

## CEDEFOP

### The training of trainers network (TTnet) at work

The professional development of teachers and trainers has become a central aim of Community vocational education and training policy and is now a priority in the 'Objectives' and 'Copenhagen' processes. Improving the quality of teachers and trainers is increasingly recognised as indispensable to ensuring the quality of the VET systems and to developing new forms of knowledge sharing.

In this connection, Cedefop has encouraged the establishment of partnerships in the Member States based on the pooling of resources and competences. This is the distinctive feature of the TTnet network, which was set up by Cedefop in 1998.

Since its inception, TTnet has made a major contribution to a Community level approach to the training of teachers and trainers as a key factor in the quality of systems, particularly in the face of the impact of the knowledge society. The Training of Trainers Network (TTnet) is a network of national networks. Its objective is to provide a European forum, where key players and decision-makers in the field of training of teachers and trainers can share good examples of practice, knowledge and expertise on key issues in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers.

To achieve this objective, in the last five years, many Member States have set up their own national networks. TTnet, with Cedefop in a coordination role, has contributed to European integration through study projects, workshops, and its annual conferences.

Essentially the challenges to be met are posed by quality assurance and innovation in the professional development of teachers and trainers. Among these are the introduction of new information and communication technologies (ICTs) and new 'open' and 'distance' learning/training methods.

In order to keep abreast of developments in training occupations, the TTnet network has set itself a two-fold mission:

- to foster teachers' and trainers' competences as a key factor in the quality of vocational training systems;
- to construct a common framework of reference for the changes taking place in training occupations.

Continued on page 3

## EUROPEAN UNION

### Key themes for education and training during the Dutch presidency

The thematic focus in the field of vocational education and training for the Dutch presidency is laid down in the Lisbon goals and the rolling agenda of the Education, Culture and Youth Council. It also derives from Dutch national policy with its focus on fewer rules and more autonomy for educational institutions, on the learner and citizenship and on strong impulses towards knowledge, research and innovation. The ambition is to stimulate European citizens to take the chances increasingly offered by the single European Area.

The presidency will focus on the following four key themes:

#### Open coordination and transparency

European benchmarks and learning from each other are central to this. The growing VET cooperation through the Copenhagen process will be the main input for the Conference for Ministers of Education. The Netherlands will strongly support the further development of this process.

#### Knowledge and quality

The interplay of national policy, European added value and learning from each other should contribute to a stronger emphasis on knowledge and quality. The pursuit of quality is inherent in the Lisbon benchmarks. Furthermore, attention will be paid to accreditation and to education in modern foreign languages.

#### Mobility and exchange

Mobility is seen as a precondition to, and a result of, transparency. The discussion will focus on the future of the education and training action programmes (Leonardo and Socrates) and on the promotion of mobility as the key to a dynamic Europe. Another

## IRELAND

### Cultural diversity in the workplace

Two recent publications dealing with diversity in the workplace have been launched by the social partners. One examines the attitudes and experiences of Irish and migrant workers (1) and the other provides guidelines for delivering diversity training in the workplace (2). The steep rise in the last five years in the proportion of non-nationals in the labour force from 3.4% in 1998 to 6.8% in 2003 provides the background for these reports. Immigration accounted for almost a quarter of the overall labour force increase in Ireland between 1998 and 2003.

Continued on page 3

issue will be the development of instruments, such as the Europass framework, to promote transparency. A major effort will be made to remove the obstacles to transferring scholarships abroad.

#### Citizenship and cohesion

The sense of shared European values for the cohesion in Europe will be a Dutch input for discussion. Education can contribute to the 'Europe of the citizen' by offering a transparent learning environment, within which mobility of citizens adds to a knowledge economy, in which society and culture are integrated.

In relation to vocational education and training, the following are the main events on the agenda of the Dutch presidency (by invitation only):

September 2004:

- meeting of the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVT);
- conference *Brain Gain, the instruments* (higher education);

October 2004:

- conference on modern foreign languages;

December 2004:

- final event of the European Year of Education through Sport;
- Ministerial conference on vocational education and training (follow up of the Copenhagen conference and declaration).

In cooperation with Ireland, Luxembourg, the United Kingdom, Austria and Finland, the Netherlands will work to create a strategic agenda for the period 2004-2006.

Further information: [www.minocw.nl](http://www.minocw.nl), see the link to the presidency site, [www.eu2004.nl](http://www.eu2004.nl)

Source: CINOP/Ministry of Education, Culture and Science

Continued on page 11

## EUROPEAN UNION

### A new generation of Community education and training programmes

The European Commission adopted on 9 March 2004 a Communication on 'The new generation of Community education and training programmes after 2006'. This Communication outlines the content of two major new Community programmes in education and training, which the Commission will formally propose in the summer. These are:

- An integrated programme in lifelong learning, for mobility and cooperation between EU, EEA/EFTA and candidate countries, which will subsume the existing Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes.
- A Tempus Plus programme, for the countries neighbouring the EU and for the existing Tempus countries, which will focus on cooperation and development in higher (university-level) education, vocational training, school and adult education.

The Commission proposals build on the experience of the existing generation of programmes, which is summarised in a series of interim evaluation reports published at the same time as the Communication. They also take account of the outcomes of a public consultation exercise, conducted between November 2002 and February 2003, on the future development of these programmes.

These proposals, along with that on 'Citizenship in action', should be viewed in the light of the Commission Communication of 10 February on the financial outlook(1), which set out a vision for the European Union and budget plans for the period 2007-2013. The proposals underline the need to establish reinforced and restructured programmes, which are clearer to the citizens of an enlarged European Union, enabling them to benefit from a true common area in terms of mobility. Once established, these new programmes will also enable institutions in the fields of education, training and culture to improve the way they cooperate with each other. These programmes will also contribute to achieving the Lisbon objective.

The Communication responds to a number of major challenges and lays down ambitious objectives:

- To ensure from 2007 a successor for current programmes supporting mobility and cooperation in the fields of education and training, namely Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, and the external cooperation programme, Tempus;

Continued on page 5

## Letter from the Director

The big event in 2004 is enlargement. Cedefop has been preparing for it for some time; now it is with us. We are celebrating this event in various ways, such as by organising an introductory meeting for our new Management Board members in May and by including in this issue of Cedefop Info a dossier containing information on each of the ten new member states. The dossier also contains articles from colleagues in the European Training Foundation and Cedefop on what has been achieved in accompanying these countries in their progress towards full and active membership.

The report presented jointly by the Commission and the Council to the spring European Council meeting in March, in Brussels, emphasised that in the field of education and training, although much had been done to achieve the targets for 2010 laid down

in Lisbon in 2000, even more remains to be done. This, as we indicated in Cedefop Info 3/2003, had also been the message of Cedefop's second VET policy report, which has recently been published. Cedefop is working very closely with the Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture in preparing a deeper analysis of what needs to be done both at European and member state level to ensure that the targets are met. The main conclusion of this research report being prepared by a consortium of important VET research organisations, will be delivered to a major conference being organised under the Dutch presidency in Maastricht in December (see article on page 1). Cedefop staff have assisted the Commission in defining the objectives and methods to be used in preparing this report and are accompanying each step of its preparation.

A major event during the Irish Presidency was the conference *Towards 2010 - Common themes and approaches across Higher Education and Vocational Education and Training in Europe*, held in Dublin in early March. Earlier work of Cedefop, particularly in relation to transparency of qualifications, quality assurance and recognition of informal learning, was drawn on in the preparatory documents and other inputs to the conference (see page 4 for more details). At the meeting of the Directors General for Vocational Training, held immediately after this conference, the 'Maastricht' study (see above) was presented and Cedefop contributed background documents on recent developments in vocational training in both the accession and candidate countries, as well as in the Member States. Linked with the Irish presidency, we have also published a short description of the VET system in Ireland.

The European Commission's proposal [COM(2003)796 final] for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council on a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass), published in December, has received a positive welcome in both the Parliament and the Council.

More recently, in March, the Commission published a Communication [COM(2004) 156 final] on The new generation of community education and training programmes after 2006. There is a short article on this on page 1.

Johan van Rens  
Director  
March 2004

### THE AGORA CORNER

## Cedefop's 19<sup>th</sup> Agora - Vocational education and training in Europe: to what end?

### What is an Agora?

Three times a year in Thessaloniki, the Agora project brings together researchers, trade union officials, and representatives of employers' organisations, practitioners and decision-makers from the EU Member States, associated countries and candidate countries. Away from their everyday concerns, they devote a day and a half to collective reflection on initial and continuing vocational training (ICVT), maintaining a balance between sociological, economic and political analysis and research. A different issue is discussed each time. The theme of the 19<sup>th</sup> Agora held on 16 and 17 February 2004 was the *raison d'être* of vocational training research and its real impact on initial and continuing vocational training policies implemented in the different countries and regions of Europe.

### What are the aims of an Agora?

The Agora project is based on the idea that the wealth of Europe lies in our differences, provided we are able to respect them and work together on developing our common project - that is, to allow each individual citizen to flourish in his or her family, civic and professional life; to provide access to well-being and tranquillity within an equitable society; to monitor and manage growth in a sustainable way.

Agora Thessaloniki aims to:

- build a bridge between research and other players in ICVT;
- bring together the occasionally very different viewpoints of the various players to converge toward a European vocational training system that is able to integrate the most promising pedagogical principles and practices, without trying to eradicate our cultural differences;
- contribute to the implementation of the European project.

### What was the purpose of the 19<sup>th</sup> Agora?

In most countries and across all sectors

of economic activity, it is becoming increasingly evident that the results of vocational training research find little expression or consideration at the level of political decision-making. This is equally true of both initial and continuing training, youth and adult training, ad hoc training or lifelong learning.

This Agora sought to analyse the reasons behind this relegation of research results to the archives of university libraries, vocational training policy agencies or training institutions. It was designed to explore the difficulties we face in relating scientific work to political action, linking up theory and practice, connecting thought to action.

### The debate at the 19<sup>th</sup> Agora

Although the Lisbon summit proclaimed European education and training policy as one of the EU priorities for the years to come, this area is still far from harmonised, and considerable disparities remain between Member States at the level of decision-making in vocational training. The Agora tried to find the reasons for this disparity in policy. Can it be explained by the diversity of the proposals made by researchers, or the different degrees of attention paid to these proposals in the various Member States? Or is it perhaps because researchers display a varying degree of know-how in disseminating the results of their research?

An overview of the origin and emergence of VET research in Europe helped to pinpoint not only a number of recurrent dysfunctions of VET research, but also some of its success stories which could serve as a basis for a European model.

The presentation of the PISA study, conducted by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on the performance of the different education systems within the OECD countries, proved an excellent starting point for the debate. This study, which focuses on equality of opportunity and how learning achievements at

school can be beneficially used in later life, produced very different results from one country to another. In general, education systems in those countries in which the state delegates all or part of its responsibilities to educational institutions seem to show the highest standards of efficiency. This decentralised approach seems to promote a better match between the education dispensed and the expectations of both learners and practitioners. It should however be pointed out that these results apply to education as a whole, and not just VET.

Two recurrent points emerged in the course of the ensuing debate: the detrimental absence of European standards, partly due to the national fragmentation of research, and the difficulties in transferring the recommendations of researchers - be they from the private or the public sector - into practice.

First of all, several speakers regretted the absence of a standardising European structure in the field of VET, a role that could well be assumed by Cedefop if it had additional resources and with the appropriate dilution of the principle of subsidiarity in the field of education, inherited from the Treaty of Rome. The networking of the various research initiatives in the field of ICVT should promote exchange and bring together the viewpoints of researchers and policy-makers in the various countries, with a view to finally reaching a common - and, if possible, consensual - European policy. This exchange of views is moreover the key function of the Agoras.

Presentations by Giorgio Alluli (Director of Research at ISFOL, an Italian public-sector agency) and Bruno Clematide (Director of Kubix, a Danish private-sector agency) subsequently highlighted the difficulties in obtaining policies that translate into concrete action the recommendations formulated by researchers upstream. This problem is in the first instance due to political and

ideological factors, when research results do not point in the direction desired by the politicians in government; secondly, it can be explained by logistical reasons and the slow pace of validation processes, particularly in the case of centralised decision-making systems.

In more general terms, the point most frequently raised in the course of the debate were the difficult interactions between the various players involved in the definition of VET policies. All the participants agreed that the good functioning of these interactions seems to be the key to an efficient VET policy, and that any dissociation of research and decision-making is detrimental. However it was also agreed that this should not be at the cost of the independence of researchers vis-à-vis politicians, a further sensitive issue repeatedly addressed in the course of the debate.

On the one hand, researchers must therefore be heedful of the expectations of politicians and practitioners, providing expert opinions which are both accessible and visible, and being realistic in terms of the viability of their recommendations, if they are not to be merely bypassed. On the other hand, decision-makers must take care not to act without prior consultation of researchers and therefore without a scientific basis, if their policies are not to be irrelevant to reality on the ground. The idea of a strong involvement of teachers and trainers - ultimately those mainly concerned by possible improvements or change - was also frequently raised, without however a consensus being found on the best means of involving these players.

Which brings us back to our point of departure, i.e. the diversity of interpretations formulated in the field of VET - be they at the level of research or decision-making. To return to the above-mentioned example - the absence of a European consensus on the

Continued on the next page

modalities of integrating teachers and trainers into the process of reflection on ICVT systems and decision-making on the development of these systems - all the stakeholders justify the relevance of their proposals with the specificity of the teachers and trainers in their own countries. It is this entrenchment behind 'national specificities' every time a sensitive issue is raised which seems to be the main obstacle to the emergence of a European dimension to actions promoting the development of vocational training.

Once again, the idea of networking and of a European agency such as Cedefop, which could synthesise the different national research initiatives, seems to be essential for the definition of the bases of a large-scale common policy. This would mean that the specificities of each country could be taken

into account, while at the same time moving towards the long-term construction of a common European system, along the same lines as the Bologna Council decision on the recognition and comparability of diplomas of higher education.

Further information from the Agora project coordinator, Norbert Wollschläger, e-mail: [nw@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:nw@cedefop.eu.int)

Source: Cedefop/Cédric Magnien

## The training of trainers network (TTnet) at work

Continued from page 1

### Two levels of activity - an overall mission

At national level, the network coordinator's task is to:

- monitor and promote discussion of developments relating to the key national issues for teachers and trainers,
- identify and analyse innovative practices and
- disseminate the findings.

The network members are institutions or organisations specialising in the field of the training of teachers and trainers. They include policy-makers, researchers and experts, universities and training organisations, social partners and public authorities, enterprises and documentation centres. The national coordinator acts as an interface with the EU level network, passing on any experiences that could be relevant to transversal themes.

The Community level network provides logistic and scientific support for the national networks. For example, it holds workshops and annual conferences, organises thematic projects, publishes transversal studies, and conducts promotion and communication campaigns. Cedefop plays a general coordinating role at this level. The main aim here is to foster coherent action and added EU-level value. Making a contribution to the implementation of the European Union's policy framework for teachers and trainers has for the past three years become an increasingly important factor for all the players in TTnet.

In this connection, two strands of activity can be highlighted:

- the contribution of TTnet to the 'teachers and trainers' strand of the Commission's eLearning Action Plan (COM (2001) 172 final). TTnet began its work on the three main

measures advocated for teachers and trainers in the action plan (analysis of practices, analysis of competences, guide to existing eLearning resources) in July 2001. This work continued as part of the TTnet thematic project on eLearning (2002-03), which involved the analysis of more than 50 innovative practices proposed by the national networks. The final report was published by Cedefop in March 2004. The e-TTnet project (2003-04), co-financed under the eLearning Action Plan, is promoting the continuity of this work by opening it up to a wider audience;

- the contribution of TTnet to the 'Objectives' and 'Copenhagen' processes. Quality assurance and the learning needs of VET teachers and trainers have been defined as priorities by the Council. In this connection, TTnet launched an exploratory study on 'The role of teachers and trainers in quality approaches in the EU'. The outcomes of the study will be the basis for building the TTnet contribution to the expert group set up by the Commission on 'Improving the Education of Teachers and Trainers'.

In autumn 2002, TTnet's mission acquired a further dimension, i.e. the familiarisation of the ten acceding countries (ACs) emphasising the importance of training their teachers and trainers in the context of their forthcoming entry to the European Union. In close cooperation with the European Training Foundation in Turin, an action plan has been drawn up to allow the ACs to take advantage of the TTnet network's resources. The first national networks in the ACs are due to be set up shortly.

### An original approach for the benefit of professionals

For some time, it has been agreed that the development of the vocational qualifications and skills/competences of teachers and trainers is a key factor in ensuring quality at all levels of education and training.

