

Le Magazine

FOR EDUCATION, TRAINING AND YOUTH IN EUROPE

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EDUCATION
TRAINING
YOUTH

Netdays 2 a window on the wwworld



Contents

Editorial



In my capacity as acting Director-General, I am particularly happy to sign the editorial of this issue of *The Magazine*.

After some 40 years in the European Commission, I call to mind with emotion the major stages of this fine and fascinating adventure that it has been my privilege to take part in. What a long way we have traveled from the early 1960s and the first timid discussions on possible European cooperation in the area of education, culture and youth, to today, when the Europe of Knowledge – bringing together education, training, youth, research and innovation – is recognized as a political priority!

With the gradual opening of university bastions, then the carrying out of joint projects and appearance of cooperative strategies, followed by the implementation of institutional policies in the area of education, vocational training and youth, I can now point to concrete results: student and apprentice mobility, teaching staff and pupil exchanges, joint curricula, thematic networks... This list is far from exhaustive.

If I am to believe the latest Eurobarometer public opinion survey, "two-thirds of Europeans, and up to 77% of those in managerial positions, trust the institutions of the Union to provide improvements in the field of culture and education". In other words, creating a European area for cooperation in education is not just a romantic idea. It is a solid desire, it is a movement which is already under way. The Treaty of Rome has created the common market, and European Union is on the right track. As I take part in the day-by-day negotiations on our future generation of programmes for the year 2000, I am already sorry that I will no longer be a player in the Socrates of 2010.

Will we have built this Europe of Knowledge, which in a few brief sentences challenges every European: "You want to educate and train yourselves? Your geographic area is Europe! And this education and training is lifelong!"?

When I was at school, I learned that a text should end by looking forward, and that a full stop was just a punctuation mark. My message should be read as the passing of the baton to today's young people: "The foundations exist, they are yours... What are you going to build for the future?"

Domenico Lenarduzzi

New programmes: the legislative route p. 3

A Europe of knowledge,
the debate which fuels the action p. 4

Netd@ys: The Internet era p. 5

Violence at school p. 9

The Socrates thematic networks p.11

European Schoolnet,
the network of educational networks p. 12

The regional role of universities p. 12

Minority languages p. 13

Education policy round-up p. 14

Leonardo da Vinci: Initial impact p. 16

Journeyman glassmakers p. 17

Training 2000 p. 18

1998 call for proposals p. 19

Vocational training:
Dialogue, par excellence p. 20

The case of Austria p. 21

The changing scene p. 22

The Electronic Training Village p. 24

Welcome to Euro-MED Youth p. 25

Improving communication with young people p. 27

Training youth workers:
Brussels and Strasbourg join forces p. 28

European Voluntary Service:
From pilot action to programme p. 29

Tempus:
Human rights in Bulgaria p. 30

The challenges of Bulgarian higher education p. 31

Regional cooperation
in the Tempus programme p. 33

A virtual school
for a new kind of manager p. 34

Transatlantic connections p. 35

European Training Foundation p. 35

1998 Youth Conference p. 36



E D U C A T I O N



T R A I N I N G



Y O U T H



I N T E R N A T I O N A L
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Netd@ys Europe 1998, the message is getting through

Internet is becoming part of day-to-day life in Europe. It is vital that every European have access to the immense pedagogical resources available on the Web, thereby becoming more and more open to other cultures and learning to develop its multimedia content in his or her own language.

This is the spirit in which the European Commission has organized, for the second year running, the Netd@ys operation throughout Europe. This operation is based on three key ideas: heightening awareness of and providing information about the teaching opportunities offered by the multimedia; promoting and developing the interconnection of schools on a European scale; and making available the results of experiments conducted on the local, regional or national levels for the benefit of all.

The Europe Netd@ys were held during the week of 17 to 24 October 1998, with support from the Ministries of Education and a number of companies in the telecommunications and multimedia sectors.

With over 1,000 events and 15,000 schools taking part, the first Europe Netd@ys, in October 1997, created a new dynamism in partnership between the private and public sectors, providing concrete responses to the common problems with which many teachers are faced.

The 1998 Netd@ys were even clearer proof of the multiple possibilities of Internet for education, training and for youth. The result was a broad dissemination of successful experiments and, in return, a constantly growing number of visits to information and communications websites.

Over 1,000 projects and 4,000 events were prepared with schools, museums, cultural organizations, vocational training centres and cyber-theatres.

The United States, Canada, Australia, Japan, Southern Mediterranean countries such as Israel and Morocco, and Central and Eastern European countries, which are pioneer

Internet countries for education and knowledge or are attracted by this project, have all developed enriching contacts with the Europe Netd@ys.

Selected projects covered a wide range of themes: the environment, mathematics, astronomy, history, philosophy, the arts, literature, citizenship, teacher training, and many more. This is characteristic of Internet and the Netd@ys: everyone can find what interests him or her.

The Europe Netd@ys are a colourful kaleidoscope, full of life, and which reflects the dynamism and the creativity of Europeans. My ambition is to place these information and communications technologies at the service of one and all.

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Member of the Commission responsible for research, innovation, education, training and youth.

New programmes

the legislative route

The Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth programmes for the years 2000-2004 should be formally adopted by the end of 1999. In the meantime, what are the stages in this long legislative process? And how will the transition be made between the former and the new generation of programmes?

After being adopted by the Commission, on 27 May 1998, the three proposals for a decision to renew the Socrates, Leonardo da Vinci and Youth¹ programmes were submitted to the scrutiny of the other institutions. An initial stage was completed in June 1998 when Commissioner Edith Cresson submitted the proposals to the Council of Education Ministers.

A global strategy

In keeping with its communication *Towards a Europe of knowledge*, the Commission decided to take an integrated approach to the future programmes². While each of the three proposals contains specific features linked to their respective fields, they have the same structure. Each programme would use six kinds of identical actions: physical mobility, virtual mobility, support in creating and developing cooperation networks, the promotion of language skills and cultural understanding, the development of innovation by supporting pilot projects, and the improvement of Community reference systems for education, training and youth systems and policies. In future, the Community will also be able to support joint actions covering the three programmes, organizing joint calls for proposals for the purpose.

The procedures for the adoption of these three proposals by other EU institutions are therefore being pursued in parallel.

What stage has this legislative work reached? On 15 October 1998, a plenary session of the Economic and Social Committee adopted favourable opinions on the three proposals. The European Parliament then gave its opinion at first reading on these same three texts at its plenary session of 4 and 5 November. Finally, the Committee of the Regions adopted a favourable opinion at its session of 18 and 19 November.

Different adoption procedures

However, it is not going to be easy to approve three proposals at the same time. First of all, the adoption procedure is not the same for each proposal. Socrates and Youth are jointly approved by the European Parliament and the Council under the co-decision procedure laid down in Article 189B of the Treaty establishing the European Community. But the Leonardo da Vinci programme is to be adopted by the Council in cooperation with the European Parliament according to the procedure described in Article 189C, which grants fewer powers to the Parliament.

This difference in the adoption process could, however, disappear if the Treaty of Amsterdam enters into force in February or March 1999 as planned. Under the Treaty of Amsterdam, measures in the field of vocational training will be adopted using the co-decision procedure. The idea is for proposals pending at the time it enters into force to be subject to the new legal system.

Council discussions

Another source of complication is that the three proposals are not examined by the same ministers at meetings of the Council. Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci were examined by the Education Council on 4 December, when education ministers were able to reach a common position on both programmes; the Youth proposal was examined by the "Youth" Council on 26 November, when ministers were unable to reach agreement for budgetary reasons.

Parliament debates

At the European Parliament too, different committees deal with the different proposals. The Committee on Culture is discussing Socrates and Youth, while the Committee on Social Affairs examines the Leonardo da Vinci proposal. Nevertheless, this did not prevent Parliament from voting on the three proposals at the same plenary session on 5 November

A smooth transition

Whatever the scenarios and dates envisaged, whether pessimistic or optimistic, the three proposals should be adopted by the end of 1999, because there is the political will to develop the "Europe of knowledge" and to move towards a more integrated European education area which is better adapted to the realities of contemporary society.

