/managers on their training performance and attitudes to training.

Over 500 interviews were conducted across five different industry sectors with managers/owners

- to establish the current level of training,
- to evaluate the extent of the perceived skills gap in SMEs and
- to assess the barriers to further employee training.

One-fifth of companies are shown to have a "formal training budget", the

proportion being greater among the larger SMEs. In terms of training practice, just under half of all employees in the average company received training in the course of the year. 36% of companies have used external trainers in-house in the past year with 94% expressing satisfaction with the training provided.

The most common training programmes undertaken relate to basic computer skills, health and safety, and use of the internet/e-mail. FÁS - Training and Employment Authority is the most frequently used body for training schemes (37%). 28% of all respondents have used third level colleges for training their employees. Almost half of all SMEs are experiencing difficulties relating to skill shortages. This results in their conducting more training. The greatest barriers to conducting more training relate more to the disruption caused to the businesses (64%) than to the cost of training (42%) and the 'poaching' of trained labour by competitors (26%).

The interviews with over 50 Irish SMEs (2) sought to elicit concrete proposals on how training performance in SMEs could be improved in the future. Interviews with employees were also conducted to determine how much training they had received and their attitudes to their own training in the future. A majority saw training as enhancing both pay and promotion prospects while there was also a clear understanding of the importance of training to the future prosperity of the enterprises in which they worked.

(1) Fox, Roger: The CVTS2 survey: principal results for Ireland and other European countries. Available free of charge from FÁS, Planning & Research, 27-33 Upper Baggot Street, IRL-Dublin 4. Tel: 353-1 6070526 Fax 353-1 6070538 Email: roger.fox@fas.ie

(2) Skillnets/Small Firms Association:
• Developing a model for SME training in Ireland: Irish and international SME training compared.
• Small firms: survey of current training experiences within SMEs.
• SME training perspectives, prospects and proposals: interviews with 50 small- and medium-sized businesses.
• Small firms: the training imperative: situation report.

All available free of charge from Skillnets Ltd., Wasdale House, Rathfarnham Road, Terenure, IRL-Dublin 6W. Tel. (353-1) 4901411, Fax (353-1) 4901543, Email: info@skillnets.com, http://www.skillnets.com.

Source: FÁS

Italy

Public training supply: a constantly changing world

Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori - ISFOL (Institute for the development of workers' vocational training), and the Centro innovazione e sperimentazione educativo Milano - Cisem (Centre for educational innovation and experimentation), have completed a second survey of vocational training supply in Italy.

The activities of 1 366 public and private bodies offering publicly-funded training for third parties were surveyed during 2001.

The vast majority of operators working in the vocational training system have training as their main or exclusive activity, although rather unstably. In comparison to the previous survey (in 2000), 400 new operators appeared, while 145 were no longer to be found and 116 no longer provided publicly-funded training.

26 000 courses were surveyed, the majority of which involved consultation between a number of operators, bearing witness to the growing ability of operators to link into their local context, especially with the provincial authorities. This is a sign that the delegation of training policies is starting to become a reality. There were also wide-ranging links with schools and, focusing more on the working world, with employers'

organisations. The traditional training model is therefore tending to become more agency-based. Training agencies are also starting to offer their users services, such as information counters providing guidance and skill reviews.

For further information:
Alessandra Pedone
Istituto per lo Sviluppo della Formazione Professionale dei Lavoratori (ISFOL)
Via Morgagni 33, I - 00161 Roma
Tel. (39) 06-445901
Fax (39) 06-44291871
E-mail: sisform.area@isfol.it
Web site: http://www.isfol.it

Source ISFOL

France

Employment for all: in-company contracts for unskilled youngsters

Prime Minister Jean-Pierre Raffarin unveiled the introduction of "employment assurance" during his general policy address on 3 July 2002. This measure will be based on a personal training account and on the recognition of non-formal learning.

Explaining that "it is a question of providing all wage earners, including those in SMEs, the same employment opportunities in terms of training, re-training and skills upgrading", the Prime Minister pointed out that vocational training is the "essential condition allowing the access of a large number of young people to working life. It also provides a second chance for those wishing to complete their initial training. Finally, it is necessary to ensure that each individual can adapt to changing occupations on a lifelong basis".