## Contents

Austria 9 • Belgium 8, 12 • Czech Republic II • Cyprus III • Denmark 5, 7 • Estonia III • Finland 11 • France 9 • Germany 7, 8, 9 • Hungary V • Ireland 1, 10 • Italy 6, 10 • Latvia IV • Lithuania IV • Malta V • The Netherlands 11 • Norway 6 • Poland VI • Portugal 10 • Romania 8 • Slovakia VII • Slovenia VII • Spain 7 • Sweden 9 • Turkey 12 • United Kingdom 5, 6

### Cedefop/Europe 1-4

Cedefop: The training of trainers network (TTnet) at work • European Union: Key themes for education and training during the Dutch presidency • European Union: A new generation of Community education and training programmes • Ireland: Cultural diversity in the workplace • Cedefop: Letter from the Director • The Agora corner: Cedefop's 19<sup>th</sup> Agora - Vocational education and training in Europe: to what end? • Europe: How close are higher education and vocational education and training? • Cedefop/EU: Early recognition of skill needs • Eurydice: European glossary on education published

### Educational policy 5-6

Denmark: Emphasis on entrepreneurship • United Kingdom: Visions of the future • Norway: 'Pupil-inspectors' - pupils evaluate their school • United Kingdom: Biggest changes to upper secondary level exams for 50 years proposed

### Lifelong learning 6-7

Italy: The social situation in Italy: the impact on lifelong learning • Spain: Certificates of vocational competence

### Initial vocational training 7

Denmark: Major changes in school-based apprenticeship training • Germany: An opportunity for the more practically talented: short training programmes

### Vocational education and training 8

Romania: Reforming systems, reshaping misconceptions • Belgium: Engineers threatened with extinction in Flanders

### In brief 8

Germany: Harmonisation of vocational training at federal level • Germany: Centralised registration of skilling modules

### VET quality - certification systems 9

France: Accreditation of prior learning: support structures to be fully operational in 2004 • Austria: Continuing training checklist • Germany: IT certification agency launched • Sweden: A commission on validation

### Vocational training statistics 10

Ireland: More, but unevenly distributed, training for the employed • Italy: Isfol national report on training supply and demand

### Special target groups 10-11

Portugal: National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2003-05 • Finland: Youth participation project improves opportunities for young people

### Internationalisation of vocational education and training 11-12

The Netherlands: European benchmarks and Dutch education and training • Turkey: Lisbon targets

### Social partners 12

Belgium: Conclusions of the 2003 conference on employment

### EU enlargement DOSSIER I

European Training Foundation (ETF): Preparing for today - 13 years in retrospect

### Czech Republic: Progressing from a sound base II

### Cyprus: A major resource for a small economy III

Estonia: Modern approaches deserve modern attitudes

### Lithuania: Seeking effective education and training IV

Latvia: Infrastructure changes to meet external challenges

### Hungary: Good VET funding fights poor prestige V

Malta: Restructuring demands resources

### Poland: Matching learning to markets VI

The new Member States - some vital statistics

### Slovakia: Networking: the key to success? VII

Slovenia: Education through partnership

### Cedefop: Ten new countries on board! VIII

However, this does not mean that the point at which there are common issues and objectives for the professional development of teachers and trainers in all countries of the European Union has been reached.

TTnet has built on existing work and identified and defined common issues, e.g.

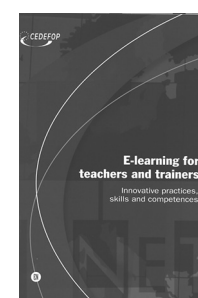
1. innovation - to establish how vocational training practices and systems can be constantly developed through innovative processes with a view to their transfer between different contexts within the European Union;

2. eLearning - to identify the new competences and new resources required of teachers and trainers and the responsibilities of the various levels of decision-making for their deployment;

3. quality - to analyse the needs of teachers and trainers of vocational training and provide appropriate indicators and assessment tools.

Further information, including the names and addresses of network members and national coordinators, is available at: [http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects\\_Networks/TTNet/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/TTNet/)

Contact: Mara Brugia, project coordinator, Cedefop, Tel. (30) 2310 490 125, e-mail [mb@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:mb@cedefop.eu.int)  
Source: Cedefop/mb



**E-learning for teachers and trainers**  
Innovative practices, skills and competences  
Cedefop Reference series 3035  
Language: en  
Price: EUR 25  
Cat. No: TI-57-03-451-EN-C

May be obtained from the EU sales offices

## How close are higher education and vocational education and training?

A one-day Irish presidency conference entitled *Towards 2010 - common themes and approaches in European policy development across higher education and vocational education and training* was held in Dublin in March. The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI), on behalf of the Department of Education and Science and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, hosted the conference. It was partly funded by the European Commission.

The conference was timed to coincide with meetings of the Directors General for Higher Education, the Directors General for Vocational Education and Training, and the Bologna Follow-up Group, to enable participants in these meetings to come together and interact formally for the first time.

The conference aimed to provide an opportunity for participants to examine some of the main common themes in European policy development across higher education and vocational education and training. It also aimed to facilitate an exchange of information on parallel developments in each area, so that participants could consider the possibility of joint action in the future. It aimed to provide a forum where participants' concerns, interests and views on the common themes could be heard. Finally, the conference aimed to consider new models and approaches that have begun to minimise the traditional distinctions between vocational education and training and higher education.

A research report prepared for the conference found that while the themes of quality, credit and the transparency and recognition of qualifications have been addressed in different ways within higher education and vocational education and training at European level, there is a gradual convergence of approaches in some areas. The theme of frameworks of qualifications, however, is relatively new and contested. This theme has begun to emerge as a proposal from a number of current European policy and development initiatives.

Over 300 participants from 37 countries attended the conference. They came from ministries, social partner organisations, teachers' and students' unions, universities and research institutes, qualifications authorities,

quality assurance agencies and other interested bodies.

In his opening keynote speech, Mr Noel Dempsey, the Irish Minister for Education and Science stressed the importance of a common approach to quality and qualifications policy across the further and higher education and vocational training sectors if mobility and quality for lifelong learners is to be assured. To achieve the objective of a real open market for workers and learners, there is a need for improved transparency and recognition of qualifications along with 'underpinning arrangements' in relation to programmes, quality assurance and credit accumulation and transfer. The Minister hoped to see the Europass proposal for a common transparency framework, adopted by the Education Ministers in the near future.

At the end of the conference, Mr Nikolaus van der Pas, Director General at the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, said that a clear message was that success in achieving the Lisbon goal of making Europe a world-class reference for education and training by 2010 is essential. To do this, diversity must be seen not as a weakness, but as a strength. Mr van der Pas said he was taking five important conclusions from the conference.

1. There is an urgent need for more co-operation and communication between the main actors in VET and HE, particularly in the context of Education and Training 2010.
2. There is a need for a common platform for exchange and mutual learning about quality assurance in HE and VET.
3. The ultimate aim should be to have a single system of credit transfer and accumulation for lifelong learning.
4. It is crucial to aim for a single qualifications framework for lifelong learning at European level.
5. We need to focus more on the vocational aspects of higher education.

All the conference background papers and a report on the conference are available on the website of the National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, <http://www.nqai.ie/>

Source: NQAI/Cedefop/jma

publication/publications.asp? section=24). The electronic version often contains additional items for which there was no space in the printed version.

The contents have been selected and edited by Cedefop staff. Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Cedefop. Articles concerning activities and events at EU level and particularly those involving Cedefop are usually written by Cedefop colleagues. Their names and contact addresses are given. Most of the articles concerning the Member States or other EEA countries have been submitted to Cedefop by the members of the ReferNet (see Cedefop Info 2/2002). Contact information for these, including names and addresses, e-mails and web sites, can be found at <http://www.cedefop.eu.int/directory.asp?refernet>. Articles concerning the Candidate Countries have been submitted through the European Training Foundation (ETF) by its network of National Observatories.

Unsolicited manuscripts, books and other material will be carefully examined and assessed. Requests for contacts, news of forthcoming conferences and other information would be welcomed. For the accuracy of these, however, Cedefop bears no responsibility. Reproduction in whole or in part of the contents of this publication is authorized, provided that the source is acknowledged.

Responsible publisher:  
Johan van Rens, Director  
Stavros Stavrou, Deputy Director

Editors:  
J. Michael Adams  
[jma@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:jma@cedefop.eu.int)  
Corinna Frey  
[cf@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:cf@cedefop.eu.int)  
Eric Fries Guggenheim  
[efg@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:efg@cedefop.eu.int)  
Eleonora Waltraud Schmid

in cooperation with:  
Vaclav Klenha, ETF  
(39011) 630 2225  
[Vaclav.Klenha@etf.eu.int](mailto:Vaclav.Klenha@etf.eu.int)

Coordination: J. Michael Adams,  
Corinna Frey, Dagmar Wolny

Responsible for translation:  
David Crabbe

Layout/Design: Panos Haramoglou,  
M. Diamantidi S.A., Thessaloniki, Greece  
Editorial deadline: 19.4.2004

Printed in Spain 2004  
Cat. number: TI-AD-04-001-EN-C

## Early recognition of skill needs

How can we identify new and changing skill needs early enough to be able to react to them? How can we improve transparency and cooperation across countries to achieve the early identification of skill needs? And how can research findings be transferred into training policy and practice?

These questions are of concern to both employment and education and training policy. Indeed, all European countries are confronted with the paradox of hundreds of thousands of people remaining unemployed while enterprises cannot fill their job vacancies. One reason for this is that the supply of skills does not match demand.

SkillsNet, Cedefop's new network for the early recognition of skill needs, has set itself the aim of presenting innovative solutions generated in this field, in Europe and beyond, to a wider public. At the same time, the network is to promote cross-border cooperation and information exchange.

The basis of the network's activities is research: it investigates skill needs in European labour markets, looks for similarities across territories, sectors or occupations, in order to identify common trends, and also examines the needs of specific groups, e.g. low-skilled people or small and medium-sized enterprises. Its methods include enterprise and labour force surveys, forecasting techniques, scenarios, case studies, analyses of job advertisements and observatories on skills developments.

SkillsNet's activities further involve the processing of research findings at European level and their use across EU countries. In the wake of changing skill requirements, labour market and training policy options are re-

quired across Europe. Transferring findings into policy must involve all players if it is to ensure legitimacy.

The network also holds events focused on specific sectors, industries or occupations across countries and regions. Two conferences have already been held in 2002 and 2003 to present research in this field and discuss the findings with social partners and decision-makers in training policy and practice.

The network also organises workshops on innovative approaches and regular international conferences. Workshops on skill needs in tourism, on systems-oriented approaches and the transfer of findings into policy are planned for 2004. Further events will highlight skill needs in new technologies (e.g. fuel cells, nanotechnology, biotechnology), for job and careers counselling, among others.

Information on the activities of the network and its findings to date is available on the Cedefop website, via the European Training Village: [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr). Experts on skill needs are invited to join the network. Relevant information can be obtained from our website or the members of the project teams.

Further information:  
M. Tessaring, O. Strietska-Illina, G. Manderscheid, B. Herpin,  
Cedefop,  
[skillsnet-team@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:skillsnet-team@cedefop.eu.int)  
Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11

Source: Cedefop/CF

## EURYDICE

### European glossary on education published

Terminology relating to examinations, qualifications and titles is constantly changing. In order to facilitate understanding of these changes in a Europe in which cooperation is intensifying, Eurydice has just updated the first volume (1) of the European Glossary on Education, which was initially published in 1999.

This new edition covers around 1 000 national terms used in the 30 countries in the Eurydice Network. It has been expanded to include qualifications officially recognised in adult education, as well as those awarded to persons with special educational needs.

The present glossary is a unique reference source that supplies the information required to understand each national term: with what level of education and field of studies is it associated? How many years of study are normally involved? The explanatory note also specifies the content and authority responsible for examinations, and whether each qualification gives access to a particular level of studies or the labour market, or confers a formal title on its holders.

Example:  
Főiskolai oklevél  
Country: Hungary  
Grammatical variants: Főiskolai oklevelek, főiskolai oklevél\*  
Level: ISCED 5  
Explanatory note: Degree awarded at the end of 3 to 4 years of non-university tertiary education in a college (*főiskola*) or at a university (*egyetem*), to students who have passed the *Záróvizsga* final examination. It mentions the field of study, the specialisation and the final mark. It gives access to employment and entitles students to take a further course at an *főiskola* or to continue their studies at university level programmes.

(1) European Glossary on Education, Volume 1: Examinations, qualifications and titles, 2004, Eurydice.  
Available on the Eurydice website: [http://www.eurydice.org/Doc\\_intermediaires/term\\_tools/en/frameset\\_glossaries.html](http://www.eurydice.org/Doc_intermediaires/term_tools/en/frameset_glossaries.html)

Source: Eurydice



European Centre for the  
Development of Vocational Training

Europe 123,  
GR-570 01 Thessaloniki (Pylea)  
Postal address: PO Box 22427  
GR551 02 Thessaloniki  
Tel. (30) 23 10 49 01 11  
Fax (30) 23 10 49 00 20  
E-mail: [info@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:info@cedefop.eu.int)  
Homepage: [www.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.cedefop.eu.int)  
Interactive website: [www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr)

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

Cedefop Info is published in DE, EN, FR and contains information on vocational training in Europe, in particular the findings of work carried out by Cedefop and reports from the social partners and the Member States. It is provided free of charge upon request. Cedefop Info is also available on the Internet (<http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/>)

## A new generation of Community education and training programmes

Continued from page 1

- To establish a single and unique integrated programme for education and lifelong learning bringing together the Member States, the member countries of EFTA and the candidate countries, and grouping together education and vocational training, ranging from primary schooling to adult training;
- In response to public consultation, which showed that current programmes were too complicated, this integrated programme will be more flexible and easier to access. It will be heavily decentralised, with 80% of funds administered by national agencies in the participating countries;
- A number of quantified targets illustrate the scale of the challenges:
  - at least 10% of school pupils in the Union and their teachers (as opposed to 3% today) should take part

- in the Comenius programme between 2007-2013;
- the number of 3 million students benefiting from Erasmus is to be reached by 2010, thus tripling the current number of 120 000 students taking part in the programme each year;
- at least 150 000 persons each year are to have access to the Leonardo programme by 2013 (currently 45 000);
- at least 50 000 adults each year are to benefit from education or training abroad by 2013;
- a new Tempus programme, called Tempus Plus, will be extended to cover school, university and adult education, as well as vocational training, which will relate to cooperation between the Member States, neighbour States of the Union and those already taking part in the Tempus programme. The mobility objective would be for

100 000 persons to benefit from a Tempus Plus mobility measure by 2013.

The Commission would welcome suggestions for improvements to the operation of the programmes. They can be sent by email to [eac-np@cec.eu.int](mailto:eac-np@cec.eu.int)

See note IP/04/189 'Building our common future: Financial and political outlook for the enlarged Union 2007-2013'.

For more information:  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/index_en.htm)  
[http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/newprog\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/newprog_en.html)

Source: European Commission/Cedefop-JMA

## Educational policy

### DENMARK

## Emphasis on entrepreneurship

The Danish government has launched a new series of initiatives that aims at strengthening the culture of entrepreneurship, particularly among pupils and students in the educational system, but also in higher education. The campaign is called 'A society with room for free initiative'.

The aim is to offer students, throughout their education, an unbroken chain of educational opportunities that, seen as a whole, will strengthen their capacity for innovation, deepen their understanding of the business world and give them professional qualifications which will help them establish and operate independent companies.

These efforts to foster a culture of entrepreneurship in education will be aimed at producing long-term effects, using resources that will be linked in various ways and to varying degrees to the government's education schemes. The resources and degree of responsibility will vary and will be adapted to the educational levels and the aims of individual programmes. Broadly speaking, the higher the education-

level, the greater the degree of practical applicability and responsibility.

### Implementation will be in four stages:

- a general effort to strengthen the culture of entrepreneurship,
- a targeted development and dissemination of teaching and learning methods to strengthen students' innovative competences,
- central support for targeted training in the skills that are necessary for starting and operating one's own company and
- a continued development of the function of higher education programmes as regional generators of growth and development.

The approach is illustrated by the following examples from various education sectors:

### Primary and lower secondary school

Wide-ranging initiatives to motivate schools to include role models in teaching, e.g. parents and graduates, and also introduction of an award for 'Entrepreneurial School of the Year'.

### Upper secondary school

The introduction of an optional subject, 'Innovation', which is designed to promote initiative, independence and creativity and to teach students the methods and theories of business, innovation and entrepreneurship.

In addition to existing programmes, students can take part in company competitions and other activities (Young Enterprise and European Business Game). For example, economics and the optional 'innovation' subject may involve planning and creating student companies and projects, carried out in partnership with businesses.

### Higher education

An academy of entrepreneurship will be based on cooperation between several higher education institutions. It will function as a central institution for pedagogical development, research and training in innovation and entrepreneurship.

The Minister of Education wants to bridge the gap between the formal educational sys-

tem and life as an entrepreneur. They should not be seen as competitors, but instead as interlinked. These changes are necessary because many new businesses are established within very knowledge intensive areas, requiring entrepreneurs with a university degree. Therefore more focused attention must be given, throughout the whole education system, to innovation and how to establish one's own company.

The reform of the guiding and counselling system in Denmark also plays a vital role in ensuring that young people are better informed about the possibilities of becoming an entrepreneur and starting up their own business.