For their part, the Commission services are already preparing for the future. They are currently working on the operational literature for the new programmes (guidelines, vade-mecums) and drawing up timetables for calls for proposals and financing applications. They will be making every effort to ensure that, both on paper and electronically, programme partners and beneficiaries can make a smooth transition from one generation of programmes to the next.

Further information

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¹ This Youth programme proposal combines the former Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service programmes

² See the article in issue 9 of Le Magazine



The state of play three years after the White Paper

The five objectives of the White Paper

- 1 Encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge
- 2 Bringing schools and the business sector closer together
- 3 Combating exclusion
- 4 Proficiency in three Community languages
- 5 Equal treatment for capital investment and investment in training

For further information

Innovative projects for language learning: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/language/home.html>

Second chance schools: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/2chance/homen.html>

Automatic evaluation tests of knowledge and skills: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/tests/>

A Europe of knowledge the debate which fuels the action

The White Paper on the learning society has fuelled a fruitful debate over the past three years, producing political, legal and also practical results. Although it is too early to draw conclusions, an initial assessment can be made.

November 1995: in publishing its White Paper *Teaching and learning: towards the learning society*, the Commission was seeking to launch a very wide-ranging debate on the importance of education and training in the European Union. The continued acquisition of knowledge, in the Commission's view, has become a vital necessity which determines the development of individuals as well as of a competitive economy and employment. To this end, the White Paper calls for the creation of a European area of access to knowledge and skills. It also sets five priority objectives, designed to open up five fields of debate.

On the basis of this document, the debate has since taken a number of paths, developing along the way. First of all DG XXII set up internal teams of staff from the various programmes and units for each of the five objectives, each drawing on the results of the others' thinking. In 1996 and early 1997, the Commission then organized thematic conferences with the aim of taking a more in-depth look, with various experts, at the White Paper's priorities. Meanwhile education and training professionals, trade unions and employers' organizations, the political authorities and others submitted their views and proposals to the Commission. In the spring of 1997 an assessment was made of this first stage in the debate. This took the form of a communication, adopted by the European Commission on 29 May 1997¹.

At the same time, DG XXII set up a series of very concrete experiments to test the priorities set by the White Paper. A knock-on effect was produced. Debate led to pilot experiences; pilot experiences in turn enriched the theory and produced the first policy decisions.

A fruitful year

1997 was a fruitful year. In June the Treaty of Amsterdam picked up on the idea of lifelong education and training (the theme of the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996). It defined the EU's intention "to promote the highest level of knowledge for its people through broad access to education and its permanent updating." Another important development is that innovation, research, education and training form one of the four pillars of Agenda 2000, published in 1997, in which

the Commission sets out its principal priorities for the coming years. At the end of November, heads of state and government met for a special summit to approve the guidelines for a coordinated employment strategy, placing particular emphasis on adopting a new approach in the field of training and employment.

On 12 November 1997, the Commission adopted its communication *Towards a Europe of knowledge*², in which it further defines its priorities and presents the first guidelines for future Community programmes in the fields of education, training and youth.

In its 1995 White Paper, the Commission had stressed the link between the development of knowledge and the economic and social dimension. In the course of the ensuing debates, the contours of the European educational area were redefined. Particular stress is now placed on the link with employment, by means of the acquisition of the skills made necessary by changes in work and its organization. The need to widen access to knowledge – for everyone, everywhere, and at any age – is also highlighted. Finally, the concept of citizenship is also presented as a horizontal priority, in the sense of the sharing of common values and the sense of belonging to a common social and cultural area.

Pilot action

As for the pilot actions initiated by DG XXII in the wake of the White Paper, most of these are still running and it is therefore too early to make an evaluation. The most that can be done at this stage is to briefly review these initiatives. There are four kinds of action: some are genuinely experimental, some are organized under present programmes, some relate to specialized studies, and some are in the form of legal instruments.

As regards the White Paper's first objective (encouraging the acquisition of new knowledge), 18 pilot projects have been set up to test at European level the new methods of self-assessment of the skills acquired. This is an important subject, as the validation of skills stimulates the training effort by ensuring a better "return on investment" for the work done.

Two paths have been followed for objective two (strengthened links between schools and companies). The first involves the Leonardo da Vinci programme, which is committed to reinforcing its mobility actions for students and apprentices through in-company placements: 100,000 students have recently benefited from such schemes in Europe. Progress has also been made in the proposal for "European pathways for work-linked training and apprenticeships", which will be translated into a Community decision.

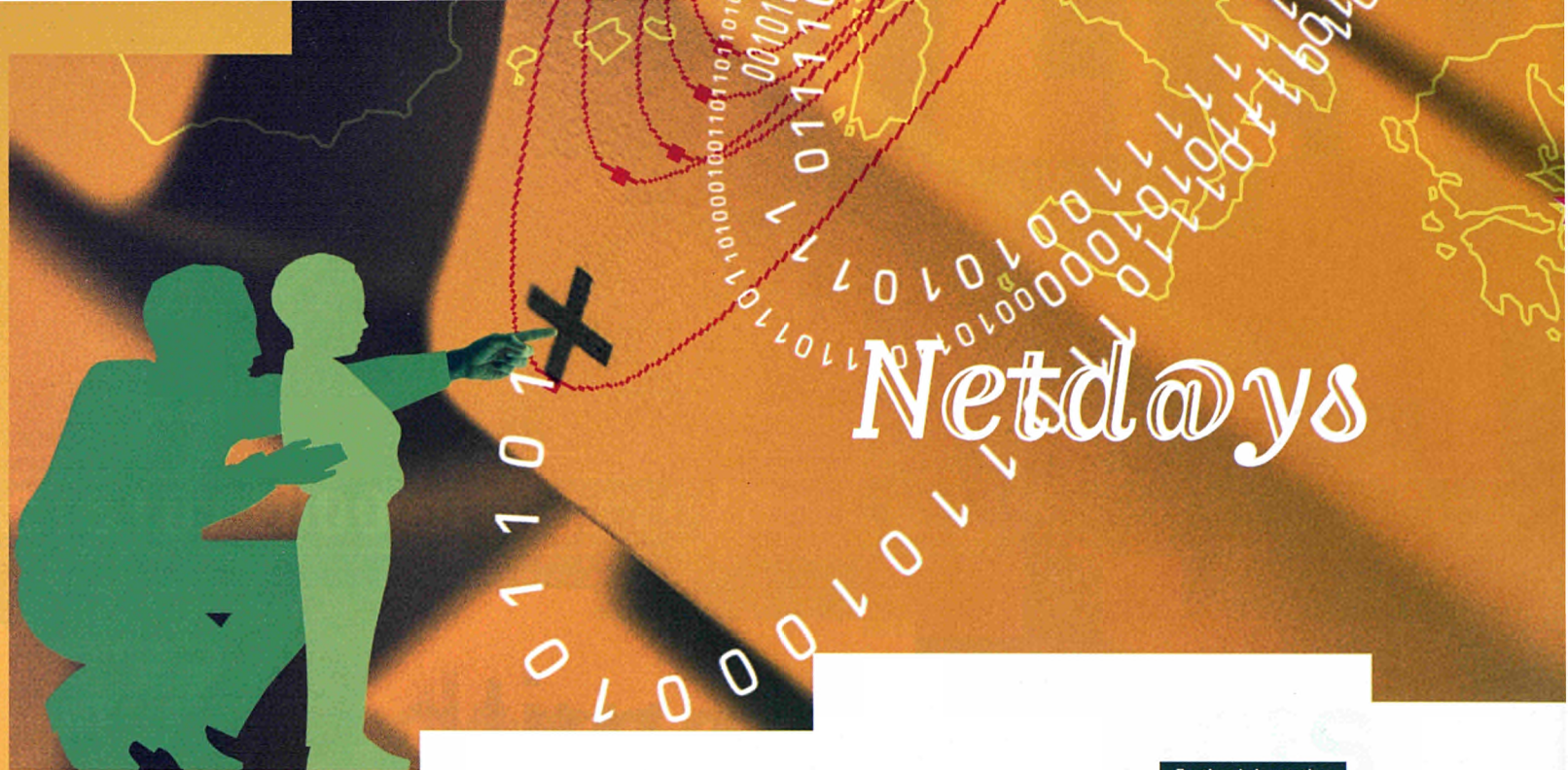
The principal achievement for the third objective (combating exclusion) is the creation of a European network of second chance schools, in close cooperation with the Member States³. Objective four (proficiency in three Community languages) is also receiving increased attention within the Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci programmes, while a European quality label is also being developed with the aim of drawing maximum benefit, on a decentralized basis, from the most innovative actions in this field. As regards the fifth objective (linked to investments in training), a study has been carried out into incentive tax and accounting measures adopted by Member States in order to increase investment in training.

