

## CEDEFOP

### Evaluation and impact of education and training

#### Third report on vocational education and training research in Europe

Cedefop has published its series of reports on vocational education and training research since 1998. The reports provide a comprehensive review of current research in initial and continuing vocational education and training (VET) in Europe, its results and their implications for policy, practice and future research. Attention is also paid to theoretical and methodological foundations and due reference given to relations with institutional, economic, social, demographic and other fields of social action.

Each research report comprises a background report of several volumes, with contributions from renowned researchers, and a synthesis report prepared by Cedefop experts.

Detailed information on the reports and how they can be obtained are found in Cedefop's electronic training village ([www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects\\_Networks/ResearchLab/](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/Projects_Networks/ResearchLab/)).

Cedefop's third research report deals with the evaluation and impact of education, training and skills. It illustrates the contribution of education and training to realising a knowledge-based society and specifies their benefits for individ-

uals, enterprises and society as a whole. It also suggests ways of improving the design and implementation of education and training programmes or measures. The report serves both to inform and improve policy and practice, and further develop research. It also contributes to the discussion on the goals set by the European Council at its Lisbon and follow-up summits.

The background report, edited by Pascaline Descy and Manfred Tessaring (Cedefop), gathers contributions from renowned experts and researchers into three published volumes (1). These contributions review the impact of education and training from various angles: individual, enterprise and macro/system level. They discuss concrete evaluations of education and training systems and active labour market policies, with detail of approaches, foundations, methods and standards of evaluation and impact research.

#### Education and training impact

The first volume focuses on the impact of education and training, reviewing their contribution, and that of human

capital, to the economic growth of countries and regions, to company performance and to individual careers. The papers include research findings on material and non-material, social and private benefits of education, training and skills. They also discuss the limitations to investigating these issues. The picture is completed by case studies on the impact on the economy and social integration of active labour market policies (ALMP) with training components.

R. Wilson and G. Briscoe (IER, University of Warwick, UK) discuss the contribution of education, training and skills to economic growth and productivity at macro level; H. Izushi (Coventry Business School, UK) and R. Huggins (Robert Huggins Ass., UK) review related research at regional level. A. Green, J. Preston and L.-E. Malmberg (Institute of Education, University of London, UK) discuss the non-material benefits of education and training, in areas such as citizenship, health, crime, trust and political participation. B. Hansson, U. Johanson (IPF, Sweden) and K.-H. Leitner (Austrian Research Centers, ARC) investigate the impact of train-

Continued on page 5

## GERMANY

### A blessing or a curse?

**The German federal government has for the time being suspended the legislative process on the introduction of the training levy. The social partners are deeply divided on the issue of the proposed levy.**

The possible introduction of a training levy has been the subject of controversy in the federal debate on training places for a number of years. With another yawning gap between training place supply and demand looming up on the horizon again this year, the Social Democratic/Green coalition government decided to bring before Parliament a bill introducing the controversial levy. On 7 May, the government pushed the Law on Securing Vocational Training through the Bundestag against the votes of the opposition. However the bill was blocked by the upper house representing the Länder in June in order to give the voluntary 'training pact' with industry another chance of fruition.

The bill which is now 'on ice' before the conciliation committee imposes the levy on all companies with over ten employees liable to social insurance contributions if the number of their trainees is less than seven percent of the entire workforce (referred to as the training ratio). These firms will have to pay a fine, or levy, into a fund by means of which the federal government intends to fund additional training places, on the one hand, and reward enterprises with a training ratio of more than seven percent, on the other.

The federal government nevertheless gives priority to voluntary efforts over the imposition of the levy. The cut-off date is 30 September each year. If the number of vacant training places on that date does not exceed the number of unplaced applicants by at least 15%, the levy will not be imposed. Efforts to

conclude a binding multi-annual training pact between the federal government and industry initially failed. Whereas the federal government merely wished to suspend application of the law by entering into this alliance, industry refused to sign the pact unless the bill introducing the levy was scrapped entirely. This condition has now to all intents and purposes been fulfilled although the legislative process has only been suspended and not actually shelved.

The social partners hold diametrically opposed views on the training levy. While the employers condemn the bill as a 'scandal', it is welcomed by the workers as 'long overdue'.

In May, Michael Sommer, President of the German Trades Union Congress (DGB), congratulated the federal government on its decision to introduce the levy which he believed would improve young people's opportunities in the training market. He recalled that the assurance of employers' representatives that an adequate number of training places would be offered without the need for legal constraints had repeatedly been proven wrong in the past and that, on the contrary, the situation in the training market had continued to deteriorate. The number of training places had fallen by some 82 000 to about 380 000 in the course of the last two years, while the ranks of the applicants had swollen. The figures proved that the introduction of a training levy was necessary. Sommer described the position of the employers - who would only agree to a training pact if the law imposing the levy was suspended for three years - as absurd and said that it made them lose every credibility.

In contrast, the decision on the training levy

Continued on page 9

## EUROPEAN UNION

### Historic step for guidance

On 28 May the Education, Youth and Culture Council of Ministers took a historic step by adopting a Resolution on lifelong guidance. This endorsement by Ministers and the decision to opt for a Council Resolution on this area of education, training and employment policies constitute a strong signal of the importance now accorded to guidance at the highest level. Clearly guidance is no longer considered as a peripheral issue or mere accompanying action but has moved from the wings and is now firmly centre stage.

The main reason for this attention is the recognition of the key role guidance plays in promoting public policy goals such as lifelong learning, social inclusion, labour market efficiency and economic development which all contribute to the realisation of the strategic objective the EU has set itself of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world by 2010.

Lifelong learning is the foundation upon which the development of a successful knowledge-based society is built. Access to good quality education and training across the lifespan is crucial. And the more diverse and flexible learning systems are, the greater individuals' needs for guidance become to enable them to make sense of the diversity of choice they are faced with. Individuals have to be able to make decisions about career and learning opportunities at all stages in their lives and to be equipped with the skills to self-manage their career-paths. In fact, lifelong guidance is a pre-requisite for effective lifelong learning.

The Resolution defines guidance as: 'a range of activities that enables citizens of any age and at any point in their lives to identify their capacities, competences and inter-

ests, to make educational, training and occupational decisions and to manage their individual life paths in learning, work and other settings in which these capacities and competences are learned and/or used.' Making lifelong guidance a reality, however, is a challenging task. Recent research, carried out by the OECD, Cedefop, the European Training Foundation and the World Bank, shows that current guidance provision is generally both narrowly targeted (mainly on secondary school pupils and unemployed adults) and limited in its content.

The Resolution stresses that, in many countries, policies, systems and practices for guidance in Europe do not match the demands of knowledge-based economies and societies and call for a reform of policies and a rethinking of practices. The Resolution puts especial emphasis on improving access so that guidance services are: 'available at times and in forms which will encourage all citizens to continue to develop their skills and competences throughout their lives, linked to changing needs in the labour market.' Particular attention is also given to provision for individuals and groups at risk and to the need for more flexible and diverse guidance provision, including the use of innovative methodologies and technologies as well as outreach services.

Key priorities highlighted in the Resolution include:

- improving the content of guidance services by refocusing provision on skills to manage learning and work;
- developing better quality assurance mechanisms for guidance services, information and products, especially from a citizen/consumer perspective;

Continued on page 17

## Letter from the Director

1 May marked the formal enlargement of the European Union. Our Management Board meeting on 13/14 May was therefore the first, which all 25 countries could attend with the power to vote. Cedefop organised a special information day for board members from the new Member States on 12 May. We are pleased that the new Member States and the Candidate Countries are well represented in the national contributions to this issue of Cedefop Info.

In June all these countries as well as the remaining EEA countries participated in the annual meeting of our ReferNet (see Cedefop Info 2/2002). This meeting carried out its normal task of reviewing inputs from the ReferNet members to Cedefop's different activities, for example the Knowledge Management System, the VET bibliographical and institutional databases, Cedefop Info, etc. It also looked at the question of how to effectively organise a network covering 30 countries, comprising, at the national level, hundreds of members and carrying out a broad range of different tasks.

The results of the Council of Education Ministers held under the Irish presidency on 28 May illustrated graphically that the momentum of activity at European level in the fields of education and VET is being maintained. It adopted a Resolution on strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of lifelong guidance (see article on page 1 and 17). It also drew conclusions on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning and on quality assurance in vocational education and training (see OJ C C 104, 30.4.2004). In addition it reached political agreement for a common position on a Decision of the European Parliament and Council on a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (see separate article on page 20).

At the meeting of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT) held in Brussels on 24/25 June, there was a first discussion on what might be included in the communiqué to be adopted by Member States in Maastricht in December. The progress in achieving the Lisbon goals and, in particular, in implementing the Copenhagen declaration on enhancing the

role of VET was welcomed. However, members, particularly from the social partners, drew attention to the information gap and the enormous difficulty in making European citizens aware of the practical and positive implications for them of what is now planned in the areas of education and vocational training. Much of what has been done is neither easily available nor comprehensible to the individual learner. This in effect can be seen as echoing one of the conclusions drawn from the very low turnout in some countries in the elections to the European Parliament held earlier this month. One of the challenges for Cedefop is to identify how it can promote its information instruments (both electronic and hardcopy), in order to support the European Commission, the Member States and the social partners in getting the messages about progress in creating a European space of lifelong learning over to the individual European citizen. In this context our virtual communities (see <http://cedefop.communityzero.com/>) could play an even more important role in the future.

The study visit programme for experts in the field of vocational training which Cedefop has organised for many years, most recently as part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, is a particular instrument for the intensive exchange of information and experience. In this and future issues of Cedefop Info we will have a new section ('Study visit programme corner') with contributions from programme organisers and participants.

Johan van Rens  
Director  
30 June 2004

### CEDEFOP

## New glossary to promote mutual understanding throughout the new Europe

Cedefop publishes a glossary of 86 essential VET policy terms.

Cedefop is publishing a glossary of vocational training policy addressed to the new Member States: *Terminology of vocational training policy - A multilingual glossary for an enlarged Europe*. The initial edition of the glossary presents 86 widely used terms from all levels of vocational training (policy, research, action in the field) in six languages: English, French, German, Czech, Hungarian and Polish.

Each term is accompanied by a definition, along with its source, as well as comments on both the general concept and the use of the term in the relevant countries. Closely related terms are also listed so that the user can 'surf' throughout

## Was the Olympic spirit present at the 20<sup>th</sup> Agora conference?

Returning from Thessaloniki to Berlin shortly after the 20th Agora conference, my attention was caught by a billboard advertising a global credit card company which proclaimed that 'there is Olympic spirit in all of us'. And it struck me that this slogan could have been coined by the organisers to describe the spirit which reigned at the 20th Agora conference held on 10 and 11 May 2004 on the subject of 'New approaches to vocational education and training through sport'.

In a year which not only sees the Olympic Games return to their birthplace, but has also been proclaimed 'European Year of Education through Sport' by the EU, this was an ideal choice of subject for a Cedefop event in Greece, the cradle of world sport. Cedefop's long-standing member of staff Norbert Wollschläger had got the timing exactly right.

And so they came to discuss the role which could or should be played by sport in VET: politicians, scientists, practitioners, teachers, sportspersons and administrative experts.

The participants arrived in beautiful Thessaloniki from Australia, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Malta, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

The Agora conference was offered a particular highlight by the host country in the shape of a visit (amid great media hype) by Greek opposition leader and former foreign and education minister, George Papandreou (Socialist Party, PASOK). Although many were puzzled about the reasons for his lightning visit, to their surprise he actually addressed the subject of the conference, thus proving that his visit was not a ritual exercise. Papandreou expressly underlined the 'power of knowledge in the hands of the citizens' and 'the importance of lifelong learning', and emphasised the role of sport not only as a health factor, but also as a *sine qua non* in the life of society, in terms of the values it imparts. He echoed what Cedefop Director Johan van Rens had described as the role of sport in his introductory statement to the conference: 'Sport is an essential part of our society. One in three Europeans regularly practices a sport, not only to keep fit and healthy, but also to enjoy the competition with others.' Sport instils 'noble virtues': team spirit, sharing, tolerance and strength of character. Along similar lines, the paper inviting contributions to the 20<sup>th</sup> Agora had read:

'Sport undeniably instils noble values: team spirit, a feeling of togetherness, greater self-confidence. But ethics, health and the assumption of personal challenges belong to the ethics enshrined in the Olympic Charter of Baron de Coubertin since 1896. Thus, when those values take the form of skills that can be used in daily life as well as in professional life, should they not appear in one way or another in the curriculum vitae? Turning the question round, is it not possible to use sport as an educational tool in order to impart certain skills or values that are necessary professionally? Is this not precisely what we mean by vocational training?' These were the issues which had drawn the experts to Thessaloniki. As only limited and isolated national activities have been conducted in this field so far, they wished to find out more.

The assembled experts wished to find out what role could be played by sport as an educational tool in VET and in work-

ing life, but also what dangers are inherent to the commercialisation of sport. Unfortunately this aspect was only touched upon. However the conference participants were given impressive accounts of how active sportsmen and sportswomen devote their lives to competitive sport and training. At the end of their sporting careers, many feel at a loss. Life after a sporting career is not easy. Many former sportspersons have difficulty coping with the transition to 'normal' working life, a different working world, without the assistance of others, such as their former clubs, and above all without the support of training institutions at all levels. In a nutshell: coordination between sports and working life is vital.

Detailed reports and presentations were given on efforts in e.g. Finland, the Netherlands and Scotland or - outside the EU - Australia or Switzerland to integrate sport as an inseparable dimension of education/training. All the participants agreed on the educational and social values and virtues instilled by sport, although it was recognised that sport and education have so far existed in separate worlds. Bringing these two worlds together could be one of the successes of this conference: after all, both sport and education face some of the same areas of conflict: violence, drugs and racism. The educational and social values of sports, including the ability to appraise one's own errors and strong points, and to appraise others, must therefore be incorporated into both these worlds.

How can this be done? The question of incorporating sport into the future EU constitution gave rise to debate. Should the EU have responsibility for amateur and professional sport, along similar lines as its competences in cultural affairs? Good arguments were presented for and against.

Ultimately, therefore - and this is one of the insights from this conference - organisers and participants must be on the lookout for partners. However they must have sound and convincing arguments to convince politicians to establish sport as a fundamental educational tool in the curricula of all educational institutions. Both Finland and the Netherlands offer good examples of how this could be tackled.

Despite a considerable degree of cross-fertilisation among the Agora participants, with many interested questions asked and a lot of new ideas gained, the fundamental issues remained unanswered. As pointed out by Cedefop Deputy Director Stavros Stavrou in his concluding address: 'It has become clear that sport is a supplement, an element or a main element of education and in life, when learning and at work. Sport is a means of imparting knowledge and abilities which are useful for later working life.'

Until a decision on the integration of sport into VET is taken, long efforts of persuasion will be necessary to bring together the separate worlds of sport and education. As Cedefop Director, Johan van Rens, put it 'It is not a sprint we have ahead of us, but a long-distance run'.

Ulrich Eickhoff, journalist, Berlin

For more information: Norbert Wollschläger, Cedefop, [nw@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:nw@cedefop.eu.int)

the glossary to a deeper level of research. An index in each of the six languages aids consultation.

### Better mutual understanding

The multilingual glossary is the result of a long process of research and consultation among practitioners in the various countries as well as European and international institutions.

It is designed to assist the work of participants at meetings on vocational training at European level. It provides a uniform working basis, creating the same understanding of currently widely-used concepts of vocational training policy, e.g. 'non-formal learning', 'lifelong learning', 'the digital divide' and the 'learning region'.

Practitioners working on the basis of common definitions will thus be able to dialogue more easily.

As a bridge towards the languages of the new Member States, the glossary will also facilitate the work of translators and interpreters in a field in which policy trends have a considerable influence on the content of terms.

The glossary is available from Cedefop free of charge. At present it is only available in hard copy form but will soon be accessible for online consultation.

Further information from  
Philippe Tissot, [pht@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:pht@cedefop.eu.int)  
Sylvie Bousquet, [sbo@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:sbo@cedefop.eu.int)

Source: Cedefop/sbo/pht



## Streamlining Cedefop for the challenges of the future

New developments, particularly those related to enlargement made it necessary to amend the Council Regulation of February 1975, which established Cedefop. This provided an opportunity for the Commission to propose and for the Council to agree to a number of additional changes in Cedefop's founding regulation. These resulted from the recommendations of an external evaluation carried out in 2001 and an action plan for the implementation of its findings, established by Cedefop's Management Board. They also took account of an opinion on reforms delivered jointly in 2003 by the management boards of Cedefop and the two other tripartite agencies (Dublin and Bilbao). The objective is to maintain the efficiency and effectiveness of the Centre and its management structures.

Under the Council Regulation<sup>(1)</sup>, the Management Board now becomes the Governing Board. The principal of parity between governments and the social partners is main-

tained and the Board to have three representatives from each member state and from the Commission. However due to the size of the Board, it will normally now meet only once a year. It will however establish a Bureau, which will be made up of the chairperson and the three vice-chairpersons of the Governing Board and a further representative of each of the groups on the Governing Board. The Bureau will monitor the implementation of the decisions of the Board and take all necessary measures for the management of the Centre between Board meetings. Decisions in the Bureau are to be taken by consensus.

The new regulation also formally stipulates that Cedefop should establish Medium Term Priorities and cooperate with the European Training Foundation (ETF).

Source Cedefop/JMA

## Vocational training between skills for the workplace and personal development

Within the framework of its study visit programme (see page 19), Cedefop held a synthesis seminar in Bratislava, 1-2/12/2003, on 'Reforming vocational training in Europe' to discuss the reforms in the east and the west.

Of the innumerable changes which have had to take place in the countries of central and eastern Europe, those in the field of vocational education and training are the least well known, the most delicate and, perhaps, among the most decisive for the success of their integration into the European Union. They are the least well known changes because, in both eastern and western Europe, training issues are often seen as administrative matters, lacking excitement compared with the political and economic upheavals taking place. They are the most delicate changes, because transforming training systems simultaneously brings into play policy-making, the attitudes of the social partners and the choices of individuals. And finally, they are the most decisive changes because they create - or fail to create - the level of skills and human resources which will enable these countries to narrow the gap still separating them from the European average.

The challenges facing these reforms are in fact very similar to those facing vocational training in western Europe: how to keep pace with excessively fast changes in the working world without leaving behind a growing number of workers and how to forge skills that will meet the needs of our economies in the first decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Apart from some circles close to Community institutions, few experts, researchers, politicians or media are interested in the changes taking place in the education and training systems of eastern Europe. This is true of France and western Europe generally. This is why it is so significant that at the

end of 2003 the European Training Foundation (ETF) published a report on thirteen years of cooperation and reforms in vocational education and training in the acceding and candidate countries (see Cedefop Info 1/2001).

Since 1989, the vocational training systems of the former Communist countries have seen their links with big industry fall away together with the funds they generated. Under the old regime, anyone starting training could be sure he would be assigned and guaranteed a job for life. In Czechoslovakia, 80% of a generation pursued vocational studies and 70% in Poland. Subsequently the public authorities, supported by Community programmes, tried to replace the declining large industries with private training offers, responding to the immediate needs of the enterprises suddenly confronted with market mechanisms and a heavy social demand for disciplines and technologies coming 'from the west': computers, foreign languages (especially English), marketing, management, etc. But this development meant that the private training market only satisfied the most 'solvent' demand coming from the most well-to-do groups. At the same time, public policies gave priority to general education, thus responding to the mass popular demand for access to higher education which, until that time, had been reserved for a small elite: in Poland, for example, the number of staff in higher education institutions tripled between 1989 and 1996, and the proportion of a generation in general higher education reached 70% in 1997. Vocational training thus suddenly became the poor relation of the education system.