A short introduction to the campaign can be found at:  
<http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/innovation/kap01.html>  
The full version in English can be found in pdf-format at:  
[http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/innovation/hele\\_eng.pdf](http://eng.uvm.dk/publications/innovation/hele_eng.pdf)

Source: Ciriuz

### UNITED KINGDOM

## Visions of the future

A report from the Learning and Skills Development Agency's (1) Learning and Skills Research Centre, published in November 2003, takes a long-term view of what the post-16 education and training system in England might look like in 20 years' time.

The report, *Learning from the future* (2) has been produced as part of The Tomorrow Project ([www.tomorrow-project.net](http://www.tomorrow-project.net)), an independent programme of research, consultation and communication about people's lives in the next 20 years. The report is based around consultations with experts from 48 different organisations, including government departments and agencies, voluntary and professional organisations, educational bodies and businesses.

Four questions were posed: Where are we now? What will influence the future? What are the possible outcomes (scenarios)? So what?

Starting with Where are we now?, the report highlights recent measures to improve the quality and extent of vocational education in England concentrating on four areas:

1. skills - equipping workers for the knowledge economy, but possibly at the expense of more traditional skills,

2. widening participation - how to increase the number of people engaged in learning,
3. raising standards and
4. tackling social exclusion.

The most pressing future challenges (What will influence the future?) are seen as

- responding to the evolution of the global economy with more fluid work patterns and possibly older workers;
- delivering skills that will support not just 'knowledge' skills but also 'old economy' skills (e.g. traditional crafts), interpersonal and life skills;
- finding the right balance between academic and vocational learning;
- securing closer integration between different parts of the learning and skills sector;
- embracing new methods of teaching and learning and promoting social inclusion.

Four scenarios are built around two forms of government intervention - labour market regulation and increased public investment - and structured around four themes. The report addresses a number of policy questions addressed in each of the four scenarios. Each one relates to the four

themes. For instance: What sort of skills will we need in the future? Should more attention be devoted to the demand for, rather than the supply of, skills? (Skills) Would further expansion of higher education provide too many over-skilled graduates, or will the concentration on expanding foundation degrees increase the supply of skills at a level that the economy demands? (Priorities). Can we leave it to the market to bring greater integration to post-16 learning? If not what policy levers should the government pull to promote further integration? (Integration). In what ways can learning be made more attractive to those with negative experiences of school? (Participation).

(1) A national agency advising on development of policy and practice in post-16 education and training - see Cedefop Info 3/2002

(2) *Learning from the future: scenarios for post-16 learning*, ISBN 1 85338 896, is available free of charge from: Information Services, LSDA, Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyle Street, London W1F 7LS. Tel. (44-207) 297 9123. Email: [enquiries@LSDA.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@LSDA.org.uk).

For further information contact: Mick Fletcher, LSDA.  
Tel. (44-1823) 66 84 603  
E-mail: [mfletcher@LSDA.org.uk](mailto:mfletcher@LSDA.org.uk)

For further information on LSCRC, please phone: (44-207) 7840 5470. Email: [LSRC@LSDA.org.uk](mailto:LSRC@LSDA.org.uk)  
Web site: [www.LSRC.ac.uk](http://www.LSRC.ac.uk)

Source: QCA

## NORWAY

### 'Pupil-inspectors' – pupils evaluate their school

The survey 'Pupil-inspectors' is an internet-based survey, which, in January 2004, became obligatory for all students in years 7 to 10 of compulsory education and in the first year of (upper) secondary school. It is also available on a voluntary basis for apprentices. The Norwegian Board of Education is responsible for the survey, which is carried out as part of a national plan for quality evaluation and development in schools.

The idea behind 'Pupil-inspectors' is that pupils can influence the teaching in their school and give their opinion regarding important issues, in order to optimise the teaching in, and well-being of, their school. Each school provides each pupil with a username and password. When the questionnaire has been completed the username is erased, thus ensuring anonymity. The administration in each school can extract results from the survey related to their school. These results will be discussed by the 'student council', the school administration and the school board and will be followed up with actions to improve or change areas where the school had a low score.

The survey is primarily a tool to map the learning environment in Norwegian schools. The results from the surveys carried out in all schools will be aggregated and made available on a new web portal put in place with a view to publishing results and evaluations of the Norwegian education system ([www.skoleporten.no](http://www.skoleporten.no)).

This is part of a larger plan from the Ministry of Education and Research to give more influence to pupils. An investigation into the power and influence of pupils (The Power and democracy report <sup>(1)</sup>) showed that although regulations and acts give pupils a solid foundation to intervene in, and influence, the running of their school, they do not use these possibilities fully. The Minister of Education and Research wishes that pupils exercise their rights on a larger scale. The Minister wants to ensure more influence and real power in the school for pupils, based on opportunities grounded in the legal framework. Making participation in the 'Pupil-inspectors' survey obligatory is one of the measures to achieve this.

The evaluation survey is divided into the following areas: motivation; well being; co-determination; quality/relevance of the school curriculum; counselling; health, environment and security.

The survey is carried out in order to give schools, companies, training offices, counties and municipalities practical help in carrying out systematic evaluation and quality development of the training and education in the region.

<sup>(1)</sup> Power and Democracy - a general scheme 1998 - 2003, published 1999. More information on: <http://www.sv.uio.no/mutr/english/index.html>  
More information from: Norwegian Board of Education - its website [www.ls.no](http://www.ls.no) has more information (but only in Norwegian) concerning this project.

Contacts:  
Mr Jan Fredrik Stoveland, E-mail: [jfs@ls.no](mailto:jfs@ls.no)  
Ms Angela Kreher, E-mail: [akr@ls.no](mailto:akr@ls.no)

Source: National Institute of Technology, Norway

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Biggest changes to upper secondary level exams for 50 years proposed

The Government's task force on 14-19 education in England has produced radical plans for reforming the existing systems of curriculum and qualifications of all young people in education and training. These proposals, if adopted, may lead to the phasing out of GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education) A-levels (the general education qualification at ISCED level 3), and GCSEs (level 2).

#### The main aspects of the proposed reforms are as follows:

- A system of linked diplomas should replace A-levels, GCSEs and existing vocational qualifications within 10 years. The diplomas will operate at four levels - entry, level 1, intermediate and advanced. The advanced diploma will be equivalent to a diploma or baccalaureate at ISCED (International Standard Classification of Education) level 3. Thus, the intention is that the diplomas will be inclusive and cover all students, whatever their level of attainment, offering flexible pathways for vertical and horizontal progression.
- All diplomas will contain a compulsory 'core'. Communication skills, maths and ICT skills will form part of the core,

as will an extended project for all students. Skills including problem-solving, independent learning and teamworking will be assessed as part of the diploma, although languages do not feature prominently.

- Students are free to choose from open diplomas, which will contain the compulsory core and an open choice of subject combinations and specialist diplomas, which will contain prescribed vocational or specialist academic courses alongside the core.
- Young people leaving education will gain credit towards diplomas, even if they do not complete their courses.

The intention is that employers and universities have access to portfolios or transcripts, setting out details of the diploma achieved and young people's achievements in each subject.

Mike Tomlinson, the former chief inspector, said that his report sets out proposals for long-term reforms that are needed for several reasons. These include the current low rates of participation and qualification among 16 to 19 years

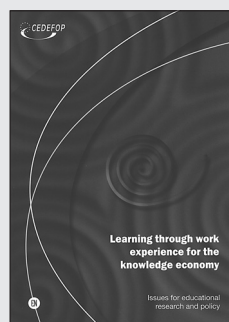
olds, in which the UK performs poorly in international comparisons; and the need to achieve more coherence in vocational courses. Launching the report in London in February 2004, he said: 'We need to create a system which will better serve the needs of all students, rather than just some of them.'

The report proposes the biggest changes to upper secondary level exams in England for 50 years. Teachers' unions and other groups have broadly welcomed the report, and it appears to have a degree of cross-party political support. However, the Confederation of British Industry dismissed the plans as confusing.

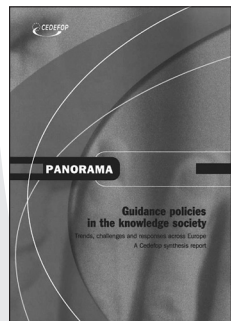
The report is out to public consultation over the summer, and the Tomlinson enquiry will produce its final report in September. Then it will be up to ministers to make a decision.

Further details can be found at: <http://www.14-19reform.gov.uk/>

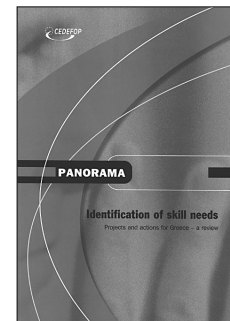
Source: QCA/The Times Educational Supplement, February 20, 2004



**Learning through work experience for the knowledge economy**  
Issues for educational research and policy  
Cedefop Reference series 3034  
Language: en  
Price: EUR 25  
Cat. No: TI-67-03-467-EN-C  
May be obtained from the EU sales offices



**Guidance policies in the knowledge society**  
Trends, challenges and responses across Europe  
A Cedefop synthesis report  
Cedefop Panorama series 5152  
Language: en  
Cat. No: TI-58-04-942-EN-C  
Free of charge on request from Cedefop



**Identification of skill needs**  
Projects and actions for Greece – a review  
Cedefop Panorama series 5154  
Language: en  
Cat. No: TI-58-04-966-EN-C  
Free of charge on request from Cedefop

## Lifelong learning

## ITALY

### The social situation in Italy: the impact on lifelong learning

Censis, the Centre for Social Studies and Policies, has presented its annual report on the social situation of the nation.

Among other aspects, the socio-economic research institute's 37<sup>th</sup> report analyses data on training processes, in particular the supply and demand of lifelong learning, and the funding of relevant training efforts in Italy.

The 2003 report follows on from the first European survey on lifelong learning, which ranks Italy below the EU average in terms of participation and interest in training. Indeed, the most recent Censis-Isof survey revealed that almost one half of all training course participants were upper secondary school leavers, compared to a mere 1.8 % among university graduates, thus drawing attention to the risk of a passive correlation between training supply and demand.

Compared to the European benchmark of an average level of participation in lifelong learning of at least 15% of the adult working age population by 2010, the level of training participation among Italian citizens remains persistently low.

The current percentage of participation in training activities among the employed aged 25 to 70 stands at some 30%. Of these, only half of the training measures involve learning for personal reasons, unrelated to employment. Individual propensity for learning stands in close correlation to age and, especially, education level: the greatest interest in training participation is to be found among younger Italians with a higher level of education.

The Censis report suggests that the new definition of lifelong learning policies in Italy should give greater consideration to these features of continuing training demand. It points out that if significantly more people are to engage in training it will be necessary to remove the cultural and economic obstacles now blocking their way.

One of the most relevant indicators at the basis of the social situation in Italy is level of schooling: the majority of youngsters aged 15+ hold a lower secondary certificate and 30% either have no qualifications at all or merely a certificate of elementary education.

Women show the highest level of schooling across all age brackets. In general, the majority of employed women (35.6%) hold a lower secondary school certificate. But the high percentage of women graduates is not matched by a corresponding ratio of women in higher-level jobs: this reveals that significant gender disparities persist.

Concerning public expenditure on education and training, the Censis report draws attention to the low level of investment in Italy in comparison with other European countries, even though Italy is on a par with the United Kingdom in terms of GDP. The average level of investment per student is lower in tertiary education, although an upward trend was recorded for the sector as a whole in 2001 and 2002. Public spending on school-based education and vocational education at regional level has also increased.

Further information at: <http://www.censis.it>

Source: Isof (Alessandra Pedone)

## Certificates of vocational competence

A Royal Decree establishing the guidelines for the certificates of vocational competence was published in the Official State Bulletin on 18 December 2003<sup>(1)</sup>.

The certificates of vocational competence provide accreditation for vocational skills acquired in the course of occupational and continuing vocational training programmes, training and employment schemes, apprenticeship and training contracts, work experience and other non-formal training routes. This, however, has no bearing on the regulation of vocational activity.

The government now wishes to introduce certificates of vocational competence by means of this legislation. Hitherto, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs regulated a total of 130 certificates of vocational competence for 130 occupations and established

the necessary modular training routes and occupational profiles, i.e. the entire set of occupational skills exploitable and relevant in the labour market. Moreover, since 1995 many unemployed persons have engaged in occupational training within the National Training and Vocational Integration Plan, the accreditation of which may be subject to the award of a full certificate of vocational competence or of partial job-related credits.

However so far the conditions for the acquisition and award of these certificates, which must be officially recognised and are valid nationwide, had not been regulated. The recent Royal Decree now lays down the general requirements for access to the examinations leading to the certificates of vocational competence. To be eligible for these tests, candidates must fulfil one of the following conditions:

- a) a positive evaluation in all or part of the relevant training route for the certificate in question;
- b) full or partial acquisition of the vocational skills corresponding to an occupational profile by means of prior work experience or another form of non-formal learning.

The Autonomous Communities are responsible for the annual organisation of the examination sessions and notification of General Council for Vocational Training. At the same time, the Autonomous Communities are to set up evaluation committees comprising accredited experts. The theoretical and practical tests to be carried out will be standardised and approved by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs which is also tasked with awarding and reviewing the certificates of vocational competence within five years.

An annex to the Royal Decree further regulates the minimum requirements in terms of years of work experience for admission to the examinations, for each of the 130 certificates issued so far.

<sup>(1)</sup> Royal Decree 1506/2003, 28 November, establishing the guidelines for the certificates of vocational competence. The full text is available at: [http://www.servef.es/organos/formacion/RD\\_CERT\\_PROF.pdf](http://www.servef.es/organos/formacion/RD_CERT_PROF.pdf)

Source: National Institute of Employment, INEM, 21 December 2003 <http://www.inem.es>

## Initial vocational training

### DENMARK

#### Major changes in school-based apprenticeship training

Two seemingly independent decisions, which may have great influence on the long-term provision of skilled workers in Denmark, can be seen as being closely linked.

Following a December 2003 agreement with some of the opposition parties, the Danish Government has decided to make a deep cut in the provision of school-based apprenticeship training, which since 1991 has been an option for students who were unable to find a training place in an enterprise. Simultaneously an adjustment is being introduced to create new ways of achieving a full VET qualification step-by-step.

##### School-based training

The system's characteristic apprenticeship approach has for many years suffered from a lack of enterprise-based training places. In order to solve this problem without actually changing the basic principle of apprenticeship, a school-based practical training option was launched in 1991. This was, however, only open to students who fulfilled certain criteria, such as having good results in the introductory level of the chosen VET course and being open to educational as well as geographical mobility. In this option, both the schools and the apprentices' wages are financed by the employers' reimbursement scheme (AER).

This school-based practical training constituted a sort of guarantee to young people that they would be able to finish their VET course with a skilled worker qualification and not lead to a dead end because of the lack of apprenticeship places. However, since the employers solely financed the scheme, from the outset they heavily opposed it.

The distribution of school-based training among the trades has been uneven from the beginning, with a few trades accounting for more than half of the places. Some trades are popular and have a surplus of applicants, while others cannot attract enough. In 2003, there were 87 000 apprentices who had a contract with an enterprise, while 7 000 were in the school-based scheme.

The capacity of school-based training is now to be cut from 7 000 to 1 200 places. The number 1 200 has been randomly selected. In future, there will be an offer of school-based training only in trades and skill areas where a great need for skilled workers can be anticipated. In addition, apprentices who have

lost their training place due to closure of their company will still be able to continue their training at school.

The financing of both school-based training places and wages for apprentices in this system are also being changed. Formerly, school-based apprentices had the right to the same wages as other apprentices. This was related to the result of collective bargaining in different trades. In future, they will lose that right and instead only receive the same amount as students in the Danish Education Grant and Loan Scheme (SU). This amount is less than half of what they presently receive.

In 2003, the school based training system cost the AER around 1 billion Kroner (ca. Euro 134 million). From now on the state will bear these costs. In return, the employers will take over the cost of adult continuing training. Since the number of school-based training places is being cut drastically, a substantial reduction in the state budget is expected.

The issue of school-based training has always been a point of conflict between the social partners and the trade unions are not happy with the new model.

##### Step-by-step VET

In 2001, a major reform in apprenticeship was carried out. Now a further adjustment will mean that almost all courses will be broken into 18 or 24 months modules providing the student/apprentice with a partial qualification. This is supposed to provide direct access to the labour market at a lower level than a full qualification. After a period of work experience, it will be possible to return to training to complete a full qualification. This reform will take effect from 1 August 2004, and it is the responsibility of each of the trade committees to decide how its courses should be broken up. Since school-based training places will only be offered at this first qualification level, their number will automatically be reduced. This on top of the restrictions imposed on the definition of trades that can offer school-based training places will bring about the reduction from 7 000 to 1 200 in a short time.

The qualification guarantee will thus not cease to exist, but will apply only to the first qualification level.