The European Commission has decided to circulate the results of these pilot actions and products currently being developed, in particular through the Internet. It is important for the theoretical debate, fuelled by practical experience, not to remain hermetic and for information to circulate widely, in the interests of European citizenship.

¹ *Assessment of the results of the White Paper "Teaching and learning: towards a learning society"*. COM (97) 256 final.

² *Towards a Europe of knowledge*. COM (97) 563 final.

³ See the article in *Le Magazine* n°9



Further information

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The era of Internet learning, coming shortly to a screen near you

Meet an astronaut, solve a crime mystery with the help of real policemen, follow a treasure trail through the cities of Europe, create a collective art work or novel, all on Internet!

Netd@ys:

A key objective:

publicizing the opportunities that the new media (multimedia, video-conferencing and new audiovisual services) offer for knowledge and culture

A basic principle:

content first, technology second

A partnership approach:

bringing together the public sector and businesses

In a precise context:

the European Commission's plan *Learning in the Information Society*, adopted at the initiative of Edith Cresson and Martin Bangemann

Thanks to Netd@ys Europe 1998, schoolchildren, apprentices, teachers and trainers have been able to explore and test all the new opportunities that Internet offers. In every country of Europe and, of course, on the net itself, a whole series of events (open doors days, competitions, discussion forums, and training programmes) have given pride of place to projects supported by the European Commission. With over 35,000 schools taking part, as well as libraries, museums, opera houses, private organizations and vocational training centres, this was the world's largest event for heightening awareness of the use of new technologies in education and training.

The projects were run by people working in education and culture, according to their needs, for dialogue and exchange of ideas, for networking, but also and above all, for teaching contents. For example, science pupils and students can discover in a pluridisciplinary and transnational manner the latest research developments in cloning, thanks to the network shared by Agropolis (France), the Natural History Museum (UK), the IDIS Foundation (Italy), the Heurêka Centre (Finland) and the NewMetropolis Centre (The Netherlands). Other projects make it possible to initiate or strengthen links between partners who may not necessarily be accustomed to working together, and to bring together areas which for geographical reasons cannot offer the same possibilities of access to education or training (particularly the infrastructures) as others, thus opening up new vistas.

From philosophy to music and from history to languages, the projects cover all subjects and all disciplines. But their originality is also that they give schools a better opening to society. Thus, as in Greece, pupils can debate the role of television and TV programmes with European broadcasting bosses, question directly a historian from the University of Tübingen on a research project into Celtic religion in the sixth century B.C., or develop their creativity using the artistic resources of the Georges Pompidou Centre in Paris.

Europe is now within reach for everyone. Often an abstract notion as far as children and young adolescents are concerned, it is now becoming concrete and tangible. When a pupil in Siena can dialogue directly with a colleague in Porto or Edinburgh, he has access to a culture that is different from his own, and he learns the diversity and richness of Europe.

Of course, not all these projects arouse the same degree of enthusiasm. The slowness and the technical difficulties of the systems still sometimes check the spontaneity of the exchanges.

Yet this is surely also one of the ambitions of Netd@ys Europe: to encourage exchanges, to disseminate successful experiments, and to permit partners to meet and set up new projects that are even more innovatory and productive.

Next stop: October 1999, for the third round of Netd@ys Europe and a host of new challenges!



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On with the music!

The official inauguration of Netd@ys Europe '98 was held in the Brussels opera house, the Royal Theatre of La Monnaie. This lively, symbolic site is engaged in numerous innovatory initiatives to open up schools to culture, in all its potential forms.

Figaro, the rascal, had made a clever plan. He wanted to excite the Count's jealousy, and thereby draw his attention away from Susanna. He decided to set a trap for him, with Cherubino as bait. This was not happening on the main stage of La Monnaie, but in a small room on the 7th floor of the famous theatre building. Here, Susanna was a young girl in trousers, with a round head topped by two bobbing bunches of hair. As for the Count, whom Beaumarchais described as a "great lord so proud [...] that he took the trouble to be born and nothing more", he was being played by a gangling youth with a Rastafarian look about him. Since one o'clock in the afternoon, 16 pupils from the Charles Janssens school in Brussels, directed by two professionals from the theatre, had been holding a free-form rehearsal of part of the second act of the *Marriage of Figaro*, which was billed at the time at the opera. This was what is known as a "Figaro-minute", a sort of theatrical performance. On entering the rehearsal room, the young people from the Charles Janssens school were all neophytes, with no knowledge of this work by Mozart. The aim of the exercise was that two hours later the amateur group had to be ready to perform this extract with the words and the music. Miraculously, it worked, in an atmosphere of high-spirited satisfaction.

This nail-biting exercise is one of the numerous activities organized by La Monnaie's educational department to get schoolchildren acquainted with opera. Those in charge of the Brussels institution do not simply work at attracting young people to opera performances by organizing guided tours or giving price reductions; they also send members of the company into the schools of Brussels. In one, their task is to explain the *Magic Flute* to primary-school children. In another, they organize a debate. Elsewhere, they construct pieces of opera with different pupils. Each year, 40,000 young people are involved in these initiatives.

Bridges everywhere

For the inauguration of Netd@ys, La Monnaie went to great lengths to display the whole range of its know-how. Thus, while the pupils of the Charles Janssens school were playing the Count and the Countess, several dozen students, large and small, were being given a guided tour of the wings of the theatre before being invited to the main event, part of an act of the *Marriage of Figaro*, performed by a group of professional artists.

For Bernard Focroulle, the director of La Monnaie, schools are in urgent need of opening up to culture. This involves far more than organizing lessons to teach their pupils to read music. What matters is for the young people to "live through emotional experiences", to develop their sensitivity and emotional intelligence, which are qualities as important as learning theory. He adds that this does not require major expenditure. Everywhere, bridges must be built between cultural institutions and schools, by establishing permanent partnerships.

What is the Netd@ys' role in all this? They are at the centre of this action. For the function of Internet is precisely to help establish these links. In this perspective, La Monnaie has created a site on the *Marriage of Figaro*, the first of its kind in Europe. Pupils and teachers can not only get to understand the different acts of the opera, with the sound and the pictures to help them, but they can also discover, as though they were taking part, the different operations and professions involved in an opera. This project is conducted in collaboration with schools in Finland, Portugal, France, the United Kingdom, and Germany. Throughout the experiment, these schools will provide commentaries, which will help gradually to improve the computer programme.

Bernard Focroulle often says that the new technologies are like windows: they are of use only if they enable one to see further.

Is it really learning?

The official inauguration of the Netd@ys at La Monnaie was accompanied by a press conference attended by several public figures and a number of representatives of the European Commission's DGs X and XXII. Commissioner Edith Cresson, presenting the priorities of Netd@ys' 98, stressed the importance of "the content, the message, the link". The challenge of new technologies is, of course, pedagogical. "We have to avoid the danger of children surfing on the net and thinking they no longer have to get to the bottom of things."

Domenico Lenarduzzi, acting Director-General at DG XXII, picked up on this idea with a reminder of the central role of the teacher. With the new technology, the latter "is no longer the sole dispenser of knowledge. There is a shift in his or her fundamental role".

So how can teachers be helped to take advantage of all the new possibilities that Internet offers? This question begs another: that of the initial and in-service training of teachers. In this context, Belgium's French-speaking community is looking to provide each school with a multi-media installation: the French-speaking community has already trained more than 10,000 teachers, not only in how to operate the Internet, but also and in particular how to use it for teaching purposes.