Lately, rising unemployment as a result of massive industrial restructuring and the inability of young people who have complet-

## Contents

Austria 16, 18 • Belgium 7, 10, 18 • Cyprus 4 • Czech Republic 12, 13, 16 • Denmark 5 • Estonia 18 • Finland 8 • France 10, 11, 14 • Germany 1, 8, 16 • Ireland 11, 12 • Italy 6, 8, 19 • Latvia 13 • Lithuania 7, 17 • Norway 7 • Poland 9, 12 • Romania 14 • Slovakia 9, 13 • Spain 14 • The Netherlands 6, 15, 17 • Turkey 18 • United Kingdom 10, 15

### Cedefop/Europe 1-5

Cedefop: Evaluation and impact of education and training • Germany: A blessing or a curse? • European Union: Historic step for guidance • Cedefop: Letter from the Director • Cedefop: Was the Olympic spirit present at the 20th Agora conference? • Cedefop: New glossary to promote mutual understanding throughout the new Europe • Cedefop: Streamlining Cedefop for the challenges of the future • Cedefop: Vocational training between skills for the workplace and personal development • Euroopen: Trading at the edge of reality • Cedefop/Cyprus: Preparing Cyprus for ReferNet • Europe/ETF: Financing of VET reforms in South-Eastern Europe

### Internationalisation of vocational education and training 5-6

Denmark: Strategy to strengthen internationalisation of education and training • Europe: Launch of European Youth Portal • European Training Foundation/Syria: Making all the difference • Italy: Training passport popular among young Italians

### Lifelong learning 6-7

The Netherlands: Latest developments in accreditation of prior learning and in lifelong learning • Belgium: First skills centre opens in Flanders

### Educational policy 7-8

Norway: Culture for learning • Lithuania: Colleges: a new higher education opportunity in Lithuania • Finland: Guidelines for education and research until 2008

### Initial and continuing vocational education and training 8-11

Italy: The right and duty to education and training: training standards • Germany: Reforms to back up new offensive • Slovenia: Decentralisation, a key instrument in developing the training system • Poland: New challenges for vocational education • France: New right to training in industry • Belgium: Technical education offers better job market prospects in Flanders • United Kingdom: New apprenticeships to widen opportunity and boost business • France: Governmental plan to modernise apprenticeship training • Ireland: Who is trained at work, and how?

### Employment policy 12

Czech Republic: Information support for human resources management • Ireland: Changes proposed in focus of human resource investment • Poland: First Job: implementation and results

### New organisations and programmes 13

Czech Republic: Launch of the centre for evaluation of educational results • Slovakia: PCs for schools: from rhetoric to reality • Latvia: Latvian cultural craftsmen

### Quality of VET - certification systems 14

France: Pass' compétences promotes access to sustainable employment • Romania: New quality assurance mechanisms in continuing vocational training

### Training of trainers 14-15

Spain: Teacher training • Eurydice: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century • The Netherlands: Making the teaching profession more attractive - more on-the-job training

### Financing of training 15

United Kingdom: Earn as you learn • Germany: The price to pay for continuing vocational training

### Special target groups 16-17

Austria: The long shadow of the knowledge society • Czech Republic: Intensive individual work with unemployed young people pays off • The Netherlands: The threat of a lost generation - strong commitment to fight growing youth unemployment

### Vocational guidance 17-19

Lithuania: Computerised vocational information system • Austria: The secret of success? - Vocational guidance, Austrian style • Belgium: Social partner project tempts job-seekers to the construction sector • Turkey: İŞKUR career guidance and counselling 2004 • Estonia: Coordination of career guidance and counselling • Italy: New national resource centre for guidance

### The Study Visits corner 19

The British trade unions' silent revolution

### Mobility 20

Promoting mobility in Europe

ed training to find a job have become major problems in the countries undergoing transition. Today's priorities are to set up a continuing training system that will provide re-training for the unemployed and qualifications for adults and to create an initial training system that will prepare young people for the labour market as it is today (the oversupply of general higher education diplomas today increases youth unemployment).

To respond to these short-term needs, public policies have largely been oriented towards decentralisation, with the local level appearing in principle to be the best level for achieving a match between labour-market needs and training provision.

However it would appear from the discussions between the participants at the seminar in Bratislava that this approach of matching skills to workplace requirements

does not necessarily meet (relatively) longer-term needs, such as those identified in the objectives of the European Union at the Lisbon summit: to build between now and 2010 the world's most competitive knowledge economy. One could even say that the gradual approach is the most appropriate one here: how can one claim to base the economies of eastern Europe on the development of a services sector with a high intellectual value added component - as the ones in western Europe claim to have done - when the legacy of heavy industry is still far from being surmounted? This argument can be countered by saying that the skill-matching strategies in the west have also led to dead ends: it is not very efficient to orient young people towards a particular path on the basis of needs

## Trading at the edge of reality

Education worldwide is in transition. New ways of learning encourage engagement and involvement; they offer problem-solving challenges and virtual environment technology training and they promote communication and skill development and entrepreneurial attitudes.

Despite an origin that can be traced back to 17<sup>th</sup>-century Germany, the practice firm concept is still very much in tune with modern training needs. It is flexible and responds to the demand for qualified people with skills that can be applied to a global marketplace. Now it also offers a recognised educational quality mark through the EUROPEN network of over 5 000 practice firms across 42 countries.

### Real business

A practice firm is a virtual company that is run like a real business, mirroring an actual firm's business procedures, products and

services. Each practice firm trades with other practice firms, following commercial business procedures in their worldwide economic environment. The concept enables students to develop technological, professional, social and business language skills and to put their theoretical knowledge into practice. All practice firms have a real company that assists them by giving commercial support in the running of the business in line with the mentor company's products and policies.

The practice firm concept is an ideal method for imparting free-enterprise thinking to students and unemployed people in Eastern European countries. It offers them comprehensive hands-on business education and learning by doing, with personalised and practical soft skills training. It can be targeted at the unemployed, those returning to work, school/college/university students, and those needing training or retraining. It can also benefit business start-up training, people with

disabilities and other disaffected people, plus future employees being assessed for a job.

### Network

EUROPEN, the worldwide network of practice firms, is a non-profit association, whose headquarters are located in Essen, Germany. The association's strategic aim is to enhance the international training of young people and adults for the world of work. It uses real commercial documentation, procedures and systems, via the practice firms, under the auspices of each country's central office.

The central offices provide support for the practice firms by offering some of the commercial services expected in the business world. These can include post office, bank, customs, insurance, labour office, tax offices, water companies, electricity companies, phone companies.

Recent EUROPEN developments include a minimum quality certificate for practice firms

and their trainees, a move cofinanced by a Leonardo da Vinci project. Since January 2004, eight European countries have implemented this innovative transnational minimum standard educational methodology; the rest of the EUROPEN network is currently launching the certification. It assesses trainees' practical office employability skills, within the practice firm environment, to the same standard throughout the world. This will ensure that all the practice firms train, assess and verify in a way that meets the current and future needs of employers.

More information from:  
Suzana Temkov  
EUROPEN e.V.  
Altenessener Str. 80-84  
D-45326 Essen  
Tel. (49-201) 320 44 49  
Fax (49-201) 320 44 51  
<http://www.europen.info>

Source: EUROPEN / Cedefop

### Vocational training between skills for the workplace and personal development

Continued from page 3

expressed at any given moment on the labour market, when those requirements will have changed by the time those young people have completed their training. Companies which make their manpower forecasts on a long-term basis, always prefer to recruit overqualified but adaptable people, rejecting the less qualified in the ranks of the unemployed, even if they were trained to meet the demand for 'immediately operational' employees!

In the end, the policy of raising the general level of education applied in eastern European countries in the 1990s may, paradoxically, be the most appropriate preparation for a 'knowledge economy'. Some Scandinavian countries are adopting this

type of strategy today by trying to bring not only young people but also poorly-qualified adults up to a general level of knowledge close to that required for university entrance. The fight against failure in school - the first factor of social exclusion - becomes a priority once again. Vocational training at a later stage is not often able to 'remedy' what has been missed in the first round. The notion of 'personal development' which has been overlooked both in the east and the west by the reforms aimed at satisfying the demands of enterprises or industrial restructuring, can perhaps acquire a new legitimacy in the objectives set by the European Union.

Antoine Reverchon,  
journalist with Le Monde

### CEDEFOP/CYPRUS

## Preparing Cyprus for ReferNet

The Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (HRDA) is the National Coordinator for the ReferNet consortium in Cyprus. In early March 2004, the HRDA submitted a proposal in response to Cedefop's wish to award contracts for coordinators of national ReferNet consortiums in acceding countries.

In preparation, the HRDA has already brought eighteen network partners into the Cyprus national consortium. All appropriate national stakeholders are represented: ministries and relevant government departments; employer and trade union organisations; non-profit making organisations; and national agencies/units for managing European programmes/ initiatives. The members of the consortium have extensive experience and knowledge of vocational guidance and counselling, organisation and provision of initial and continuing training, research studies, surveys and organisation of conferences and workshops.

It is expected that the work of the consortium will better serve vocational education and training information needs in Cyprus, in particular in the preparation of thematic overviews, research studies and reports in various subject areas, as well as in disseminating the results of Cedefop activities. Dissemination networks and tools to be used, such as the Cyprus ReferNet website, exhibitions, press releases, magazines, newspapers, etc. are expected to be effective both nationally and at European level. The list of consortium member contacts is extensive, covering the government and professional bodies and business.

The HRDA used ETF financial support for cooperation activities related to preparation for ReferNet to invite officials from QCA/UK ReferNet to Cyprus to present and discuss their own experience. In a two-day workshop in April 2004, two UK officials provided valuable background information and discussed the main functions and core activities of ReferNet with their Cypriot counterparts. Both conceptual issues and technical aspects of the network were covered.

The UK team explained the role of the national coordinator and its relationship with the national steering group, providing detailed information on aspects such as awareness-raising, dissemination and promotional activities, and the construction, structure and content of a relevant website. Discussion on core activities mostly covered thematic reporting and the function of the various databases, which was very well demonstrated.

This two-day meeting was constructive, creative, interactive and useful. It gave the Cyprus team the opportunity to get first hand information and useful hints on how the whole system could function effectively to meet the specific needs of Cyprus.

Further information:

George Siekkeris, Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), P.O. Box: 25431, 1392 Nicosia, Cyprus, Tel. (357) 22 390363, Fax (357) 22 428522, E-mail: [g.siekkeris@hrdauth.org.cy](mailto:g.siekkeris@hrdauth.org.cy), HRDA website: [www.hrdauth.org.cy](http://www.hrdauth.org.cy), CY ReferNet website: [www.refernet.org.cy](http://www.refernet.org.cy)

Source: Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus



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/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 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)  
Éric Fries Guggenheim  
[efg@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:efg@cedefop.eu.int)

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: 30.6.2004

Printed in Spain 2004  
Cat. number: TI-AD-04-002-EN-C

### EUROPE/ETF

## Financing of VET reforms in South-Eastern Europe

Seventy representatives from South-Eastern Europe met at the Cedefop headquarters in Thessaloniki, on 11-12 March 2004, to seek new ways of tackling common problems. They shared best practice of vocational education and training development in the region, assessed the needs and costs of reform and talked together about potential funding sources for new developments.

Country representatives were joined in the meeting by international experts in vocational training and finance. Speakers from the European Investment Bank, the European Agency for Reconstruction and the World Bank explained how they were now actively seeking to back new projects from South Eastern European countries.

A series of smaller meetings provided forums for representatives to explore these and other related issues in depth. In one, for example, the workshop leader asked the question: how can

barriers to VET development be overcome? Ideas included: sharing information on a regional website; greater access to existing EU programmes and a special mini-programme for South Eastern Europe.

The ETF workshop concluded by emphasising two key issues: the necessity for specific initiatives for disadvantaged groups and the need for greater co-operation within the region.

South Eastern European countries face huge challenges in working together to promote social cohesion. There were nonetheless many instances of new working relationships being formed throughout the two days.

Further information:  
[www.etf.eu.int](http://www.etf.eu.int)  
Joanna Anstey, PR Dept.  
[joanne.anstey@etf.eu.int](mailto:joanne.anstey@etf.eu.int)

Source: Cedefop/ETF



## Evaluation and impact of education and training

Continued from page 1

ing on company production growth, productivity and competitiveness. M. Heise and W. Meyer (Universität des Saarlandes, Germany) review research work on the influence of education and training in an individual life course perspective.

Finally, K. Walsh and D. J. Parsons (HOST Policy Research, UK) discuss the impact of ALMP on integration into the labour market and R. Hujer, M. Caliendo and C. Zeiss (Universität Frankfurt, Germany) present a case study on macroeconomic evaluation of ALMP in Germany.

### Foundations of evaluation and impact research

The second volume addresses the foundations of evaluation and impact research: the different evaluation approaches, their philosophical roots and theories and their functions. It also examines the main methods and tools for evaluating education and training systems and reforms as well as training programmes at micro and macro level.

Ethical and normative standards of evaluation practice are given special attention. Approaches to competence measurement and the designing and selection of key competences in an international context complete the content.

E. Stern (Tavistock Institute, UK) discusses the philosophies underlying evaluation and presents different types of evaluation as well as the basic approaches. The issue of ethical and normative standards for evaluation practices is detailed by W. Beywl (Univention Evaluation Institute, Germany). M. Caliendo and D. Radic (Universität Frankfurt, Germany) present an overview of the most important evaluation methods and techniques at micro and macro level including their usability, adequacy and data requirements. A set of tools for evaluating VET systems and reforms is presented and discussed by E. Viertel et al. (European Training Foundation, ETF, Italy). The methodology and impact of external evaluations of education and training systems as organised by the OECD in the context of adult learning is presented by B. Ponz and P. Werquin (OECD, Paris). G. Straka (Universität Bremen, Germany) discusses competence measurement and eval-

uation. Designing and selecting key competences in an international context is addressed by D. Rychen (Swiss Federal Statistical Office, SFSO).

### Evaluations of education and training systems and reforms

The last volume gathers studies on recent evaluations of education and training systems and reforms. Case studies provide an insight into evaluation practices in several European countries - old and new Member States - and their role in reform. Other contributions assess the results of international and EU-supported programmes and initiatives as well as the impact of the introduction of market forces in employment and training services.

M. Coles and T. Leney (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, QCA, UK) look at current practices to assess the impact of education and training reforms in various European countries. L. Nieuwenhuis (STOAS Research, the Netherlands) and H. Shapiro (Danish Technological Institute) compare evaluations of VET system reforms in the Netherlands and in Denmark. W. Hellwig et al. (German Institute for International Educational

Research, DIPF) review evaluations of mobility and exchange programmes implemented either with the support of the EU or in the context of binational exchanges. B. Baumgartl et al. (Navre Knowledge Development, Austria) present case studies of evaluations of the NARIC network of the Socrates programme, of the PHARE VET programmes and of Leonardo da Vinci in selected countries. The impact of the introduction of market forces in employment and training services for integrating job-seekers is the subject of the contribution of L. Struyven and G. Steurs (IDEA Consult, Belgium). Finally, J. Molsosa (EU Commission, DG EAC) takes stock and proposes future steps for evaluation activities in the European Commission.

The three volumes of the background report are currently being prepared for print and should be published separately in July-October 2004. The synthesis report should be published in winter 2004.

Source: Cedefop/Pascaline Descy, Manfred Tessaring

# Internationalisation of vocational education and training

## DENMARK

### Strategy to strengthen internationalisation of education and training

**Political support for international cooperation in the education system is ever increasing. Never before have so many students participated in study trips or studied abroad as exchange or regular students. Despite this, the Danish government is now encouraging an extra effort in the field.**

The government has presented an action plan (\*) with new strategies for the internationalisation of Danish education and training. It was discussed in parliament in May 2004 and has the following overall objectives:

- Danish education and training should be among the best in the world, and Danish research programmes should be of the highest international standard;
- Danish education and training should be contemporary and attractive so as to avoid brain drain;
- Before 2010, Europe should possess the most competitive and knowledge-based economy in the world and Danish companies should be at the forefront of this development.

To ensure Danish competitiveness in the global education market and a satisfactory listing in international comparisons, the quality of education and training should be improved, by, for example, participation in international cooperation and attracting highly qualified students and researchers to Danish education institutions.

Initiatives are encouraged in the following fields:

- The international dimension is strengthened by intro-

ducing English as a teaching language. More study programmes should be offered in English than today, specifically in higher education, so that more foreign students are attracted to follow a study programme in Denmark. In this way, Danish students improve their opportunities for an international career and thus have a higher value in the international working environment. The opportunities for undertaking studies, research and work abroad for a period of time must therefore be improved.

- The international dimension is incorporated into local government objectives and future legislation.
- Mobility for pupils, students, and teachers is increased by introducing a new financing structure for internationalisation in short cycle higher education and vocational education and training. Funding is allocated per student and the rate is set by the state on the basis of actual costs of the education in question. This is called the 'taximeter' principle and is already in vigour in the vocational education and training system. The special rate for internationalisation is called the internationalisation taximeter rate. The opportunities for undertaking a work placement abroad are also strengthened,
- The use of information and communication technologies (ICT) as a tool for internationalisation, e.g. to develop and provide e-learning, is increased.
- Focus is put on the international profile of education institutions. Danish education and training should be marketed abroad, and cooperation in higher education should

be enhanced with parties outside Europe. To attract highly qualified students from countries outside the EU/EEA, a grant scheme is established for this target group.

Evaluation of these internationalisation initiatives is to take place before 2007.

The administrative structure for internationalisation of education and training is affected by the government's strategy. As from 2005, CIRIUS is to undertake the administration of programmes and schemes for international cooperation in the education sector and be responsible for analysis and documentary work, as well as for the assessment of foreign qualifications. Today, these tasks are carried out by Cirius (the Danish Centre for International Cooperation and Mobility in Education and Training) and the Center for Vurdering af Udenlandske Uddannelser (Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications). The new CIRIUS is a merger of the two and will be a unit under the Ministry of Education with direct links to the permanent secretary. Funding will be allocated in the annual finance bill.

(\*) Ministry of Education and Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, 'Styrket internationalisering af uddannelserne, redegørelse til Folketinget, April 2004' (Statement to the Danish parliament on increased internationalisation of education and training, April 2004). In early autumn, an English version of the statement will be available from the Ministry's English web site (<http://eng.uvm.dk>).

For more information:  
Svend-Erik Povelsen, Cirius, tel. (45-33) 95 70 99, e-mail: [sep@ciriusmail.dk](mailto:sep@ciriusmail.dk).

Source: Cirius

## EUROPE

### Launch of European Youth Portal

How can I do voluntary work in Estonia? How can I fulfil my dream to find a summer job in Italy? How can I exchange views on the enlarged Europe with young people from other countries? How can I create a project in my local community? For young people who want to discover and participate in Europe, the European Youth Portal with links to more than 10 000 websites of interest to young people is the place to start.

The portal, which has been developed with and for young people, was launched on 26 May 2004 in Brussels by European Commissioners Viviane Reding and Dalia Grybauskaitė. The press conference was followed by a live internet chat between the two Commissioners and young people, or any-

one active in European youth affairs. Participants had the opportunity to ask questions in 19 languages of the European Union thanks to the assistance of a team of interpreters. It was also possible to follow the whole discussion in English. Many questions were about mobility issues (finding a summer job, studying abroad). Young people also had questions regarding enlargement, European values, intercultural Europe and participation of young people in society. The current YOUTH programme and the future programme in the youth field were also of considerable interest.

The European Youth Portal (<http://europa.eu.int/youth/>) intends to give young people in Europe quick and easy access to youth related information in the 25 EU member states.

The links available include detailed national, regional and local level information and are presented under headings such as Studying, Working, Volunteering and exchanges, Your rights, Portals for young people, Travelling Europe and Info on Europe. In addition, the public can submit their own contributions, participate in discussion forums and ask questions.

Further information:  
<http://europa.eu.int/youth> in all official EU languages

Concerning the YOUTH programme: [http://www.europa.eu.int/youth/index\\_en.html](http://www.europa.eu.int/youth/index_en.html)

Source: European Commission/Rapid Press Releases/Cedefop/cf

## Making all the difference

ETF's project to launch an apprenticeship scheme for the first time in Syria has left behind a legacy to be proud of.

Since the project began in January 2001, almost 400 apprentices have completed or are undergoing training in Damascus in four trades: garment-making, automation, mould-making and mechanical handling. The scheme has been extended to Syria's second city and important industrial centre, Aleppo.

Teachers have been trained technically, pedagogically and in IT and have spent time in companies to improve their technical skills. Several have become trainers themselves. The Syrian government has spent around EUR 0.7 million on upgrading equipment and a brand new school, dedicated exclusively to the apprenticeship scheme, has been set up.

These initial results are encouraging, but the less tangible achievements may prove even more significant in the long term. Until now Syrian vocational education has been cut-off from industry, with too much emphasis on theoretical learning and too little on practice. This has often produced graduates who are ill-equipped for the labour market.

### Building bridges

Over the past three years, the ETF project has been slowly building bridges between education ministry officials, industrialists and heads of schools and between teachers and company supervisors. The long term aim is to develop a training system that is much more responsive to the needs of industry, and for this, the involvement of the industrialists has been paramount. Changing the attitudes of people is a key to success.

Teachers, company supervisors and the project co-ordinators have worked together to design new curricula. Company representatives and school teachers have developed a national system of testing, although the government has yet to implement this. The project has established school boards with two representatives each from industry and the ministry, a novelty in Syrian education.

### Public/private partnership

On a macro-level, the project has produced a Green Paper that proposes introducing an apprenticeship scheme

throughout the country. Industrialists and the government have also begun negotiating the future financing of such a system.