Source: Cirijs

### GERMANY

#### An opportunity for the more practically talented: short training programmes

Most of the new training programmes introduced in recent years in the process of the modernisation of training occupations have been three- to 3 1/2-year courses. However industry - not least the Association of German Chambers of Industry and Commerce (DIHT) - has for some time been calling for more up-to-date two-year training courses to provide manpower for jobs involving activities which are theoretically less demanding. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has accordingly issued a recommendation to the federal government to introduce more two-year training courses, in particular in the fields of industrial manufacturing, trade and commerce, assembly and recycling, maintenance and repair, nursing and care, organisation, leisure activities and logistics. The first training regulations could come into force as early as 2004.

At the same time, BIBB has initiated a research project to identify the acceptance of these occupations, determine the readiness of industry to make the necessary training effort and quantify the actual demand for skilled workers coming out of these short-track training courses on the basis of empirical findings.

The BIBB initiative was preceded by a study, conducted by the research institute ECONOMIX Research & Consulting in Munich on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour, which identified over 30 training fields eligible for the introduction of more practically-oriented short-track courses. ECONOMIX's findings point to a drop-out rate of approximately 25 % among trainees in three- and 3 1/2-year training programmes, with 14 % of young people ending up with no qualifications at all. The institute comes to the conclusion that short training programmes involving less theoretical learning would not only be more suitable for more practically talented youngsters but would also reduce the training risk assumed by industry. Moreover, the more practically-oriented training courses would offer young people a better starting position for entry into qualified employment than school-based remedial schemes. The results of the study can be downloaded in PDF format from [www.economix.org](http://www.economix.org).

Source: BIBB/Cedefop



## ROMANIA

### Reforming systems, reshaping misconceptions

#### Reform breaks a vicious circle

Employers claim VET schools do not provide required competences, while schools complain about the lack of interest and low participation by enterprises in education and training. Even though unemployment rates are higher among graduates from general education, parents favour academic education pathways for their children.

Before 1990, going into VET meant choosing a narrowly defined training field at an early age. The first important VET reform projects (e.g. PHARE RO 9405) aimed to establish demand-driven educational planning. This was a step forwards, but much more is needed to develop acceptance, commitment and ownership among all relevant parties.

Reform of education and training in 2003 made basic VET (ISCED 2) part of compulsory education (now ten years, though previously eight). Another PHARE project, launched across 100 schools in developing areas, aims to build on previous success in making VET both more attractive and useful by responding better to regional needs and ensuring participation by all stakeholders. Schools involved in the previous project will provide assistance.

Making parents aware of false perceptions and raising the image of VET are major challenges that need to be part of the initiative. Guidance and counselling services and in-service teacher training institutions have an active role to play. Social partners, particularly employers, should contribute, ensuring that VET meets their demands. Clear roles and responsibilities must be devised for developing VET programmes and curricula, as well as providing sound and relevant work experience for students. School managers and teachers have already received training to learn how to cooperate with enterprises.

#### Partnership includes parents

The recently created regional consortia, with representatives from local public authorities, regional development agencies, school inspectorates and universities, employers and trade unions, have been asked

to produce regional action plans for the period 2003-2010. Sound labour market and supply-side capacity analyses should form the basis of these plans. A standard planning approach should apply and include: types and levels of qualification needed in the region; structure and location of VET schools, to ensure equal access and efficiency; and measures needed to strengthen the partnership between schools, students and enterprises. Local action plans (at county level) and school action plans will follow.

The basis of this exercise is the conclusion drawn from earlier projects: irrespective of any changes implemented at system level, sustainable reform will only happen as the result of an internal process, started and conducted from inside VET schools and in co-operation with local communities. Hence, teachers have been trained in student-centred learning and appropriate support materials are being developed. Attention will now focus on integrating students with special needs. Parents are key in shaping attitudes and pathway decisions. Motivating them to become active partners in associative management, guidance and delivery of work-experience could be the heart of community partnerships.

Such strategies - developing partnerships and a culture of participatory management - are seen as essential elements in making VET more attractive and ensuring high quality provision.

Source and further information:  
Madlen Serban and Lucian Ciolan  
Ministry of Education, Research and Youth  
National Centre for Development of VET  
Str. Spiru Haret 10-12,  
RO 70738 Bucuresti  
Tel. (40-21) 311 1162, Fax (40-21) 312 5498  
e-mail: madlen@tvet.ro

## In brief

## GERMANY

### Harmonisation of vocational training at federal level

On 12 December 2003, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) issued a recommendation advising the federal government to retain its responsibility for non-school-based vocational training. The BIBB recommendation comes in response to a proposal from the *Länder* that they be devolved their own legislative competence in this field. The BIBB's Central Committee (comprising representatives of the social partners, the federal government and the

*Länder*) rejects this proposal as inappropriate in terms of both training and economic policy; in its opinion, decentralisation in this field would result in higher costs, additional organisational input and a lower degree of legal certainty, transparency and recognition. Rather than further devolution, the Central Committee calls for the optimisation of the system which in its opinion can best be guaranteed at federal level.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop

## BELGIUM

### Engineers threatened with extinction in Flanders

The number of first-year students training to become engineers, mainly at high school level, has fallen steeply over the past 15 years: in the 1987-88 academic year there were 5 000 students, now the number is less than half that. Figures from the Flemish Service for Employment and Vocational Training (VDAB) show where this stagnation has taken us: a third of all vacancies for engineers do not become filled. Year after year these vacancies appear among those that cannot be filled, especially engineering jobs in civil engineering, electricity, mechanics and electromechanics. Even more strange is the fact that engineers are often confronted with unemployment. The paradox can be partly explained by the criteria for applicants often being more demanding than just having obtained the qualifications on paper. Engineers are also expected to be leaders, be able to communicate well with less technically able people, have language skills, etc. Engineers not fitting that bill find themselves out in the cold when the economy is in a poorer state, according to the Royal Flemish Society of Engineers (KVIV). Businesses also want candidates who can start work straight away. Large businesses do provide people with internal training, but at smaller concerns there is less opportunity to grow into the job, according to the Flemish Council of Hogescholen (Vlhora). Despite this nuance the basic observation remains the same: there is a need for technically highly-skilled people. Furthermore, the government is recruiting many more highly qualified people than before. The processing industry can offer a more dynamic working environment with more cutting-edge technology, but it must cope with job security and the association with the quality of life of the statute of civil servant. The public and the private sectors are both confronted with the same shortage. This is another argument for examining moving activities to Eastern Europe, for example, warns Agoria. Short-term campaigns have shown to have little effect. Many countries are facing this problem. At the world congress of engineers everyone reported at least the stabilising of the inflow. Highly qualified jobs such as that of engineer have knock-on effects also resulting in jobs for the less highly qualified.

Education must stimulate an attitude of eagerness to learn: to encourage more keenness to learn, creativity and own thinking. At the start of the 80's the inflow for training as an industrial engineer was twice as great: in the 70's many pupils were in technical education because it put them in a strong position. It is advised to have better pupils move into the technical fields, and the level will also increase. Technical Secondary School Education (TSO) must again become the equivalent of General Secondary School Education (ASO). Industry also has to play its part: such disciplines have a less cool image because they are associated with care for the environment, for example. Chemistry on the other hand has connotations of pollution. Co-operation could be much better. We do not have the consultation platforms that exist in our neighbouring countries for concrete solutions such as training with equipment at a company. Matching training to the demand is another aspect: with one year continuation courses we could respond to the demand for textile engineers. This is a problem because the textile sector has to unjustly cope with the reputation that there is no future in it. But nothing comes of the actual adaptation of the training.

#### Educational reforms

Students should be able to follow three-year bachelor studies that in Flanders would result in a diploma with which they can already enter the employment market. They can also follow two-year master studies in the same discipline, or a similar one for which the transitional problems remain manageable. All partners in dialogue agree that the system entails the promise of more flexible training with which students can find their own way, or carry on where they left off after a break. Everyone also agrees that the two profiles can co-exist side by side, with a more practice-oriented specific industrial engineer and a more conceptually thinking civil engineer. It is particularly of importance for the aims to remain high.

Further information: <http://www.vdab.be>

Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB.

## GERMANY

### Centralised registration of skilling modules

In a further recommendation in December 2003, BIBB proposes that all skilling modules authorised by the chambers should be registered with BIBB. These learning units, which are clearly defined in terms of both time and content, are developed from the content of recognised and regulated training occupations. They are now to be centrally registered and their details made available through the BIBB. A centralised database with full details of all the skilling modules authorised by the

chambers nationwide, classified according to a uniform format, has been set up for this purpose: [www.good-practice.de/bbigbausteine](http://www.good-practice.de/bbigbausteine).

Source: BIBB/Cedefop





FRANCE

## Accreditation of prior learning: support structures to be fully operational in 2004

The French Association for Reflection and Exchange on Training (AFREF) recently held a working session to draw up an 'inventory of practices at the end of 2003' in the field of the accreditation of non-formal or prior learning (APL).

Anne-Marie Charraud, secretary-general of the National Commission for Vocational Certification (CNCP) presented the experimental projects already up and running in the field of social services and welfare, drawing attention to the fact that the ministries of Defence and Culture had committed themselves to formalising underlying principles with a view to developing an APL procedure.

She did not conceal the fact that the universities, where the introduction of APL procedures were the responsibility of registrars, displayed a high degree of heterogeneity in their response to APL candidates.

She then gave AFREF a report on the creation of a network of specialised resource units to provide support and information for potential APL candidates. In her opinion, counselling only makes sense if a career project has been discussed with the enterprise or the candidate upstream. At this level it is necessary to identify whether or not the candidate's plans can be appropriately followed up within a certification context - which is not always the case. The resource units provide information on an initiative or a strategy to 'formalise' a project and the corresponding procedure for access to certification and APL. The resource units are constituted by regional interdepartmental units, with funding from central government and the Regional Councils, and draw on and pool their resources with the 'Carif' information and training resources centres. The support structures are expected to be up and running throughout the regions with the exception of Corsica in the course of 2004. The CNCP representative moreover announced that an

initial computerised version of the National Directory of Vocational Qualifications would be available to the public in the spring of 2004.

Source: INFFO Flash, No 627, 15 to 31 December 2003, article by Philippe Grandin

AFREF, Association française pour la réflexion et l'échange sur la formation, 91, rue Blomet F-75015 Paris, Tel. 33 (0)1 56 36 12 45, Fax (33) 01 56 36 07 93; e-mail: afref@club-internet.fr  
CNCP Secretariat national, 80 rue Lecourbe, F-75015 Paris, Tel. (33) 01 44 38 31 53, Fax (33) 01 44 38 31 99; e-mail: info@cncp.gouv.fr; site internet: <http://www.cncp.gouv.fr/>

N.B.: Prior to the adoption of the Law on Social Modernisation which instituted APL, a number of ministries (Education, Agriculture and Sports) had already accomplished a certain amount of pioneering work in the field of evaluation procedures by means of the validation of prior learning (VAP). The Ministry of Social Affairs subsequently tried out other evaluation procedures prior to their extension to French certification procedures in general.

On the subject of APL, cf. also following Cedefop Info articles:  
Definitive adoption of the Law on Social Modernisation, in: Cedefop Info No 1/2002 <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo12002/C12J3EN.html>  
Mainstreaming the accreditation of non-formal learning, in: Cedefop Info No 1/2003 <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo12003/C13K1EN.html>

AUSTRIA

## Continuing training checklist

The increasing importance of life-long learning has triggered a boom in the continuing training market in recent years, with an almost countless number of providers delivering all kinds and types courses and programmes. To help potential clients find their way through this maze of provision, the Austrian Institute for Vocational Training Research (ÖIBF), in conjunction with the Institute for Pedagogical Science and Educational Research of the University of Graz, has compiled an 'online checklist of quality criteria for adult education and training courses'. This online offering is designed to help would-be clients make a considered selection of fee-paying courses and clarify their aims and requirements in their own minds. Alongside these personal decision-making tools, the continuing training checklist also includes objective quality criteria, e.g. cost-benefit ratio, trainers' qualifications, suitability of the premises and the technical facilities of a continuing training institution. This approach fosters quality aware-

ness at both the subjective and objective levels.

In view of the complexity of the issues and technical developments in this field, the checklist is available online (<http://www.checklist-weiterbildung.at>). This online format facilitates direct access by potential course participants, and also promotes multiplication and dissemination, e.g. by counselling agencies and other relevant bodies. The creation of direct links to other sources of information and counselling is also possible. A condensed version of the checklist is also available in hard copy format to ensure dissemination among those with no direct access to the new media.

Source: ÖIB/Cedefop

GERMANY

## IT certification agency launched

In Germany, as elsewhere, there is a certain degree of confusion surrounding the qualifications of IT specialists. While two-thirds of all IT experts are lateral entrants with no relevant vocational qualifications, over 300 different certificates/qualifications have been identified, most of which however are not internationally compatible. Moreover, in view of the high pace of innovation in the IT sector, both employees and firms find themselves having to introduce and apply new technologies flexibly and on an ongoing basis.

The Cert-IT certification agency for IT specialists was set up in September 2003 to create greater transparency in this field. Cert-IT, the first body to be authorised by the Association for Accreditation (TGA) for the certification of IT specialists, provides certification of 29 different specialist profiles. As pointed out by Professor Herbert Weber, chief executive of Cert-IT and director of the Fraunhofer Institute for Software and Systems Engineering, 'with Cert-IT, competences are only acquired in real work processes as the certification of IT specialists is carried out on the basis of successful projects implemented in practice'. For those employed in the IT field, this opens up secure routes for combining a career with learning, as well as an opportunity to acquire internationally recognised qualifications.

This opportunity to upgrade the professional skilling of their personnel has been welcomed with keen interest by industry. The German association of information and telecommunication industries and the new

media (BITKOM) commented that the new continuing training certificates would greatly enhance systematic personnel development. Moreover the transparency created by the certificates is particularly attractive to multinationals: as pointed out by BITKOM director, Dr B. Rohleder, the lack of transparency of continuing training certificates has often stood in the way of the recruitment of qualified IT specialists in the past.

The new certification agency is to assess IT specialists according to the quality standards set by TAG. In doing so, Cert-IT draws on the services of IT experts with practical experience. Candidates for Cert-IT accreditation have to define a real project, to be completed in their own company within a maximum deadline of 24 months. The examination is based on documentation compiled by candidates in the course of the process and an interview on the subject of the project. 'This is evidence that the principle of 'practitioners working on behalf of practice' has also been consistently implemented at the level of certification', commented Stefan Grunwald, Cert-IT managing director. The quality and acceptance of IT continuing training are thereby sustainably guaranteed - which in turn contributes to securing the competitiveness and innovativeness of the German IT industry.

Further information:  
<http://www.cert-it.org>  
E-mail: [info@cert-it.org](mailto:info@cert-it.org)

Source: Cert-IT/Cedefop

SWEDEN

## A commission on validation

Validation is an important function in the education system to support the life long learning process. Validation can be defined as a precise assessment, valuing, documentation and recognition of knowledge and competences that an individual person has gained, irrespective of how and where they have been acquired. The responsibility for validation in Sweden is divided between the education system and the social partners. Validation is often carried out by regional cooperation between education providers, trade organisations and the social partners.

In December 2003, the government set up a special commission in order to develop the processes of legitimising qualifications, quality assurance and methods for validation during the next four years. The com-

mission started operating in January 2004 and has a budget of six million Euro. Members of the Commission include representatives of the social partners and government agencies, such as those for labour market administration and flexible learning

The aim of the validation Commission is to increase quality, strengthen the legitimacy of qualifications and strengthen equivalences in the processes of validating adult's competences and knowledge. The Commission is to cooperate with other bodies in order to develop validation, to make the on-going processes better known publicly and to create a good climate between all partners involved in validation. By creating well-founded presumptions and increasing effectiveness, the questions connected to

validation will get increased attention at national and international level.

The tasks of the commission for validation are to:

- develop legitimation and equivalents,
- carry on and support development,
- strengthen regional cooperation in order to reach well-adapted working methods for development, consultation and evaluation,
- inform the wider public and
- work out proposals on what measures should be taken to assure validation activities after 2007.

The Commission will inform stakeholders, the public and the media about its activities using its homepage, a newsletter, participation in conferences and seminars, and

distribution of information through publications.

The Commission's work will initially focus on describing and mapping ongoing national work on validation in the labour market and in the education field, in order to identify similarities and differences between existing activities. The Commission will also support methodological development and collect experiences from international activities in the field of validation.

For further information, contact:  
Swedish Commission of Validation, Valideringsdelegationen, Sankt Persgatan 10,  
S- 600 02 Norrköping, Tel. (46-771) 25 50 00  
Contact: Eva Nordlund, Director, Tel. (46-11) 24 04 60  
E-mail: [eva.nordlund@valideringsdelegationen.se](mailto:eva.nordlund@valideringsdelegationen.se). Website: [www.valideringsdelegationen.se](http://www.valideringsdelegationen.se)

Source: Skolverket/Cedefop/jma



## IRELAND

### More, but unevenly distributed, training for the employed

8.3% of Irish people in employment in 2002 received education and training during the 4 weeks prior to being surveyed<sup>(1)</sup>. This data is among the findings in a chapter entitled 'Participation of the employed in education/training in 2002' in the latest FÁS review<sup>(2)</sup>. The chapter provides data on the extent and distribution of education and training (ET) among employed persons in Ireland, using recent results obtained from the 2002 Quarterly National Household Survey (QNHS). Data from the QNHS covers all employed persons and will be available annually.