On 10 July 2002, the Minister for Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity, François Fillon, introduced a bill to the cabinet on the "creation of a support mechanism for the in-company employment of young people". The bill, targeted towards young people aged 16 to 22 with a level of educational attainment below the baccalaureate, was definitively adopted by Parliament and enacted on 29 August 2002 (1). The system, enforced with retroactive effect as of 1 July 2002, is to be supplemented by a decree specifying the amount and the formalities of the grant of state financial aid to employers over a period of three years.

Enterprises recruiting unskilled young people aged 16 to 22 on the basis of a permanent contract are henceforth to be exempted from certain social costs.

250 000 young people are to benefit from this new scheme which targets enterprises in the commercial sector and associations, regardless of their headcount, between now and 2005. The scheme is not applicable to public enterprises and household employers.

State financial support takes the form of a flat-rate exemption from employers' social security contributions: 100 % during the first two years of the contract, and 50 % in the third.

The law does not provide for any training commitments. Although it refers to the principle of access to the recognition of informal learning, this provision is not further specified. This is a shortcoming which has given rise to criticism, notably from the opposition and the trade unions, which drew particular attention to the need for training in the drafting of the bill.

It will therefore be the role of the social partners to set the conditions for recognition of informal learning, skills auditing and access to measures provided in the company training plan in the framework of sectoral agreements. The Minister for Employment explained that a

training obligation had not been included in the bill because the scheme is targeted towards young people "who have often experienced school failure and do not wish to return to training for the time being". He therefore expects the social partners to conduct negotiations in this field and to decide whether tutors should be provided for the young people in question. The French employers' association, MEDEF, welcoming the scheme as "a very good initiative", confirmed that the social partners would "do all they could to provide this additional training".

Presenting the bill on the in-company contracts for unskilled youngsters, François Fillon confirmed that he was not going to create more youth jobs, but that many youth job contracts would be allowed to run their course. He stated that "there is no longer any reason to create more youth jobs. On the contrary, they will have to be gradually phased out (...). Current agreements will run their course, but state aid will not be revamped".

In the associations, the scheme is to be phased out over a three-year period in order to prevent an abrupt end to state support. Consultation with local authorities and the associations is to be engaged to manage the exit of young people from the scheme. In contrast, the contracts of those young people under contract to the national education system as educators, recruited in 1997 and 1998, are to be extended until 2003, so that they will not be interrupted in the course of the academic year.

See also the report on in-company contracts for young people in industry on the homepage of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity: http://www.travail.gouv.fr/dossiers/contrat_jeune.html

(1) Law No 2002-1095 of 29 August 2002 on the creation of a support mechanism for the in-company employment of young people was published in the Official Journal No 202 of 30 August 2002, p. 14410 - 14411. The text can be consulted at: <http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/WAspad/UnTexteDeJorf?numjo=SOCX0200120L>

Source: INFFO Flash, No 594, 15-31 July 2002, page 3 and INFFO Flash, No 595-596, August 2002, article by Sandrine Zadunayski, page 3

Belgium

A new approach in the labour market

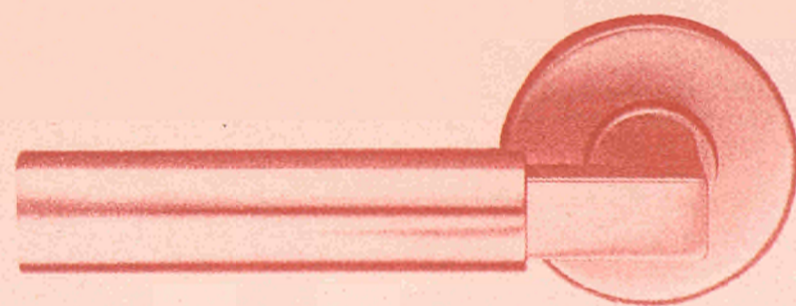
The Flemish employment and training service (VDAB) positions itself as the electronic arm and renovator of placement in Flanders with the creation of a public-private partnership as a new approach in the labour market.

Europe has ambitious projects in the field of skills management and curricular exchange. eLearning has now also reached Flanders. VDAB intends to introduce innovations via a public private partnership (PPP), commissioned by the Flemish Minister for Employment and Tourism, which is to lead to the creation of a

new form of on-line service in the European job market. As things stand at the moment, VDAB, as a public service, is not authorised to set up a limited company, even with other partners. This is precisely the aim of the operation. Private sector players do offer certain services, but VDAB believes that it is necessary

to go beyond the commercial interest of an individual company. The real target is to reinforce the socio-economic fabric as a means of promoting national economic growth. This objective is of essential importance. In the long term, should Belgium not move towards electronic governance, the development and solidity of the socio-economic fabric of Belgium may be adversely affected.