Last but not least, the success of the apprenticeship scheme has paved the way for a much more ambitious MEDA project aimed at overhauling the entire VET system of Syria. With a budget of EUR 21 million, the project will begin in September 2004 and will pay special attention to fostering the links between vocational training and the labour market.

Further information: External Communication Unit, ETF, viale Settimio Severo, 65, I - 10133 Torino.  
E-mail: info@etf.eu.int  
Tel. (39-011) 630 2222, Fax (39-011) 630 2200;  
www.etf.eu.int

Source: ETF

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 the implementation of this partnership. The Programme offers technical and financial support measures to accompany the reform of economic and social structures in the Mediterranean partner countries.

## ITALY

### Training passport popular among young Italians

#### Europass Training (1) launched in Italy on 1 January 2000: Isfol survey three years on

Between November 2000 and December 2003, more than 5 000 young Italian job-seekers used the Europass Training instrument developed by the European Commission in 1998 (1999/51/CE).

Europass Training was introduced to promote mobility by means of an individual booklet testifying work-linked training pathways within the European Union. It provides greater transparency and visibility of the modalities and content of training periods abroad. Promoted by training agencies, firms,

schools and universities, it is addressed to workers, apprentices, students and unemployed persons following a work-linked training pathway.

In Italy, Europass Training is managed by Isfol in its capacity as National Contact Point (NCP), under the aegis of the Ministry of Employment and Social Policy.

The data from the survey on the 2001 to 2003 experimental phase point to a higher rate of participation among women than men, above all in the 14 to 19 age bracket. The most popular host country was the United Kingdom (26%). Most of the youngsters heard about Europass Training at school, in partic-

ular from their teachers. The main sectors chosen for the experience abroad were linked to IT, research and occupational activities. Following the mobility experience, approx. 60% of participants continued with their studies, 21% found a job and 1.8% obtained training credits or went into other training courses. 44% of the agencies promoting Europass Training were educational institutions, 25% training agencies, 1.11% universities and local authorities and 8.6% firms.

With its name shortened to simply 'Europass', the training passport is to become a more general instrument creating greater transparency of skills and qualifications at Euro-

pean level in the coming years.(1) The booklet will help individuals better communicate their skills and qualifications when searching for employment or for a different job or when intending to move, both inside and outside their own countries of origin. Europass will be effective in all EU Member States, throughout the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein), as well as in Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey.

(1) See page 20 of this Cedefop Info

Further information at:  
www.isfol.i  
www.welfare.gov.it

Source: Alessandra Pedone - ISFOL ReferNet Italy

## Lifelong learning

### THE NETHERLANDS

#### Latest developments in accreditation of prior learning and in lifelong learning

In accordance with the agreements within the framework of the Bologna and Copenhagen processes, the Dutch government and social partners promote employability and life long learning. Important issues are the upgrading of the qualification level of the labour force, the prevention of early school leaving from vocational education and a smooth transfer to higher levels of vocational education. In alternate learning and working, better arrangements are needed for recognition, assessment and accreditation of competences obtained from practice-based, non-formal and informal learning (*erkenning van verworven competenties* - accreditation of prior learning - APL). Recently, further steps have been taken to bring APL and lifelong learning closer together.

The national qualification structure for secondary vocational education is the most used standard for assessment of competences in APL procedures in the Netherlands. With the development of a competence based qualification structure and examination system, APL practitioners expect that important problems with the present standard will be solved. The new standard must be less education driven, and more outcomes based (emphasis on competences rather than endless lists of knowledge and skills), and must include assessment criteria (measurability of standard is one of the system demands).

One of the key quality aspects is that the new standards of the Quality Centre Examination (see Cedefop Info 2/2002) should also be applicable to prior learning. A group of experts from regional training centres and CINOP has reviewed the organisational aspects, identified the gaps in cooperation, created the necessary instruments and defined the quality needs for examination in combination with APL (1).

#### Application of APL in four spheres (2)

The National Knowledge Centre APL (3) has defined a structure to distinguish the many various APL services. The structure is based on two leitmotifs that run through all APL applications: the objective (accreditation of competencies for civil effect or for career development) and the context (ranging from one national standard - national qualification structure - to distinctive standards per company, school, employment centre, etc.). Combining these leitmotifs gives four fields of application:

- Professionalized model for certification in/around the VET sector, aimed primarily at providing diplomas or (partial) certificates in the context of the qualification structure;
- professionalized model for acquisition of initial qualifications focusing on the contribution made by accreditation and certification to obtaining or retaining employment

or career development;

- model for accreditation of competencies within structured contexts, aimed primarily at the accreditation of competencies (provision of diplomas, certificates or partial certificates) outside the context of the national qualification structure;
- model for lifelong learning (employability) seen as the integrated model within which the other three spheres are subsumed. 'Lifelong learning' outlines the situation of citizens, who are engaged in a process of continuous self-development in line with their own development requirements on the one hand and the demands of their environment on the other.

#### APL essential for future individual learning account

The final evaluation of the Individual Learning Account (4), after 3 years of piloting, was positive and gave some further indications for the continuation of the experiment. Companies, training and development funds, and intermediary organisations were positive about continuing the individual learning account. Companies however stipulated that the training should be work-related. Learners were also positive about the continuation of the scheme, but attached less importance to the ownership of their account, because of the administrative procedures.

A good perspective for the continuation of the experiment is the combination with APL and the provision of tailor-made courses. In fact, this is a key to the success of future developments. Discussions on continuation of this instrument, possibly in another form (lifelong account, development plans etc.), are continuing.

(1) Boerma, S., Van den Dungen, M., Pijls, T. Organisatie en verantwoording van examinering en EVC. (Organisation and accountability of examination and APL) in Dutch, CINOP. November 2003.

(2) The world of EVC. The application of EVC in the Netherlands in four spheres - article, available electronically in English, by Ruud Duvekot, Erik Kaemingk, Tijds Pijls. Knowledge Centre APL (Kenniscentrum EVC). April 2004.

(3) In 2000, the National Knowledge Centre APL was initiated by government (Ministries of Economic Affairs; Education, Culture and Sciences; Social Affairs and Employment) to speed up the implementation of APL in the Netherlands. The National Knowledge Centre is managed by a consortium consisting of CINOP, Stoas Group and Cito Groep. National organisations for vocational education and training and social partners are engaged in the role of an advisory committee.

(4) Doets, Geertsma, Groenenberg, Jansen, Westerhuis. *Experimenteren met individuele leerrekeningen: de balans opgemaakt* (Experimenting with individual learning accounts: a final balance) available in English Dutch report of experiments with individual learning accounts (2001-2002). CINOP. 's-Hertogenbosch. April 2004. ISBN 90\_5003\_381\_4

Further information and further reading see [www.kenniscentrumevc.nl](http://www.kenniscentrumevc.nl) (in English and Dutch), [www.kce.nl](http://www.kce.nl) (in Dutch).

Source: Kenniscentrum EVC (Knowledge Centre APL) / CINOP



## BELGIUM

### First skills centre opens in Flanders

On 19 April 2004, the Flemish minister for employment opened the first skills centre of Flanders, in Zottegem, province of Eastern Flanders. This skills centre is in fact not a new establishment or institution but the new name for the 70 training centres operated by the Flemish employment and vocational training service, VDAB. But as VDAB's Administrator General points out,

the changes go beyond a mere change of name. In the past, the general perception was that once one had completed one's training, one was set up for the rest of one's life and that any mishap occurring in the course of one's career could be resolved by a bit of retraining here or there. But this is no longer the case: we now live in a world of rapid change. In this environment,

the new skills centres offer individuals the chance to take charge of their own skills development.

The VDAB Zottegem centre is the first to focus on the new tasks of the skills centres: information services, career management and certification (i.e. VDAB certificates awarded to participants in a training or re-training course delivered by the centre). The

Flemish minister has set aside EUR 4.7 million for the development of the skills centres.

Further information at: <http://www.vdab.be>  
The info spot broadcast on the Flemish television network Kanaal-Z can be viewed at:  
<http://www.kanaalz.be/CMarticles/ShowArticle.asp?ArticleID=1309&KZ=83&SectionID=3&ParagraphID=5>

Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration

## Educational policy

## NORWAY

### Culture for learning

In June 2004, a white paper on primary and secondary education presented in April by the Ministry of Education and Research was adopted, with some changes, by the Parliament. The white paper, called 'Culture for Learning' (*St.meld. nr. 30 Kultur for læring*)<sup>(1)</sup>, focuses on enhancing the quality of learning - from kindergarten to working life.

'Our vision is to create a better culture for learning. If we are to succeed, we must be more able and willing to learn. Schools themselves must be learning organisations. Only then can they offer attractive jobs and stimulate the pupils' curiosity and motivation for learning. Schools cannot teach us everything, but they can teach us to learn.'

'We wish to strive for the ideal goal which is to give all pupils adapted and differentiated education based on their own abilities and needs. All pupils are of equal worth, but none of them are alike. Both pupils who are 'fed up with theory' and those 'thirsting for knowledge' must be met with respect. If we treat all pupils in the same way, we create greater differences. It is demanding work to take differences into consideration, but at the same time this is the greatest challenge facing Norwegian schools.'

(Report no. 30 to the Storting (2003-2004) Culture for learning - Abridged version)

As part of its broad focus on the school and on learning in general, and on the different measures needed to realise the goal

of a flexible and differentiated education to meet the needs of everyone who is undergoing education, the white paper discusses several issues related to vocational education and training and proposes some important changes, especially in upper secondary school.

#### Major structural changes to vocational programmes and programme areas (courses)

The existing 12 vocational programmes are reduced to 9. In addition, the 102 current programme areas (courses) offered in the second year of upper secondary school are reduced to 35-50. These major structural changes are the result of a desire to change a course structure that is still seen as too specialised, making it into an even more 'modularised common content' based system. Some of the existing programmes currently have a very small number of participants, typically approximately 1% of the total number of pupils. The nine programmes are a result of combining and rearranging content from several of the current programmes. In addition to the nine vocational programmes there will be three academic education qualification programmes, which is the same number as previously.

With the new system, education is organised in a more modularised fashion, allowing for greater flexibility in terms of shared

content between programmes. The aim is to combine a common platform with the specific modules necessary to reach the level of specialisation required for the trade / subject in question.

Of the nine 'new' vocational programmes, five are unchanged, except for one small change of name. For the remaining four, their names are new and they result from combining content from two or more of the existing programmes. This means that the content of the specific programmes that will no longer exist has been channelled into one of the new programmes.

#### Early specialisation

The white paper proposes that pupils in lower secondary school should be able to choose upper secondary school modules within the optional part of the curriculum. This can be a source of increased motivation to some pupils and can also be a way for upper secondary schools to promote certain subjects. Teaching of such modules should only be done by staff that satisfy the necessary competence requirements.

The government is considering application of the same principle to pupils in upper secondary school and courses offered in higher education.

#### Access to higher education

The formal requirements to be accepted

for higher education will remain strict. However the aim is at the same time for pupils having undergone vocational education and training to be able to be accepted for higher education without having to meet the formal requirements for qualifications for higher education. A study is currently being conducted and the issue will be considered in more detail when the results of existing experiments are available.

#### Strengthened educational and vocational guidance and counselling

The white paper proposes some measures in order to enhance the quality of educational and vocational guidance and counselling. An increased focus on competence development among school counsellors and others working in the field of educational and career guidance will be actively promoted. A second measure is to establish regional partnerships initiated on a county/municipality level. These should comprise schools, local and regional authorities, social partners, industry and business life and other private and public organisations.

<sup>(1)</sup> The white paper is available from Akademika AS, P.O. Box 8134 Dep, N-0033 Oslo. The electronic version in Norwegian (pdf) is available at: <http://www.odin.dep.no/filarkiv/207625/STM0304030-TS.pdf>. An abridged version in English (html) is available at: <http://www.odin.dep.no/ufd/engelsk/publ/veiledninger/045071-120012/dok-bn.html>.

Source: Teknologisk institutt, Norway

## LITHUANIA

### Colleges: a new higher education opportunity in Lithuania

Two major reforms have been implemented in Lithuania within a short period. In 1991, professional colleges were established, based on former technical schools that had been operational in the Soviet Union. In 2000, professional colleges that met specific eligibility requirements came together as the start of a new network.

The legal basis for the colleges was a new law developed from a White Paper on higher education in Lithuania, prepared jointly with EU experts. The law legitimised a dual structure of higher education incorporating universities and colleges. The colleges deliver non-university higher education programmes that are shorter than those undertaken in universities, with emphasis on practical training rather than academic.

The network of public colleges is being developed by the regions. In the meantime

colleges, or their divisions, are situated throughout all 10 Lithuanian administration units, i.e. counties, ensuring that Lithuanian citizens have access to higher education. In addition, there are several specialist colleges in navigation, forestry and environmental engineering, construction and design. The average number of students at public colleges is 2 000, though the largest is Vilnius College with approximately 10 000 students.

Only those students who have completed general secondary education are admitted to colleges. The duration of non-university higher education programmes is three years (full-time study, worth 120 credits). Practical training, including professional activity practice, must be not less than one third of the training programme. It must take place at the workplace and must account for not less than 20 credits.

Lithuanian higher education programmes are classified into 62 study themes. Colleges offer 271 different programme titles across 34 study themes, with most students opting for social and technological sciences programmes. The programmes are prepared by the colleges individually and approved by the Minister of Education and Science. Programmes are designed on the basis of vocational education and training standards structured towards competences; the standards are originated by working groups comprising employer, trade union and college representatives. College graduates are awarded a higher education diploma together with a professional qualification. Discussions are taking place on whether college graduates should be awarded a bachelor degree.

The experience of professional colleges suggests that around 10-15 % of graduates

will continue their studies at university. For those who wish to follow the same subject there is the potential to complete a bachelor degree in 1.5 - 2 years. Requirements for master's degree studies are under discussion, including possible professional master's courses and more favourable conditions for college graduates wishing to continue their studies.

Further information:  
Antanas Levickas  
Head of College Division  
Vocational Education and Training Department,  
Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania  
A. Volano str. 2/7, LT-2691 Vilnius  
E-mail: [Antanas.Levickas@smm.lt](mailto:Antanas.Levickas@smm.lt)  
Tel. (370) 5 2743141  
Website: <http://www.smm.lt>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science

## Guidelines for education and research until 2008

A central development document in the educational sector is the 'Development Plan for Education within the Administrative Field of the Ministry of Education and University Research' ('KESU'), which the Government approves every four years. The plan for 2003-2008<sup>(1)</sup> was adopted at the end of 2003. It contains development measures for each field and level of education, as well as guidelines for education and research policy and the allocation of resources.

The basis for the development plan for education and research is to ensure basic educational security. The aim is to intervene to prevent marginalisation and consequently achieve fundamental educational rights for all, at all levels of the system. There is an emphasis on improving the effectiveness of the educational system, supporting and guiding children and young people, improving the educational possibilities of adults and conducting research.

The Finnish education system is faced with great challenges. During 2006-2015 a total of 660 000 people will be leaving working life. In the beginning of the decade there will not be enough young people to satisfy the demand for new and educated labour. The changes in the demographic structure, the ageing of the labour force and the simultaneous attempt to increase the em-

ployment level, pose challenges to the educational system. In addition to flexibility and the ability to develop, the demographic changes require educating the whole of each age group, utilising all pools of ability and improving the educational opportunities for the adult labour force. Furthermore, changes in the social and cultural environment and internationalisation call for reforms in education.

The education level and the skills of the population and labour force need to be further improved. The aim is that by 2015, 90% of all 25-29 year olds have gained at least a general upper secondary or vocational upper secondary education. Currently the percentage is 85. Furthermore, the percentage of 30-34 year olds with a higher education degree should be increased from the current 40 to 50%. In addition, the transition from education to working life is to be accelerated. This requires improving the student selection processes, reducing drop-out rates and avoiding overlapping qualifications.

The marginalisation of young people is to be prevented by strengthening remedial teaching, special education and student welfare, by ensuring basic educational security and by developing the education of immigrants. The objective is that, in 2008, at least 96% of students completing compulsory educa-

tion continue to general upper secondary education, to vocational upper secondary education, or to the optional 10th year of basic education.

Increasing respect for vocational skills and professionalism and enhancing the attractiveness of vocational education are the preconditions for guaranteeing the sufficient quality and quantity of the Finnish labour force. A central mechanism in making education attractive is the further development of the quality of education and the focus on working life in education.

During the period, the skill demonstrations of vocational education (see Cedefop Info 2/2002) are to be established in all fields. Simultaneously, a national evaluation system of learning outcomes, based on skill demonstrations, is being developed. Furthermore, the apprentice training system is being strengthened as a work-based way of ensuring initial vocational education and of organising further education.

Reducing the numbers of those who interrupt their training is a central aim in the development of vocational education, for example, through the development of guidance counselling. The training of guidance counsellors and the further and in-service training of teachers in guidance counselling will be strengthened.

Adults who have already gained degrees will be offered educational opportunities that are suited to their circumstances and take into consideration their previous studies. The objective is to raise the educational level of adults and to update skills and knowledge. Education, organised as adult education and leading to a basic degree, is being structured so that in vocational institutions, vocationally-oriented higher education institutions and universities, the number of adult students will increase to 20% of the total student intake. Each adult is to be entitled to an annual training period of one to two weeks and, at intervals of 10 to 15 years, the thorough updating of skills, for about half a year.

<sup>(1)</sup> Available electronically at <http://www.minedu.fi/opm/koulutus/asiakirjat/kehittamissuunnitelma041203.pdf> (in Finnish)

<http://www.minedu.fi/uvu/utbildning/pdf/utvecklingsplan041203.pdf> (in Swedish)

<http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/koulutus/2004/opm08/opm08.pdf> (in English)

Also available in hardcopy. An English version is in preparation.

For further information:  
Kirsi Kangaspunta  
Planning Director, Ministry of Education  
P.O. Box 29  
FIN-00023 Valtioneuvosto  
Tel. (358-9) 160 77252  
E-mail: [kirsi.kangaspunta@minedu.fi](mailto:kirsi.kangaspunta@minedu.fi)

Source: NBE

## Initial and continuing vocational education and training

### The right and duty to education and training: training standards

The extension of the right to education and training envisaged by reform law 53/2003 has been underpinned by the adoption of a technical document on the definition of training standards. The development of these standards dates back to the framework agreement between the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, the Ministry of Employment and Social Policy, the Regions, the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano, the Provinces, the Municipalities and the Mountainous Communities, ratified by the interinstitutional conference of 19 June 2003.

The interinstitutional agreement envisaged the introduction of a 'process of institutional partnership (...) for the definition of minimum training standards' for three-year training routes.

Law 53/2003 introduced the right and duty to complete initial education and training, 'redefining and expanding compulsory education (...), as well as compulsory training introduced by Article 68 of law No 144 of 17 May 1999', making access to education and training provision for at least 12 years (or until the acquisition of a qualification by the age of 18) a legal duty.

The education and training system gained a new structure: infant school; a first cycle comprising primary school and first-level secondary education; a second cycle comprising the system of the more academically-focused licei and the vocational education and training system.

In the context of decentralisation measures aiming to implement experimental

VET, the technical document which has now been adopted defines the minimum training standards in terms of the basic skills to be complied with in the three-year experimental routes leading to a vocational qualification. In this way, it provides a national benchmark ensuring equivalent standards for the training outcomes certified by intermediate and final training certificates. The standards are divided into four areas: language (written and oral expression, reading, comprehension as well as a foreign language), science (comprehension of natural processes and phenomena), technology (use of ITC with reference to the European Computer Driving Licence - ECDL) and, finally, history/social studies/economics (observation of historical events and ge-

ographical areas, functioning of the economic system).

The standards have a wider scope than the basic skills used in vocational training so that all students can reach a common platform of basic training, which is not designed exclusively on the basis of employability.

This first three-year pilot phase will be followed by a monitoring process at regional and national level. The aim will be to define a definitive validation process for minimum standards for basic skills.

Further information at:  
<http://www.education.it>  
<http://www.isfol.it>

Source: Alessandra Pedone/ISFOL ReferNet Italy

### Reforms to back up new offensive

#### Federal government to combat training place deficit by a series of regional support programmes for specific target groups coupled with new legislative measures.

The 2004 Vocational Training Report<sup>(1)</sup>, published by the Federal Ministry for Education, Training and Research, which reviews the training market situation throughout 2003, notes that the number of training places offered by industry fell for the fourth consecutive year in 2003. According to the report, a total of 35 015 unplaced applicants were registered with the Federal Employment Agency (BA) at the end of September 2003, 11 632 more than in 2002. The ministry attributes this to both the ongoing economic slowdown, as well as structural changes. The decline in the number of training places in the manufacturing industries, in particular in the construction sector and crafts, failed to be offset by the positive trends in the growth sectors.