Significant differences persist in rates of participation among different types of employees. This is particularly striking in regard to gender and age. Female participation in education/training at 11% was much higher than that of males (7.8%). Younger age groups were more likely to receive ET than older persons. This was particularly the case for men. The participation rate for employed men over 45 was 4.3%. The figure for women was 8.6%.

There is a marked contrast in the ET participation rates of employees and others (self-employed and owner/managers). Overall, participation rates by self-employed (3.3%) were significantly lower than those of employees (9.5%). Again the gender difference is quite marked - the rate of male self-employed undertaking training is 2.5% and the female rate 7.0%.

Instruction in a working environment (39%) and instruction in a classroom setting (35%) were the two most common types of training undertaken. A combination of instruction with work experience and complementary classroom instruction, indicated by 8%, and other (e.g. e-learning and on-the-job instruction), indicated by 18%, were other options presented.

Analysis of the differences on a sectoral and occupational basis shows that overall the percentage of employed persons aged 25-64 receiving ET varied from 2.4% in agriculture to 16.3% in the education sector. As expected, the rate of participation in ET was very high in the (mainly white-collar) private services sectors, such as financial and business services, and the public services, such

as public administration/defence, education and health - all over 19%. Manufacturing, on the other hand, had a below average rate of 7.1%, while construction, wholesale/retail and hotels/restaurants all had low rates of 4%. The male-female differential persists even within sectors. All sectors experienced a fall-off in ET among older age groups, particularly in wholesale/retail and manufacturing.

As expected, those most likely to receive training were professionals and associate professionals (15%), with females much more likely than males to be receiving ET (18% compared to 11%). A surprise of the survey is the figure of 7% for managers, though this was mainly the case for male managers. It is believed that this is due to a significant number of self-employed, small company, owner/managers, who have a low propensity to receive education/training. An employee with a third-level qualification was nearly four times as likely to receive education/training as someone with lower secondary education. Thus employee training seems to aggravate, rather than diminish, educational differences.

The study concludes that there has been a significant increase in participation in education/training among Irish employees over the last decade. In 2002, 8.3% of employed 25-64 year-olds received ET during the four weeks prior to being surveyed, which would place Ireland in the lower middle ranking of European countries. This was an increase from 6.1% in 1996 and 4.6% in 1991. However, there are significant differences in participation, with relatively low levels among males, older workers and persons with low educational attainments. These differences in participation will need to be reduced, the author states, if Ireland is to develop its lifelong learning objectives.

<sup>(1)</sup> The FÁS report does not contain comparable information about the other EU countries. However, Eurostat figures for the working age (25-64) population i.e. not just employed people show that in 2002 7.7% of Irish people compared to an EU average of 8.4% received education and training in the previous 4 weeks.

<sup>(2)</sup> The Irish Labour Market Review 2003 / FÁS - Training and Employment Authority. Available: FÁS, Planning and Research, 27-33 Upper Baggot Street, IRL-Dublin 4. Tel. (353-1) 607 0526. Fax (353-1) 607 0634. Email: brian.mccormick@fas.ie

Source: FÁS

## ITALY

### Isfol national report on training supply and demand

The first national report on 'training supply and demand in Italy' has been published by Isfol (Institute for the development of the vocational training for workers). The survey provides an analysis of trends in education and continuing training systems in the light of the new scenarios emerging in Europe.

#### Continuing training demand in Italy

The changes in the Italian education and training system in the course of the last decade have not only been legislative and institutional, but above all social. Italian families now invest more in the education and training of their children, and young people stay on longer in education and training; this is particularly true of the 15 to 18 age-bracket (upper secondary school).

The most visible effects of schooling are evident at the level of the workforce. There has been an increase in the number of those holding upper secondary and university qualifications, with increases of 0.4% and 0.5% from 2000 to 2001 respectively. 38% of the population has engaged in post-compulsory education (9% of these with a university degree or diploma); only 32% have gone no further than compulsory schooling and a mere 30% have engaged in only elementary (or no) schooling. There has also been an increase the users of the vocational training system, with the number of courses delivered by the regions rising to 34 400 in the year 2000-2001.

The majority of the courses cater for those in employment: 12 852 (37.3%). These are followed by first-level (6 999) and second-level (6 187) courses, including higher-level technical education and training courses. Apprenticeship programmes stand at a total of 2 000.

A gap between the centre and the south of the country can be observed in

the number of upper-secondary certificate holders (32% against 26%). In contrast, the number of those holding only the certificate of elementary education is much higher in the south of Italy.

#### Continuing training provision

The survey identifies four macro-areas corresponding to the formal and non-formal sectors of continuing training provision: 1) public- and private-sector training/educational institutions; 2) the tertiary sector; 3) cultural infrastructures; 4) other public administration bodies.

The provision of institutional structures is higher than 'non formal' provision, mainly delivered by tertiary sector organisations.

The geographical distribution of the structures shows a significant penetration in the regions of Latium (12.1%), Lombardy (11.7%), Emilia Romagna (11.3%) and Sicily (7.5%).

As far as course modalities are concerned, 85.1% of the centres have implemented face-to-face training courses, 33.2% adopt a 'meeting the experts' approach, 23.8% 'guided visits', 20.1% other forms of didactic and cultural activities, 17.3% seminars and 15.6% conventions.

At the level of financial resources, most of the structures benefit from state funding. The second source of funding are the private contributions of the users. At 14%, funding from the local administrations (Regions, Provinces and municipalities) have a significant weighting, while funding from the European Social Fund remains relatively insignificant (10.2%). Public funding is mainly directed towards 'formal' training provision delivered by educational structures, whereas 'non-formal' training provision is mainly financed through users' contributions.

Further information at: <http://www.welfare.gov.it>  
Source: Isfol (Maria Elena Moro)

# Special target groups



## PORTUGAL

### National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2003-05

The National Action Plan for Social Inclusion (PNAI), implemented under Resolution No 192/2003 of the Council of Ministers<sup>(1)</sup>, follows on from joint commitments made by the Portuguese Government along with the other Member States of the European Union. With the adoption of this plan, Portugal seeks to contribute to the prevention and regulation of problems affecting the most vulnerable groups of society in fields such as participation in employment, reconciliation of work and family life, access to the knowledge and information society and equal opportunities.

In the light of its integrated and integrating character, the Plan envisages interaction with other national processes, including the National Plan for Employment, vocational training legislation, the basic law on social security and all the other plans in the social field.

A series of vocational readaptation measures is designed to increase the participation of the disabled in active policy

measures, in particular vocational evaluation and orientation, job induction schemes, various training arrangements, incentives for the employment of disabled workers, incentives for self-employment and sheltered employment.

In the context of the guiding principles defined, the 2003-05 PNAI provides for a series of measures with the following aims in particular:

1. to promote lifelong education and training as an instrument developing knowledge, competences and skills, with particular attention paid to the most vulnerable;
2. to develop the use of information and communication technologies in education and training, workplace adaptation and increased provision of technical aids with a view to promoting participation in the labour market and society, particularly for disabled people;
3. to help scientific research and higher education meet the needs of society and industry;
4. by the year 2010, to cut by half the number of young

people aged 18 to 24 with nine or fewer years of schooling and no further training;

5. to attain an average participation rate in lifelong learning actions of at least 12.5% of the adult population of working age, again by the year 2010;
6. to guarantee, in the same time-frame, the participation of at least 25% of the long-term unemployed in an active measure in the form of training, re-training, a practical work placement, or other employment promotion measures, with a view to attaining the average rate of the three most advanced EU Member States in this field.

<sup>(1)</sup> Resolution of the Council of Ministers No 192/2003. DR 295 Series I-B, 23 December 2003. Aprova o Plano Nacional de Acção para a Inclusão para 2003-2005; the text can be consulted (in Portuguese) at: <http://www.iapmei.pt/iapmei-leg-03.php?lei=2570>

Source: Diário da República, Series I B, 23 December 2003  
Fátima Hora (fatima.hora@deep.msst.gov.pt)  
Cláudia Arriegas (claudia.arriegas@deep.msst.gov.pt)  
CID/DEEP

## Youth participation project improves opportunities for young people

The Youth Participation Project (2003-2007) is targeted at young people in the final stages of comprehensive school and particularly those who are experiencing difficulties during this stage. It aims at flexible and innovative cooperation between different bodies and to respond to local and regional needs, thus developing new opportunities for young people.

In Finland, 94% of comprehensive school leavers (i.e. those at the end of the first cycle of secondary education) continue their education. 55% go on to the upper secondary school and 37% to vocational education. Two percent of those leaving ninth-grade move on to the tenth grade within the comprehensive school. Six percent of young people do not continue their education immediately after completing the comprehensive school. Moreover, 8-12% of those who start vocational education drop out of it. These young people, mostly boys, are threatened by social exclusion.

The aims of the Youth Participation Project are to:

- make sure that young people take up education or work after comprehensive school,
- reach groups at risk and support them in their choices and,
- offer a broad range of models for problem-solving depending on the individual life situation.

The project operates on the basic value of enabling everyone to lead a full life and to participate in the management of their personal affairs and in joint decision-making.

The project is coordinated by the National Board of Education (NBE). It consists of 39 local projects and involves a total of 75 municipalities in various parts of the country. Its budget is Euro 2 million coming equally from the Ministry of Education and the municipalities. Organisations involved include ministries, actors in the youth sector, the Finnish Association of Local and Regional Authorities, Evangelical-Lutheran parishes and labour market organisations.

The local projects develop:

- methods for an early identification of problems,
- measures of student welfare,
- guidance during the transition stages,
- cooperation between educational institutions and working life and
- cooperation between youth work, social work and education authorities.

The different authorities work with the young person and his/her family in matters concerning the individual. Parents are supported in problematic situations. The young people

are offered personal guidance, support and systematic service in organising their lives. The aim is to set up an educational guarantee, whereby every young person leaving comprehensive school is guaranteed a place, either in upper secondary school or vocational or other education. If a suitable place cannot be found, the municipality where the young person lives will take appropriate steps.

A varied range of leisure opportunities for young people is an important element in the services of a municipality. Young people will also be provided with more opportunities of influencing matters and are encouraged to participate in the preparation and making of decisions.

The project aims at a flexible, network-based cooperation between both locally and regionally based bodies. The networks provide the authorities with a forum for working with the young people - as opposed to only working on their behalf.

The operating models used are systematically monitored and evaluated throughout the project. The research results, data and experiences will be widely disseminated.

More information: [www.edu.fi/osallisuus](http://www.edu.fi/osallisuus), which has material in English on this project  
Source: NBE

### Cultural diversity in the workplace

Continued from page 1

environment including issues of career development and training opportunities.

The report finds that although a higher proportion of migrant than Irish workers received some form of induction, the quality varied widely. A more comprehensive induction process is the norm only for medical or paramedical workers in hospitals. Migrant workers' perceptions of equality of opportunity in relation to promotion or career development were low. Many found that information about training was not always easy to access. Language difficulties impeded such information. The report recommends that

training on multiculturalism and anti-racism should be made available to Irish workers and managers.

The guidelines for diversity training are directed at employers, trade unions and others involved in delivering training at enterprise level. They have been drawn up by a multi-agency framework committee, established under the national partnership agreement, "Programme for Prosperity and Fairness" <sup>(\*)</sup> to promote equality at the level of the enterprise as part of the implementation of the 1998 Employment Equality Act. The guidelines are aimed at supporting those who are commissioning,

designing or delivering training. Practical guidance is given on the delivery and content of such training and on how to evaluate and secure certification of programmes. Ideally, the report states, equality and diversity training should be integrated into training and development generally in the organisation, whether at induction, supervisory, middle management or senior management levels.

A university programme in Equality Diversity Studies involving collaboration between the Irish Congress of Trade Unions, Dublin City University and the Equality Authority is now being offered, while the employers'

body (IBEC) will, in the coming months, publish a comprehensive guideline for employers on diversity management.

<sup>(\*)</sup> Promoting an intercultural workplace; building on diversity, report on the experience of Irish and migrant workers / Dave Redmond & Paul Butler. Dublin 2003. Available: IBEC, Confederation House, 84-86 Lower Baggot Street, IRL-Dublin 2. Tel. (353-1) 605 1500 Fax (353-1) 638 1500. Website: <http://www.ibec.ie>

<sup>(\*)</sup> Guidelines on equality and diversity training in enterprises / National Framework Committee for the Development of Equal Opportunities at the Level of the Enterprise. Dublin 2003. Available from: The Equality Authority, 2 Clonmel Street, IRL-Dublin 2. Tel. (353-1) 417 333 Fax (353-1) 417 3331. E-mail: [info@equality.ie](mailto:info@equality.ie). Website: <http://www.equality.ie>

<sup>(\*)</sup> Government of Ireland: Programme for Prosperity and Fairness. Dublin 2000. ISBN 0-7076-64381. Available: Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 4-5 Harcourt Road, IRL-Dublin 2. Tel. (353-1) 661 3111, Fax (353-1) 475 2760. Price: EUR 6.34.

Source: FÁS

## Internationalisation of vocational education and training

### THE NETHERLANDS

## European benchmarks and Dutch education and training

In May 2003, the Education Council (*Onderwijsraad*) <sup>(\*)</sup> advised the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Agriculture, Nature Management and Food Quality (responsible for agricultural education) on Dutch education and training policy and practice in relation to the European benchmarks.

The *Onderwijsraad* emphasises the care with which international comparisons should be made. When benchmarking relates only to the results achieved, the following issues, which are essential to get a realistic view, are not taken into account:

- possible different starting points of countries. Progress in relation to the starting point is a very important standard, especially as the target may be unattainable or even have already been reached;
- strong economic growth and development in certain countries (e.g. Greece, Portugal, Spain, Ireland);
- the outcomes cannot be seen as standards for success; indicators differ strongly and the results of these comparisons cannot be added up.

Furthermore, the *Onderwijsraad* reported that cooperation between the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, and the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science is important to achieve the benchmarks.

### Dutch accents

The *Onderwijsraad* reviewed the Dutch situation for each benchmark. This was based on the traffic light system; i.e. 'green' for those in which the Netherlands is well placed in comparison to other countries, orange for those needing attention and red for benchmarks where intensification of action is needed. Four benchmarks received an orange light:

- reduce the percentage of early school leavers. Although the percentage is reasonable (15.3 % in 2001, against an EU average of 19.4 %), extra attention is necessary. Various recommendations have been made;
- increase percentage of students with at least upper secondary education. In 2001, 68.4 % of the Dutch population reached this level. The EU goal is that 80% of the population should have reached this level by 2010;
- increase the education level of 15 year-olds. The Netherlands is in a good position, but this might be threatened by the shortage of teaching personnel;
- increase participation in lifelong learning. Although the Netherlands score (16.3% in 2001) is twice the EU-average (8.4 % in 2001), ongoing attention is needed. Motivation of the most vulnerable groups is the most difficult point.

The traffic light for one benchmark is on red:

- train more highly skilled technical professionals, scientists and engineers (especially women). The percentage of women specialists has dropped by 10%. To reverse this trend,

it is important to strengthen cooperation between education and industry, not only in technical jobs, but also in related sectors as health care and economy.

### Proposal for extra benchmark

Finally, the Education Council proposes an extra benchmark to measure the basic skills of all (potential) employees in Europe. To reach the Lisbon goals all citizens should play their part in the development towards a dynamic knowledge economy. The essential skills (e.g. find and use information, read pay slips and travel information) are more and more important for all citizens and they are getting more complex. In the Netherlands, 10% of the working population reach only level 1 of the International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS) research index, while in Ireland, the UK and the United States 20% of the working population does not exceed this level <sup>(?)</sup>.

<sup>(\*)</sup> The Education Council (*Onderwijsraad*). *Europese richtpunten voor het Nederlandse onderwijs*, [European benchmarks for Dutch education and training] in Dutch. May 2003. Den Haag. ISBN 20030153/741.

<sup>(?)</sup> Houtkoop, W. *Basisvaardigheden in Nederland. De 'geletterdheid' van Nederland: economische, sociale en educatieve aspecten van de taal- en rekenvaardigheid van de Nederlandse beroepsbevolking*. 1999. Amsterdam, Max Goote Kenniscentrum. Houtkoop, W. 'De mensen op niveau 1.' In: Houtkoop, W.A. & Wieringen, A.M.L. van (red.) p. 139, 147. *De omgeving van het beroepsopleidings*. 2002. Den Haag, Elsevier.

Further information: [www.onderwijsraad.nl](http://www.onderwijsraad.nl)

Source: CINOP/Onderwijsraad.

## TURKEY

### Lisbon targets

#### Improving through national action

Turkey has a young population, with 20 million of a total of 68 million in the 0-19 age group. Consequently, providing educational opportunities at a broad level is very important. Vocational education and training (VET) is seen as an effective means of developing employment and combating unemployment. The National programme and the 2003 regular report on Turkey's progress towards accession outline the measures to be taken to meet the Lisbon targets. Progress to date is as follows.