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Internet contacts for children in hospital

With the support of the L'Enfant à l'hôpital association (Children in Hospital), the school of the child psychiatry centre in the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris has started a pilot scheme called "Rése@ux pour la vie" (Networks for life). Thanks to Internet, sick children can keep in contact with their families, their friends, and their school classes, and their teachers can communicate more easily with them. Restoring the link of affection restores hope and helps them get better.

Cyrille, 12 years old, and Aurore, 11 and a half, have their eyes riveted on the computer. Nothing can distract them, not even the tumult of adults around them. On the screen, they are scrolling one by one blue photos of a pool in which scuba divers are moving about. Their physical education teacher is standing behind them, watching them with great concentration and explaining the purpose of the exercise. "In a few weeks' time, the children will be taking their diving certificate in the hospital swimming pool. In this workshop, we are giving them their technical preparation. A fortnight ago the children created their own website. They imported some snapshots on Internet and paginated them. They also learned to scan the photos". While his teacher is talking, Cyril takes the opportunity to escape from the pool and click on other icons from the site. He conjures up a poem, Fa the Fish, which appears to fascinate him, as do the drawings and stories of dolphins, those funny, friendly-faced companions. "All this material", continues the teacher, "has been downloaded by the kids from different data banks".

The link with school

Cyrille and Aurore are two of 80 or so children aged between 4 and 18 in the child psychiatry centre of the Parisian Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital¹. Some of them suffer from very serious pathologies and stay in the centre for long periods. During this time, they are cut off from the outside world and hence from friends, family and the class in the school they came from. Fortunately, despite all this, they retain a contact with school.

Whereas in many hospitals private or voluntary associations take care of teaching, at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital the children have the advantage of a real school, integrated into the hospital, under the responsibility of the national education administration. This public status ensures that a team of teachers specially trained for this work is permanently available.

Thanks to the L'Enfant à l'hôpital association², the centre has recently bought three computers and will soon be buying two more. The association has been able to repeat this initiative in 60 hospitals in France and Belgium. However, what L'Enfant à l'hôpital has to offer goes far beyond the hardware, the cost of which is relatively modest. Its contribution is above all the method proposed, and in the training given to the teachers so that in due course they can cope with the computers without any outside help.

Chips against microbes

In this way a pilot scheme has been started experimentally at the Pitié-Salpêtrière Hospital, known as "Rése@ux pour la vie" (Networks for life). Its practical aim is to establish networks permitting exchanges via Internet between teachers and hospitalized pupils. This network links teachers with different teaching sites and allows them to communicate while comparing the different approaches. At the same time the children can remain in contact with their home schools and

gradually prepare their return to a normal school context. This is of fundamental importance. They can also communicate as much as they like with their friends and their parents. The system has been conceived to combine the use of Internet and Intranet, distinguishing between public and private access, which is important in order to preserve the confidentiality of the exchanges between children. This is an example of the useful use of Internet, in contrast with futile surfing: it creates a social link rather than social isolation. The strengthening of affective relationships does wonders for morale and confidence, comments Mme Burgess, the headmistress of the Pitié-Salpêtrière school. This, she says, has very beneficial results for the children's state of health.

The "Networks for life", emphasises Frédéric Soussin, who is one of the conceivers of the scheme, "explode the unity of time and place for the learning process". The sick children are often obliged to undergo tests and care. Their timetables are unavoidably fragmentary. With Internet, it is possible to act and to react at any time, and thus to respond directly to the sick children's needs. Another significant consideration is that it is easier to sterilize a computer than paper and pencils, and this is of course very important in the hospital context.

Chips against microbes! With the "Networks", the association's ambition, as its chairman Anne Dunoyer declares, is progressively to widen the circle of the exchanges and the friendships "to all the hospitals throughout Europe and even throughout the world".

¹ In France, 150,000 children of primary school through to sixth-form ages are hospitalized every year.

² Association "L'Enfant à l'hôpital": Anne Dunoyer de Segonzac, 86 rue Cambonne, 75015 Paris, France. T/F +33 1 43 06 70 01.



Netd@ys

Like an 18th century philosophical salon, an on-line "philosophical hotel" project aims to give children a taste for discussing essential questions, while heightening their critical sense.

Philosophy, a question of pleasure

That afternoon, the Cybertheatre, Brussels's fashionable multimedia temple, was dressed up as a hotel. At the entrance, a doorman in a red uniform was receiving the visitors. From then on, they were caught up in a strange atmosphere, for this was unlike any other hotel. There were a few, rather awkward adults here and there, but nearly all the guests were children. Upstairs, downstairs, they were everywhere. They were speaking four languages (English, French, Dutch and German), and they came from the Brussels European School, from a class from Flanders and another from Wallonia.

Behind a thick black curtain, schoolchildren were engaging in a mysterious exercise. In turn, they were asking existential questions: "What does growing up mean?", "Do you think while you sleep?". Or "How can we stop overpopulation?" Each of them was speaking his own language, simultaneously interpreted into the other three, and a cameraman was filming the scene from beginning to end.

In the other rooms of the Cybertheatre - sorry, the hotel - other children were zipping around their computers with a mouse in the semi-darkness. What were they all up to?

Sharpening the critical sense

Little by little, it became more comprehensible. While some of the children were talking philosophy under the spotlights, their friends could follow them in real time on their screens, and take part in the debate at any point. The sound was not very good. Everything was going very quickly, but that didn't matter.

Jean-Marie Delmotte of Averbode publishers, coordinating the operation, explained. The next day, the film of the philosophical dialogue was to be put on to the "Philosophical Hotel" website. Then, throughout the Netd@ys week, 24 primary classes from different European countries would have the opportunity of reacting, via Internet, with their own commentaries on the debate started at the Cybertheatre. At Netd@ys '97, an experiment of this type had already been tried for the first time. New this year was the sound and image system, whereas the first edition was based on a simple dialogue box.

Every child could visit the virtual hotel, but only a single class, which had reserved in advance, could enter a conversation "room" and, above all, take an active part in it.

For a teacher from Nivelles (Belgium) who was present at the Cybertheatre, the Netd@ys required intense preparation. She invited a philosopher to come to her class. With the pupils, she discussed the problems of citizenship. She organized different workshops to heighten her pupils' critical sense towards sources of information. "I went to great lengths to show them that Internet is not the gospel, and that the information available on it must be handled prudently", she said, adding that the children engaged in philosophical discussions with great ease and a great deal of pleasure. "However, we must help them to put their ideas together in a sequence, and that is what is the most difficult."

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Internet as a cohesive influence

The (real) clock of the hotel struck five. The filmed debate came to an end. In happy cacophony, the children gathered on the ground floor around large tables spread with orange juice, hot chocolate and chips. Even budding philosophers need something more than spiritual food!

Richard Anthon, a professional philosopher who led the afternoon debate in four languages, could breathe at last. "What I have against Internet", he said, "is that it is a gigantic network that gives little that is of value, while it often isolates people. With this experiment of the philosophical hotel, we are doing the opposite. It is cohesive. And it is the children who, via Internet, give the added value". The experiment was ambitious. But Richard Anthon takes a modest view: "Basically, we have invented nothing at all. We just took up the idea of the philosophical discussions held in 18th century drawing-rooms. Jean-Jacques Rousseau used to keep a dialogue going with 900 different people all over Europe. Voltaire was in touch with 1,200 correspondents. Our aim with the hotel project was simply that the children learn to listen, to talk and to discuss". In the last analysis, what is philosophy other than a renewed taste for a debate on basic ideas?

With young mediators



Conflict solving can also be learned in school

The college of Mantes-la-Ville, to the west of Paris, gives its pupils the chance to become mediators as an effective means of combating violence. The experience is part of a global educational project designed to train young people in the practice of citizenship. Five young mediators spoke enthusiastically to Le Magazine of their experiences.

The Mantes-la-Ville mediators

It is nearly five in the afternoon. Mr Letessier, deputy head of Mantes-la-Ville, casts a worried look at the school gates. Provocation, or just a game? Just outside the railings, some youths are fighting with sticks. In a few minutes, his pupils will be coming out of school. It is the most sensitive time. The situation outside the gates is tense. Pupils are increasingly victims of aggression or theft, carried out by other young people who are not pupils at the school. The trouble-makers with their sticks wander off. The path is clear. The deputy head gives the all-clear for the pupils to leave.