The federal government intends to combat this trend by launching a renewed training offensive, backed up by the Act on Securing Vocational Training, adopted by parliament in the spring. However the legislative process has now reached a standstill and a training pact with German industry is planned to counter the dearth of industrial training places.

The primary aim is to convince firms and enterprises of the advantages of the dual system of vocational training.

The federal government is making its own contribution to this effort with a raft of support programmes - some of which are co-funded by the European Social Fund - to assist both structurally weak regions and enterprises in joining forces to create training networks. These networks will receive the assistance and support of an external training management team while training place developers are to track down appropriate opportunities for the creation of training places.

The Federal Ministry for Education, Training and Research is making a particular effort to secure and expand training opportunities in the field of innovative technologies (e.g. nanotechnology, biotechnology, microsystems technology and optical engineering) showing a high demand for non-academic training. The ministry has therefore reached agreements on the dovetailing of regional vocational training activities with existing regional research networks.

All target groups requiring assistance in access to vocational training are to start off at a basic level which will include individual skills evaluation. An individual support plan will then help them to build up their skills so that they can manage to switch to a training programme after three or at the latest six months. Candidates requiring further support can enter a second remedial level consisting of skilling modules to enhance their starting chances.

At the same time the federal government is continuing with its efforts to modernise and reduce the bureaucracy within the training market by reforming the Vocational Training Act. One measure of particular interest is that with a view to enhancing the labour market recognition of purely school-based training programmes, it will be possible to complete fully school-based training programmes with a recognised final examination before the same board as industrially-based training programmes in the future.

German vocational training provision is also to be given a more pronounced European and international dimension in order to boost its competitiveness. Measures in this context include the full recognition of a training placement abroad as an integral part of a training programme.

In the course of the coming years, the federal government also intends to introduce further staggered and additional new training occupations with fewer complex requirements. It is determined to continue in this direction undeterred by differences among the social partners.

<sup>(1)</sup> For further information: [www.bmbf.de](http://www.bmbf.de)

Source: BMBF/BIBB/sk



## A blessing or a curse?

Continued from page 1

reaped harsh criticism on the employers' side. Michael Rogowski, President of the Confederation of German Industry (BDI) warned that with the introduction of the bill the government was jeopardising industry's willingness to join in the training effort and therefore calling the entire dual system of vocational training into question. He regretted that the government was steering against the forces of the markets and against its better judgement. The German Industry and Trade Advisory Board for Vocational Education also fears 'chaos' breaking out, believing that the introduction of the levy would decouple vocational training from the employment system. The Board dislikes the centralistic approach envisaged by the bill which, it says, is based on careers guidance statistics with only partial relevance, and fails to take account of regional differences. It also draws attention to the fact that employment-intensive companies would be punished by the introduction of the levy as it was exclusively based on the headcount criterion. Moreover, it was unfair that companies actually wishing to offer training opportunities, but unable to find suitable candidates should also have to pay the levy. In view of different employment structures and company sizes, the Board sees no just basis for the principle of a training ratio or the enormous amount of red tape the introduction of the system would imply, predicting 'a massive process of misguided management' in its wake.

Pointing out that the imposition of the training levy is solely based on the relative number of trainees, whereas the actual costs of training play no role, the Federal Institute

for Vocational Training (BIBB) believes that the bill may have negative consequences and trigger a shift in training capacity from large companies to smaller firms. BIBB draws attention to the fact that, as a ratio of earnings, training costs are frequently lower in small-scale firms, and considerably higher in large companies. It could therefore be worthwhile for small companies to increase the number of training places they offer, whereas for large companies the levy they would have to pay for training places they do not offer could ultimately be cheaper than net training costs. The vocational training experts moreover cannot rule out the possibility of a structural shift in the range of training occupations offered which could ultimately lead to a rise in unemployment.

The federal government defended the training levy by drawing attention to the decline in the number of training places offered by German industry. Minister for Education and Training Edelgard Bulmahn said that 'there is nothing worse for young people than having to start off in life with no training behind them'. Regretting the fact that only about one half of enterprises with more than ten employees actually participated in the national training effort, she emphasised that Germany's economic future depended on an adequate supply of skilled workers. She was convinced that German industry did not realise how dramatic the situation really was and warned that without corrective measures to counteract the current trends, Germany would be faced with a shortfall of some 3.5 million skilled workers in the 30 to 45 age-bracket by the year 2015.

Source: BMBF/BIBB/KWB/DGB/BDI/DPA/sk

## SLOVENIA

### Decentralisation, a key instrument in developing the training system

Vocational education and training (VET) in Slovenia have been reformed in the last few years in accordance with the 1995 White Paper on Education and Training and certain laws adopted in 1996.

The 2002 evaluation performed within the Phare (Modernisation of Curricula, Certification and Assessment in Vocational Education for Youth and Adults - MOCCA) Programme revealed the need for a drastic change in the VET system in the direction of decentralisation. Thereby schools would have greater autonomy and there would be a modular- and competence-based curriculum and interdisciplinary and project-based learning. That is why the Development Programme for implementing reforms throughout the VET system was launched in 2002. Its main aims are to:

- establish a competence-based VET system;
- boost co-operation between schools and businesses;
- improve the flexibility of vocational schools and
- reduce school dropouts through guidance.

These aims are to be achieved through the following measures:

- the development of internationally comparable occupational standards;
- curriculum modularization through the introduction of a new modular and competence-based curriculum;
- the integration of general, professional and practical knowledge and learning;
- enhancing the autonomy of schools through an open curriculum in which 20% of the curriculum is determined by schools in order to meet local community needs;
- teacher training as a central support instrument for implementing changes;

- modernisation of the system for financing VET;
- preventing drop-outs from VET schools;
- implementation of a new VET curriculum in pilot schools;
- dissemination of the Development Programme's results in Southeast Europe.

The Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training is in charge of carrying out and co-ordinating the various activities within the Development Programme. In the first stage, several project groups were established to work on different tasks, ranging from preparing the methodology for introducing a modular- and competence-based curriculum to introducing a new concept of teacher training and implementing the results in vocational schools and preventing drop outs.

The second stage of the programme is set to start on 1 September 2004. The new Car Mechatronic curriculum was selected to become the first curriculum to apply the concepts of the new methodology and will be introduced in four pilot schools.

Steps in its implementation include:

- several working groups comprising teachers, enterprises, VET experts and stakeholders taking part in developing new programmes;
- determining the knowledge and skills relevant to the occupation and
- designing the curriculum's concept, based on a variety of learning tasks in different learning areas in both the school and workplace.

Further information from:  
Mirjana Kovac, Deputy Director, Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training, Ob zeleznici 16, 1000 Ljubljana, e-mail: mirjana.kovac@cpi.si, tel. (386-1) 58640 203

Source: Centre of the Republic of Slovenia for Vocational Education and Training

## POLAND

### New challenges for vocational education

Modernisation of upper secondary education in Poland was begun in 2002. Educational reform will continue in 2004, with vocational education included on the agenda. One of the three goals of reform is to create conditions for improving the quality of education. For vocational education, this includes the introduction of external exams and improving vocational training facilities.

The first external exams confirming vocational qualifications will take place in May/June 2004, initially covering those leaving vocational schools after a two-year course of instruction. Preparatory work is under way at schools and in the establishments endorsed by provincial examination commissions as authorised exam centres for vocational qualifications. Preparation of external examiners is also under way.

Requirements for qualifying as an exam centre include specification of items such as examination stations (desks) and how they are equipped. To assist qualification, in March 2004 the Ministry of National Education and Sports published standards on didactic aids for vocational training facilities at schools, covering an initial 23 occupations. The

same standards may also be applied in other areas, for instance in continuing education.

In January 2004 an accreditation process for non-formal continuing education providers was initiated with the aim of assuring better quality vocational and continuing education. The inspection teams will probably find Ministry standards very useful in evaluating the vocational training facilities of centres seeking accreditation. Other elements to be evaluated during accreditation will include curricula, staff resources, and innovation in educational activities. Preparation of inspection team staff responsible for accreditation was started in December 2003 and feedback on progress is expected in the third quarter of 2004.

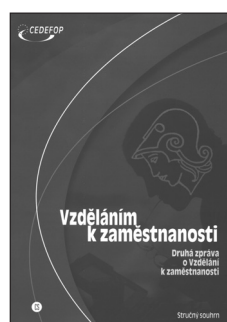
In 2003, *Krajowy Ośrodek Wspierania Edukacji Zawodowej i Ustawicznej* (National Support Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education), at the request of the Ministry of National Education and Sport, conducted a survey on the quality of vocational training facilities at continuing and practical education centres. Analysis of the findings helped in improving existing facilities to meet the standards required for

award of exam centre status. Existing opportunities, such as the ESF contribution, will enable many such centres to be furnished with modern didactic aids by the third quarter 2004. This process will also cover basic vocational schools and secondary technical schools during 2004-06.

KOWEZIU will continue to develop didactic aid standards for the remaining occupations, for which qualification exams will be held in 2005 and 2006.

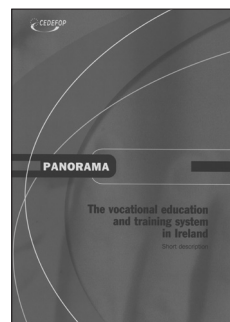
Further information:  
Grażyna Osicka  
Director of National Support Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education  
Tel. (48-22) 844 34 38, fax(48-22) 646 52 51  
E-mail: sekret@kowieziu.edu.pl  
www.menis.gov.pl and www.kowieziu.edu.pl

Source: National Support Centre for Vocational and Continuing Education/Grażyna Osicka



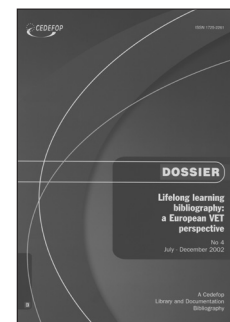
**Learning for employment**  
**Second report on vocational education and training policy in Europe**  
**Executive summary**  
4027  
Languages: cs, da, de, el, en, es, fi, fr, it, nl, pt, sk, sv  
Cat. No: TI-52-03-708-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop



**The vocational education and training system in Ireland**  
**Short description**  
Cedefop Panorama series 5145  
Languages: de, en, fr  
Cat. No: TI-58-04-829-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop



**Lifelong learning bibliography: a European VET perspective**  
**No 4 - July - December 2002**  
**A Cedefop Library and Documentation Bibliography**  
Cedefop Dossier series 6010  
Language: en  
Cat. No: TI-58-04-401-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

## FRANCE

### New right to training in industry

On 8 April 2004 Centre Inffo organised a round table conference on the new right to training in industry introduced by the Law on Lifelong Learning (<sup>(1)</sup>). Representatives of the social partners and the General Delegation for Employment and Vocational training (DGEFP) were invited to speak on the subject of the changes in the wake of the reform.

The speakers gave an overview of the changes introduced by the National Inter-occupational Agreement (ANI) and the Law on Lifelong Learning, adopted on 7 April 2004 (<sup>(1)</sup>), with particular reference to the fall-out in the different sectors of the economy, the undertakings and at the level of training provision.

The director of the Training and Human Resources Management department of a sectoral employers' organisation expected a considerable impact in the various occupational sectors. Conceding that the reform offered a greater degree of liberty and flexibility to the various occupational sectors, he pointed out that it also implied 'a new and complex analysis of the economic situation of the enterprises and definition of training policy at sectoral level to meet short-term (the so-called 'professionalisation period' and the training plan), medium-term (the so-called 'professionalisation contract') and long-term (apprenticeship) requirements'.

Training management in industry will have to adapt to the new training provisions. The same speaker expects 'the role of the head of company training to be profoundly trans-

formed; training policy will become integrated, if this is not already the case, into overall company policy'. He went on to say that 'it is all about ensuring that firms remain competitive while maintaining the employability of their workforce on the basis of stable resources'. He also expects an impact at the level of management, where 'the personal career interview will mean that managers will have to express an interest in the skills building of their staff'. A number of participants expressed their doubts about the complexity of the new system but, as a representative of a trade union confederation pointed out, the complexity of the system is in fact in response to the concern of the social partners to develop a 'qualitative' training policy, tailor-made for the individual employee.

A number of speakers underlined the changes the reforms imply for the role and the nature of the activities of training agencies which will now have to buy into a number of new dimensions: guidance, counselling, analysis of company and employees' requirements, individualisation of training paths, traceability of training paths and certification. An employers' representative pointed out that 'employers and employees will also enter into a dialogue with training providers; negotiation will also take place at this level'.

The different levels of negotiation introduced by the ANI and the Law on Lifelong Learning gave rise to lively debate. A DGEFP head of unit commented that the social partners wished to make the ANI 'a tremendous

machine to produce social bargaining' in businesses and the various sectors of industry. He described the individual right to training (DIF) and the 'professionalisation period' as priority areas of negotiation, providing 'a niche for discussion' at the interface between the initiative of the employer (the training plan) and the decision of the employee (individual training leave, CIF). Reacting to this analysis, a trade union representative pointed out that the DIF was not the result of a joint decision by the employer and the employee, but, just as CIF, depended on the sole initiative of the employee, even if it had a different correlation with occupational activity. He also believed that negotiation was by necessity positioned at the collective level: it was not a matter of a 'mere discussion between the employee and his/her employer', which would not be egalitarian nor

#### Schedule

A number of aspects relating to the timetable for the introduction of the ANI and the Law on Lifelong Learning were specified at the conference.

- The first DIF will be available one year following the date of the enactment of the law, a year's work giving rise to the right to 20 hours of training.
- The professionalisation contracts/periods will be introduced as of 1 October 2004. A secretary from a managerial confederation confirmed that 'all training contracts concluded before 15 September will run their full term'.
- A DGEFP head of unit indicated that 'the public authorities have set 30 June 2004 as the target date for publication of the implementing decrees pertaining to the law'.
- A trade union confederation secretary expects 'the second phase of negotiation between the social partners on, in particular, ways of implementing the personal career interview and the training passport to be wrapped up by the end of July'.

allow 'a correlation of individual aspirations and the collective needs (of the enterprise, the geographical area or society as a whole)'.

(<sup>(1)</sup>) An appeal against the law adopted on 7 April 2004 was lodged with the Constitutional Council by over 60 members of parliament on 13 April. Law No 2004-391 of 4 May 2004 on Lifelong Learning and Social Dialogue was published in the Official Journal of 5 May 2004.

Source: The above article is taken from the feature on 'training reform - a tremendous machine producing social bargaining' published (in French) in INFFO Flash, No 635, 16-30 April 2004 (P. Gautier-Moulin)

#### Further information:

- Law No 2004-391 of 4 May 2004 on Lifelong Learning and Social Dialogue  
Official Journal of Laws and Decrees, No 105, 5 May 2004 p. 7983-7998  
<http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/WAspad/UnTexteDeJorf?numjo=SOCX0300159L>

- The website of the French parliament provides a feature on the bill on vocational training and social dialogue  
[http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/dossiers/training\\_professionnelle.asp](http://www.assemblee-nationale.fr/12/dossiers/training_professionnelle.asp)

- An article on the same subject entitled 'Training reform: the social partners clarify their position on various aspects of the national inter-occupational agreement' appeared in Cedefop Info 1/2004  
<http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo12004/C14H2EN.html>

- National inter-occupational agreement of 20 September 2003: new momentum for the training of employees / Centre INFFO  
INFFO Flash, supplement to No 624, 1-15 November 2003, ISSN 0397-3301 (in French)

- National inter-occupational agreement of 20 September 2003 [ANI] on the access of workers to lifelong learning. - September 2003, 50 p. (in French)  
[http://www.centre-inffo.fr/maq/100901/pdf/accord\\_inter-occupational2003.pdf](http://www.centre-inffo.fr/maq/100901/pdf/accord_inter-occupational2003.pdf)  
<http://www.travail.gouv.fr/actualites/pdf/training.pdf>

The ANI is published (in French) in Official Journal of Collective Agreements No 2003/42, 15 November 2003.

## BELGIUM

### Technical education offers better job market prospects in Flanders

It should be drawn to parents' attention that technical education offers much better job market prospects for young people coming out of the education system. This is the conclusion drawn by the Flemish minister for employment from a survey conducted among 80 000 school-leavers by the Flemish employment and vocational training service, VDAB.

VDAB registers the annual inflows of school-leavers into the labour market. In 2004, the annual VDAB study expanded its sample to cover a total of 80 250 young people, including, among others, those coming out of vocational education. The study shows that certain qualifications offer better and faster prospects of finding a job, in particular training programmes in construction, tourism or

sport (second cycle), hotel management, agriculture/gardening, mechanics, public relations (third cycle), architectural assistants, geriatric assistants and carers (higher education). The results partly reflect a comparison of the data provided by young school leavers with the occupations registering the main problems. Every year, 1 800 students drop out after one or two years of secondary

education. 6 500 break off without completing the secondary cycle whereas they still have the opportunity of continuing their studies in technical education.

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

Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration

## UNITED KINGDOM

### New apprenticeships to widen opportunity and boost business

More young people in England will get the opportunity to learn skills under radical reforms to apprenticeships announced in May 2004 by Education and Skills Secretary Charles Clarke and the Chancellor of the Exchequer Gordon Brown. The new 'Young Apprenticeships' are intended to be a major boost to business and productivity. Working through the Sector Skills Councils, employers will also be put in the driving seat in terms of the design and development of apprenticeships.

In February 2003, the Apprenticeship Task Force was formed. Its terms of reference included increasing the number and range of employers offering apprentice places and ensuring that apprenticeships reflect the changing needs of employers and young people. This independent group consists of senior executives from blue chip companies and small and medium enterprises, representatives from the public sec-

tor, key stakeholders such as Confederation of British Industry, British Chambers of Commerce, Institute of Directors and Trade Union Congress and agencies involved in the delivery of apprenticeship programmes. Its 27 members had around 3000 apprentices.

The reforms proposed by the task force will build on the success of Modern Apprenticeships which have seen numbers grow from 75 800 trainees in 1997 to 255 500 today - the highest ever level. They will be backed up by a targeted campaign encouraging more employers to 'get on board' and boost the number of apprentices even further. They will deliver a more flexible, stronger apprenticeship 'ladder of opportunity' beginning at the age of 14.

The improvements will consist of:

- brand new 'Young Apprenticeships' for 14-16 year olds. They will motivate pupils who could spend up to two days a week

in the workplace learning a trade. Initial opportunities will be in engineering, automotive industries, business administration, logistics, and the arts and creative industries;

- a 'pre-apprenticeship' offer. This will be based around the very popular 'Entry to Employment' programme for young people that have potential, but are not yet ready or able to enter an apprenticeship or maybe are currently disengaged and disenfranchised from learning;

- apprenticeships at ISCED level 2 (GCSE grade A-C) (replacing the Foundation Modern Apprenticeship);

- 'Advanced Apprenticeships' (equal to 2 good A Levels or level 3 qualification and replacing the Advanced Modern Apprenticeship) and

- opening up of apprenticeship to adults by scrapping the arbitrary 25 year old age limit. Development work will begin immediately with the Sector Skills Councils.

With demand from young people outstripping the supply of places on offer from employers, the launch will be backed up by a major Learning and Skills Council advertising and marketing campaign targeted at increasing the number of employers offering places.

A recent survey (<sup>(1)</sup>) by the Learning and Skills Council showed that 44% of organisations, which reported skills shortages, said they lost business as a result. The government hopes that apprenticeships will provide businesses with the solution they need to thrive in the 21st century and that many employers respond to this 'call to arms' and join the Apprenticeships reform.

The Learning and Skills Council working with employer organisations will drive forward the new reforms and will:

- give employers via the Sector Skills Councils a bigger role in the actual design, con-

Continued on the next page



tent and entry requirements of apprenticeship;

- develop greater 'portability' arrangements so that apprentices can take a part completed apprenticeship with them if they move employer;
- create a 'clearing house' for school leavers

to match prospective trainees to employers;

- work towards awarding 'accredited' status for those who successfully complete an apprenticeship. At present an apprenticeship is not a recognised qualification in its own right;
- explore the development of credit-based

qualifications in apprenticeships to better meet the needs of employers;

- review financial incentives for apprentices;
- consider financial incentives to encourage more small and medium sized employers to get on board;
- introduce an eight-week probationary period for the trainee and employer.

(1) National Employers Skills Survey 2003: Key finding, LSC, January 2004, available electronically <http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Documents/SubjectListing/Research/LSCcommissionedresearch/NESS2003Findings.htm>

More information at [www.apprenticeships.org.uk](http://www.apprenticeships.org.uk)  
Tel. (44) 870 000 2288  
E-mail: [info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

Source: QCA

## FRANCE

### Governmental plan to modernise apprenticeship training

On 25 February 2004, Renaud Dutreil, state secretary with responsibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), commerce, crafts, liberal professions and consumer affairs, presented his plan for the reform and modernisation of apprenticeship training to the cabinet. The reform process initiated in June 2003 culminated in the presentation of a white paper in October 2003 which provides the basis for the governmental plan (see box).