Resources allocated to education from the general budget have risen from 3.33% of GNP in 2001 to 4.15% in 2004. There has been a 26% real increase in allocation from the consolidated budget to the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) in comparison to 2003.

In 2000, 33% of the 18-24 year age group continued beyond basic education. During 2000-03, there was an increasing tendency to stay on in secondary and higher ed-

ucation which, if continued, would result in a rise to 65% by 2007.

The project to provide internet access for all 42 534 education institutions by the end of 2004 is well under way. An education portal is being developed, providing support services to teachers, students and families.

#### Hopes for international cooperation

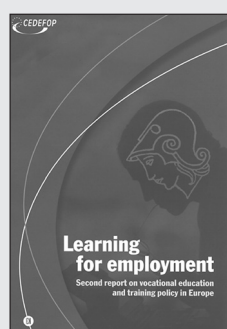
EU support within the framework of the MEDA programme (1) helps pave the way towards the Lisbon targets. One of the long-term projects aims to establish a national qualification framework and develop modular training programmes for both basic and continuing education. Training and support for VET school managers and teachers complement the activities. Up-to-date VET also requires well trained and professional VET teachers. Hence, another project focuses on developing occupational standards for VET teachers, designing a modular training programme based on these standards and developing a modern and effective in-service training system.

From the beginning of 2004, Turkey can participate in the Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and Youth programmes. Great importance is attached to mobility projects under the Leonardo programme.

New methods to teach students new basic skills, i.e. IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills, are being piloted but not yet at the desired level. The other projects under way might provide a framework for continuing the work and achieving more satisfactory results.

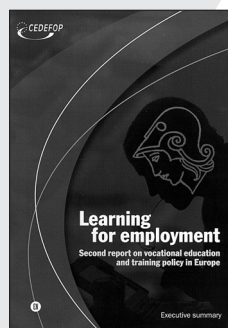
(1) The EU's proximity policy towards the Mediterranean region is governed by the global and comprehensive Euro-Mediterranean Partnership launched at the 1995 Barcelona Conference, between the European Union and its 12 Mediterranean Partners. The MEDA Programme is the principal financial instrument for implementing this partnership. The programme offers technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean partner countries. *Strengthening of vocational education and training system in Turkey and Modernisation of vocational and technical education* are the two MEDA projects referred to.

Source and further information:  
Aise Akpınar  
Tel. (90-312) 426 34 85 or (90-312) 426 34 86  
E-mail: eduser@turk.net

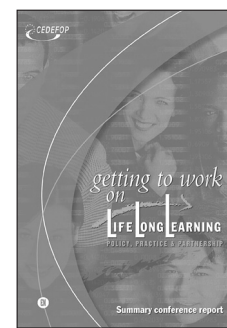


**Learning for employment**  
**Second report on vocational education and training policy in Europe**  
Cedefop Reference series 3032  
Language: en  
Price: EUR 30  
Cat. No: TI-57-03-540-EN-C

May be obtained from the EU sales offices



**Learning for employment**  
**Second report on vocational education and training policy in Europe**  
**Executive summary**  
**4027**  
Languages: da, de, el, en, es, fi, fr, it, nl, pt, sv  
Cat. No: TI-53-03-708-EN-C  
Free of charge on request from Cedefop



**Getting to work on lifelong learning**  
**Policy, practice & partnership**  
**Summary conference report**  
**4033**  
Language: en  
Cat. No: TI-59-04-750-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

## Social partners

### BELGIUM

#### Conclusions of the 2003 conference on employment

In the context of the conference on employment held in the course of the last quarter of 2003, the social partners at federal level formulated a series of proposals designed to mobilise all stakeholders (authorities, employers and trade unions), within their own specific fields of responsibility, with a view to increasing the level of training provision to the benefit of both sides of industry.

The social partners confirmed the terms of the inter-occupational agreement - to reach a global training effort corresponding to 1.9 % of the total wage bill by 2004.

They also expressed their willingness to consider increasing that figure even further to reinforce and achieve a more even distribution of the overall training effort.

They also intend to increase the rate of participation in training in accordance with the new European guidelines, aiming at 50 % of workers engaging in training every year by 2010. As a result, between 2004 and 2010, all stakeholders will have to make a concerted effort to provide a training opportunity for 60 000 workers every year.

In the context of these efforts, the social partners recommended that a particular effort be made in order to diversify the categories of workers receiving training. To this end, they call upon industries and firms to earmark 0.10 % of their total training effort for groups at risk, in particular older workers, the low-skilled, the disabled and migrants.

By means of these increased efforts, they also wish to facilitate access to sensitive occupations. They call upon the various industries, in collaboration with placement agencies and with due account taken of the situation in each labour market, to regularly monitor and forecast occupational and skill trends and to increase financial incentives to engage in relevant training programmes.

Moreover, without prejudice to the different areas of responsibility, the federal social partners advocate a more methodical and structured organisation of training, in particular by means of sectoral training plans and individual company training plans, designed to implement these broader sectoral plans.

On the basis of the technical work done by the Central Council for Economic Affairs and the National Labour Council, the social partners are to develop a simple measuring instrument which will provide an accurate overview of the overall training effort.

As far as existing training instruments are concerned, the social partners are to examine the possibility of optimising the operation of the sectoral funds and easing administrative formalities and reimbursement of employers within the framework of the paid educational leave system.

Moreover, the social partners support the initiatives of the Regions in the field of the recognition of prior learning by, among other things, opening up paid educational leave to skills acquisition, according to modalities and conditions to be set within the context of the social dialogue. They call upon the federal authorities to take account of these qualifications in assessing vocational aptitude for access to occupations.

Among their proposals relating to jobseekers and labour-market entrants, the social partners stress the importance of education as a mechanism of labour market entry. They call upon the competent players to harness the enormous potential of know-how in the world of education to the benefit of employment, among others by decompartmentalising the different forms of education, by breaking down education into modules, by according a central role to the 'learning to learn' approach, by stimulating collaboration

between education and the enterprises at the level of teachers and trainers (exchanges, re-training, etc) and by enhancing the value and appeal of technical and vocational education.

Each of the social partners is to examine the actions which could be undertaken within their own particular area of responsibility to ease the transition between education and labour market, among other things by better provision of information for young people on labour-market opportunities to support a reasoned educational choice (possibly through sectoral funds); by determining an increase in the number of young people in statuses facilitating labour-market entry; by simplifying and rendering more attractive all statuses of apprenticeship and breaking down existing barriers; by promoting structural collaboration between schools and industry; by offering students industrial placement opportunities, infrastructures, etc; and by developing a clear status for tutoring and mentorship (titulariat) schemes.

The social partners emphasise the importance of developing a coherent approach between now and 2006 to guarantee the provision of guidance and training for all jobseekers. The social partners at federal level will also make a contribution to this effort in the framework of the 'vocational integration plan'. The social partners call upon both the regional authorities and the regional partners to examine the possibility of improving the guidance of jobseekers throughout the transition phase and rendering this provision more effective. In this context, the social partners will also examine the extent to which collaboration between the sectoral training funds and regional and community initiatives can be optimised.

Information from: FOREM - Department for International Relations Sigrid.dieu@forem.be  
Source: Site Internet - <http://www.vandenbroucke.com>

This dossier contains a series of snapshots of vocational education and training in the new EU Member States. The pictures come from both the countries themselves as well as from European observers. The ETF contribution also provides a retrospective view of joint activities with and in these countries and an appraisal of the development of the reform process. The national contributions focus on the presentation of models of good practice and challenges still ahead. We would like to thank our colleagues and partners in the various countries for their contributions and hope that the comparison of the different perspectives will encourage readers to make a closer acquaintance with VET in the new Member States.

Corinna Frey, Vaclav Klenha and Eleonora Schmid

## EUROPEAN TRAINING FOUNDATION (ETF)

### Preparing for today - 13 years in retrospect

**The ETF looks back on its cooperation with the acceding countries and reflects on the state of play in vocational education and training.**

#### The ETF in action

Since 1995 the ETF has worked intensively with EU candidate and accession countries. The work started with the implementation of Phare (!) projects on vocational education and training (VET) plus programmes of management training, distance education and higher education on behalf of the European Commission.

Simultaneously, the ETF set up national observatories for VET and labour market issues in all countries. The main aim was joint development of thematic work on specific priority fields. These included mutual recognition of regulated professions, social partnership in vocational training, training of teachers and trainers, vocational qualification and certification standards, curricula and core skills and transparency of qualifications. There was also training and entrepreneurship for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), continuing training and labour market training and regional development.

In 1998, after the European Council of Luxembourg and the reorientation of the Phare programme, the ETF was asked to focus on analysing and reporting on education and training developments in the candidate countries. The revised aim was to support the preparation process for EU accession. The ETF started to produce annual reports - the Review of progress in VET reforms - for each candidate country. The European Commission used these reviews when drafting the regular reports on the countries' progress towards meeting the conditions for EU accession.

Finally, in June 2000, the European Commission asked the ETF to prepare in-depth

monographs on lifelong learning and the public and private employment services systems in the candidate countries. This work was seen as a contribution to the monitoring of the joint assessment papers (JAP) on employment priorities each country had to prepare in conjunction with the Commission. The monographs have been used systematically by the Commission services and country representatives, during bilateral discussions and meetings of the joint monitoring committees.

The report, *Thirteen years of cooperation and reforms in vocational education and training in the acceding and candidate countries: what are the lessons to be learned from the perspective of the Lisbon objectives?* constitutes a synthesis of all this work. At the time just before accession it was important to review the lessons of the past and to assess where acceding countries stand in reference to the Lisbon objectives and what their main challenges and priorities are. Some of these are highlighted below.

#### VET developments Systems reforms and their impact

Since 1990, the acceding and the candidate countries have radically reformed education and training. With EU assistance, some started early and in a coherent way; others began later or had to face a number of challenges when designing and/or implementing reforms. Cyprus and Malta did not have to face the constraints of moving away from a centralised planned economy, so their situation has been different. It is not surprising that some countries have achieved better results than others.

The reforms differed in focus depending on the different systems and subsystems. Vocational education and training, in particular, received insufficient attention and support from policy-makers and, therefore,

still faces significant challenges. The current situation in education and training in the candidate countries is highlighted in the recent ETF report mentioned above. The analysis focuses on the areas where EU benchmarks have recently been adopted: the number of graduates in maths, science and technology; the performance in literacy of 15 year-olds; educational attainment; the issue of early school leavers; the participation of adults in lifelong learning.

All countries have changed their secondary school systems. They have developed general education, introduced new streams and pathways and/or modernised technical and vocational streams at upper secondary and post secondary levels. Particular attention was given to tertiary education. The opportunities for students in technical and vocational streams at upper secondary level to obtain the *maturita* and to enter tertiary education have been enhanced. In most countries, short university-level VET programmes have been developed fairly quickly. Local and regional training centres and private educational establishments and universities have also developed quickly, complementing the formal system and contributing to a growing non-formal education sector. In consequence, participation in upper-secondary education and, even more, in tertiary education has increased substantially. Total enrolment in tertiary education is now very close to the EU rate but enrolment in mathematics, science and technology is markedly below the EU rate.

#### Updating curricula

International assistance prompted curricular revision which is still in process. The aim is to widen scope and incorporate core skills, with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurship, computer literacy and foreign languages. Curricular reform was achieved quite quick-

ly in general education but the results of the PISA study indicate low performance in most countries in some of the key competences important in preparing for life in the knowledge-based economy and society. However, other studies demonstrate a positive impact in some of the countries arising from high levels of public investment and consistency in educational reforms.

Curricular reform in vocational streams has been more difficult to devise and implement. VET curricular development requires responsiveness to labour market needs and close cooperation with the social partners. This poses a considerable challenge in economies which experienced complex changes and where rapid development of the services sector accompanied a very slow restructuring of agriculture and industry. Development started mainly on a pilot basis. Dissemination and mainstreaming are still difficult, as they require ambitious actions in teacher training activities and equipment refurbishment. While national competence-based qualification frameworks are now being introduced to provide a basis for curricula development, the process is still far from complete. It is estimated that, at best, 30% of the curricula have now been revised and implemented. In the majority of vocational schools the former very narrow and highly specialised curricula still prevail. Thus, improving the quality of VET is still a considerable challenge as is promoting transparency in the whole system. Moreover, despite the fact that far fewer graduates enter the labour market after completion of upper secondary education, as more and more continue in tertiary education, their qualifications are mostly outdated and they face very high unemployment rates.

This means that the high proportion of people with high levels of educational

Continued on page II

attainment in the candidate countries, compared to the EU, is misleading. It details only numbers and does not take account of the profound mismatch between the qualifications provided under the former planned economy and today's labour market needs. For the same reasons, early school leaving and dropout rates in vocational schools have increased severely in many cases. However, the overall rate of early school leavers is lower in most of the countries than in the EU. This demonstrates the priority given to general education as well as the strong and positive role the formal system is able to play when it deals with social cohesion and equal access. But this requires appropriate funding in a situation where public resources have been limited and are now markedly below the EU average in the largest countries. In contrast, they are often markedly higher in the smallest.

### Future priorities

Until now continuing education and training has not received priority treatment. Access is uneven across categories, sectors and regions. Disparities are significantly greater than they are in the EU-15. The situation is particularly difficult for the unemployed and/or groups at risk who do not benefit from the same level of active labour market measures as in the EU-15. Public employment services are still ill prepared to cope with very high unemployment rates in some countries, the continuing industrial and agricultural restructuring processes and the increase in population at risk of exclusion. The situation is particularly critical for the Roma population in central Europe.

Although training funds have been set up and incentives have been introduced in some countries, enterprises still do not invest significant resources in (continuing) training of their employees. As a heritage of the former system, adult education is rather more developed and policy-makers often see it as a way to prepare for lifelong learning and to compensate low investment by businesses. Nevertheless, skills development in the adult population is a big issue and the main challenge is to counteract growing social exclusion.

From the analysis it is possible to identify some key features that need proper attention and support. Awareness of the importance of human resources development has grown and a number of actions have been undertaken and/or reinforced in consequence of the technical assistance of the Phare programme, full inclusion in the Euro-

pean employment strategy and the European Commission's initiatives to promote lifelong learning, to meet the Lisbon objectives and enhance cooperation in VET (Education and Training 2010) Preparation for the European Social Fund continues but is hampered by slow progress in institution-building within education and training. However, considerable sections of the populations show great motivation for learning and a number of actors at national, regional and local level are developing interesting initiatives to raise awareness on learning issues and promote education and training.

What still requires serious efforts is the definition of comprehensive strategies. This includes:

- setting up priorities and ensuring the coordination between ministries and all administrative layers;
  - increasing funding and its effectiveness;
  - involving the social partners in education and training, giving attention to learning at the workplace and encouraging the cooperation between schools and enterprises;
  - considering quality assurance and transparency issues and ensuring recognition and validation of prior learning;
  - attributing significance to teachers status and training as well as improving teaching aids and equipment;
- counteracting social exclusion is probably the main challenge.

There is still a lot to do to meet the Lisbon objectives.

Jean-Raymond Masson  
Senior Advisor

(<sup>1</sup>) Similar to agricultural and structural support, the Phare programme has been an instrument to assist the countries in their preparations for joining the European Union. Originally created to assist Poland and Hungary (1989), it has supported the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and Bulgaria and Romania in their economic and political restructuring processes. Cyprus, Malta and Turkey have received separate pre-accession funding. Until 2000 Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia were also beneficiaries of Phare. However, as of 2001 they have received financial assistance through the CARDS programme (Community assistance to reconstruction, development and stability in the Balkans).

After 1993, when the Copenhagen Council invited central European countries to apply for membership, Phare aimed at supporting infrastructure investment. Since the Luxembourg European Council's launch of the enlargement process, Phare funds have focused on the priorities highlighted in each country's accession partnership, a document which outlines the areas where progress needed to be achieved prior to accession.

<http://europa.eu.int/comm/enlargement/pas/phare/intro.htm#11>

## CZECH REPUBLIC [CZ]

# Progressing from a sound base

### Private funding helps state reform

The Czech Republic has the highest proportion of people in Europe with a full upper secondary education. VET has always held a strong position in upper secondary education, maintaining its importance with the establishment of private schools which also now provide VET opportunities.

Young people clearly want a route within VET which ensures their progression to tertiary education. After 1989, interest in education accelerated structural changes. Major developments included reduced interest in vocational training without *maturitní zkouška* (<sup>1</sup>) (*střední odborné učiliště* - ISCED 3C), increasing interest in secondary technical and vocational education with *maturitní zkouška* (*středná odborná škola* - ISCED 3A) and establishment of 'higher professional schools' (*vyšší odborné školy* - ISCED 5B). Since the mid-1990s, these have been a substitute for the slowly developing bachelor programme and have made tertiary level education possible for thousands of young people. Since parents are increasingly willing to pay for their children's education, private higher education institutions providing bachelor programmes have grown over recent years, enhancing the capacity of tertiary education.