With its bright hall, decorated with coloured frescoes, and its classrooms in perfect condition, the college of Mantes-la-Ville gives an impression of calm and industry. Conditions here are indeed more peaceful than in other neighbouring schools which are closer to the sensitive areas.

Twice a week, during break, young mediators put on their armbands and patrol the playground in groups of four. If a fight breaks out, they immediately intervene to separate the participants, listen to what each has to say and try to calm them down. These are not school prefects and certainly not police auxiliaries. They are just pupils like the others, who speak to their schoolmates as equals, without any disciplinary powers at all. But it works. So much so in fact that when teachers on playground duty come across minor disputes they prefer the mediators to sort it out, reserving their own intervention for more serious disturbances, in particular those at the school gates.

"The pupils know our faces"

This Friday, at the beginning of the afternoon, there is a chance to talk to five of these mediators, girls aged 14 or 15: Elodie, Ibtissam, Naïba, Ouafa and Jesus. Last year they all signed up – of their own accord – for the lunchtime course to train as mediators, which lasted 15 weeks. "We first went out of curiosity. It was only later that that we became really involved." At first there were 11 of them, but just eight finally became mediators: seven girls and one boy. At first", admits Naïba, "we didn't really dare wear the armband," fearing

the jibes of their classmates. Until "June 23," the girls all shout in unison. That was the day the mediators met with their first success. Ibtissam tells the story: "Two 6th-year pupils hated each other and were constantly fighting. They contacted us. We sorted things out between them." An initial victory which spurred them on to further success. "Now," explains Naïba, "the pupils know our faces, which makes it easier." Their confidence has clearly received a boost. All five speak of how much the mediation has changed them. Jesus: "I now try and understand people before judging them." Elodie: "I can no longer tolerate seeing big kids picking on little ones." Ibtissam: "I have learned to understand myself better. I can no longer stand vulgarity." She stresses that it is now easier to speak to the teachers, even if "a pupil will still be reluctant to tell their teacher they have been picked on in the street." Mediation during break is certainly a serious business for them. "I realized," says Naïba, "that this could become a job." Ibtissam has also learned that there are social mediators in the town, adults who are working in the difficult Val Fourré district. "It would be good to establish contact with them."

A global project

Every two weeks, the team of young mediators meets Marie Labat, the teacher who initiated the scheme at the school. They exchange experiences, assess the problems and seek solutions together.

At Mantes-la-Ville the mediation has been included in the school's teaching programme and is actively supported by the head, Mme Marsaliex, who is convinced of the benefits of this approach to all concerned. Teachers at the school are now also going to be given the chance to train in the art of mediation. Thirty of them have already signed up.

A large sheet of paper has been put on the glass of the school's front door, setting out the mediator's charter. "The mediator does not judge but asks you to find a solution to your problems," is one of the points. There is no mistaking the message: you are entering the school of citizenship!

Two pioneers in Saint-Rosaire

Babeth Diaz and Brigitte Liatard teach at the Saint-Rosaire college, in Sarcelles, in the Paris suburbs. Long committed to combating violence in school, they initiated a school mediation pilot project launched by Saint-Rosaire in 1994. This how it works. First off, pupils volunteer to follow a training course. This is given at the school and makes extensive use of communication techniques and role playing. Each in turn then practices his or her skills as a mediator, in the playground of the school's primary section. Their job is to defuse disputes between the children. All those involved agree that the pupils learn a great deal from the experience. By becoming interested in others, the mediators feel better about themselves and get on better with those close to them, including friends, parents, brothers and sisters. Acts of violence are being committed by increasingly young pupils, whether in the form of physical attacks or verbal abuse. There is a therefore a need to take preventive action at an increasingly early age. This is why Babeth Diaz and Brigitte Liatard are trying to extend this "mediation" experience to primary school pupils, while at the same time widening its scope. At Saint-Rosaire, training is now given to all children at "CM2" level (second year of middle school) as part of the normal school programme. By means of a variety of games, pupils learn to appreciate the qualities of their classmates and to view others in a positive light. Those who want to can then enrol on a course which specifically prepares them to act as mediators. Having initiated these practices at Saint-Rosaire – a private school – the Sarcelles teachers are now trying to spread the word by training teachers in other schools, such as the state school of Mantes-la-Ville, an enthusiastic convert to the virtues of mediation by pupils for pupils. Where do they find all this creative energy? Diaz and Liatard like to quote Einstein: "The world is a difficult place to live in, not because of those who do evil, but because of those who let them do it." In 1997 the Sarcelles team were awarded the "health and enterprise" award for their "school mediation by peers" action at the Saint-Rosaire college, by the Club européen de la santé (European Health Club). In 1998 the two teachers published a book relating their experiences, in the Editions Nathan educational series, entitled *Contre violence et mal-être: la médiation par les élèves* (Combating violence and negativity: pupil mediation).

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Speaking out

At the Saint-Rosaire college in Sarcelles, teachers, parents, primary school pupils and mediators spoke openly of their experiences of the project. Here are some of their comments.

Mediators, pupils in 5th, 4th and 3rd grades at the school

Yasmina: "I try not to swear any more at my older brother."

Fatima: "In the playground, one girl was constantly teasing another who was upset by it and crying. This girl was called 'Cheval' (Horse). Everybody added... 'gallop'. We asked the girl who was doing the teasing how she would like it if people did the same to her. After that there were no more problems."

Nicolas: "When there are strikes, we bring in mediators. So why not mediators in school?"

Slightly younger children, in the 6th and 5th grades, who had experience of the mediators when they were in primary school or who received mediation training at "CM2" level.

Xavier: "Two years ago I was fighting with a friend. The mediators intervened, but without shouting or anything. They are closer to us than the supervisors."

Florent: "If we fight, the supervisor sends us to sit on the bench. But afterwards we just start again."

Olivier: "Supervisors are useful when we go to the stadium and pupils from other schools pick on us."

A group of teachers

Mrs Tingaud, head of the 5th grade:

"I have noticed that pupils who take the mediation course become more open. Their school work also improves."

Mrs Verney, English teacher:

"For it to work properly, all the teachers must support it and follow the training."

Mr Ajamian, maths teacher:

"What has changed is the way the pupils look upon me as a teacher."

Mrs Lefèvre, teacher of the 6th year:

"Conflicts are part of life and are not necessarily a bad thing. What must be avoided is conflict degenerating into violence."

Mrs Danoy, primary school teacher:

"If you are positive, then others become more positive too. If we can demonstrate this to children, it will help them to be more patient and more tolerant."

A parent

Mrs Tan: "My two children followed the mediation course. When they come home we talk about things a lot more than we used to."

As a new activity and pilot initiative of the Socrates programme, the action now going under the name of thematic networks has, for the last two years, mobilized the energy of large numbers of players in European higher education. Many partners from outside the academic community are also taking part in this action.

Even if it is still too early to assess the real impact of these activities on universities and to identify initial general recommendations, the thematic networks have laid the foundations for organized and structured discussion at the European level on the future and on teaching and disciplinary practice in higher education.

With an emphasis on developing European cooperation and mobility, and improving the quality of training and teaching innovation, they have directed their activities towards certain priority themes:

- the evolution of training needs and inserting higher education in the general economic and social fabric;
- a comparison of policies, system concepts and training practice;
- publicizing references or models which are suitable for broad dissemination, and experimenting with new and innovative paths at the organizational and teaching level;
- developing of institutional cooperation, opening the academic world to outside partners, and creating synergy between human and institutional resources which have shared interests in the area of education;
- producing, disseminating and exchanging information, teaching products and publications.

The recently completed interim report allows an analysis of the strategy implemented and the resources mobilized. It shows that thematic networks represent a formidable source of collective mobilization to promote cohesiveness within higher education, whilst directly involving the main training players. It provides arguments for maintaining Community support in the coming years.

A potential for collective mobilization

Around 1,700 higher educational institutions take part in the Socrates programme's thematic networks, 92% of them from the countries eligible for the programme. Five countries (France, United Kingdom, Germany, Spain and Italy) provide half the participating institutions, whilst there is a growing opening towards the new associate countries. The first six of these (CY, HU, PL, CZ, RO, SK) already represent 9% of partner institutions. Institutions from the other four continents are also involved.