Further details at: <http://www.vdab.be>
Source: VDAB Gestion média et bibliothèque/codoc



Belgium

Co-operation between public training providers and temporary employment agencies

The temporary employment agency sector is a major player in the Walloon regional job market. It accounts for 140 million hours of work, represents one half of all job market entries and gives 40 % of temporary workers a foothold into stable employment within one year.

Moreover, in a market which, despite unemployment, is characterised by a mismatch between labour supply and demand, temporary employment agencies have no alternative to a policy designed to upgrade their employees' skills.

The final bastions of resistance to the temporary employment agencies, e.g. the construction sector (to quote but one example) are now beginning to draw on their services.

The institutionalisation of the temporary employment agencies in selection and recruitment therefore offers the sector precious tools with which to analyse labour market trends and skilled manpower and training requirements.

For the public training provider, FOREM FORMATION, it is therefore becoming of fundamental importance to act, as far as training is concerned, as a counterpart and a reference for the temporary employment agency sector.

Various fields of cooperation have thus been defined:

Upskilling workers by means of flexible training measures

It has been established that the profile of temping staff is often characterised by high motivation, geographical mobility and psychological flexibility. As their working assignments are interrupted by periods of non-activity, which offer them the chance to learn new skills, it is essential to offer this group short

and adapted training modules. FOREM FORMATION is consequently in the process of making part of its service provision more flexible.

Opening up job access opportunities for high-risk target groups

Although the experience of the temporary employment agency sector is limited as far as this target group is concerned, there are opportunities in this field, provided that a number of conditions obtain, e.g. guidance for clients at risk and use of the enormous network of enterprises which temping agencies contact to arrange work placements. This would give candidates a foot in the door and subsequently open up access to training routes.

Matching supply and demand to promote integration

Notifying trainees of assignments offered by the temping agencies, on the one hand, and

notifying temping agencies of the availability of trainees with the relevant qualifications. The aim is to help match supply and demand on the labour market.

Considering the eclipse of the public employment service monopoly, and the consequently greater participation of the temporary employment agency sector in assisting the integration of job seekers, the development of new types of partnerships seems essential.

Further information from: Jacques Meerschaert, Service Clientèle - Forem
e-mail: jacques.meerschaert@forem.be

Source: FOREM CIDOC

Big increase in company recruitment

Despite the weak economic situation, enterprises expected to recruit more than 70 000 new employees during 2002. While new employees are always needed to replace those who retire or change to another job, increased business activities by the enterprises demand more personnel.

The need for new workers increased by over 60% from 2001. There is a high demand for skilled personnel in technology.

The information is based on the barometer⁽¹⁾ of industries' qualification needs prepared by the Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers (TT). The member enterprises of the Confederation were asked

about their recruitment and qualification needs for the year and how their work force needs would change in the following two years. This was the fourth time the survey was conducted.

Companies estimated that they would employ 32 000 skilled persons from among those graduating from institutions. Recruitment needs in the late 1990s were concentrated on

electronics, but now the need is more diversified.

Around 40% of the new personnel will be recruited from secondary level vocational institutions and 47% from higher education institutions. The rest will qualify through apprenticeship training or the enterprises' own training programmes.

Shortage of skilled workers

The need for skilled workers is still great. Companies estimated that in 2002 they would need to recruit approximately 13 000 people with secondary level vocational qualifica-

tions. Over 4 000 of these will be employed in the metal industry. Other sectors employing upper secondary VET graduates are forestry, building and construction.

The barometer signals clearly that upper secondary VET should be made more attractive in Finland. To remain competitive, it is necessary that research and product development units include qualified workers from the production line. The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers has long stressed the importance of improving VET quality through co-operation between edu-

cational authorities, enterprises and labour market organisations.

The survey also indicates that the polytechnics have successfully become a part of the Finnish education system (see Cedefop Info 2/2002) and are seen as providers of qualified labour.

(¹) Original report (in Finnish only): http://www.tt.fi/arkisto/getoriginal.pl?ft_cid=3084

More information:
Ms Marita Aho,
The Confederation of Finnish Industry and Employers,
marita.aho@tt.fi,
Tel.: (358) 9 6868 2336 – Web site: www.tt.fi

Source: NBE

Vocational training statistics

Access to continuing training

Workers who have recently come out of initial training are at an advantage; access to continuing training is unequal depending on occupation

A series of analyses have been conducted as a follow-up to the "Continuing training 2000" survey (¹) by the Directorate for the promotion of research, surveys and statistics (DARES) within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity. DARES examined how often and in what way people access training, according to age and seniority in the school system, on the one hand, and how workers access continuing training and occupational mobility according to occupation, on the other.