Young people's interest in education has been supported by the development of counselling. Pedagogical-psychological counselling is traditionally part of education, focusing on problems and the choice of suitable programmes. New information and counselling centres at labour offices, set up in the mid-1990s, offer career counselling; their work has substantially broadened the range of information about employment opportunities for school leavers and employers' requirements. New counselling approaches have been developed (e.g. various counselling modules, diagnostic tools, the integrated system of typical positions (<sup>2</sup>)), as well as new ways of providing counselling services to meet individual client needs. Increasingly links are developing between the two counselling systems, with positive impact on best educational and career path selection in line with available employment opportunities.

### Society needs CVET

In spite of positive trends, the Czech Republic cannot be complacent. Indicators of participation in education after the age of 18

are still far below the EU average; many young people do not continue their vocational education after completion of upper secondary school. The capacity of the tertiary sector and the proportion of students in shorter programmes at tertiary level (including higher professional schools) are still insufficient, despite a considerable increase in the 1990s.

The development of continuing education and lifelong learning is of fundamental importance. Particular attention must be given to promoting lifelong learning among those with low qualification levels; in the Czech Republic this includes graduates from secondary vocational programmes without *maturitní zkouška*. Participation by adults in continuing education is 6.4 %, far below the EU average. Moreover, there is no system of CVET that is linked to IVET, particularly regarding certification. Generally recognised certificates can only be obtained within the school system and the issue of acknowledging non-formal learning has not been addressed. This and other problems related to CVET will soon have to be tackled systematically, the rapid ageing population providing added incentive.

(<sup>1</sup>) maturitní zkouška: exam which provides university/higher education access.

(<sup>2</sup>) <http://www.istp.cz/charlie/istp-info/html/istp-eng/index-eng.html>

Source and further information:  
Věra Czesaná, Národní observatoř zaměstnanosti a vzdělávání - Národní vzdělávací fond (National Observatory of Employment and Training - National Training Fund)  
Tel. (420-2) 24 50 05 00  
Fax (420-2) 24 50 05 02  
e-mail: czesana@nvf.cz  
[www.nvf.cz/observatory](http://www.nvf.cz/observatory)

## Modern approaches deserve modern attitudes

### External assistance feeds structural change

Considerable progress has been made in developing VET in Estonia in recent years. This was largely stimulated by the prospect of EU accession and the support of foreign assistance, such as the Phare programme and bilateral support from EU member states. A major achievement is the establishment of a competence-based qualification system. Before 2002/03, there was no VET qualification system in place and certificates awarded after training simply confirmed that a specific programme had been covered. The initiative to create a qualification system came from employers' organisations unhappy with the lack of qualified labour and dissatisfied with the existing VET system.

Work on a national qualification system began in 1997/1998 under the auspices of the Estonian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Social partnership was a key element and 16 professional councils, such as construction, financial services and the timber industry, were established. These councils develop and ratify professional standards and licence awarding bodies. The main legal and institutional framework was established in 2000 with the adoption of the Professions Act and the

creation in 2001 of the Estonian Qualification Authority.

Today Estonia has a 5-level qualifications system with 348 ratified professional standards. VET schools must use these professional standards for developing curricula and as the criteria for professional qualifications. Non-regulated professions are managed by 34 bodies, usually professional associations, and the award of a professional qualification in this area is discretionary. So far 1 559 certificates have been issued by the awarding bodies and it is expected that the number will rapidly increase as the professions become more fully involved.

### Internal beliefs hinder optimum progress

Despite what has been achieved, improving the image of VET among young people, and so increasing VET participation at secondary level, remains a major challenge. The number of students in Estonia following basic education with vocational training is one of the lowest in Europe. Most opt for a secondary general education (gymnasium) with only about a quarter choosing VET. Targets set in the 2001-2004 action plan for developing Estonian VET sought annual increases in participation. These targets are not being met though there has been a noticeable im-

provement in the volume of students taking up VET.

Low participation is partly as a legacy of the low social status of VET during the country's former history and also its image as a second class education; an academic education is seen as more valuable in the labour market. The problem of ingrained attitudes may take some time to overcome fully.

There has been progress in the introduction of social partnerships, new qualification systems, curricula and equipment, teacher training and career guidance and counselling. It is hoped that joining the EU, and seeing the benefits and advantages derived by other countries, will help young people recognise the value of vocational education.

Source and further information:  
Lea Orro  
Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development Innove  
Estonian National Observatory  
Liivalaia 2, 10118, Tallinn, Estonia  
Tel. (372) 6998062  
Fax (372) 6998081  
E-mail: Lea.orro@innove.ee  
www: www.innove.ee

## A major resource for a small economy

### Continued reform with increased participation

Cyprus has a small and open economy with limited natural resources. Growth demands investment to develop its most important asset: its human resources.

Education levels in Cyprus have risen dramatically in recent times, with fewer Cypriots now without any education. Participation by 12-17 years olds is estimated at over 90% and there is a strong leaning towards general and higher education. Approximately 85% of upper secondary students are in general education while 15% opt for VET programmes. More than two thirds of secondary education graduates continue on to tertiary studies. Upper secondary education has undergone reform to respond to the labour market and knowledge-based society. This has been fully implemented in upper secondary general education and is currently being evaluated.

VET reform, approved in 2000 with the aim of modernising curricula and providing easier progression to higher education from technical and vocational areas, is entering its final stage and is being closely monitored. Transfer between general and technical and vocational education programmes will also be easier, with VET elements becoming more attractive through student-centred learning, new programmes (e.g. for the service sector) and more practical training.

The human resource development authority (HRDA), as the main promoter of initial out of school and continuing vocational training, ensures a wide range of training schemes in all sectors of the economy and at all levels. The number receiving training has increased over the years to 11% of the employed population (34 400 during 2003). Approximately 17 000 participate in programmes organised by education centres for adults. Evaluating labour market characteristics, the training sector and the challenges of EU accession, reveal that significant progress has been made in training within recent years. Businesses and employees increasingly see the importance of training and lifelong learning.

### Seeking broader scope, demanding flexibility

A more comprehensive approach to lifelong learning is needed. Analysis of education, training and the labour market indicate policy priorities for the coming years.

First is a focus on those not in employment, providing training and employment opportunities. Even though adults can acquire formal qualifications and/or upgrade their skills, options for the unemployed are limited. Guidance and counselling is confined to filling vacancies. Provision for vulnerable groups is important, especially for females, the disabled and secondary education graduates who cannot find jobs. There are few opportunities for those who drop out of school, par-

ticularly for girls; this requires attention if the 2000 school dropouts each year are to be brought back into education, training and eventual employment.

Enhancing flexibility, quality, range and responsiveness in technical-vocational education and training is also important. Training in any of its forms, (formal, non-formal, initial, continuing, private, public) must support employability and adaptability in available human resources to contribute to Cypriot economic competitiveness. Currently, links between initial and continuing vocational training are weak. National occupational standards need to be developed. These could form the framework for what is lacking: an integrated approach to formal recognition of competences, whether acquired through secondary technical and vocational education, continuing vocational training, experience-based or through apprenticeship.

Source and further information:  
Antonios Kafouros  
Department of Labour  
Tel. (357) 22300300  
Fax (357) 22663788  
e-mail: roc-te@cytanet.com.cy



## Infrastructure changes to meet external challenges

### Teachers as a training priority

There have been positive vocational training developments in Latvia since 1991, including reform of VET teacher training. Traditionally, most teachers working in VET institutions were specialists with appropriate secondary vocational or higher education in their professional field. Most did not have a specific pedagogical (diploma) education. As from January 1 2004, teachers must have pedagogical training in addition to their vocational qualification. The curricula for VET teacher pedagogic training were drafted, as part of the same reform, for those without this type of education.

Today, VET teacher training can be acquired through a higher vocational education programme which provides a 'teacher' qualification. This confers a bachelor's or master's degree or provides professional development programmes with teacher training courses lasting at least one year, including 320 contact hours. Other courses for teach-

ers are also offered by local government training centres, city and regional education administrations and teachers' professional associations.

### Local partnerships for European goals

However, there is still much to be done. Latvia must develop a comprehensive and coherent lifelong learning strategy which ensures access to education for all groups in society. Achieving this demands adequate financial resources and more social partner involvement in vocational education at institutional and regional levels.

While national tripartite social dialogue is well developed, local cooperation should be improved to take local needs for VET and employability into account. The national tripartite sub-council for cooperation in VET and employment, established in 2000, is actively involved in VET and employment issues, discussing and approving policy documents, approving vocational

standards, etc. Discussions to organise regional sub-councils, however, have been on the agenda for several years without specific impact. Encouraging local social partnership and raising social partner awareness of VET issues takes considerable time and effort.

So far, one regional tripartite sub-council has been established (in Rezekne). The members are five state and local government institutions, four trade union branches operating in the region and the chamber of crafts, together with five representatives of businesses. The main tasks of this sub-council are to promote cooperation in developing VET, continuing training and labour market accessibility. The quality of vocational education and developing employment and international cooperation are other important topics. The sub-council is also expected to be actively involved in coordinating regional examination centre activities, work placements, information exchange and accredi-

tation of education establishments and programmes.

While the main challenge will be to make this council work effectively for local VET, and to set up similar councils in all regions, Latvia has firmly set as a priority its integration into the common European area of education. It is determined to achieve the Lisbon and Copenhagen goals.

Source and further information:  
Baiba Ramina and Solvita Silina  
Academic Information Centre- Latvian National Observatory  
Tel. (371) 7-212317  
Fax (371) 7-221006  
email: baiba@aic.lv; solvita@aic.lv  
website: <http://www.aic.lv/en/ln/default.htm>

## Seeking effective education and training

### Education and assessment: separating functions

Education reform in Lithuania followed the announcement of independence in 1990. Local initiatives and EU support have resulted in VET changes that include curriculum reform, a system for training of the unemployed, social dialogue, and establishing the quality assurance system. However, putting in place a VET system to meet labour market needs was constrained by the specific situation in the country. The economy has been undergoing a radical restructuring from centralised planning to a free market and schools have needed to promote vocational education and training, traditionally of low prestige.

As a result, links between vocational education and training and the economy were rather formal: it became difficult to ensure the same standard of qualification for graduates from different VET schools. Therefore, it was decided to separate education and training from the final qualification assessment. This function was delegated to the Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Crafts.

The experiment began in 1998; in 2003 the final assessment of qualifications in initial education and training was organised by the chamber for the whole country. The first steps in transferring responsibility for the final assessment of qualifications for labour market training to the Chamber have also been taken (see also Cedefop Info 3/2003).

The method of final assessment commits schools to maintaining more strictly the qualification requirements set by the state and to paying more attention to meeting labour market needs. The participation of all the interested parties - employers, employees and school representatives - in the assessment stimulates further social dialogue. Separation of the responsibility for training and final assessment should enhance the effectiveness and quality of vocational education and training, as well as creating favourable conditions for developing validation of non-formal and informal learning. This is in line with the Copenhagen Declaration priorities of quality assurance in VET and recognition of competences and qualifications.

### Qualified workers from qualifying frameworks

European education and training initiatives and the integration of Lithuania into the EU have raised new challenges for education. In June 2003, the Seimas (Parliament) of the Republic of Lithuania confirmed the National education strategy guidelines for 2003-12. Following the approval of these guidelines, a detailed implementation programme was developed and adopted by the Government: included are transparency of qualifications and labour force mobility.

The revitalised economy needs qualified workers competent to operate modern equipment, middle level employees with up-to-date competences, and highly qualified academic staff. This in turn requires a well-tuned qualifications framework, currently considered the main challenge for the further development of education and training. Employers and their organisations bemoan the shortage of qualified staff, a problem so acute that the Prime Minister has set up a special task force on urgent proposals to improve the correspondence

between workforce demand and supply. The development of a qualifications framework will have the highest priority among actions supported by the European Social Fund.

Further information:  
Vincetas Dienys  
Profesinio mokymo metodikos centro  
(Methodological Centre for VET)  
Gelezinio Vilko str. 12, LT-2600 Vilnius  
E-mail: valdas.d@pmmc.lt  
Tel. (370-5) 249 71 26  
Fax (370-5) 249 81 83  
Website: <http://www.pmmc.lt>

Source: Methodological Centre for VET/National Observatory



## Good VET funding fights poor prestige

### Structure delivering benefits

During the last decade, financing has played an important part in developing VET in Hungary. By law, Hungarian businesses must contribute 1.5% of their wage costs to VET support. This can be through in-house training, supporting the development of VET establishments or contributing directly to the training element of the labour market fund. The development objectives and programmes of this fund, and the resources for them, are determined by the National Vocational Education Council, with its five sector representation (employer, employee, government, main-tainer and chamber).

Regional development and training committees are allocated 60% of resources. Programmes developed by the fund include: school and company workshop development, the development of qualifications, teacher further training, comprehensive e-learning and textbook development, profile change in school training, the introduction of a quality assurance system, career guidance, a counselling system and international programmes. Resources are distributed through a tender system, which has developed over the last two years in line with the tendering system for structural funds.

The accession of Hungary to the EU opens the way to supporting similar development

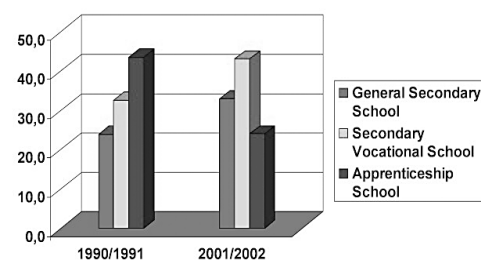
programmes, using the existing successful financial model as a basis on which to allocate resources.

### Actions undermining intentions

The main aim of education policy over this period has been to ensure that all Hungarians have equal education opportunity and receive training suited to their abilities and needs. The number of students undertaking higher education doubled, their main requirement being to pass the érettségi vizsga (the final secondary school leaving exam). This is acquired at grammar or secondary vocational schools, prompting student focus on such schools.

However these developments resulted in the number of those in vocational training dramatically decreasing to half of that at the beginning of the 1990s; the situation was made worse as the numbers of students in the relevant age groups also fell. The effect of this reduction began to be apparent in the workplace at the beginning of this decade, with a serious shortage of skilled workers in a number of professions.

The solution may not lie totally within VET but there is a serious need to address the current system. Young people selected for vocational school training often have poor academic standards, and sometimes few or no



numeracy and literacy skills. The natural result is poor progress and inevitable failure in the system. A fresh approach has been provided in a three-year comprehensive development programme aimed at raising the image of vocational school training, reducing drop-out and devising training programmes more suited to the needs of the economy.

For further information, contact:  
 Tamás Köpeczi-Bócz (PhD)  
 Hungarian National Observatory  
 Bihari J. u. 5.  
 H-1055 Budapest  
 E-mail: [tamas.kopeczibocz@omai.hu](mailto:tamas.kopeczibocz@omai.hu)  
 Tel. (36-1) 301 32 10  
 Fax (36-1) 301 32 42

## Restructuring demands resources

### Trade school out, technology in

Two main achievements mark VET reform in Malta: phasing out of trade schools, with the introduction of lower secondary technology education, and reorganisation of post-16 VET under one post-secondary umbrella.

Trade schools were set up in 1972 to offer education resembling the world of work. They aimed to provide literate workers with craft-level skills that could be upgraded. However, they offered an impoverished curriculum, often leading to blue collar work in low-wage, low-skill sectors. They also reinforced traditional destinies for young women, directing them to sectors such as textiles.

In the mid-1990s, Malta began restructuring its economy towards higher skilled, high value-added service industries and electronics. This required more flexible workers, with basic understanding of technology and soft skills best promoted by general education. Concern for equity and postponing selection and channelling of students also contributed to the argument that trade schools should be closed down.

A new curriculum was designed, introducing primary and lower secondary students to skills that aided better appreciation of the role of technology in contemporary life and encouraging suitable approaches to learning. This programme is being piloted in a number of schools.

Establishing the Malta College of Arts and

Technology (MCAST) in 2001 was a major VET development (see also Cedefop Info 3/2003). It promotes the philosophy that all young people can achieve higher levels of learning and competence in a context comparable with the academic stream. Its ambition is to provide VET accommodating different ages, learning styles and time schedules.

The MCAST has already done much to project a more modern image of VET, to attract able students in the post-16 sector, and offer a credible alternative to academic higher secondary education. Credit equivalence is a basis for transfer to university degree courses. The College also offers second-chance education, giving the young access to further training opportunities.

### Quality, certification and the need for a framework

VET quality remains an issue, despite various initiatives and a new culture of benchmarking, especially in teaching. The new MCAST administrative culture caused several experienced teachers to transfer to general schools. Newly-employed lecturers, often having solid grounding and industrial experience in their subjects, have little or no methodology training. Pedagogy remains largely traditional. In-service training has been ad hoc, though a new collective agreement entitles MCAST staff to promotion-linked training. Pre-service VET teacher training is not offered in Malta.