Combating violence in school, the Community initiative

Launched at the end of 1997, the "Violence in schools" initiative organizes European cooperation in the field of education in the interests of increased safety in schools. It follows the work undertaken by the Dutch EU Presidency and the conclusions of the Council of the European Union in this area. In its conclusions, the Council recognized safety in school as a basic condition for quality in education as Member States find themselves increasingly confronted by these problems.

The initiative combines:

- A group of experts, consisting of Member States' representatives and chaired by the Commission. They manage the initiative, provide information on national policy, and establish a link between European and national activities.
- Pilot projects, providing support for transnational experiences, for a fixed term, and focusing on various aspects of the fight against violence in school, such as crisis inter-

vention, prevention, the organizational strategies of schools, and links with parents, educational psychology managers, the police, the courts, local authorities and associations.

- European conferences and seminars together with the setting up of information networks on these subjects.

The initiative is limited in duration. In 1999, the Commission will draw up a report on the activities undertaken and the results. If the conclusions permit, it will propose recommendations for the short, medium and long term.

Further information is available on the Internet at the Europa server: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/violence/home.html>

A number of projects adopted in 1997 include experiences linked to pupil mediation. Two of the teachers interviewed for the report featured in this issue of Le Magazine, Babeth Diaz and Brigitte Liatard, are involved in one of the projects supported under this initiative: "Pupil Power, a European model to combat bullying in schools", coordinated by Mrs Besag of the Gateshead Metropolitan Borough Council (UK).

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Socrates

Thematic networks: a potential to be exploited

Launched in 1996 (see The Magazine no. 7), the oldest of the Socrates programme's thematic networks are now in their third year of activity. As part of the process of discussion preparatory to the implementation of Socrates Phase II, and at the request of the Higher Education Subcommittee (Erasmus), an interim evaluation of this action was undertaken last spring based on a detailed analysis of the 1996-1997 activity reports and the 1997-1998 interim reports of the 27 first generation networks (initiated in 1996) and of the 7 second generation networks (initiated in 1997). The following is a summary of the report.

Apart from higher education institutions, the networks include more than 350 voluntary associations, public and private bodies and non-governmental organizations. Of these, over 80 operate at a European level and more than 30 have an international or global vocation. Around 30 are businesses, the remainder are primarily national, regional or local bodies, such as voluntary associations, ministries or public bodies, research centres and a small number of secondary education or vocational training institutions, and even student associations.

A factor for cohesion

Each thematic network contains an average of 117 higher education institutions, but individual networks vary from 50 to 300 institutions. The near-systematic presence of both university and non-university institutions make them a factor for cohesion and progress in higher education.

They cover a wide variety of themes, and few major disciplines are absent (see box).

A participative approach

Despite the diversity of their objectives, the thematic networks are very similar in terms of organization and operation. In general, their success is based on a high level of involvement by the academic community, the principle of decentralized activities and functional responsibility, and the exchange and comparison of ideas in a very large number of working parties and at international conferences.

An experiment to be continued, with a triple mission

Thematic networks represent a tool for collective mobilization which supplements the panoply of resources already proposed by the Commission, in particular the "institutional

contract". At the time when many questions are asked about the future development of higher education and its ability to adapt to the needs of the coming century, they offer a potential forum for discussion and the dissemination of ideas and experience at the European level. In the longer term, they could promote the emergence of a genuine capacity for innovation and expertise at the European level in higher education, and could become a privileged means of action and reflection to enhance the value of teaching and put students once again at the forefront of universities' concerns.

The work of the networks coincides with the European Union's priorities in the area of education, enhances its earlier initiatives and is concordant with the paths traced out by Agenda 2000 and the Commission communication on "A Europe of knowledge". The particular originality of the networks lies in their interface situation between the institutional, scientific and pedagogic dimensions and those involved in training, which makes them an excellent level for medium and long-term strategic reflection.

In fact, thematic networks should be seen as having a triple mission: serving teaching institutions, being the Commission's partners in carrying out its education policy, and promoting interaction between higher education, research, society and the professional world.

The motivation and enthusiasm of the projects' promoters and the potential for mobilization which this report¹ reveals, bode well for an innovative and original initiative. However, the difficulties encountered show that cooperation is not a spontaneous activity and that support from the European institutions is essential for the future. Whatever the final conclusions drawn from this first phase, in one year's time the thematic networks will already have met the challenge of stimulating forward-looking pedagogical thinking with a European dimension in higher education.

The thematic networks build on earlier Commission actions

47% of the networks were born out of the Erasmus Evaluation Conferences. These were organized between 1994 and 1996 with the objective, in particular, of undertaking comparative studies of different national systems, evaluating the results of inter-university cooperation under Erasmus, and analysing prospects and issues for the future.

Another 44% originate in one of the former Erasmus Inter-University Cooperation Projects (ICPs). More generally, 59% of them were launched with the support of one (or more) associations/organizations of higher education institutions. This gives them an organized framework which presents many advantages in terms of institutional representation, stability, permanence and operating resources.

Most major disciplines are involved in the thematic networks

Eighteen networks cover traditional academic disciplines:

- economics and social and human sciences: management, sports, the arts, archaeology, languages, teacher training, political sciences, law, communication sciences
- science and technology: medicine, chemistry, engineering, agricultural sciences, physics, veterinary medicine, dentistry, biology, informatics.

Twelve networks cover specialist areas, many of which correspond to specific training problems or new scientific paradigms that are seeking to promote alternative approaches.

On the one hand there are training in oral communication sciences, the social professions, tourism and leisure, the third sector (the social economy), humanitarian development, and informatics for human sciences. On the other hand are training in water and environmental management, physics, medical engineering, electrical engineering and information, rehabilitation medicine, town planning and different areas of biotechnology.

Finally, four networks take more horizontal approaches, concentrating on the promotion of certain human and social values (humanism, ethics) or on specific pedagogical problems (open and distance teaching, continuing training).

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¹ The report is currently being disseminated to higher education institutions.



European Schoolnet, the network of educational networks, is launched

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Easy, structured access to vast resources on high quality, multimedia educational networks, exchanging and cooperating on a broad scale with teachers and pupils all over Europe: what was once a vision is gradually turning into a reality.

The conference launching the European Schoolnet (EUN) project on 8 and 9 September 1998 at the IBM International Conference Centre in Belgium was held in an enthusiastic and studious atmosphere. This project aims at creating a network of educational networks in Europe and at offering schools high quality, multimedia educational services on-line. This will be achieved by interconnection and close cooperation between the networks of each of the 15 Member States, as well as those of Iceland, Norway and Switzerland, and then of those of the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, which will progressively join the initiative. Four education ministers (from Ireland, Portugal, Slovenia and Sweden) sponsored this event, which was also attended by senior officials from EU education ministries and the Commission, major figures in the information technology and communications industries, including the chief executives of IBM Europe and W3C, and over 250 delegates from 27 countries.

First, a brief flashback. In March 1995 the Commission created an Educational Multimedia Task Force, at the initiative of Mrs Cresson and Mr Bangemann, in response to the worrying gap between Europe and the United States in the application of the new educational technologies. In May 1996, the Council passed a Resolution defining the general framework of a European policy in this domain. In October 1996, the Commission drew up an action plan, *Learning in the Information Society*. Two years later, these efforts were producing results: all the Member States started wide-reaching initiatives to provide teachers and pupils with the necessary training, means and services, and, on the European level, the Commission allocated a budget of ECU 49 million to the Task Force for 46 new projects including the creation of the EUN network.

However, EUN is not just one more European project: it is a strategic initiative on the part of 18 education ministries in Europe, in cooperation with the Commission. The proposal of the Swedish minister, Mrs Johansson, to develop the first model of the network of the networks, drew the support of Mrs Cresson as soon as it was announced in December 1996. The initiative received the unanimous approval of the EU ministers of education at the informal meeting of the Council in Amsterdam in March 1997. This was the first time in Europe that the develop-

ment of the use of the new technologies in education had received support at this level and on this scale, in partnership with major figures in the IT and communications industry.