Workers who have recently come out of initial training are at an advantage

According to DARES, it seems that enterprises invest more in alternance forms of continuing vocational training (CVT) for their younger employees, reserving access to other types of training (training plan and individual leave) for more senior employees.

The analysis also shows that access to CVT in an enterprise is more likely to occur in the first nine post-training years than later in occupational life. The access rate varies from 35 to 46 % in the first nine years after initial training, as opposed to 31 % in mid-career. The training programmes delivered also seem to be of a higher quality in terms of their duration and the certification method applied.

Newcomers to the job market always seem to be at an advantage, regardless of the type of training involved (work placements, training in the workplace, etc.). Access to CVT is very much dependent on levels of initial training. Almost every other graduate of higher education has participated in a training programme, compared to barely more than one out of ten unqualified workers. This wide gap persists no matter how much time has elapsed since the completion of higher edu-

cation but seems to become wider in mid-career. In fact, people who completed their studies two to nine years previously generally start training programmes whose duration is one third longer than those completed by workers who left the school system more than ten years ago. The same applies to those engaged in in-company training. The exception is unskilled workers, who benefit from longer-term training programmes when they are older.

Access to continuing training is unequal depending on occupation

The "Continuing training 2000" survey shows that workers with the highest skills still tend to have greater recourse to training opportunities. Moreover, training completed within a company's training plan only aids mobility in certain cases.

DARES observes that "a high level of qualification and frequent recourse to training go hand in hand": 55.6 % of managers who did not switch jobs in fact benefited from a training opportunity in the period January 1999 to February 2000, compared to 32.7 % among employees and 20.1 % among workers. Human resources management and the technical content of the occupation are determining factors. Workers in sectors characterised by a rapid pace of technological renewal are

obliged to update their skills. This explains why, for instance, physicians take the most training courses (with an annual average of 3.5 courses per active member of the profession), followed by banking and insurance sector white-collar workers, trainers and recruitment managers and hairdressers/beauticians. Training courses of the longest duration are completed by IT specialists, members of the police force and social action and communication practitioners.

Taking all occupations into consideration, older employees tend to engage in the least continuing training. This is due to the reluctance of employers to invest in courses for workers approaching retirement age, and/or a lack of interest among older workers in improving their skills as they approach retirement age. This is particularly noticeable in technical occupations (engineers, supervisory management, skilled industrial or craft workers, etc.), commercial employees and public-sector employees and managers.

Strange as it may seem, it is the workers in occupations in which vocational training is firmly established who most frequently express dissatisfaction about training needs. "The higher the training level, the higher the perception of training gaps", comments DARES. Trainers, recruiters, teachers, health care

professionals, social action workers, engineers and technicians are the occupations which express the highest degree of "dissatisfaction".

The link between training and mobility tends to differ according to type of training. DARES observes that workers are less likely to switch to a different enterprise if the training course is undertaken within a training plan. In contrast, when courses are not part of a training plan, they tend to result in a greater mobility. Employees who have acquired more general skills often have no hesitation in transferring to a different company, where their new skills can be put to better use.

Mobility may also be internal, i.e. within the enterprise. The youngest employees, and the employees of the largest firms, enjoy the greatest internal mobility opportunities. At management and middle level, however, those with the most experience have a greater chance of switching jobs within the firm. Whether or not their training course is part of a training plan has no bearing on their change of job.

The introduction of new equipment or a new form of labour organisation entails a greater training effort on the part of the companies. Such courses are generally related to office automation and IT and represent 24 % of courses for those in employment. Although specialised areas vary according to occupational field and occupational imperatives, it appears that courses in human resources and communication are completed by employees of many fields, ranging

from industrial to e.g. electro-mechanical or health care. These training courses are therefore part and parcel of global company policy designed to improve the skills of the workforce in labour organisation, customer relations or working time management.

(¹) "Continuing training 2000" is a supplementary survey to Insee's employment survey, conducted in March 2000. Whereas the majority of current continuing training sources are enterprise-related, the focus of "Continuing training 2000" is on the individual, regardless of whether or not he or she has completed a training course. The advantage of this approach is that it allows us to observe attitudes to continuing training, obstacles to training and trainee behaviour.