The challenges posed by the reform of the apprenticeship system are 'on a par with governmental objectives in the field of growth and employment' announced Renaud Dutreil at a press conference, at which he unveiled the slogan 'No young people without an occupation and no occupations without young people'. The revamping of the apprenticeship system also meets the 'essential need to train the upcoming generation of entrepreneurs who will create or take over the firms of tomorrow and keep the traditions of our local economic fabric alive'.

The first pillar of the modernisation plan is designed to upgrade the image of apprenticeship and 'brand' this route among young people. Coordinated inter-ministerial actions are designed to promote relevant occupational pathways and improve the provision of information and guidance. A high-profile figure will be appointed to coordinate these activities together with all stakeholders. In parallel, specific measures are to provide young people with a greater opportunity to come into contact with industry; these include the introduction of a 'company discovery passport' for pupils as well as the development of work experience opportunities during the school holidays.

The second pillar of the modernisation plan involves adapting apprenticeship training to the aspirations and profiles of the young people. The aim is to make apprenticeship more attractive to groups which do not traditionally opt for this form of training. This involves upgrading the status of the apprentice, especially by introducing an 'initial equipment allowance' and an 'apprentice's card', modelled on the student's card. The plan also aims to ensure that apprenticeship schemes can offer young people individualised pathways, structured in complete streams and offering effective bridges leading to other training routes.

The third pillar of the reform seeks to simplify the support structures offered by the enterprises to apprentices while at the same time raising quality standards. Promotion campaigns are to target industry, in particular larger-scale firms, still underrepresented in the overall apprenticeship training effort.

Renaud Dutreil's plan also sets up an 'effective' mechanism to manage and monitor the implementation of the plan in the context of improved coordination and consultation between the various stakeholders. Measures are also envisaged to simplify and improve the transparency of the collection

of the apprenticeship tax. Finally, the three bodies which currently provide the funding for apprenticeship, (industry, regions and central government), are to make a 'balanced' contribution to the efforts to relaunch apprenticeship as an attractive training route. The reform is to be introduced 'in close collaboration with apprenticeship players, social partners, consular networks, training centres and, of course, the regions which have a wide scope in the field of apprenticeship and guidance for young people', as the state secretary pointed out.

Given the dearth of skilled workers in certain industries, coupled with demographic trends, industry will face increasing difficulty in recruiting skilled manpower, on top of which there is the problem of the increasing ranks of youngsters with no skilling at all. With this reform, Renaud Dutreil wishes to ensure that apprenticeship, just as any other vocational training stream, is regarded as

'an adequate response to both the enterprises' demand for skilled manpower and the need to offer all young people a chance of gaining a qualification, having access to employment and, in the long run, assuming entrepreneurial responsibility'.

Source: The text is taken from the article (in French) on the reforms entitled 'Apprenticeship reform - government plan presented to the cabinet', published in INFFO Flash, No 632, 1-15 March 2004 (S. Zadunayski)

Further information:

- See the feature on the reform on the website of the state secretary with responsibility for small and medium-sized enterprises (SME), commerce, crafts, liberal professions and consumer affairs <http://www.pme.gouv.fr/user/framegnale.php?var=11&rep=une&file=17>

- See also the article 'Planned reform of apprenticeship training' in Cedefop Info 3/2003 <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo32003/C33G2EN.html>

- Renaud Dutreil's white paper with 50 proposals on improving training and modernising apprenticeship training: Renaud Dutreil Paris: Prime Minister, October 2003, 103 p. <http://www.pme.gouv.fr/grands-dossiers/livreblanc.pdf> <http://lesrapports.ladocumentationfrancaise.fr/BRP/034000618/0000.pdf>

#### Almost ten months of consultations

On 17 June 2003 the prime minister entrusted Renaud Dutreil with the task of examining the issue of improving training provision for young people in the framework of apprenticeship schemes. By means of a user-centred approach, the issue was examined in conjunction with the institutional players involved in apprenticeship, as well as the stakeholders in the field (trainers, staff from the CFA apprenticeship training centres, heads of enterprise, apprenticeship masters and young people themselves). A task force, comprising institutional representatives, consular chambers, representatives of the regions and administrations, was established to draw up a status report on the operation of the system in the short term. Two groups comprising representatives of professional organisations were also consulted. This provided a full overview of the system and enabled an evaluation of the principal proposals of the task force.

A working party of 67 members of parliament used a questionnaire to survey the firms in their constituencies/departments. An opinion poll also identified the image of apprenticeship among young people and their families and defined communication strategies to be developed to enhance this image.

The inter-ministerial consultations and activities (involving the ministries of social affairs, education and finance) finally led to the formal adoption of the apprenticeship plan.

## IRELAND

### Who is trained at work, and how?

A recent series of reports on training and development in Ireland commissioned by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) in Ireland offers insights into the state of organisational and individual learning in Ireland (1). It also analyses the trends in training in the two years since the last series. The following questions are addressed in detail: has expenditure on training and development (T & D) increased or decreased during the period? Is e-Learning growing in importance? Are organisations incorporating external certification in their training? How and why do people really learn at work?

In respect of 742 employees who responded in the private and public sectors, most reported high levels of satisfaction with the quality of their training. The report 'Who Learns at Work' indicates there is a strong bias towards the better qualified when selecting people for training, a finding which bears out data in a recent FÁS study (see Cedefop Info 1/2004). People working in small firms are less likely to receive formal training. On-the-job training is considered the most popular and the most used in organisations, especially for lower skilled occupations and the less well educated. The report says for that reason it is important that the administration of on-the-job training is more effectively managed. It says it is critical that un-skilled and semi-skilled workers are re-trained and developed and that particular focus be given to the small firms sector.

Take-up of e-learning by companies is still quite modest. 44% of responding organisations use e-learning in some shape or form but there is significant variation by organisation size, sector and nationality of ownership. The Cedefop survey on e-learning in training (2002) showed an overall rate of 30% across Europe with wide variations from 50% in Nordic countries to 10% in others. Traditional methods such as face-to-face and on-the-job coaching and mentoring and formal education remain dominant in Irish organisations. They are also ranked much higher in terms of effectiveness. E-learning is viewed as expensive and technically complex and considered by many as being of low quality in content and of limited application. Its usage and scope all increase with organisational size and US subsidiaries and large organisations in the state sector are the leading users. As expected, e-learning is used most for IT and technical skills training and much less so for 'soft' skills training. The report concludes that e-learning is at an early stage of development and should not be considered as a stand-alone phenomenon. It can provide for effective learning in combination with traditional training methods. This is termed 'blended-learning'.

The benchmarking survey of training managers sought to establish a comprehensive picture of trends in T & D practices, learning strategies, practices and investment in Irish firms. It shows that a growing number of companies recog-

nise expenditure on learning as an essential corporate investment. Another trend is the importance attached to external certification by both companies and employees. There is evidence of a significant increase in usage of competency-based training at senior management, professional and technical levels and an increase in stakeholder involvement - training manager, line manager, employee - in the determination and provision of T & D. This reflects a trend towards non-formal training and the report shows the variety of ways in which employees learn. It notes that trainers are now very well qualified, with over 70% having third-level qualifications, many at post-graduate level.

(1) Garavan, Thomas: Who learns at work, a study of learners in the Republic of Ireland. Dublin, CIPD in Ireland, 2003. <http://branchwebs.cipd.co.uk/Ireland/events/learns.pdf>  
O'Donnell, David: eLearning in Irish organisations. Dublin: CIPD in Ireland, 2003. <http://branchwebs.cipd.co.uk/Ireland/events/eLearning.pdf>

Garavan, Thomas: Training and development in Ireland, results of the 2003 National Survey of Benchmarks. Dublin: CIPD in Ireland, 2003. <http://branchwebs.cipd.co.uk/Ireland/events/benchmarking.pdf>

Source: FÁS



## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Information support for human resources management

An information portal provides access to the best practices, guidance and experience related to strategic human resource management and development (HRD) in regions

In late March 2004 a best practices database for the support of strategic management of HRD in the regions was officially launched at <http://www.topregion.cz>. The idea for the database originated in 2002/03, as part of projects implemented by the National Training Fund and supported by the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs. The database has been developed as a follow-up to the strategy for human resources development, adopted by the government in its Resolution No 210 of 3 March 2003. The main aim of the database is to enhance the standards of strategic management of HRD at regional level, to provide comprehensive information and guidance support to regions in this area and to assist in the development of regional activities related to the provision of training, guidance and information.

The database takes the form of an information portal providing access to up-to-date texts, documents, links and other information relevant to HRD management at regional level. The database is administered and continuously updated by the National Training Fund in co-operation with other organisations. The users are mainly specialists concerned with HRD management in regions - i.e. managing and administrative staff, project managers, members of regional HRD councils. Of course, the database may also be used by any other civil servants, training providers, entrepreneurs and citizens. All information is provided free of charge.

The database is divided into a number of segments. The core consists of

five subject sections, the content and focus of which is designed to satisfy practical needs related to the development and implementation of HRD projects. They are analyses and prognosis, visions and strategies, partnerships, project management and funding.

Each subject section is further divided into specific topics. The core of each section provides an overview of the most important findings, guidance, procedures and methods concerning the respective topic. Specific examples of successful HRD projects are under the heading Best Practices. These are complemented by Links with Comments pointing to documents, texts, materials and other information concerned with HRD that are accessible on the Internet. Other sections in the portal include News, Calendar of Events and Our Guidance. A Discussion Forum is under development.

The 'Best Practices Database' aims not only to provide high quality, verified and up-to-date information necessary for HRD management in regions, but, most importantly, to develop a platform for effective sharing of the relevant knowledge and experience related to HRD project implementation. As the Czech Republic lacks a comparable source of information, the database has great potential for becoming a unique instrument that will be developing in line with new findings about the current state of HRD management at regional, national and European levels. An English version of the database is planned.

For further information contact:  
Petra Jedličková,  
National Training Fund  
Tel. (420) 224 500 573  
E-mail: [info@topregion.cz](mailto:info@topregion.cz)  
URL: <http://www.topregion.cz>

Source: National Training Fund - Human Resources Development

## IRELAND

### Changes proposed in focus of human resource investment

An evaluation of the Irish National Development Plan and the Community Support Framework (CSF) calls for a change of emphasis in human resource measures. These measures, which were outlined in the Employment and Human Resources Development Operational Programme, 2000-2006, were devised at a time of strong economic growth. The current slowdown in the economy necessitates a re-allocation of resources to tackle current needs.

The report (1) examines the returns to the state on human investment in Ireland. Considerable resources were allocated to investment in education and training under previous CSFs. These resulted in a major upgrading in the educational attainment of the labour force. The proportion of the labour force with at least a Leaving Certificate (final upper secondary examination) has increased from over 50% in 1973 to just under 70% today and is expected to reach 77% of the labour force by 2013. The report finds a sharp fall in returns on educational qualifications, except third-level sub-degree qualifications, between 1987, 1994 and 2000. The authors say the fall may be due to the increased supply of persons with higher qualifications over the period (including immigrants), the introduction of the National Minimum Wage and the relative increase in the pay of low-skill jobs during the peak of the Celtic Tiger years.

The most obvious benefit of education/training is an increase in the productivity of employees and hence value-added and competitiveness. However, the evaluation report cites two other important effects. Firstly, the initial impact of increased education/training of the population was to reduce the supply of persons with low educational levels. This led to an increase in wage rates for low-skilled jobs and this, in turn, provided an incentive for the unemployed and inactive to seek and obtain employment. Thus, total labour supply was increased. The second factor relates to higher-skill jobs. The increased supply of educated labour reduced wage pressures in these jobs, and this, in turn, improved competitiveness.

The report also shows that the ratio of skilled to unskilled average wage rates reduced as a

result of the investment in human capital, thus having a 'positive impact in reducing social exclusion'. It also notes that the impact on participation rates was much greater for females, thereby having a positive impact on the Lisbon Agenda objective of increased female participation.

Overall the evaluation concludes that the investment under the first three years of the Operational Programme will lead to a 1.5% increase in Irish GDP during the medium-term, which, in turn, will lead to over 50 000 extra jobs.

Following a detailed analysis of current investment measures in education and training within the Operational Programme, the report calls for a re-balancing of expenditure. The main proposals are:

- a greater focus on short-term unemployment in the light of growing job losses, and in order to ensure preventative action so that long-term unemployed numbers do not rise;
- more focused and progression-led interventions for the long-term unemployed and socially excluded;
- greater focus on interventions having strong labour market linkages, which have a significant impact on participants' future employment prospects;
- a re-focusing on continuing education for older age groups to replace the falling numbers in initial education;
- a need for greater focus on training those at work;
- a need for increased emphasis on lifelong learning opportunities for everyone in Irish society at all levels - in work, out of work, and innovative responses;
- a need for a greater awareness of and focus on costs and cost effectiveness in HRD provision.

(1) Fitz Gerald, John et al: The mid-term evaluation of the National Development Plan and Community Support Framework for Ireland 2000-2006. Dublin: ESRI, 2003. ISBN 0-7070-0221-4.  
Available: Economic & Social Research Institute, 4 Burlington Road, IRL-Dublin 4. Tel. (353-3) 667 1525. Fax 353-1 668 6231. Price EUR 50.  
The findings of the report are discussed in a recent paper by Fox, Roger: Investing in human resources. Presentation to Mutual Information Policies on Employment Policies in Europe (MISEP) Network, 23 April 2004. Contact: [roger.fox@fas.ie](mailto:roger.fox@fas.ie).

Source: FÁS

## POLAND

### First Job: implementation and results

*First Job* is one of the Polish support programmes targeted at unemployed school leavers and graduates from various types of schools. It is part of the National Strategy for Employment and Human Resources Development in 2000-06, modelled on the European Employment Strategy. The programme aims to create new jobs and improve the vocational qualifications of unemployed school leavers, so enhancing their employability.

At the end of 2003, school leavers and graduates accounted for 4.97% of the unemployed in Poland. Unemployed youth (18-24) totalled 26% of general unemployment. The second round of *First Job*, from June 2003 till May 2004, was also targeted at young people in the 18-24 range who had never worked before.

The programme is financed from the Labour Fund, to which all institutions, businesses and enterprises contribute by paying a 2% tax for active measures to fight unemployment. In 2003, Labour Fund expenditure totalled MPLN 1 588.5, including MPLN 230.9 in reimbursement of wages to businesses hiring unemployed school leavers.

The Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy is in charge of programme im-

plementation. It works in partnership with the Ministry of National Education and Sport, Voluntary Labour Corps, other government departments, labour offices, enterprises, businesses, local governments at all levels (municipal, county and regional), and NGOs and other institutions implementing local and regional programmes.

The Programme includes three types of measures which, to date, have assisted 833 717 people.

First are measures aimed at increasing school leavers' participation in the labour market (206 217 people). These include:

- work placements of up to a year (120 138);
- reimbursement of costs incurred by employers hiring school leavers (27 166);
- training programmes (29 964);
- loans for training purposes, start-up loans and loans for creation of new jobs (1 266);
- intervention works, public works, community works (20 039);
- reimbursement of commuting costs (4 641);
- special programmes (1 098);
- Programme for the Development of Rural Areas and Phare (6 698)
- other instruments

A second strand is exemption from payment of social security contributions for those

who start up business activity. This was applied to 2 300 school leavers.

Finally there are supplementary activities in career information, vocational counselling and labour exchange, as well as projects implemented with other partners. These covered 624 800 people, including 451 000 school leavers and graduates, offering education and information activities aimed at preparing young people for work, labour fairs and exchanges, other programmes and projects:

- My Municipality in the EU, employing 4 997 school leavers in Municipal European Information Centres;
- Voluntary Labour Corps (OHP) activities: 498 labour fairs and exchanges, employing 10 000 people, setting up 158 school career centres, organising 427 Municipal Information Centres, setting up 74 new Academic Career Bureaux in higher education institutions;
- Work for School Leavers: micro-loans for start-ups in the BGK Bank for 347 school leavers;
- Junior: 282 work placements for the handicapped, international contracts for 1 134 work placements abroad, launching 400 multimedia facilities in labour and Volunteer Labour Corps offices, collecting information

about occupations, and training and employment opportunities.

The results of *First Job* in 2003 are significant: 89 900 people, including 80 900 school leavers and graduates, found employment within three months of the end of the specific measure they undertook. Compared with December 2002, the number of unemployed aged 18-24 fell by 70 300 and the number of unemployed school leavers and graduates by 8 900.

The *First Job* programme will continue, and will receive additional support from the sectoral operational programme Human Resources Development, specifically the measure on prospects for youth. It will have an allocation of approximately EUR 270 million in the years 2004-06, over EUR 64 million of which will be available in 2004.

Further information:  
Krystyna Lelińska  
Institute of Labour and Social Affairs  
Tel. (48-22) 636 13 25, ext.137  
E-mail: [kasyfikacja@piss.com.pl](mailto:kasyfikacja@piss.com.pl)  
Website: [www.ipiss.com.pl](http://www.ipiss.com.pl)

Source: Ministry of Economy, Labour and Social Policy/Krystyna Lelińska





## CZECH REPUBLIC

### Launch of the centre for evaluation of educational results

On 1 January 2004 the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic set up a Centre for Evaluation of Educational Results (CERMAT) as a section of the Institute for Information on Education. The reason for establishing the centre was the need to ensure comparability of the quality of outcomes in an education system which underwent decentralisation in 2001. Liberalisation and decentralisation in education has provided schools with a large degree of independence and responsibility for the quality of the education process and its outcomes. However, this requires a common framework to ensure consistency in education, while at the same time assessment criteria must be set. Unlike in the former centralised system, which focused on supervision of the educational process, decentralised governance places a far greater emphasis on outcomes. This makes comparability of certificates and the criteria for their award all the more important.

The Centre was not built from scratch – it represents a transformation of the Centre for the 'Maturita' (1) Examination, building on its expertise, but substantially expanding its range of activities. The Centre for Evalu-

ation of Educational Results is concerned with external evaluation of educational results and pedagogical processes. It contributes to the development of an evaluation policy and carries out the relevant methodological research and development. It also supports the process of introducing a new evaluation culture in general and provides assistance to various bodies concerned with education (regional authorities, schools, pedagogical centres), including training of teachers and trainers. The Centre's mission is to develop instruments for external evaluation of the outcomes of education and for their interpretation. Special attention is devoted to students with special learning needs.

CERMAT continues working on the reform of the maturita examination. As part of a scheme called 'Step by Step to a New maturita' it organises preparatory programmes for secondary schools. Specific goals necessary in pursuing maturita reform are set for each calendar year. The programmes are designed to attract an increasing number of secondary schools and to promote self-evaluation. The number of participating schools increases every year and this year (the 4th of the scheme's operation), 64% of all secondary

schools providing maturita took part in a project entitled 'Draft maturita 2004'. A 'maturita without a handicap' programme designed for special needs students is an integral part of the scheme. The implementation of the scheme will continue until 2007.

CERMAT is also developing a similar evaluation scheme - 'Evaluation of Educational Results of 9<sup>th</sup> Year Pupils' - for basic schools (2). This is the first attempt to introduce to basic schools an instrument for external evaluation that will provide information for internal school evaluation and pupils' self-evaluation. It will also be relevant for other school partners (e.g. governing authorities, such as regional governments, churches, private institutions etc.) and secondary schools, where basic school leavers continue studying. In March 2004, pupils in 9th year of basic school in the Karlovarský region were evaluated on a pilot basis.

Apart from ensuring comparability of learning outcomes among regions and type of schools, CERMAT also facilitates international comparisons. It provides expertise in relation to the PISA and PIRLS surveys (an international scheme for evaluation of pupils' reading, scientific and mathematical literacy and

an international survey of reading literacy respectively).

External evaluation carried out by CERMAT is an important source of information and benchmarks for schools. This stimulates further development and quality enhancement of the education process. Moreover, the information is relevant for students as well, as it facilitates their self-evaluation of their real chances to succeed in the chosen educational pathway. External evaluation is also expected to contribute to rendering admission proceedings to advanced levels of education more simple and transparent.