EUN is an outstanding forum for developing pan-European cooperation on the use of multimedia educational networks in schools. During the launch conference, workshops were organized on the teaching dimension of the new technologies in school classes, national policies, cooperation with Central and Eastern Europe, the future of Internet, the development of meta-data in education, teacher training, and on multimedia educational networks outside Europe in Canada, the United States and Japan. Summaries of the results of these workshops and the texts delivered by the main speakers are available on the EUN website (www.eun.org). Visitors to this website can also update themselves on the services at present being developed: the European virtual school, the virtual teacher training college, the technical corner, a contact gallery, European projects, etc.

EUN will promote collaboration between schools and the world around them, using the on-line services of media libraries, museums, and other educational and cultural institutions, as they develop. The participation of suppliers of multimedia educational contents will make it possible to define a viable model for the creation and distribution of quality multimedia

educational resources for schools. EUN will play an important role in the exchange of innovative teaching practices between European schools and, for this reason, will be very closely associated with the Community programmes, particularly the Comenius (school education) part of the Socrates programme.

The first experiments have shown the advantages for teaching: greater opportunities for openness, greater facility in the search for quality educational resources, the team spirit associated with themes of common interest and, at the same time, familiarization with cultural and linguistic differences. This vision will take shape gradually: over the coming two years, 500 schools will be followed up closely so as to analyse and better understand the use of the EUN network, as well as to direct its future developments. Eventually, EUN should favour intercultural and multilingual communication between the 60 million pupils and over 4 million teachers in the 305,000 schools of the Union. In so doing it will contribute to the emergence of a European area for cooperation in education.

The regional role of universities

The Association of European Universities (CRE) mobilized 19 of its members last year to look at the links between the university and its local and regional partners. This pilot project, carried out in cooperation with the European Round Table of Industrialists (ERT), was launched and supported by the European Commission.

A study by Professor John Davies, from Anglia Polytechnic University (UK), covered four aspects of the dialogue between a university and its "stakeholders": the development of human resources, cultural and social development, regional economic development, and communications.

Participants were grouped into three *regional types*: regions with high population densities; regions undergoing economic revival after decades of decline, and peripheral regions. In addition to the characteristics of each regional type, it emerged that other factors have considerable significance in determining institutional responses to questions of regional dialogue and partnership, for example, the age and traditions of a university; its focus, comprehensiveness and size.

Each university examined its links with regional stakeholders, in close association with a major external partner. Most frequently implicated were municipal authorities, chambers of com-

merce and other higher education institutions. Least involved were alumni associations, social NGOs and media groupings. Student organizations did not appear at all.

The different approaches selected (questionnaires, formal or informal meetings, etc.) reflected to a certain extent the maturity of the contacts in each region – in some cases well advanced and institutionalized, in other cases just developing, partly under the influence of this project.

The project has shown the difficulties universities experience in establishing such links. Only in a minority of cases is there a well-structured dialogue and effective partnership. For example, the University of Umeå's regional role has evolved considerably, as a result of a decentralization policy in Sweden over the last 10 years: contacts were previously formal and not action-based, but today they cover a broader range of issues and are result-oriented. A common plan has been

agreed with the regional authorities to ensure coordinated development of information, education, research and medical activities.

In general, it proved difficult to identify an explicit view among local stakeholders on the role of the universities in their regions. The methodology chosen by the project partners, leaving the initiative with the higher education institutions, explains this in part. However, there is a general problem of a lack of incentive for dialogue with external partners, which is not confined to universities but is also a weak point within companies. Both sides have difficulties in articulating their mutual expectations. Historically, universities' perspectives have been long term, their interests academic and largely non-commercial. Stakeholders' perspectives are often short term, their interests instrumental and commercial. Different languages, time-scales and mentalities constitute important obstacles to dialogue, communication and partnership.

A multi-annual programme for regional and minority languages?

Did you know that in their day-to-day lives nearly 40 million European citizens speak another language than an official Community language? Lapp, Galician, Occitan, Frioulan, Yiddish, Sorbian... These and many others are all living languages within the European Union and their accents can be heard from the tip of the Italian boot to the Arctic Circle, from the green fields of Ireland to the Iberian peninsula! Then there are also the pockets of official languages spoken in the middle of another country: German in Denmark, Finnish in Sweden, and even French in Italy. Known as "minority" or "regional", all these communities are nevertheless an essential part of the Union, in just the same way as the "majorities". They are an inherent part of Europe's cultural wealth.

But if you speak one of these less widely spread languages, you are liable to face difficulties which others scarcely imagine. How to pass on your language to your children? How to teach them to speak, to read and to write? How to gain access to information in this language? And how to use it in your day-to-day life?

For almost 15 years now, the European Union has been helping these citizens who, at times, feel marginalized from the major European movement. Since 1983, the budget heading which the European Parliament has granted

to the Commission has served to fund countless projects in all the EU's minority language communities. Projects of every origin, for all kinds of activities, and with very different aims. The fields of intervention have been education, the media, linguistic development, increased European cooperation through study visits to these communities, the Mercator information network, etc. From a school class to a vast regional project, from the small village association to a university partnership, the diversity of applicants has been characteristic of the Commission's action. Last year, for example, the *Landesschulrat für Burgenland* was able to implement cooperation between educational establishments and families with a view to permitting bilingual Croatian-German education. While the National Centre for Scientific Research in France carried out a research action in the field of computerized language resources for minority languages.

European citizenship cannot be dependent on the language spoken. We must share our differences which are also a source of our wealth! For these reasons, and to lend a new impetus to its action, the Commission is preparing to propose a multi-annual programme to promote and protect regional and minority languages. It will be incorporated in the actions the Commission is currently adopting in the fields of education, training and youth.

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The project also revealed a lack of communication and cooperation between universities and SMEs (with some exceptions in the Technical University of Graz and in the University of Newcastle), which are often the main employers in the region; a lack of cooperation with secondary schools and an increasing need to engage universities in the field of lifelong learning.

The project has, nonetheless, succeeded in establishing a clear view of university-stakeholder relationships across Europe and gives indications on how regional partnerships can be improved. Some models of innovative good practice were identified and can be shared with the other members of CRE, more than 520, as well as with the further education sector.

Between tradition and innovation, the international dimension and local responsibilities, cooperation and competition, European universities cannot avoid complex challenges. More thought is required on how to adapt their services, their role and their structures to a dynamic

environment and its evolving needs, from globalization to employability issues, from new technology to the knowledge society.

The study, which constituted the main discussion paper at the last CRE General Assembly (Berlin, 26-28 August 1998), is available from CRE and can be consulted on the Europa website at: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/socrates/erasmus/public.html>.

In brief

20 years of Arion

As one of the first actions resulting from the 1976 Council resolution on cooperation in education, a study visits programme for education administrators, later known as Arion, was launched in 1978. Over 13,000 education specialists and decision-makers have taken part in one of the 1,300 multilateral study visits organized since then.

The programme's 20th anniversary was celebrated on 9 June 1998 in the presence of the national agencies of the 29 countries participating to date.

During the first years, the general structure of the education systems in the participating countries was the only topic of study. Arion has since become a means of implementing a wide range of measures.

"Arion now faces new challenges", DG XXII's acting Director-General Domenico Lenarduzzi said. "In the run up to the Socrates II programme, we will carefully study how Arion can and will play a role to foster new partnerships in the different actions of the programme, and how it should link up with the work of senior officials of education".

Together against racism

Together against racism/Ensemble contre le racisme: An educational CD-Rom against racism produced under a project funded by Socrates and coordinated by France Libertés Fondation Danielle Mitterrand.

On the basis of a description of 50 concrete cases of racism, the CD presents national and European legislation in the sector, together with role-playing games in order to discover stereotypes and the most widespread racist attitudes. Designed for teachers, trainers, youth workers, trade unionists and citizens committed to the fight against racism.

Available in French and English from France Libertés Fondation Danielle Mitterrand, 22 rue de Milan F-75009 Paris. Price: FF 150 (Teaching kit: CD-Rom with a book entitled *The European identity and human rights*, a film and activity sheets for trainers).