This survey was designed by the Centre for Research on Education, Training and Employment (Céreq) and the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Studies (Insee), in collaboration with the planning board, Commissariat général du Plan, the Directorate for the Promotion of Research, Surveys and Statistics (DARES), the General Delegation for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP) within the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity, the Directorate for Programming and Development (DPD) of the Ministry of National Education and the Under-Secretariat of State for Women's Rights and Vocational Training.

See also: <http://www.cereq.fr/cereq/fc2000/> Default.htm

For further information on the frequency and forms of individual access to training:
Formation continue et insertion: un taux élevé et des formations qualifiantes après la fin des études, Didier Gélot, Claude Minni, Premières Informations et Premières Synthèses, No 10.2, March 2002, 8 p. This issue can be consulted on the Internet at: <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/publications/picts/titres/titre1618/integral/2002.03-10.2.pdf>

For further information on workers' access to continuing training and occupational mobility according to occupation:
Métier, accès à la formation continue et mobilité professionnelle, Frédéric Lainé, Premières Synthèses et Premières Informations, No 24.1, June 2002, 8 p. This issue can be consulted on the Internet at: <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/publications/picts/titres/titre1694/integral/2002.06-24.1.pdf>

Sources: INFFO Flash, in particular INFFO Flash, No 593, 1-15 July 2002, article by Sandrine Zadunayski, p. 5

What's missing?

In this issue of Cedefop Info, we report on a large number of recent European Union and Cedefop activities. Because of this, we have no space for two of our customary items. For information on forthcoming **conferences and exhibitions**, please go to http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/ETVNEWS/Show_today_fevents.asp

For the names and addresses of the **Refer network members**, who are the sources for most of the articles coming from member states, please see page 3 of Cedefop Info 2/2002. Cedefop Info is available electronically, often with some additional articles, which could not be included in the paper version, at <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/publications.asp?section=24>.

The list of Refer network members is also available at <http://www.cedefop.eu.int/directory.asp?refernet>

Source: Cedefop (JMA)

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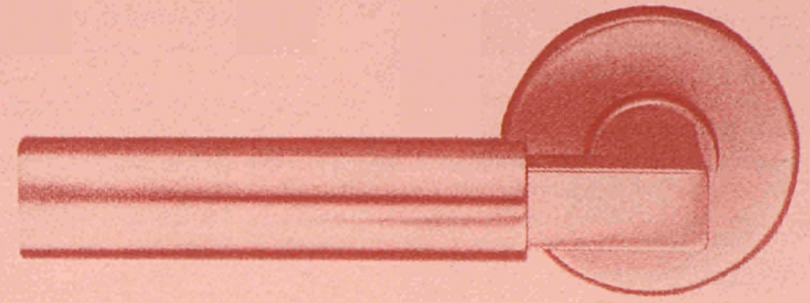
New organisations and programmes

A: A creative means of reaching the public;
 D: Many enterprises still shy of eLearning;
 D: iMove gets continuing training providers fit for the international market; A:
 Production engineer - the star among the newcomers; L: New training institute for the construction sector

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P: Quality means investing in innovation; B: A single system of skills validation; Agora Corner: Agora XIV on parity of esteem;
 UK: A new agency to support the Sector Skills Councils; Selected bibliography.



New organisations and programmes

Austria

A creative means of reaching the public

A 'continuing training party' held in a shopping centre attracts the public with training vouchers



In September 2002, 30 Viennese continuing training institutions advertised their courses in a very unconventional and creative way by organising a 'continuing training party' in a shopping and entertainment centre in the Austrian capital. The message of the fourth nationwide information days on continuing

training, which the party helped to get across to the public, was that learning can be fun and open up new opportunities.

The participating institutions deliberately positioned themselves at a location where they could come into contact with the public and intro-

duce them to the subject of continuing training on an informal level. The events included an opportunity to win vouchers both for shopping and for continuing training. Specialists presented their training provision in the fields of languages, IT and the media, among others, as well as initial and continuing vocational

training. Professionals offered counselling interviews free of charge in an Internet cafe. The programme was rounded off by live bands to add that extra bit of fun.