(1) Examination at the end of upper secondary school, ISCED level 3A  
(2) Basic school includes both primary and lower secondary levels. The 9th grade is at ISCED level 2

For further information contact:  
Jitka Pilbauerová, public relations,  
Centre for Evaluation of Educational Results,  
Institute for Information on Education  
Senovážné nám. 26,  
P.O.Box č. 1,  
110 06 Praha 1,  
Czech Republic  
Tel. (420) 224 398 259  
E-mail: pilbauer@uiv.cz  
Website: www.cermat.cz

Source: National Observatory of Employment and Training - National Training Fund

## SLOVAKIA

### PCs for schools: from rhetoric to reality

Slovakia is the only acceding country where the Internet is accessed more often from an Internet café than from a place of education, a clear indicator of education's limited contribution to creating the information society. According to local and international experts, and surveys such as the 2003 eEurope+ progress report, Slovakia's preparation for the information society is inadequate.

Lack of funding is responsible for the poor ICT infrastructure in Slovak education. For many years the INFOVEK project, with its well considered four-pillar policy, suffered from insufficient support from the state budget. Despite the rhetoric in policy papers supporting education, the information society and a knowledge-based society, despite even the signing of the eEurope+ initiative and the subsequent public-private partnership initiative eSlovakia, there was no decisive action. Now, strident public criticism seems to be bringing about change.

The PCs for Schools project, which is part of the eSlovakia initiative, was officially launched on 15 January 2004 at the rural basic school in Ivanka pri Dunaji, when the door was opened on the first ICT classroom connected to the Internet using ADSL technology. Nationwide implementation began on 13 April 2004 and, by the end of the year, more than 22 000 IBM computers will have been donated by Deutsche Telekom AG for new ICT classrooms in over 3 500 basic and secondary schools in Slovakia. All schools will have the necessary technology infrastructure and a service 'package' of five student PCs, one teacher PC, printer, scanner and tablet. All PCs will be provided with Microsoft Windows XP Professional SK and Microsoft Office 2003 SK. A free guarantee service will be in place for four years. In addition, all basic and secondary schools will be connected to the Internet by ISDN or ADSL technology by the end of 2004.

Alternative Internet providers and small hardware/software firms - traditionally anti-Telecom and/or anti-Gates - are critical. They question whether the

Slovak authorities have always believed in the existence of free lunches or think they were invented only in Slovakia in 2004. For the hungry education sector this is irrelevant and the schools see the project in a very positive light. Independent analysts, however, have three pointed questions:

- Why did Slovakia not invite the private sector into the INFOVEK project sooner to speed up the introduction of information technology?
- Would it not have been better to follow a solid incremental policy, providing gradual improvement of ICT in schools, instead of launching a rescue operation at the last minute?
- Are complementary activities being prepared to make as much additional use of the infrastructure as possible?

There is always a danger that the most visible effect of such a project is an increasing number of children playing games on PCs, instead of in playgrounds, and a flurry of pictures in the local press and school yearbooks showing smiling people at schools with new computers. Those behind the INFOVEK and PCs for Schools projects are fully aware of this danger and are determined that this initiative will learn from mistakes of others.

For more information on INFOVEK see  
<http://www.infovek.sk> with very brief info in English at  
<http://www.infovek.sk/english/index.html>  
For information on eSlovakia initiative inclusive PCs for Schools project see  
<http://www.slovaktelecom.sk/En/Default.aspx?CatID=31>

Source: Slovak National Observatory of VET

## LATVIA

### Latvian cultural craftsmen

To improve the artistic and creative skills of its young people, Latvia encourages VET students and future craftsmen and technicians to spend leisure time in folk dance groups, choirs and school theatre groups.

Most VET students in Latvia are aged between 15 and 21. Some come from socially disadvantaged families and have no experience of spending leisure time in a meaningful way. Promoting cultural education through hobby groups, choirs, dance groups, etc., and involvement in state cultural education projects, are seen as important elements of their training.

The Ministry of Education and Science, in cooperation with the State Youth Initiative Centre (established in 1996 and responsible for implementing youth policy under the supervision of the Ministry) is, for the third year running, organising a 'Craftsman Festival' involving young people from VET schools who can sing, dance, act or have some other talent. The festival's aims are to develop students' artistic and creative skills, promote productive leisure activities and strengthen festival traditions. The festival is held in three stages, first at the school level, then regionally and nationally in Riga, the capital. Of the 10 000 students involved in the early stages, approximately 1 000 take part in the final event.

The Ministry of Education and Science's policy is that each school must provide facilities for organising leisure time activities. In Ministry supervised VET schools there are 37

choirs, 44 folk dance groups, 13 school theatre groups and a number of modern dance groups. Some schools may only have one activity while others have several.

This year the Craftsman Festival was held on 30 April, a day of ceremony and celebration of Latvia's accession to the European Union. There were many competitions and shows leading to the nomination of the best teams and individuals: 'singing craftsman', 'dancing craftsman', 'craftsman - theatre performer', 'best occupation show'.

Although the Craftsman Festival is still new, it has already become a permanent festival tradition for VET school students. Next year the festival will coincide with the 9th School Youth Song and Dance Festival and will be staged in the heart of old Riga, in the Doma Square.

Further information:  
Baiba Ramina  
[baiba@aic.lv](mailto:baiba@aic.lv)  
[www.aic.lv](http://www.aic.lv)

Quelle: Latvian National Observatory/ Baiba Ramina



### FRANCE

## Pass' compétences promotes access to sustainable employment

The *Pass' compétences* scheme, piloted by the temporary employment service, Adecco, and the National Association for the Vocational Training of Adults (AFPA), allows temporary workers to acquire a recognised qualification through a linked work and training programme.

*Pass' compétences interim* is a new system of training route management developed by Adecco and AFPA. It offers 'temporary workers access to sustainable employment and provides firms the opportunity to bridge their skills gaps'. AFPA has been piloting this scheme since September 2002 in the regions of Franche-Comté and Alsace, in partnership with Adecco/eastern France. The scheme, an extension of the Paquette initiative for the training of temporary workers within the context of the European project Equal, is co-funded to the tune of 50% by the European Social Fund (ESF) with an initial budget of EUR 1.3 million in Franche-Comté and approx. EUR 1.6 million in Alsace for the period 2002 to 2005. The rest of the funding is provided by Adecco (30%) and AFPA (20%).

The objective of the *Pass' compétences intérim* scheme is to provide a flexible and practical response to the skills needs of enterprises, and to provide motivation for temporary workers wishing to acquire a recognised qualification in the following sectors: construction (bricklayer, building maintenance operative, plumber/heating engineer, pat-

tern maker, painter, etc.), industry (plastics processing occupations, lathe operator, trimming operator, electrician, etc.), and the tertiary sector (catering, etc.).

To be eligible for the scheme, temporary workers must be nominated by either an enterprise or an Adecco agency; alternatively they may apply for entry on their own initiative. Adecco stipulates that 'the selection of the temporary workers takes place on the basis of the candidates' know-how, social skills, involvement and ability to follow the training programme'. Candidates are initially interviewed by their Adecco agency and their motivation and career plans evaluated. A meeting with an AFPA trainer is subsequently organised to 'evaluate and ascertain candidates' abilities and potential'. The training pathway for the temporary worker is then organised, alternating periods in industry with training.

Each occupation is divided into modules of 35 or even 70 hours of training, representing a specific field of job skilling. As emphasised by Adecco, the accumulation of these modules means that skills management can be organised to match company requirements, while at the same time developing the employability of the temporary workers, evidenced by the acquisition of vocational certificates awarded by AFPA. Once participants embark on the scheme, the objectives targeted by the training pathway are jointly iden-

tified by the enterprise, the temporary worker, Adecco and AFPA. As training progresses and the participants gain increasing in-company experience, AFPA certificates are awarded for the completed training modules. The validated skills are recorded in an individual booklet. The final stage is the award of the vocational certificate in the target occupation or a recognised qualification, depending on the objectives defined at the outset of the programme.

Since the beginning of the pilot phase, almost 70 temporary workers have come out of the scheme with a vocational certificate, the majority having been taken on by firms on the basis of open-ended contracts of employment.

Contacts:  
Adecco Est  
Marc Poncin  
Tel. (33) 3 89 32 95 60;  
AFPA  
Catherine Vinson  
Tel. (33) 3 81 65 06 29

Source: INFFO Flash, No 631, 15 to 29 February 2004 (Ph. Grandin)

### ROMANIA

## New quality assurance mechanisms in continuing vocational training

**Six months after its inception, the authorization of adult training providers offers its first results.**

The policy on the authorisation of training providers in Romania has generated a great deal of controversy. It has raised several issues, such as whether in a country where adult participation in continuing training is quite modest, it is appropriate to regulate the training provision market.

The National Adult Training Board (NATB) (1) plays the central role in the process of accreditation. Law no. 375/2002 concerning the endorsement of Government Ordinance no. 129/2000 on adult vocational training regulated the process. One year later, in October 2003, the methodology for the authorisation of adult training providers was adopted through Emergency Ordinance no. 522/2003.

During late 2003, the organisational process started with the setting up, nation-wide, of the authorisation county committees, in the framework of the Directorates for Dialogue, Social Solidarity and Family (DDSSF) of the Ministry of Labour, Social Solidarity, and Fam-

ily (MLSSF). Each of these consists of five members: the DDSFF executive director, who also acts as the president and four other members representing the County School Inspectorate, the County Employment Agency, the local labour union and the local employers' organisation, respectively.

In January 2004, supported by a technical secretariat, the authorization commissions became operational and the first authorizations were released. By May 2004, more than 200 training providers received an authorization to organise training courses for specific occupations and to issue qualification and graduation certificates. A national database, the National Register of Adult Training Providers, was created to record all authorised training providers. The certificates are recognized at national level and display the seals of the two issuing authorities, i.e. the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs and of Education and Research.

In response to the criticism that restrictions are being imposed on the market of training providers, it is argued that provider registration is optional and does not aim at

eliminating any training provider from the market. All providers may continue to operate and issue certificates under their own seal. The recognition of acquired certificates remains a decision of the employer.

According to the Committees' representatives, the authorisation system assures transparent criteria and evaluation procedures and creates improved monitoring mechanisms for all occupations. The significance of the authorization process resides in its attempt to assign nation-wide recognition and additional quality assurance to a given programme. Expanded responsibilities for NATB and its proposed acquisition of the status of National Qualifications Authority - still under debate - will foster the development of the system of qualifications and will have a positive impact on the monitoring process of training programmes in terms of human resources, equipment, curriculum etc.

In the near future, the accreditation and certification methodologies applied to continuing vocational training are expected to improve the quality of the learning process and its contents. This initiative, alongside the

implementation of initial and continuing vocational training standards, the development of transferable core skills and the introduction of the national system of vocational qualifications will entail in-depth changes relating to quality assurance in the provision of continuing vocational training in Romania.

(1) NATB (<http://www.cnfa.ro>) is the main institution accountable for adult training policies implementation in Romania.

Further information from:  
Ms. Mihaela Jigău,  
Deputy Manager,  
Romanian National Observatory  
37, Știrbei Vodă St.  
RO-010102 Bucharest, Romania  
Tel./Fax (40-21)-315-8705  
E-mail: [mihaela.j@ise.ro](mailto:mihaela.j@ise.ro)

Source: Romanian National Observatory

## Training of trainers

### SPAIN

## Teacher training

The Ministry of Education adopted a royal decree on 4 February regulating the 'certificate of specialisation in teaching' (1). The certificate is to be a requirement for all those wishing to teach at upper secondary general and higher-level vocational education.

The new certificate of specialisation in teaching for initial teacher training is structured according to processes designed to be complementary: the scientific fundamentals of teaching (academic dimension) and the corresponding didactic (vocational) dimension.

At the same time, the initial training structure envisaged by the royal decree now means that future teachers will be awarded not only the basic or core certificate spe-

cific to the studies of their choice, but also the 'diploma supplement', defining a specific specialisation, in this case teaching, within the scope of the European Union. Those deciding to opt for teaching in the course of higher education may also take the certificate as a postgraduate programme. Finally, to complete the required training for the certificate, academic training is to be followed up by a period of teaching practice.

The training process leading to the certificate of specialisation in teaching (didactics) is therefore divided into two stages: an academic phase, which may be directly incorporated into studies of higher education, and a vocational phase of teaching practice to back up the acquired

academic knowledge and assist in the evaluation of all teachers starting off in teaching, both in the public or the private sector.

(1) Royal Decree 118/2004, 23 January (Official State Journal, 4 February 2004); The Spanish text is available at:  
<http://www.uv.es/occe/web%20castellano/RD%20tit%20esp%20didactica.pdf>

Source: INEM, public state employment service



## Keeping teaching attractive for the 21<sup>st</sup> century

Eurydice has just published the final report in a set of four devoted to the teaching profession in Europe (<sup>1</sup>). This latest publication examines how the profession is perceived by teachers and society in various surveys of opinion. It suggests that the following five areas need further consideration if the attractiveness of the profession is to be enhanced: diversification of paths through training; greater overall consistency in initial and in-service training; the part played by financial incentives in salary policies; the promotion of mobility as a means of securing a balanced supply of teachers on the employment market; and factors likely to motivate teachers nearing retirement to remain in the profession.

### Some of the report's findings:

- The teachers surveyed in national or international surveys say that in general they are fairly satisfied with their profession. Above all, they appreciate reasonable freedom to work as they wish and good relations with pupils and colleagues. However, the major difficulties affecting them appear to be linked to their working conditions, including the complexity and proliferation of tasks required and an increased workload. Teachers also often cite the lack of practical training, in particular for managing groups of difficult adolescents. Indeed, a significant proportion of them state

they are ready to leave the profession. They also underestimate the extent to which their work is appreciated by society.

- Some countries have begun to explore alternative approaches to training, including part-time programmes, distance provision or intensive programmes for those who have acquired professional experience in another sector. One of the major innovations in this area is the introduction of 'on-the-job' forms of training, mainly in the Netherlands and England (<sup>2</sup>). This development requires a move from a teaching qualifications system based on a thorough knowledge of what has been covered in the training curriculum to one dependent on the evaluation of skills acquired in accordance with a centrally defined standard. Bearing in mind the substantial autonomy enjoyed by training institutions in Europe, the concern is to testify more objectively to the level of ability acquired by candidates, irrespective of their chosen path through training and training institution.

- Given that many European countries have to contend with an ageing teaching profession, ensuring that experienced teachers remain motivated for as long as possible has become a major concern. This is particularly significant in that teachers in many countries are able to retire before they reach official retirement age, and generally take advantage of the opportunity to do so. Reforms to limit the scope for

early retirement have been undertaken in several countries. Consideration is being given to possible ways of compensating for this longer period in service by partially modifying the employment conditions of teachers when they approach retirement. Several countries provide for a reduced teaching load with no loss of earnings. The supervision of inexperienced colleagues is a constructive way of turning the experience of teachers to good account while at the same time offering them an alternative activity.

(<sup>1</sup>) The teaching profession in Europe: profile, trends and concerns, Report IV: Keeping teaching attractive for the 21st century, 2004, Eurydice. Available in English and French (and from September 2004 in German) in hard copy form and on the Eurydice website: <http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/en/FrameSet4.htm>

The first three reports may also be accessed on the Eurydice website:  
Report I: Initial training and transition to working life (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/en/FrameSet1.htm>)  
Report II: Supply and demand (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/en/FrameSet2.htm>)  
Report III: Working conditions and pay (<http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/KeyTopics3/en/FrameSet3.htm>)  
See also Cedefop Info 3/2003

(<sup>2</sup>) See article from the Netherlands below

Source: Eurydice

## THE NETHERLANDS

### Making the teaching profession more attractive - more on-the-job training

The competences asked from teachers are changing rapidly in educational practice. Teaching methods are changing and teams of educational staff are responsible for the learning process instead of just one teacher. Society and industry look for different competences from learners and workers when they enter the labour market. The training of educational staff should be adapted to meet the changing demands. The answer is a new structure for the educational professions, which can also help to reduce the shortage of teaching personnel, in both the short and long term.

The Minister of Education, Culture and Science has proposed a new comprehensive structure for the educational professions (<sup>1</sup>). The core of the proposal is the formula-

tion of basic quality conditions for the various occupations (teachers, teaching assistant, teacher support, etc.). Furthermore staff training inside the school will become a more central element of teacher (re) training and of a modern staff policy. Schools can, under certain conditions, be reimbursed for the extra costs, when this training in the workplace is a substantial part of (future) teacher training.

#### National platform

An important part of the basic quality conditions for the various functions and professions will be formulated by a national platform of experts drawn from both the demand and the supply side of the educational sector. The civil effect thus created will be

nationally recognised. The Minister defines these quality standards in an Order in Council, which can be adapted more flexibly than the (proposed) Act on Professions in Education. The quality conditions and responsibilities of the various professions will be streamlined in order to stimulate mobility within the sector and create better career opportunities.

#### Dual learning

In addition to full or part time training courses for those working in education, dual learning is becoming more and more important. Some schools have ambitions to train their own staff or upgrade their competences (HRM policy). Learning at the workplace thus replaces parts of training courses.

Furthermore, in some cases a more structured application of dual learning is necessary:

- dual learning routes will be the main training pathway for persons, who are already working in the educational sector and want to upgrade to a higher position;
- dual learning is the most suitable way to train persons coming from outside the educational sector in the various educational functions;
- the combination of learning and working is very attractive for a lot of students.

(<sup>1</sup>) Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. *Een samenhangend stelsel voor onderwijsberoepen*. (A comprehensive scheme for educational professions). In Dutch only. The Hague, October 2003.

Further information: [www.minocv.nl](http://www.minocv.nl), [www.leraar.nl](http://www.leraar.nl)  
Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science / CINOP

## Financing of training

## UNITED KINGDOM

### Earn as you learn

In April, the government stepped up its attack on the UK's appalling drop out rate. Education and Skills Secretary Charles Clarke called on eligible year 11 students across England to pick up the new Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA) form and apply for their weekly payment of up to £30 (EUR 42). The 'earn as you learn' allowances are seen as a financial incentive which will help replace the 'culture of dropping out' at 16 with a 'culture of getting on'.

Following a successful pilot project covering a third of the country, pupils across England can from September 2004 pick up application forms from schools, sixth form colleges or Connexions' branches (see Cedefop Info 3/2000). All young people from households with annual incomes of £ 30 000 (EUR 52 000) or less will be eligible for means-tested EMA payments of between £10 (EUR 14) and £30 (EUR 42) a week paid directly into their bank accounts in return for strong at-

tendance and commitment. Young people could also receive bonuses of £100 (EUR 140) if they remain on the course and make good progress with their learning. The government expects just over half (around 353 000 of the total 666 000) the 16 year old age population to be eligible for EMA in 2004/5.

EMAs have been successfully piloted since 1999 in 56 Local Education Authorities (LEAs). Eight different (EMA) variants have been tested mostly in areas of high levels of economic deprivation, low participation in post-16 education and low attainment at 16.

The pilots were independently evaluated (<sup>1</sup>) by the Institute for Fiscal Studies (IFS) and the University of Loughborough. They found that:

- 16 year old participation (year 12) in full-time education in the pilot areas increased by 5.9% of the eligible cohort;
- there was an even bigger impact on 16 year old boys, with a 6.9% rise in partici-

pation, which may help address the gender gap in further education and

- EMA increased the staying on rate of 16 year olds from the lowest socio-economic group by around 10%.

Speaking at the EMA national launch, the Secretary of State for Education said: 'The UK has one of the highest post-16 drop out rates in the western world. [...] The new EMA is a revolutionary public sector reform approach to cutting the UK's appalling post 16 drop out rate. [...] It is revolutionary because the payments will not be made to providers (LEAs or colleges) but will be made direct to the customer (16 year old students). [...] EMAs will produce the biggest increase in 16-18 participation in a decade. Based upon the IFS evidence, we project that by 2006/7 EMA will be causing an additional 72 000 young people to be participating in further education every year than would have done before EMA was introduced. That is over

70 000 young people in education, the vast majority of whom would otherwise have been in dead-end jobs with no training or self development at best and unemployed at worst.'

(<sup>1</sup>) The Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots: Three Years Evidence - A Quantitative Evaluation was published on the Department for Education and Skills website in January 2004 at [www.dfes.gov.uk/research](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/research) (Number 449). Available from DFES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ (tel. (44)845 6022260; fax 44.845 6033360; e-mail: [dfes@prolog.uk.com](mailto:dfes@prolog.uk.com); price UKL 4.95 (EUR 7).

Further information on Education Maintenance Allowance is published at [www.ema.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.ema.dfes.gov.uk)  
More information can be found at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/financial-help/ema/>.  
Tel. (44) 870 000 2288  
E-mail: [info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk](mailto:info@dfes.gsi.gov.uk)

Source: QCA

## The price to pay for continuing vocational training

### Results of a BIBB survey

For some time now, there have been calls for a greater degree of individual responsibility (frequently also implying a greater degree of financial participation) in virtually all walks of life. The continuing training field is no exception. It is therefore interesting to examine the extent to which private individuals currently engage in CVT, the proportion of the costs they are prepared to assume and the benefits they draw from participation in a CVT course.