Malta's certification systems have largely focused on academic courses, contrary to the interests of young people who do not attain the secondary education certificate. Creating MCAST sparked a debate about the need for certification that can accredit prior experiential learning and benchmark levels of achievement across vocational skills. This is seen as facilitating vertical and lateral mobility, locally and internationally. The debate brought about the Malta Professional Vocational Qualifications Award Council (MPVQAC) in 2000, seeking a national competence-based vocational qualification framework for initial and continuing training. However, the Council has suffered from lack of funds and insufficient local expertise. The need for a vocational qualifications framework, sustained by appropriate organisation, systems and policies, remains pressing. It is a major stumbling block in putting VET on a solid footing.

Source and further information:  
 Ronald G. Sultana  
 Euro-Mediterranean Centre for Educational Research - EMCEP,  
 Faculty of Education, University of Malta,  
 Msida MSD 06 - MALTA.  
 Tel. (356) 23402936  
 Voice mail and fax. (356) 21338126 or (356) 21414680  
 e-mail: [ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt](mailto:ronald.sultana@um.edu.mt)  
 Web page: <http://www.educ.um.edu.mt/mep/>



# The new Member States - some vital statistics

	CZ	EE	CY	LV	LT	HU	MT	PL	SI	SK	
Total population in millions (1 January 2004)	10.211	1.35	0.727*	2.318	3.447	10.115	0.399	38.193	1.996	5.38	
Unemployment rate (% of the labour force) in 2002	7.3	9.1	3.8	12.8	13.1	5.6	6.7	19.9	6.0	18.6	Total
	16.9	17.7	9.7	24.6	21.4	11.9	15.2	41.7	15.3	37.3	Youth
Total public expenditure on education as a % of GDP (2000)	4.4	6.7	5.6	5.9	5.8	4.5	[1] 4.45	5.1	[2] 5.6 (e)	4.2	
Public expenditure on vocational education and training (ISCED levels 2, 3, 4) in 2002	(p) 2.2	m	[3] 1.9	m	(p) 1.8	m	m	1.4	m	[4] 3.0	% of total public expenditure
	1.0	m	0.3	m	0.4	m	m	0.9	m	0.9	% of GDP
Highest level of education completed of adult population (aged 25-64) in 2002	12.2	12.5	33.5	17.4	15.2	28.6	81.6	19.2	23.2	14.2	at most lower secondary upper secondary
	76.0	57.9	37.4	63.1	40.7	57.3	9.5	68.6	62.1	75.0	
Participation rate in education (ISCED levels 1 to 6) in 2000/01	52.0	62.1	37.5	59.3	64.5	51.6	65.9	63.4	62.7	46.0	
Participation rate in vocational programmes (ISCED levels 2, 3, 4) in 2002/03	(p) 60.5	17.3	[5] 7.7	m	(p) 12.3	[5] 14.1	} [5] 6.8	(p) 34.1	[6] 53.3	[5] 47.2	aged 15-19 aged 20-24
	3.3	5.7	a	m	2.4	4.7		8.1	a	1.2	
Participation rate of adults aged 25-64 in education and training (2003)	5.4	6.2	[7] 7.9	8.1	4.5	[7] 6.0	(e) 4.2	(p) 5.0	[7] 9.1	[7] 15.1	
Percentage of employees participating in CVT courses, (1999)	42	20	(e) 10	12	10	12	m	[8] 16	32	20	all enterprises
	49	m	m	25	20	26	m	33	46	m	only enterprises providing training

Sources: SiF Theme 3 2/2002 - 13/2003 - 16/2003 - 1/2004, ETF Key Indicators database, Eurostat Structural Indicators Webpage (December 2003, January 2004), Employment in Europe 2003

\*: Government controlled area

[1] Year of reference 2002

[2] Year of reference 1999

[3] Year of reference 2001

[4] Year of reference 2000

[5] Year of reference (school year) 2001/02

[6] Year of reference (school year) 200/01

[7] Data lacks comparability with previous years

[8] Pomorskie region only

(a) not applicable, (p) provisional data, (m) missing data, (e) estimates

## POLAND [PL]

# Matching learning to markets

### Training for today's jobs

How do we ensure that students acquire adequate skills and competences if schools are not really aware of labour market requirements? How do we improve the image of VET schools?

External examination has been introduced in Polish VET schools to assess competences and skills relevant to specific occupations (the so-called vocational exam). The concept of the exam is based on uniform requirement standards throughout the country. Standardised procedures and similar tools are used for measuring achievements, the students being assessed by a team of independent external examiners.

As from the 2003/2004 academic year, the examination will be extended to cover graduates from the following upper secondary areas of education:

- two or three-year basic vocational schools;
- four-year technical vocational school (*technicum*);

- three-year supplementary *technicum* (for graduates from basic vocational schools);
- post-secondary schools with a period of instruction not longer than two and a half years

The examination consists of two elements, a written (theory) and a practical component. The written test assesses knowledge and skills corresponding to qualifications in a given occupation and those relating to future employability and business activity. In the practical part, pupils are asked to perform a task related to the specific occupation.

The new exams are based on the standard requirements adopted by the social partners for specific occupations, taking into account the labour market situation and trends and the employers' expectations. As a result, the examination tasks are linked to realistic organisational and technical problems. This link has been made possible through cooperation between the Ministries

of National Education and Sport, Economy, and Labour and Social Policy

### Training for tomorrow's challenges

School is no longer an institution where qualifications are acquired; it is becoming a place that teaches how to learn. Knowledge and skills acquired in formal education (school system) are merely the foundation for further education and learning. The concept of lifelong learning was not recognised in the past and qualifications acquired at school were the basis for lifetime employability. While the socio-economic context and the demands of today's labour market have changed, the approach to learning has not kept pace. It is crucial that education and training establishments play their part in raising awareness of the importance of lifelong learning.

Shaping attitudes and value systems to build a lifelong learning culture is the central challenge and this has to start with primary education. A support framework is needed that ensures access to informa-

tion about learning and employment opportunities, both in domestic and European labour markets. Networks offering different avenues of learning, suited to student needs and building on competences acquired in earlier learning, must be developed. To meet these aims appropriate and accessible databases must be developed and curricula and textbooks amended. Adequate funding is the key.

Source and further information:  
Prof. Dr Stefan M. Kwiatkowski, Director of the Institute for Educational Research  
ul. Górczewska 8, 01-180 Warsaw  
Tel. (48-22) 632 18 69, Fax (48-22) 632 18 95  
e-mail: ibe.medianet.pl  
Further reading: National observatory VET country reports

## Education through partnership

### Business training, combined evaluation

Vocational education and training (VET) is well structured and heterogeneous, providing students with different ways of acquiring occupational qualifications. Besides the 'traditional' forms of (two, three and four-year) vocational schools, dual-system programmes have been developed in some established branches (e.g. wood processing, car mechanics). The development of post-secondary vocational colleges has been of particular importance. Courses at these schools last two years and 40 % of training is carried out with employers, where students conduct project tasks. To enrol in these programmes, students must successfully complete the general or vocational *matura* exam and/or master craftsman's exam and some additional exams. Post-secondary vocational colleges are an example of business being ready to train for mid-level management functions. It is also expected that realisation of the Bologna process will open up the doors for these students to access or transfer to professionally-oriented higher education. Graduates have no problem finding jobs.

To improve and maintain the quality of education and training, Slovenia has opted for a combination of self-evaluation and external assessment methods. External assessment has been introduced for the *matura* in secondary general education programmes (*gymnasium*) and for the practical part of final examinations in dual-system programmes.

The National Examination Centre is responsible for the logistics of state-organised external assessment. This system provides a high level of objectivity, contributes to the development of new forms of examination and supports goal-based curriculum planning.

### Partnership challenges, accreditation needs

Properly functioning social partnership is a key condition for further development of VET. The social partners are represented in the Council of Experts for Vocational Education and Training, responsible for reconciling occupational standards and adopting curricula. Although the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport still has the most crucial function, the social partners have been given legal authority to verify training positions with employers, supervise practical training and propose occupational qualifications; these are the key instruments for VET planning.

Although social partnership is being successfully realised at the state level this is not the case locally or regionally. Local coalitions, which can ensure appropriate links between schools and their environment, are yet to be established, despite a new framework for VET curricula allowing schools to determine 20 % of contents in cooperation with regional or branch social partners.

Lifelong learning requires accreditation systems for informally acquired knowledge and skills. In 2001, the relevant legislation was

already adopted but implementing an accreditation system means changing programme and certificate structures. Currently curricula enable acquisition of qualifications for several related occupations. In the future a module for each individual qualification should be defined within curricula. Such a modular system would enable dropouts to acquire a nationally-recognised qualification, i.e. receive a certificate, for one of the occupations for which they were trained, so improving their labour market potential. The new system should also allow adults to use informally acquired knowledge 'formally' in their further education. This will aid establishment of a complementary and transparent system of vocational education and accreditation of occupational qualifications to support the development of lifelong learning.

Source and further information:  
Boštjan Zgonc  
Under State Secretary  
Ministry of Education, Science and Sport  
Trg of 13  
1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia  
Tel. (386-1) 478 52 84  
E-mail: bostjan.zgonc@gov.si

## Networking: the key to success?

The transition to a market economy and a multiparty democracy, started by the economic transformation in 1991 and the creation of an independent state in 1993, has resulted in dramatic changes in Slovakia. However, changes in education may not be so evident. Some analysts, mainly right-wing economists, consider that educational reform has not even started. Others, predominantly from the education sector, consider that the reforms shifting responsibilities from the state to self-governing bodies and from the Ministry of Education to regional and local authorities have been too hasty. With the exception of power-sharing reforms, developments in other areas have been gradual and more subtle, for example the steady development in post-secondary education and curriculum design.

One major development that perhaps is

difficult to quantify and therefore has received little recognition is the growth of networking and the increased spirit of openness since the 1990s. Crucial changes in education have stemmed from partnerships, e.g. within the Phare VET reform programme aimed at the establishment of pilot schools, in bilateral projects or in current community projects mainly within the Leonardo da Vinci and Comenius programmes. Changes such as these, which can be introduced by partnerships directly into school infrastructure and day to day working, are the most important and effective means of reform. Broad measures, for example increased autonomy in curriculum development (10 % of weekly hours and 30 % of content left for adjustment to regional and local needs) or the promotion of self-governance by creating school

boards, cannot produce such significant change so easily.

The further promotion of openness, networking and school-to-school partnerships, successfully initiated in the 1990s, is crucial to continued educational reform in the 2000s.

### No investment, no incentive

The availability of adequate finance is a vital factor in successfully coordinating the many policies in education and VET funding; as resources are limited, this is a major challenge facing the Slovakian education system. The present state budget based financing system encourages an insular approach and imbalance among stakeholders. These regional disparities cannot be overcome, nor more ef-

Continued on page VIII



fective use made of resources, without devolving budgets and agreeing on the appropriate targeting of funds.

More efficient social partnerships cannot be formed without the finance for VET being drawn from diverse sources; employers cannot be effectively involved unless they contribute directly to VET and/or are attracted by financial incentives. Further, financial regulation is needed to ensure consistency in the proper allocation of resources between initial and continuing VET and training for the unemployed, and between formal, non-formal and informal LLL.

A tax reform, implemented on 1 January 2004, introduced a flat rate of 19 % income, corporate and value added tax and is expected to attract foreign investment and stimulate free enterprise at home. These developments should be accompanied by promoting the value of education and training and investment by the business world.

Businesses still suffering from lack of liquidity, a dead capital market and an inability to obtain credit might not recognise the importance of investment in human resources. Equally, people struggling with rising living costs as a result of the increase in value added tax on everyday goods and services, and by the deregulation of the cost of energy, might

also be deterred from investing in education and training. There is a resistance to funding VET by a levy over a 10 year period but the developing alternative funding measures encourage all those involved to adopt pro-educational strategies.

Before being able to implement the Lisbon strategy and accept calls for higher investment in LLL, the Slovak government must face two fundamental issues:

- the problems arising from the way that budgets are devolved and allocated as a result of the 2004 fiscal decentralisation (1);
- the way in which the tax reforms introduced in 2004 can assist in developing the

quality of education and training and an improved method of funding VET and LLL (2).

(1) While responsibilities have been transferred to regional level and municipalities, the state still controls the funds.

(2) A robust financing scheme which enables entrepreneurs to invest in VET is needed, currently the state decides where the investment is made.

More information from:  
Juraj Vantuch at [sno@netax.sk](mailto:sno@netax.sk).

Štátny inštitút odborného vzdelávania  
(ŠIOV - State Institute of Vocational Education and Training)  
Tel. (421 2) 54 77 67 74  
Fax (421 2) 54 77 67 74  
Available from Internet:  
[http://www.education.gov.sk/pro/siov\\_index.htm](http://www.education.gov.sk/pro/siov_index.htm)

Source: ŠIOV/Cedefop/ews

## CEDEFOP

# Ten new countries on board!

For Cedefop the EU's enlargement on 1 May brings in 10 new members with sometimes very different systems, priorities and policies so far as vocational education and training (VET) is concerned. In seeking to assess the position of each country it will be important to bear in mind its particular social and economic situation. The new countries are joining the EU at a time when European cooperation in the fields of education and training is being steadily and purposefully intensified. One of the principal challenges to be faced is ensuring that information concerning VET is efficiently prepared, made available and used as a source of new knowledge. The practical innovations to which it leads can help the EU-25 and associated states to deal with the problems they share in ways appropriate to each.

How is Cedefop approaching its expanding range of tasks? The accession of the new states will mean that formally responsibility for them passed from the European Training Foundation to Cedefop overnight. In fact however cooperation between Cedefop and the ten new Member States already goes back a number of years.

### What has been done so far

As long ago as October 1992 Cedefop took part in the Eurotrain for Training initiative designed to promote initial and continuing training and manned by international VET experts whose route took them via Warsaw, Prague and Budapest. The first real steps in Cedefop's cooperation with individual central and eastern European countries (CEECs) date back to 1997. Although the Centre's medium-term priorities fixed in 1996 for 1997 to 2000 provide only for conducting comparative studies and preparing key data, from 1997 onwards the Management Board took a keen interest in the further involvement of these countries in Cedefop's activities. Besides the study visits programme under which participants from the countries of central and eastern Europe had since the mid-1990s been invited to visit existing Member States, with a visit to Cyprus being organised for the first time in 1997, the entry strategy adopted in the same year encompassed a whole series of Cedefop projects. The approach was flexible with individual countries being involved in different ways. The year 1997 also saw Cedefop concluding its first memorandum of cooperation with the Euro-

pean Training Foundation (ETF) relating to a sharing of information. Since then Cedefop's Deputy Director has been a member of the Foundation's Governing Board. From 1998 onwards Cedefop expressly sought to make its own products and services better known in the new countries.

The impetus for Cedefop to step up its activities with the candidate countries stemmed from the European Council held in Helsinki in 1999. This paved the way for a common strategy for enlargement - and hence also for a more systematic approach by Cedefop. A useful framework was provided by the Commission's post-Helsinki Communication on participation of the candidate countries in Community programmes, agencies and committees (COM (99) 710 fin.) which enabled these countries to take part in and send national delegates to meetings, seminars and working groups. Funds were made available for this purpose under the PHARE programme. Today Cedefop employs a number of experts and trainees from the future Member States, representatives of which attended a meeting of the Management Board for the first time in October 2003.

At the same time, Cedefop continued to develop its cooperation with the ETF through joint work programmes to intensify the exchange of information and participation in one another's meetings, working groups, committees and projects. Since mid-2000 the ETF has held a senior position in the Editorial Committee of Cedefop's European Journal for Vocational Training. This steadily growing contact has now led - in close consultation with the Commission - to a complete, systematic transfer of know-how and databases.

### Where do we go from here?

As from 1 May 2004 Cedefop is working with its new partners directly, no longer through the ETF. The latter's principal responsibility of assisting these countries to adapt their initial and continuing/further VET called for a different approach for each individual country with an expert responsible for one or several countries. Cedefop, by contrast, has always used a thematic or project-related approach. As a result, all the data received from individual countries will now have to be horizontally reorganised and incorporated in a large number of Cedefop's projects and networks.

All this will mean a great deal of work for the contact persons in the new Member States. ReferNet - Cedefop's information gathering network - will be extended to cover the new countries as from 1 May. Every care will be taken when setting up the new national consortia of specialist organisations to ensure that advantage is taken of existing national expertise, as well as that of Cedefop and the ETF. In future countries will be required to provide more diverse, project-related information.

Cedefop, too, will have to face up to change. With 27 partner countries and additional staff recruited from the new Member States, it will need to adapt its working methods, although its work will undoubtedly also be enriched. After all, in many of the new countries VET has traditionally been accorded high importance so that cooperation in this field will by no means be one-way, with the new countries acquiring the existing corpus of Community law and regulations. On the contrary, the older Member States will also be able to draw on the fund of experience gained by the new countries in the process of reform. Cedefop is anxious to take advantage of this uniquely radical and rapid socio-economic transformation process as a valuable source of knowledge for its own activities. At the same time, it could well lead to a rethinking of certain aspects or at least changes in nuance in VET strategy and policy at EU level.

The future will show how rapidly we are able to grow together. Contacts have been established, curiosity and interest on both sides is great. A promising start indeed!

Dr Stavros Stavrou  
Deputy Director