Further information at: <http://www.erwachsenenbildung.at>
 Source: BMBWK/Cedefop/SK

Germany

Many enterprises still shy of eLearning

BIBB study shows that trainers do not feel adequately prepared for the new form of learning

Although everyone is talking about eLearning, the numbers of those actually opting for the wide range of opportunities offered by computer-assisted, tele- and networked learning directly in the workplace are few and far between. This is the conclusion of the study on the "learning-conducive design of workplaces for skilled workers on the basis of eLearning", conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB), in which 68 of the total of

320 surveyed enterprises provided information on the use of, and the requirements for, eLearning in the workplace.

eLearning has so far hardly had any impact at all on industrial and technical enterprises where time, an environment conducive to learning and Intranet/Internet access are lacking. In contrast, in enterprises which have adopted eLearning, learning on the basis of electronic

media carried out directly in the workplace already accounts for over 50 % of the overall training effort.

A clear majority of the surveyed enterprises does not use eLearning and has no plans to introduce eLearning in the future. The main reason is a lack of experience with this new form of learning. The enterprises also indicate high costs, data protection concerns, possible misuse, expensive maintenance and a lack of

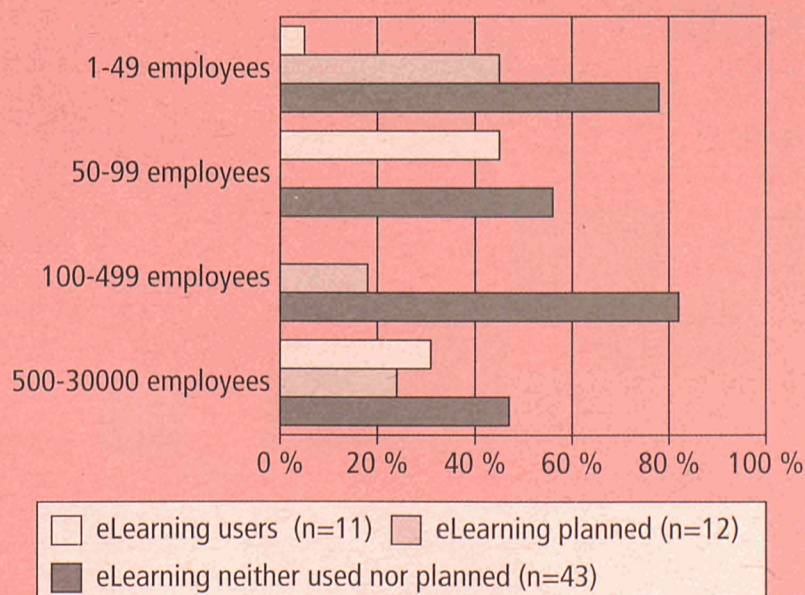
appropriate software as further arguments against eLearning. Personnel managers and trainers do not feel adequately prepared for eLearning: three-quarters of this group would welcome assistance in practical planning and decision-making.

The BIBB study concludes that the introduction of eLearning in the workplace still seems to depend on the degree to which the responsible players are prepared to assume risks

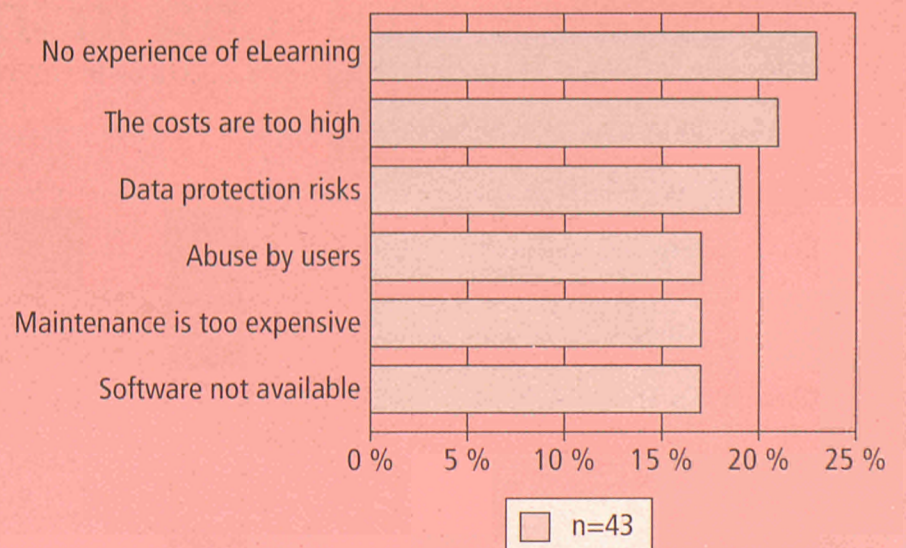
and introduce innovations. Those firms which have opted for this form of learning are all the more energetic in its implementation and offer a wide range of eLearning opportunities, ranging from learning modules and simulations through access to information systems and data bases to networked Intranet- or Internet-based learning.