These questions were addressed by the research project on the 'costs and benefits of continuing vocational training for individuals', conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) in close conjunction with the expert commission 'Funding of lifelong learning'. The results of the study were as follows:

### Extent of CVT participation

A representative sample of 5 058 individuals (employed, idle, job-seekers and persons intending to take up employment in the near future) was surveyed on their CVT participation. In 2002, 68% of persons aged 19 to 64 participated in some form of CVT. 39%

engaged in training courses, in particular in their own firms or in continuing training agencies, 26% attended congresses, conferences or trade fairs, 23% engaged in self-directed learning, using specialised literature, learning software or the Internet, and 17% engaged in learning in the workplace. Many of the surveyed persons participated in several continuing training courses. The average participation rate was 1.4 continuing training courses per person.

### Individual costs of CVT

A representative sample of 2 000 CVT participants aged 19 to 64 was surveyed on the costs of CVT.

Total costs per person:

- The average individual outlay on CVT amounts to EUR 502 per participant per year. This sum includes both direct costs (enrolment fees, learning resources and working materials, travel costs, external board and lodging, examination fees) of EUR 375 and indirect costs (educational leave or reduced employment) amounting to an average of EUR 127 per participant.

Estimated overall CVT costs:

- On the basis of the mean values indicat-

ed by the sample, 27.78 million private individuals are estimated to have participated in CVT in Germany in 2002, incurring a total outlay of EUR 13.9 billion.

### The individual benefit of CVT

In principle, the surveyed persons rate their participation in CVT positively. The most frequently mentioned benefit, indicated by 69% of participants, is personal further development. A positive impact on job performance (67%) and adaptability to new demands in the workplace (62%) were also frequently mentioned. In contrast, enhanced promotion opportunities (31%) and a better salary (28%) were the least frequently mentioned benefits.

These results demonstrate that private individuals already assume a high degree of responsibility for their own CVT, some investing a considerable amount of time and money in the courses. However, alongside considerable disparities in CVT participation according to gender, educational and vocational qualifications and employment and occupational status, substantial variations can also be observed at the level of individual CVT costs. The willingness to invest in

CVT clearly rises with the level of qualification. This is presumably due to the fact that the motivation for continuing learning and related expectations tend to differ. But the amount individuals can afford to spend on CVT presumably also plays a decisive role. This implies that targeted and effective support measures are indispensable in the future if participation in CVT is to be guaranteed across the board, without specific groups or individuals being excluded.

Publications from the BIBB project:

Ursula Beicht, Elisabeth M. Krekel, Günter Walden: *Berufliche Weiterbildung - welche Kosten tragen die Teilnehmer?* In: *BWP - Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis*, vol. 2/2004, p. 39-43 (EUR 7,90)

Ursula Beicht, Stefan Schiel, Dieter Timmermann: *Berufliche Weiterbildung - wie unterscheiden sich Teilnehmer und Nicht-Teilnehmer?* In: *BWP - Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis*, vol. 1/2004, p. 5-10, price: EUR 7,90. (An abstract of this article 'Continuing vocational training: how do participants and non-participants differ?' can be found at the address indicated below)

<http://www.bibb.de/de/text/10080.htm>  
These publications may be ordered from: W. Bertelsmann Verlag, Postfach 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld, Tel. (49-521) 91101-11, Fax (49-521) 91101-19, E-Mail: [service@wbv.de](mailto:service@wbv.de)

Contacts

Dr. Elisabeth M. Krekel - [krekel@bibb.de](mailto:krekel@bibb.de), Ursula Beicht - [beicht@bibb.de](mailto:beicht@bibb.de), Dr. Günter Walden - [walden@bibb.de](mailto:walden@bibb.de)

Source: BIBB

## Special target groups

### AUSTRIA

## The long shadow of the knowledge society

No matter what direction is taken by educational/training policy, there will always be individuals who for one reason or another fail to keep pace with social or economic developments. A disadvantage in initial and continuing training is in turn followed by intractable labour market exclusion; this in turn cannot be adequately combated on account of the existing educational disadvantage. Lifelong learning, building on broadly-based and ongoing access to education and training, is therefore critical for the educationally disadvantaged.

The groups typically at risk of disadvantage in continuing training are those traditionally targeted by specific schemes, e.g. persons living with disabilities, young people and women. On the other hand, little is known on whether technological progress, new forms of working, e-learning - in a word, social change - has transformed the disadvantage pattern and triggered the emergence of new disadvantaged social groups. This question was examined by a one-year project conducted by the Vienna Institute for Industrial Sciences (IWI), concluded in March 2004. The educational researchers unearthed a number of surprises:

The results of the IWI study point to 'new disadvantages' in the field of continuing training, essentially in the form of 'frictional losses' which have developed in the wake of social change over the past 20 years. The occurrence and extent of these 'new disadvan-

tages' typically depend on the social and political circumstances in which continuing training is organised, the interests of individuals and enterprises in exploiting qualifications, individuals' biographical skill spectrums, the social status of these skills and the relevant societal discourses on education/training and learning. Moreover these new disadvantages not only influence 'traditional' disadvantaged groups, but also those in atypical employment relationships or in jobs with a low level of integration into company life, typically resulting from the interaction of a number of factors (e.g. gender, employment relationship and social status).

The following groups appear to be hardest hit by the 'new disadvantages': those in atypical employment relationships, persons not integrated into company life or the labour market, the lowly skilled and educationally deprived, women, foreigners, senior workers and low earners.

Further information from:  
Barbara Birke ([Barbara.Birke@tgm.ac.at](mailto:Barbara.Birke@tgm.ac.at)) and Helmut Hafner ([Helmut.Hafner@tgm.ac.at](mailto:Helmut.Hafner@tgm.ac.at))  
Training and Labour Market research, Laboratory for Plastics Engineering, LKT, Wexstrasse 19-23, Vienna  
Tel. (43) 699 120 120 19

Source: Helmut Hafner/Cedefop/cf

### CZECH REPUBLIC

## Intensive individual work with unemployed young people pays off

One of the Czech Republic's contributions to implementation of the European Employment Strategy is a programme entitled 'První příležitost' (First Chance). It has been implemented by all labour offices since the beginning of 2004, and it is designed for young people up to 25 who are seeking their first job. The main aim is to provide specific assistance to them soon after their registration at the labour office (within six months at the latest), thus decreasing the likelihood of their becoming part of the long-term unemployed. This programme is of particular importance as it focuses on the age group with the highest unemployment rate - 22.9% in 2003. The group is largely formed by school leavers who are among the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market, particularly due to their lack of work and social experience in the real life/work process.

Before its nationwide launch the programme was tested at selected labour offices. The results proved its effectiveness. The programme has contributed considerably to increased awareness on the part of unemployed young people of employers' requirements, of employment opportunities, and counselling, job brokering and other services provided by labour offices. This has resulted in a more active approach by participants and one third of them got a new job within three months. The remaining group of participants could then enjoy more intensive services provided by the labour offices in the area of motivation and counselling, including the use of psychological and diagnostic methods. As there was more time available for individual consultations, the clients were more open and willing to co-operate.

One important instrument used as part of the programme is Individual Action Plans (IAP). These are agreed with motivated unemployed individuals, normally after 3-4 months of unemployment. The IAPs have resulted for most clients (approx. 70%) in increased levels of activity and acceptance of responsibility for their situation. In individual action plans, great emphasis is placed on training programmes. These are designed not only to motivate the unemployed (establishing their vocational orientation and providing personal deve-

lopment) and to provide them with ICT skills and missing key competencies, but also to retrain them for a specific job (e.g. in services, construction, accountancy and tax planning, marketing, entrepreneurship etc.).

When the 'First Chance' programme was tested, a number of problems arose, particularly among young unemployed individuals with the lowest qualifications. They were passive and indifferent in their approach to most activities offered in order to increase their employability or secure them a job. Indeed IAPs had no effect on approx. 30% of the participants. Conversely, those with secondary education co-operated generally well and sought to adapt to labour market requirements. Job seekers with a university education (the smallest proportion of the unemployed registered at labour offices) have a chance of succeeding in their search for employment even without such specific assistance.

Nationwide implementation of the programme comes at a time when the government is seeking to toughen the conditions for the payment of unemployment benefits. This should motivate young people to search for jobs in time. Those who do not succeed get an opportunity within the 'First Chance' programme to improve their position in the labour market or to return to the education system, if they need to acquire a vocational qualification. In this way the economic pressure on unemployed school leavers is offset by individual counselling and targeted support, which has proved itself able to produce positive results.

For further information contact:

Věra Havlíčková, National Observatory of Employment and Training-National Training Fund  
Tel. (420) 224 500 542, fax (420) 224 500 502  
E-mail: [havlickova@nvf.cz](mailto:havlickova@nvf.cz)  
[www.nvf.cz/observatory](http://www.nvf.cz/observatory)  
or  
Hana Blažková, Labour Office Most  
Tel. (420) 476 440 664  
E-mail: [Hana.Blazkova@up.mpsv.cz](mailto:Hana.Blazkova@up.mpsv.cz)

Source: National Observatory of Employment and Training - National Training Fund



## The threat of a lost generation - strong commitment to fight growing youth unemployment

Although the unemployment rate in the Netherlands is relatively low, it is increasing faster than the European Union average, especially amongst youngsters. However, in view of the ageing population, this group will play an essential role in the (future) labour market. All actors involved agree that all school leavers (with or without basic qualifications) should in the coming years keep in shape for the labour market. The Secretaries of State of Education and Social Affairs joined hands, formulated an action plan<sup>(1)</sup> and installed a Youth Unemployment Taskforce in November 2003.

The aims of the Action Plan are to ensure that

- the youth unemployment rate is not more than twice the national average, and
- in order to prevent long term unemployment, every unemployed youngster ob-

tains a job or re-enters education or training within 6 months.

Various initiatives have already been taken by employer and employee organisations, Centres for Work and Income (CWI), municipalities and others, to prevent a further increase of youth unemployment. There is a strong commitment to help youngsters back to school if needed, and to a job if possible. Another example is the call from the Labour Foundation (social partners)<sup>(2)</sup> to branches, companies and employees organisations to agree in collective labour agreements (CAO) to stimulate youth employment, maintain and create practical training places (even in these tough times) and to create more starting jobs or functions for school leavers.

The Youth Unemployment Taskforce supports the realisation of the following goals, by the end of 2004:

- 40 000 extra youth jobs, e.g. learning on the job, work-based apprenticeship, job with (temporary) contract, etc, should be guaranteed and be realised by the end of 2007;
- an extra 10 000 youth jobs should be recorded at the Centres for Work and Income;
- 7 500 youngsters should have actually started in a youth job.

Furthermore, the activities of the Taskforce are to:

- support municipalities in ensuring local cooperation between education, (youth) care and labour market services;
- inform youngsters and their parents of the importance of jobs and education by way of national and regional information campaigns;
- exchange good and innovative practices;
- stimulate further development of the availability of short term tailor-made courses for school leavers by regional training centres;

- exchange experiences with fiscal measures and
- initiate a Knowledge Passport (a uniform youth passport linked to the European developments towards a Europass<sup>(3)</sup> single transparency framework), to make the competences of youngsters transparent on the labour market.

<sup>(1)</sup> Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid (Taskforce Youth Unemployment). Werkplan Samen aan het Werk (Action plan Together at work) in Dutch. The Hague. June 2003. See also [www.jeugdwerkloosheid.nl](http://www.jeugdwerkloosheid.nl)

<sup>(2)</sup> The Foundation of Labour. Aanbeveling ter bestrijding van werkloosheid onder jeugdigen, (Recommendation to combat youth unemployment) in Dutch. The Hague. January 2004.

<sup>(3)</sup> see article on page 20 of this Cedefop Info

More information: [www.jeugdwerkloosheid.nl](http://www.jeugdwerkloosheid.nl), [www.minocw.nl](http://www.minocw.nl), [www.szw.nl](http://www.szw.nl), and, for the most recent unemployment rates, [www.cbs.nl](http://www.cbs.nl)

Source: Ministry of Education, Culture and Science / Taskforce Jeugdwerkloosheid / CINOP

## Vocational guidance

### Historic step for guidance

Continued from page 1

- strengthening structures for policy and systems development through greater involvement of all stakeholders.

However, to go beyond rhetoric and achieve real change on the ground, the priorities identified by the ministers have to be turned into concrete action. The Resolution therefore invites the Member States to take the following specific actions:

- review existing guidance provision;
- promote co-operation among providers in order to widen access and ensure coherence of provision;
- encourage education and training providers to promote reflective learning techniques and autonomous learning.

The Member States and the Commission are invited to:

- build on and adapt existing guidance related European structures and activities;
- identify areas for further co-operation in guidance;
- ensure maximum impact on policies, systems and practices at Community and national levels from EU funded collaborative guidance activities;
- integrate a gender perspective in all policies and practice relating to guidance provision;
- review existing training of guidance practitioners in the light of best practice;
- improve the collection of evidence on guidance to support the base for policy-making.

The question of how services can be transformed so that they respond to the diverse needs of citizens throughout their lives without significantly increasing public funding costs is crucial. Although the Resolution does

not directly address this issue, the emphasis given to refocusing services, to diverse delivery methods and to better co-ordination suggest that the solution is mainly to be found in getting a better return on investment by increasing the efficiency and effectiveness of services.

The Resolution foresees that progress on the implementation of lifelong guidance policies will be included in future reports on the follow-up of the Education and Training 2010 programme. This will help to keep the spotlight on guidance and to ensure that the momentum built up by the Resolution continues to be developed.

The Resolution and its follow-up are intended to stimulate the establishment of a world class guidance model in Europe. However, the Resolution is not an isolated initiative. It is in fact part of the process of the adaptation of education, training and

employment policies and systems in Europe in light of the Lisbon (2000) goals. In the next issue of Cedefop Info there will be a follow-up article highlighting Community level activity in this field.

Further information: Jennifer Wannan, Cedefop, Tel. (30) 2310 490 097 E-mail: [jwa@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:jwa@cedefop.eu.int)

Source: Cedefop/jwa

## LITHUANIA

### Computerised vocational information system

A pilot version of the Open Information, Counselling and Guidance System (AIKOS) has been produced in Lithuania. It has been created on the daily updated Internet website of the Lithuanian Ministry of Education and Science ([www.mokykla.smm.lt](http://www.mokykla.smm.lt)) and is available in English as well as Lithuanian.

Official, integrated information from education-related registers about universities, colleges and vocational schools, about the courses they provide and the diplomas they award, as well as other information for learners, teachers, employers, employees and policy makers will be published on the active website. When completed the AIKOS website will provide education, labour market and statistical information concerning the number of students at higher education institutions and vocational schools, the annual numbers of enrolments, the unemployed and job vacancies.

This is the first attempt in Lithuania to collate in one database information on the numbers of students, enrolments and labour market needs. Education policy-makers will now be able to justify statistically whether there is a need for certain area specialists.

The system will allow individuals to choose professions and occupations taking labour market needs into account. The main aim of the AIKOS is to provide information for the purpose of vocational guidance to a wide circle of users. Information on the Internet will be used by students, teachers, employers, employees and their organisations, the unemployed and those in search of a job, labour exchanges, state and local authorities and policy-makers. It will be available to those in Lithuania and abroad. The system is open, user friendly and free of charge.

In 2003 the first 20 vocational information points (VIPs) were established in education institutions. Each pilot VIP has 3 computerised workstations, Internet connection, scanner, printer, local network, directories on learning opportunities and other printed information relating to admission to higher education institutions and vocational schools. VIP staff are trained to work with AIKOS. There are also employment specialists providing initial vocational counselling.

In 2004 the software and facilities will be updated on the basis of test results; AIKOS

will be integrated into the European Information System PLOTEUS.

In 2005 the software will be finalised on the basis of expert evaluations and user feedback and an English version of the AIKOS website will be made available.

The utilisation of AIKOS largely depends on the introduction of internet in schools. It is envisaged that by the end of 2007, VIPs will have been established in all primary and secondary schools. There will also be VIPs in vocational schools, libraries, non-formal education bodies for children and adults as well as in other public places. Information made available through AIKOS will increase annually. It is intended to screen films about occupations and the world of work in Lithuania and Europe. The English version of AIKOS will enable the automatic provision of selected information for PLOTEUS.

The creation of a vocational guidance system corresponds to the strategic goals of the Ministry of Education and Science. The Lithuanian Strategy for Vocational Guidance was approved in November 2003. The Ministry of Education and Science and the Ministry of Social Security and Labour are responsible

for implementing the strategy. Statistics Lithuania participated actively in the development of AIKOS and employers' organisations are gradually joining the process. Participation of a wider circle of social partners is planned by the end of 2004 with funding from the European Union structural funds. The computerisation of residents' information and counselling is considered to be the priority goal. The strategy for vocational guidance is in line with the provisions of the Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning (2000).

Further information: Vytautas Burokas Head of Registers Division, Vocational Education and Training Department, Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Lithuania A. Volano str. 2/7, 01516 Vilnius E-mail: [Vytautas.Burokas@smm.lt](mailto:Vytautas.Burokas@smm.lt) Tel. (370-5) 2743168 Website: <http://www.smm.lt>

Source: Ministry of Education and Science/

## AUSTRIA

### The secret of success? - Vocational guidance, Austrian style

At their informal meeting in Dublin, EU education ministers noted the increasing complexity of education and training provision and ways of learning for the individual educational/training consumer and called for nations to strive to create greater transparency in this field.

In Austria, vocational guidance begins at school. Austrian schools are currently supported by some 2 500 educational counsellors and 150 school psychologists. Young Austrians coming out of the education system are supported by a whole raft of continuing training providers, the job market service, interest groups and lobby associations, delivering ongoing and blanket provision of expert guidance and counselling. Moreover, virtual information platforms and portals - e.g. [www.bildung.at](http://www.bildung.at) - are becoming increasingly important. These In-

ternet offerings offer would-be learners and educational/training providers swift and efficient access to information, and the opportunity to establish mutual contact. Given the relatively high Internet density in Austria - almost 20% of households are now online - the acceptance of these platforms is correspondingly high.

Experience in Austria, confirmed by the OECD, shows that the dovetailing of guidance provision and smooth cooperation between the various educational and training policy players is essential: they are two preconditions for the emergence of a widely accepted guidance culture.

Further information from:  
Helmut Hafner  
Laboratory for Plastics Engineering, LKT, Vienna  
[Helmut.Hafner@tgm.ac.at](mailto:Helmut.Hafner@tgm.ac.at)

Source: Helmut Hafner/Cedefop/cf

## BELGIUM

### Social partner project tempts job-seekers to the construction sector

Since April 2004 a number of social partners have been offering a series of orientation modules to familiarise job-seekers with the various aspects of the construction sector. Should these unemployed persons show interest, they can then start actual training. This should enable some sixty people a year to enter the construction sector. If this project is successful, similar initiatives may be launched in other sectors.

The orientation module for the construction sector is a project of co-operation between the *Fonds voor Vakopleiding Bouw, employers (Confederatie Bouw en Bouwunie)*, trade unions (Christian and socialist) and the VDAB. The project originated from the observation that the long-term unemployed often have no idea of what certain jobs entail. The organisers held info sessions in April to explain the project to interested parties.

Whoever wants to go further can then continue with an orientation module of a maximum of two weeks. Unemployed persons who want to become skilled in one of these fields can then follow vocational training at the VDAB. With this project the social partners hope to be able to bring some fifty to sixty job-seekers into the construction sector each year. The social partners may subsequently launch similar initiatives for other sectors.

More info: <http://www.vdab.be>

Source: VDAB VDAB Media en Bibliotheekbeheer

## TURKEY

### İŞKUR career guidance and counselling 2004

The career counselling services carried out by the Turkish Employment Organisation İŞKUR focus on comparing personal characteristics with the requirements and qualifications of specific occupations. This allows individuals to select the most suitable careers for their personal situations and wishes, to benefit from related training, and to call on assistance to solve any problems that arise in adapting to a selected job or placement. The particular targets for this activity are young people at the threshold of choosing a career, adults wanting to start, change or develop their careers, and those going through adaptation problems. İŞKUR Career Counselling Centres offer information about careers, vocational training places and working life. This information is also available at [www.iskur.gov.tr](http://www.iskur.gov.tr)

Delivering career guidance and counselling services in line with changing technology and labour markets, lifelong learning principles and the needs of the country, in an efficient and effective manner, demands the formulation of national policy and action plans, followed by appropriate implementation. It is essential that the Ministry of Education, the

Council of Higher Education and İŞKUR work jointly on this.

İŞKUR sees wider cooperation as an important part of its contribution to the fight against unemployment. Among the decisions taken by its Second General Council on 12-13 November 2003 were ambitions concerning; '... lifelong learning, the necessity of lifelong career counselling and adaptation training, development of policies incorporating effective involvement of all parties including the public organisations related to İŞKUR, private persons and institutions, social partners, non profit organisations and education institutions'.