Further information at: <http://www.bibb.de> (Aufgaben/Arbeitsfelder/eLearning)
 Source: BIBB /Cedefop/SK

eLearning users according to size of enterprise



Reasons for not using eLearning



United Kingdom

A new agency to support the Sector Skills Councils

The Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA) has been established to fund, support and champion the new UK-wide network of influential employer-led Sector Skills Councils (SSCs).

The Agency's Chair and Chief Executive have been appointed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. They and a representative employer-led board will ensure the relevance of the SSC network's impact.

The SSDA is a company limited by guarantee and a non-departmental public body, which will have its Head Office in South Yorkshire. Its role is to underpin and develop SSCs. In brief it will:

- assist employers in sectors in bidding to become SSCs
- fund, support and monitor the performance of SSCs across the UK
- ensure quality and consistent standards across the network
- provide minimum cover for essential functions in sectors without an SSC
- ensure skills provision is designed to meet sector needs
- ensure generic skills are effectively covered in the work of SSCs
- promote best practice sharing and benchmarking between sectors

- provide a website portal for public bodies and individuals to access high quality sectoral labour market intelligence across the UK.

Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) (see also Cedefop Info 1/2001) are independent, UK wide organisations developed by groups of influential employers in industry or business sectors of economic or strategic significance. SSCs are employer-led and actively involve trade unions, professional bodies and other stakeholders in the sector. SSCs are licensed by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, in consultation with Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, to tackle the skills and productivity needs of their sector throughout the UK.

SSCs give responsibility to employers to provide leadership for strategic action to meet their sector's skills and business needs. In return they receive substantial public investment and greater dialogue with government departments across the UK. This will enable sector employers to

have a far greater impact on policies affecting skills and productivity, and increased influence with education and training partners.

Each SSC will agree sector priorities and targets with its employers and partners to address four key goals:

- reducing skills gaps and shortages
- improving productivity, business and public service performance
- increasing opportunities to boost the skills and productivity of everyone in the sector's workforce, including action on equal opportunities
- improving learning supply, including apprenticeships, higher education and national occupational standards.

The establishment of the SSC network began with the licensing of five Trailblazer SSCs.

- Skillset for the Audio Visual industries (broadcasting, film, video and interactive media)
- Lantra for the Environment and Land-based sector (including farming, agriculture, forestry & rural development)
- Cogent for the Oil and Gas Extraction, Chemicals Manufacturing and Petroleum Industries

- Skillfast-UK for the Apparel, Footwear and Textiles industry
- Skillsmart for the Retail sector

They will demonstrate the value of strong and influential employer-led Sector Skills Councils and help develop effective ways of working for the first fully licensed SSCs that follow them.

The five Trailblazer sectors have been selected from 31 expressions of interest against criteria and a selection process. Launched in November 2001, they represent a cross section of the sectors that may be included in the future Sector Skills Council network. They have been approved by the Secretary of State for Education and Skills and the Lifelong Learning Ministers of the devolved administrations and will be granted a two-year licence to operate as a Trailblazer Sector Skills Council.

Further information from: Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), Callifex Business Park, Golden Smithies Lane, Wath-upon-Dearne, South Yorkshire S63 7ER, Tel. (44-20) 7839 1233 Fax (44-20) 7930 1949 e-mail: info@ssda.org.uk http://www.ssda.org.uk

Belgium

A single system of skills validation

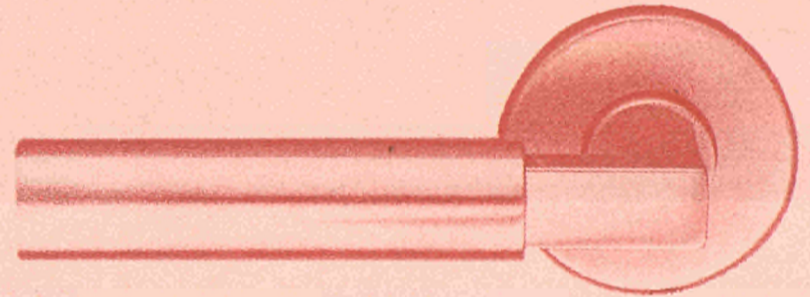
A cooperation agreement signed on 23 January 2002 between the French-speaking Community, the Walloon Region and the French Community Commission of Brussels (1) provides for the setting-up of a single system for recognising skills validation and awarding qualifications recognised by the various francophone public-sector adult training providers (courses for social advancement, FOREM, Bruxelles-Formation and the training institute for the self-employed and SMEs (IFPME)).

This approach, which is in line with the European strategy in this field, aims to strengthen employability, mobility and social cohesion. A legal system, complementary to the school-based certification system, will now recognise skills acquired in the workplace as well as formal vocational training and life skills. These will be validated by a system recognised by all.

(1) The reason why an agreement was signed between these three agencies is that within the federal structure of Belgium they share responsibility for education and training for the French-speaking community in either Wallonia or Brussels.

Source: QCA

Source: FOREM CIDOC



AGORA

Agora Corner: Agora XIV on parity of esteem

- To give general education and vocational training a comparable status:
- To find effective methods of cooperation for VET players.
- To help give an accurate picture of vocational education systems.

These were the main issues underpinning the first Agora of 2002 - the fourteenth of these now time-honoured discussion forums organised by Cedefop for the European vocational training community: trade unionists and employers, specialist journalists, academics, experts and officials.

The Agora, entitled 'The image and standing of vocational education and training. What changes are needed?' and held last April in Thessaloniki, attracted a large number of delegates to a constructive discussion of one of the most critical issues facing VET systems in Europe today.

The starting point of Agora XIV was that the major changes taking place in VET are a powerful incentive for it to rethink its functions and methods of actions, considering the particular economic and social challenges facing Europe today.

The issues that have for some time unsettled VET systems are

- sustainable economic development,
- social cohesion,
- ongoing competition,
- employment policies in keeping with socio-economic changes and
- the overhaul of occupational activities and contents.

All players in the VET field, whether trainers, administrators, employers or users (especially young people) have been prompted to raise questions about needs, demands and requirements, to which satisfactory answers have yet to be found.

There is little doubt, therefore, that we are embarking upon one of those typical cycles where innovation, creativity and new rules are a must. A new status is needed for a system that is being renewed and whose

keywords are change, evolution and development, as well as a new look at the fundamental question of what education and training mean today.

For this reason, the Agora's organisers (1) were keen to set the ball rolling by asking for the views of a VET 'philosopher', Ettore Gelpi. His words have taken on added significance since he recently passed away.

What questions did Gelpi's address raise at the Agora?

There were two main areas of thought: the need to make clear the demarcation between general education and vocational training that has up to now been a kind of 'unwanted guest' within the European debate. Now that it is more than ever necessary to tackle the problems of a global approach to education, what part can VET play in moulding citizens and not just workers? How can ambitious but realistic

aims linked to the globalisation of production be integrated or brought into line with the need to provide people, through education, with full knowledge, rather than just a partial ability which, specialised and efficient, is not really particularly 'human'?

This rallying cry and Gelpi's questions permeated all the discussions at the Thessaloniki Forum. They underpinned the most consciously informative sessions. During the Agora there were various talks on the best practices implemented or designed in the VET systems of EU Member States and other countries (the reports given by experts and officials from the countries of eastern Europe were particularly interesting). Other sessions focused their attention on the ways in which VET perceives itself and is perceived by its protagonists.

The very interesting paper presented by Professor Michael J. Deyrenfurth from the United States, a lecturer in industrial technology at Purdue University took the view that the

divide in public perceptions in Europe (and elsewhere, as recent OECD studies and surveys have shown) between an 'elevated' vision of VET in terms of its role in building technical and occupational skills and a vision, undoubtedly less effective, in which it helps to increase 'human capital', must be nipped in the bud. It is only by balancing these two poles of action, (and it was this question that Agora XIV carried over to the next meeting in Thessaloniki) that it is possible to plug the gap between what is generally said about the importance of education and training and what is actually done in VET. This gap often shows people's lack of confidence in education as the cornerstone of a system in which human resources rightfully occupy centre stage.

(1) primarily the new Agora project coordinator Norbert Wollschläger, replacing Eric Fries Guggenheim, now editor of the European Journal Vocational Training.

For more information on the Agora Thessaloniki, please contact: Norbert Wollschläger, project coordinator Cedefop, e-mail: nw@cedefop.eu.int, fax: (30) 2310 490 117 Source: Cedefop/Massimo Fotino