Working groups have been formed in the context of the Cooperation in the Career Counselling Services Protocol signed between the Ministry of Labour and Social Security and the Ministry of Education. In these groups İŞKUR's job and career counselling personnel meet with the relevant staff from MoE provincial directorates, special education guidance and advisory services and guidance research centre directorates.

Other cooperating partners include the YÖK (Council of Higher Education), DIE (State Statistics Institute), TÜRK-İŞ (Turkish Workers Union Confederation), TOBB (Turkish As-

sociation of Chambers and Bars), TESK (Turkish Tradesmen and Craftsmen Confederation), and TISK (Turkish Confederation of Employer Associations). İŞKUR work with these partners includes preparation and development of vocational training places and sources of information about working life.

Specific actions feed this broader cooperation. The Turkey country report prepared by Professor Dr. Füsün Akkök and Professor Dr. A. G. Watts, with the collaboration of the World Bank and the OECD, has the aim of analysing studies carried out in Turkey on career guidance and orientation and so providing a basis for the formulation of policies.

A workshop organised on 21-22 April 2004, aimed to assess views and recommendations on the efficiency of vocational guidance and career counselling services, their strengths and weaknesses and the cooperation required of organisations and institutions to create a vocational guidance national plan. Participants included relevant organisations and institutions, social partners and academics. Topics covered in the workshop included strategies and policies to develop/improve career counselling and guidance, developing vocational information

sources, access to the services and means of evaluation.

The working group report emphasised the need to implement career guidance and counselling in a context of broad cooperation. There was agreement on monitoring and evaluating the outcomes of guidance and counselling services, and identifying how the results of such activities can be used: to improve policy development and implementation; to help in modernising and diversifying services by drawing on successful examples; and defining obstacles to development and seeking ways of avoiding them. There was also consideration of potential research-based evaluation methods and the financial sources for these actions.

In line with the recommendations of the workshop, there will be a further a meeting in September 2004, followed by a national forum in November 2004.

Further information:  
Deniz Kartal  
Career Counsellor and Psychologist  
İŞKUR, Türkiye İş Kurumu Genel Müdürlüğü  
Atatürk Bulvarı  
NO:133 Kızılay / Ankara  
Tel.(90-312) 425 06 86  
Fax (90-312) 435 29 27

Source: İŞKUR/Deniz Kartal

## ESTONIA

### Coordination of career guidance and counselling

In Estonia, the co-ordination of career guidance and counselling is a task shared between two ministries. The Ministry of Education and Research is responsible for the provision of services to young people, whereas the main target group of the Ministry of Social Affairs are the unemployed.

The Ministry of Education and Research works in close co-operation with two organisations, namely the Estonian Youth Work Centre and the Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development (Elukestva Õppe Arendamise Sihtasustus - Innove). Agreements are signed annually by the Ministry of Education and Research with the county governors, whose responsibility it is to provide a range of guidance and counselling-related services. Each county has one or more Youth Information and Counselling Centres (YICC). There are currently 21 centres in operation across Es-

tonia, some of which are managed in cooperation with local governments in the country's largest cities.

Young people also have access to career-related information in schools, with a cross-curricular theme 'Professional Career Development'. School psychologists, who, in many cases, provide career-counselling services, also provide students with support to learn about their attitudes, personal characteristics and vocational orientations. These counsellors are usually attached to a central unit, but have no formal teaching duties.

Vocational education establishments did not offer career guidance services to their students. Recently, however, the VET school sector has seen some major reforms. A project, financed by the EU Phare programme, started in 2001. Its objectives were to support human resources development and solve

labour market problems, through provision of vocational education and training and better co-operation between social partners in the regions. Eight Regional Training Centres were developed as a result of the above project. Their main objectives include: the promotion of life-long learning and programmes for adult training; developing career counselling services and the training of career counsellors in the regions; creation of accredited institutions for awarding competence based qualification and development of a work-linked training scheme.

At tertiary level, there is no central regulation of career guidance services, and centres are established on the initiative of each university.

Active steps are being taken to promote careers guidance and counselling in different media. Leaflets, brochures etc are pro-

duced and career fairs organised, while information is delivered through the Internet. The main homepage on career information is the homepage Pathfinder ([www.ra-jaleidja.ee](http://www.ra-jaleidja.ee)) administered by the Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development (Innove). This site contains information on both studying opportunities and the labour market situation, while texts on career planning can also be found there. Almost every YICC has its own homepage.

Further information:  
Katre Savi  
Estonian National Observatory  
Foundation for Lifelong Learning Development (Innove)  
Liivalaia 2, 10118, Tallinn, Estonia  
Tel. (372) 6998062  
Fax (372) 6998081  
E-mail: [katre.savi@innove.ee](mailto:katre.savi@innove.ee)  
Website [www.innove.ee](http://www.innove.ee)

Source: Innove



## New national resource centre for guidance

The new national resource centre for guidance, sponsored by the European Commission, the Ministry of Employment and the Ministry of Education, Universities and Research, recently opened its doors at the new ISFOL branch in Benevento, in the context of its activities as the Leonardo National Agency. The Centre supports mobility for the purposes of study and employment within the European Union, combining the services so far delivered by two separate agencies un-

der one roof. The aim is to better integrate educational, training and employment-related activities.

The tasks of the new centre include the following: developing information resources on study, training and employment opportunities at national and transnational level, disseminating information on guidance services within the Member States of the European Union, including the new Member States, training guidance providers and com-

paring and piloting innovative models and experience in the field of educational and vocational guidance.

The new centre was launched in an Objective 1 Structural Fund region, a disadvantaged area where it is necessary to better target policies promoting employment, employability and social integration.

While the new resource centre is a member of the European network Euroguidance at transnational level, nationally it op-

erates within the national dissemination network of structures and bodies working in the field of guidance. It is in particular addressed to service providers in the fields of guidance, training and employment, as well as teachers and trainers.

Further information at: [www.centrorisorse.org](http://www.centrorisorse.org)

Source: Alessandra Pedone - ISFOL ReferNet Italy



## The Study Visits corner

The Community Study Visits Programme offers European policymakers an opportunity to view the vocational education and training realities of another country on the spot. A study visit is a unique opportunity for a host country to gain inspiration from an outsider's view.

What strikes a German trade unionist visiting the United Kingdom?

What may be of interest to Polish employers visiting Spain?

How do training administration managers from Italy see their counterparts' organisation in Denmark?

How can a Maltese researcher find his bearings in Iceland?

From now on, this section will offer Cedefop Info readers examples of the 'cross-pollination' made possible by the Study Visits Programme.

In this issue, Germans speak to their counterparts in the UK. The Study Visits are part of the Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Programme, administered by Cedefop on behalf of the Commission.

Further details on the study visits website: [www.studyvisits.cedefop.eu.int](http://www.studyvisits.cedefop.eu.int)

## The British trade unions' silent revolution

In the context of a trilateral exchange of experience and projects within the Cedefop Study Visits Programme, a training scheme run by the trade unions in Greater Birmingham was presented to a German-Polish delegation. Two of the participants, Sonja Deffner from the German Trades Unions Congress (DGB) and Uwe Elsholz from KomNetz, describe the project and their personal impressions below:

'The trade unions in the United Kingdom have considerably stepped up their involvement in skilling and guidance in recent years. The Union Learning Rep (ULR) Scheme<sup>(1)</sup>, which offers continuing training for workers for the provision of guidance and advice on workforce development, is a particularly successful example of initiatives in this direction.'

### Union Learning Reps - the silent revolution

The Union Learning Fund was set up by the Trades Union Congress (TUC) in 1998. By analogy to existing trade union representation structures in industry, its role, among others, is to train trade unionists in what can be approximately described as canvassing for lifelong learning: ULRs above all seek to encourage workers who have missed out on learning and skilling opportunities to get involved in learning. These workers are generally those who are unreachable by further training and development programmes, essentially the unskilled and semi-skilled. The programmes promoted in this context are above all targeted towards basic skills (reading, writing, numeracy, English, basic computer literacy).

ULRs operate at various levels of the workplace, right down to the level of menial production tasks, and are therefore in direct contact with the majority of the frequently underskilled workforce. Their role is to open up learning conditions and opportunities at the workplace to plug basic skill gaps. Training as a ULR initially comprises two five-day core training courses, as well as a number of additional modules (e.g. supplementary training for the guidance and support of the low skilled or educationally deprived). Moreover the TUC also organises regional gatherings

several times a year to support ULRs and promote exchange and networking.

### State support for the Learning Reps Scheme

The ULR scheme is directly funded by the UK Department for Education and Skills in the form of direct transfers to the TUC Union Learning Funds. In April 2001, a total of GBP 3 million was allocated to the TUC for a period of three years for the expansion of the ULR scheme and the training of ULRs. The deployment and distribution of the funding throughout the various UK regions is organised and managed by the TUC. Alongside these financial resources, the Employment Act of 2002 created a legal basis for the ULR scheme, providing inter alia for the statutory right to time off for ULRs and specifying their tasks<sup>(2)</sup>. This strengthened the position of the ULRs at the workplace. There are currently some 4 000 ULRs operating in British industry and their number is to be boosted to 10 000 by 2010.

### Workplace 'alliances for training'

The main initiatives designed to enhance the value of learning in the workplace involve the social partners and tend to be very pragmatic approaches. This 'bottom up' approach seems to succeed in developing a learning culture in industry. In cooperation with management and local colleges, learning centres are set up, generally established at a workplace. These learning centres offer free courses in basic skills and basic computing with the support of a tutor. In most companies, the learning centres are also open to the employees' family members, again free of charge. These courses are supplemented by a government e-learning scheme, 'learnirect'<sup>(3)</sup>. All the courses are also open to non-union members.

It may appear surprising at first sight that demand for these courses within the workforce is so high. The success of the initiative probably lies in the fact that as well as providing training opportunities, the scheme has also set up an information, advice and guidance structure in the form of ULRs. An important part of this seems to be that the advice and guidance is not offered by exter-

nal experts or human resources managers. If people have to admit their basic skills gaps to their managers or an expert they will always have the fear of negative consequences, up to and including redundancy; but they will be much less reluctant to admit skills deficits to their peers, i.e. ULRs who are their fellow workers and more or less on the same level of company hierarchy.

It is surprising to observe how naturally the term 'lifelong learning' is used not only by full-time educators and trainers, but also by trade unionists and shop floor workers and how highly valued workplace training opportunities seem to be. It is impressive to witness the personal dedication and enthusiasm of the many players involved in developing learning culture at the workplace and in society as a whole.

It must however be pointed out that apart from the premises for the learning centres, most firms provide no or only very few resources for the schemes. Without governmental support and co-funding from various regional funds, it is questionable whether the programme could survive under these conditions.

With reference to the implementation of the initiatives at the workplace, a decisive element of the success of the programme so far has been not only the personal dedication of the players, but also the willingness of management, HR, ULRs and trade unionists to cooperate constructively to set up learning centres over and above questions of funding. To cooperate so closely, setting aside otherwise diverging interests and disagreements, calls for high powers of discretion from all concerned. And it is not always an easy task for the various players to cope with the demands of these different roles; this is particularly true of ULRs as trade union representatives.

Concerns that human resources managers might feel that the ULR scheme was 'stepping on their toes' have only been partly justified. Many HR players see the ULR scheme not as competition, but as a partner in an alliance to reach workers with basic skills gaps. This is presumably because the scheme focuses on basic general skills as opposed to continuing vocational training, and also

because it is externally funded: there is no budgetary competition in the workplace.

### Motivation and scope

For the British trade unions, the following reasons provide the essential motivation for their involvement in this scheme: If the trade unions do not take steps to improve the basic skills of the workers, nobody will. Moreover, it is in the unions' own interests to have well trained members who can maintain and enhance their employability.

For the British trade unions, these guidance and training courses are part of a new and very successful strategy to attract new members. Many workers have been encouraged to join a union through the scheme. This is partly because the courses are as a rule open to non-union members: non-unionised workers participating in union courses in the learning centres often end up becoming card-carrying members. Delivery of these new learning services therefore really does pay off in the truest sense of the word.

However it should also be pointed out that there is little involvement of smaller firms in this programme. This is partly due to a lack of union representation at this level. In addition, employers in smaller firms tend to lack a long-term vision of training policy strategies. At the end of the day, given the limited funding for the scheme, it only succeeds in reaching a minority of the British workforce with basic skilling needs.'

The full version of this article is published (in German) in: *Gewerkschaftliche Bildungspolitik*, No 9/10 - 2003

<sup>(1)</sup> Further details at: <http://www.learningservices.org.uk/unionlearningreps/>. The background to the programme was provided inter alia by a 1999 survey which pointed to basic skills gaps (reading, writing, numeracy, English) among a significant proportion of the British workforce (some 7 million adults). This situation is regarded not only as a problem for society as a whole, but also as a competitive disadvantage for UK industry and has to be corrected. See also Cedefop Info 3/2003

<sup>(2)</sup> <http://www.eurofound.eu.int/print/2002/10/feature/UK0210103F.html>

<sup>(3)</sup> More information at: <http://www.learnirect.co.uk/>

Source: Sonja Deffner/Uwe Elsholz/Cedefop/cf

Editors' comment: Over 4 500 trained ULRs were in operation in 2003. According to government estimates, their number will rise to 23 000 by 2010. The trend already points to an increasing number of trade union representatives undergoing ULR training, which is in turn reflected by an increase in the membership numbers of the UK trade unions.



# Promoting mobility in Europe

## The Europass initiative offers a single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences

Although the free movement of individuals is clearly enshrined in European law, transnational mobility within the European Union is still relatively limited: a survey conducted in March 2003 by Ipsos <sup>(1)</sup> for Observatoire Thalys International shows that only 14% of the European working population spent a period abroad for occupational reasons in 2002. In contrast, 42% of respondents say that they would be prepared to pursue their studies or work in another country. This disparity between declared intentions of mobility and the reality of migratory flows can be explained by a number of factors. While legal and administrative barriers or the lack of labour-market transparency should not be underestimated, respondents however indicate other factors: command of a foreign language, the recognition of qualifications and diplomas and the possibility of assistance from a European employment agency.

A series of documents, programmes and networks have been set up over the years with a view to increasing transparency of qualifications and the mobility of individuals. The following (non-exhaustive) review shows that the use of these tools by European citizens is still insufficient. On 27 May 2004 the Council reached political agreement on a draft decision establishing Europass which seeks to integrate the existing instruments into a single framework to create greater visibility and promote their utilisation by European citizens.

### Mobility tools: a status review

#### The European CV

Introduced in March 2002, the European CV has since been downloaded by over 600 000 net surfers.

Available in eleven (soon 25) languages, it offers a standardised electronic format to describe an individual's work experience, education and training background, language competences and additional skills and competences acquired outside formal training schemes.

#### The Europass Training (VET)

The Europass Training document <sup>(2)</sup> validates any work experience in another Member State in the framework of a training action complying with certain quality criteria. Established by the body responsible for organising the training, this document records vocational training engaged in as well as details of training periods abroad (host partner, mentor, experience acquired, etc.).

In the course of the first three years of the implementation of this initiative, some 50 000 Europass Training documents have been issued to citizens from 18 countries.

#### The certificate supplement (VET)

The certificate supplement is a document attached to the VET certificate or diploma with a detailed description of the skills and competences acquired by its holder, the range of occupations accessible, the awarding and accreditation bodies and the level of certificate or diploma.

Although the use of this document varies across Member States, Denmark, where the supplement has been designed in four languages <sup>(3)</sup> for all VET certificates, is an interesting example.

#### The diploma supplement (higher education)

The diploma supplement (DS) is a document attached to a higher education diploma with a standardised description of the nature, level, context, content and status of the studies pursued and successfully completed by the graduate in question.

Although the DS is currently issued by a only limited number of universities, the ministers responsible for higher education set the objective of the automatic and free issue of the DS for all graduates of higher education by 2005 at their meeting in Berlin on 19 September 2003.

## The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (higher education)

The ECTS attaches credits to all the components of an educational programme on the basis of the following parameters: student workload, learning outcomes and contact hours. ECTS is designed to facilitate academic recognition of study periods abroad, and to develop student mobility in Europe.

This system is not systematically applied throughout all Member States, which serves as an obstacle to transparency and student mobility; students sometimes encounter difficulties with the validation of credits obtained abroad.

### The European Language Portfolio

The European Language Portfolio is a document in which all those who are learning or have already learned a language can record their language proficiency.

It includes a scale defining language proficiency according to criteria recognised throughout Europe as a supplement to traditional school certificates.

700 000 portfolios have been established so far.

### The Erasmus programme (higher education)

Launched in 1987 to stimulate student and teacher mobility by awarding grants, Erasmus has been a brilliant success: whereas 3 200 students participated in the Erasmus programme in 1987, their numbers had swollen to 115 000 in 2001/2002, over and above which some 15 000 teachers went abroad as Erasmus participants.

All in all, over one million students and teachers have received an Erasmus grant since the programme's inception. It is interesting to note that the highest level of student mobility is to be found in certain streams: commerce/social sciences, the arts/human sciences/languages and engineering/architecture, while the majority of the other disciplines are still lagging behind.

### The European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL)

Set up by a consortium of various partners, the ECDL (cf. [www.ecdl.com](http://www.ecdl.com)) is a modular and progressive validation system for basic computer skills examined at accredited test centres. It consists of a series of test modules leading to certification in the basic skills required in an IT workplace environment.

ECDL is a validation tool recognised beyond Europe. So far over 3 500 000 candidates have applied for the tests and more than 13 million certificates have been awarded.

### The networks

A number of European networks have been set up to promote mobility:

**Eures:** The European Employment Services (EURES) aim to facilitate the free movement of workers within the 17 countries of the European Economic Area (EEA). Objectives: informing, counselling and providing advice to potentially mobile workers on job opportunities in the EEA, as well as assisting employers.

[europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp?lang=en](http://europa.eu.int/eures/home.jsp?lang=en)

**Euroguidance** is the network of the National Resource Centres for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG). It aims at promoting mobility in Europe by providing quality information on education, training and job opportunities for both guidance practitioners and citizens at large throughout Europe, and supporting the exchange of information on systems.

[www.euroguidance.org.uk/lfrench/main.htm](http://www.euroguidance.org.uk/lfrench/main.htm)

**National Reference Points (NRP)** are currently being established to increase the transparency of national training systems. Main functions: initial point of contact for all questions relating to qualification systems; national partner of a European Network of National Reference Points.

[www.cedefop.eu.int/transparency/refpoint.asp](http://www.cedefop.eu.int/transparency/refpoint.asp)

**Naric** is the network of National Centres to help in regulating title recognition and facilitating the integration of national education systems. It aims at improving academic recognition of diplomas and periods of study in the Member States of the EU, the EEA countries and the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

[europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/agenar\\_en.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/socrates/agenar_en.html)

**IRIS** provides a service to both students and universities engaged in Erasmus exchange programmes.

[iris.siu.no/](http://iris.siu.no/)

**Ploteus** is the portal on learning opportunities throughout the European area.

[europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp](http://europa.eu.int/ploteus/portal/home.jsp)

## The Europass proposal: a single European framework for mobility tools

The Council has just reached political agreement on a proposal for a decision on the creation of a single European framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass). This proposal aims:

- to bring the various transparency documents (European CV, diploma supplement, certificate supplement, the Europass Training a simplified version of the European Language Portfolio, developed by the Council of Europe) into a single framework;
- to enable European citizens to gradually compile an individual portfolio of competences and qualifications, which can be expanded on a lifelong basis; and finally
- to provide a point of access to the various networks referenced above.

Europass is expected to be adopted in June 2004 and will be operational as of early 2005; it could then be expanded to include other tools (sectoral training initiatives, validation of non-formal learning, etc.).

A Europass national agency is to be set up in each country, in particular:

- to promote and coordinate Europass-related activities in cooperation with the competent national bodies;
- to provide information on learning opportunities in Europe, the structure of education and training systems and other mobility-related issues.

This effort is moreover to go hand in hand with the rationalisation of national agencies and networks, e.g. by integrating the existing structures (e.g., NRP, Euroguidance) to prevent a duplication of competence at national level.

<sup>(1)</sup> *La mobilité en Europe: un enjeu politique, économique mais aussi démographique* (Article in French on mobility in Europe as a political, economic and demographic challenge) <http://www.ipsos.fr/CanalIpsos/articles/1209.asp?rubId=21>

<sup>(2)</sup> The Europass Training: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index\\_in.html](http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/programmes/europass/index_in.html)

<sup>(3)</sup> <http://www.ciriusonline.dk/eng/certsupp/>

Source: Cedefop/pht