Early language learning – new publication

A team of researchers funded by the Commission has published a short book setting out the conditions necessary for children of primary and pre-school age to learn foreign languages. The work is based on an analysis of existing research. The conclusions stress the benefits of early language learning but make clear that simply putting young children in a language classroom is not enough. Coherent methods and policies must be adopted and appropriate opportunities for teacher training provided.

Publishers:

EN *Foreign languages in Primary and Pre-School Education, Context and Outcomes*, CILT, 20 Bedfordbury, Covent Garden, London, UK - WC2N 4LB.

T +44 171 379 5101

DE *Fremdsprachen für die Kinder Europas: Ergebnisse und Empfehlungen der Forschung*, Cornelsen Verlag, Mecklenburgische Strasse 53, D - 14197 Berlin. T +49 30 89785 - 0

FR *L'enseignement précoce: quels résultats, dans quelles conditions?*, De Boeck Université, Fonds Jean-Pâques 4, B - 1348 Louvain-la-Neuve. T +32 10 48 26 06



Education

What's new?

New recommendation on quality in higher education

In line with the objective stated in the Maastricht Treaty ("The Community shall contribute to the development of quality education...", art. 126), a Recommendation on "Quality in Higher Education" was adopted by the Council on 24 September 1998¹. It envisages the introduction of quality assurance methods in higher education and the promotion of European cooperation in this field, including the setting-up of a European Quality Assurance Network of national bodies. The Recommendation also invites Member States to establish transparent quality assessment and quality assurance systems, which should be based on a number of common principles, established in earlier European pilot projects (the autonomy of the institutions responsible for quality assurance; the respect of the autonomy of the higher education institutions; the various stages in the assessment procedure, etc.). Also, Member States are recommended to take follow-up measures to enable higher education institutions to implement their plans for quality improvement.

¹ No. 98/561/EC of 24 September 1998, OJ L 270 of 7/10/1998.

Lingua action C Guide for participants

A *Guide to Good Practice* for Lingua action C (language assistantships) will be published in all EU languages in 1999.

The Guide provides detailed advice for both assistants and host institutions on how to realise the full potential of Lingua assistantships. It stresses the importance of thorough advance planning of the assistantship, and provides ideas for original projects and activities, many of them outside the traditional language classroom. The text was developed in close consultation with national Lingua agencies and revised following a meeting of former assistants organized by the Commission in October 1998.

Socrates/Erasmus activities 1998/99

The largest participation ever of European universities and the opening of the programme to six new countries will mark the 1998/99 academic year of Erasmus, the higher education chapter of the Socrates programme.

The activities selected by the Commission include the exchange of 200,000 students and 35,000 teachers; the adoption by over 1,000 establishments of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS); and the organization of over 250 intensive programmes. In addition, Erasmus will support the activities of more than 50 thematic networks between faculties and university departments.

The fields most concerned with student exchanges are business (19%), languages and philology (15%), engineering and technology sciences (12%) and social sciences (10%).

The 1,627 universities (or equivalent) which will benefit from the programme through an Institutional Contract with the Commission originate from 24 countries: the 15 Member States of the European Union, the three countries of the European Economic Area (Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein), and, for the first time, Hungary, Romania, Poland, Slovakia, the Czech Republic and Cyprus. In 1999/2000, the Socrates programme will be open to three additional countries: Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia.

Belgium

(French Community)

New measures promoting equal opportunities

The French Community has introduced several measures since the early 1990s to combat early school-leaving and school failure. In the context of the July 1997 decree on the mission of schools, Parliament adopted another more specific decree in June of this year designed to provide "equal social opportunities for all pupils". This decree combines various provisions aimed at making more effective use of the available resources and making the policy adopted more transparent.

Two types of measure are prescribed:

- The first type of measure – "affirmative action" – will concern schools which will be selected on the basis of social and economic criteria. They will receive additional human and financial resources (at least 360 million Belgian francs for nursery and primary education and 310 million for secondary education). In addition, the decree confirms the establishment of a school mediation service designed to promote, preserve or recreate an atmosphere of trust among pupils, parents and teaching staff. It also establishes an affirmative action committee charged, among other things, with coordinating all the projects.
- The second type of measure involves all schools and aims to prevent violence and combat truancy. These measures reproduce earlier provisions, which they clarify and reinforce.

Spain

The humanities in secondary education

In 1997 the Ministry of Education and Culture, trying to give an answer to the social concern about the humanities in secondary education, decided to carry out a study. The Conference of Education, made up of the Minister and the Educational Advisers of the Autonomous Communities (regions), commissioned an interdisciplinary working group to prepare an "Opinion on the Humanities in Secondary Education" in Spain and the neighbouring countries.

The final report consists of a comparative study on humanities in the European Union countries (focused on the subjects of language and literature, history, geography, social sciences, classical languages and philosophy), together with an analysis of the historical development in Spain up to now, a summary and assessment of the present situation and 18 final recommendations.

The outcome of the work is a consensus between the different experts involved in the working group. In July 1998, the Ministry has drawn up a set of 20 guidelines from the conclusions provided in the study. These aim to strengthen the core humanities, limit optional subjects, and adapt the curriculum to the new guidelines.

The put implementation of this project is the responsibility of the education authorities in the Autonomous Communities with full powers in education.

Italy

Approval of a "Statute on secondary school pupils"

In its meeting of 29 May 1998, the Council of Ministers approved the text of a "statute on secondary school pupils". After a year and a half, another stage of the reform of the Italian school system has been completed, following a long debate involving all the participants in the school system, and pupils in particular.

Inspired by the international convention on the rights of the child, the statute identifies the principles underlying a proper relationship between pupils and teachers based, on the one hand, on the equal dignity of both and the separation of their roles, reciprocal respect and

cooperation to achieve the school's aims while, on the other hand, the statute introduces into the reality of school life fundamental rights such as freedom of opinion and expression, the right of assembly and association, and the right to information and privacy.

Particular emphasis is placed on the need for teachers to determine teaching methods encouraging a dialogue with pupils, to enable the latter to express their opinions.

As regards pupils' duties, the statute confirms that their primary obligation is to "attend classes regularly and carry out their assignments diligently". In addition, pupils must show respect for people, observe the rules and care for school property.

Austria

New forms of part-time employment and possibility of sabbatical leave for Austrian teachers

Since the beginning of 1998, Austrian teachers have enjoyed increased flexibility in planning their individual career paths. This is in response to a long-standing wish of teaching staff, and also aims to improve the age structure within the profession and to increase employment opportunities for young teachers. In Austria an above-average proportion of teaching staff are of mid-career age, and only a few teachers are approaching retirement.

An initial, interim measure has created the opportunity for teachers to take early retirement at the age of 55 with a reduced pension.

Another measure aiming to ensure the entry of young teachers to the profession involves creating more possibilities for reducing the teaching load of teachers who have been teaching for an uninterrupted period of at least 10 years. Teachers who have been teaching for many years are given individual opportunities for working part-time or taking a year's leave of absence. Previously these possibilities only existed subject to very strict conditions: sabbatical leave was, for example, only possible without pay.

Those interested in taking sabbatical leave for a year can now choose from various formulae under which they can continue to be paid, in particular a model over three years and one over five years, including a sabbatical year and either two or four years full-time teaching, during the whole period of which the annual salary paid is respectively 66.6% or 80%.

All of these provisions are, however, only applicable at times when there is increased public interest, due to the job market situation, in generating employment in the school sector.

Finland

The reform of educational legislation

A new University Act has come into force as from this autumn, superseding the 20 separate acts on universities and other institutions of higher education. The University Act does not apply to the AMK institutions (polytechnics), governed by a separate act effective since 1995. The new act increases the universities' autonomy in deciding on their administration. Universities will continue to have faculties, as at present, but those will not be decided on by way of legislation; instead, each university will be able to decide individually which faculties or other units to establish. The new act also allows university administrations to include members other than those representing the staff and students. In other words, universities are encouraged to establish closer links with society, particularly with business life.

University rectors have been appointed hitherto from within the university in question, but under the new act it is also possible to elect a person from the outside who meets the prescribed qualification requirements. The rector will be elected by the university.

The reform of legislation governing basic education, secondary education (general upper secondary education and basic vocational education) and adult education will come into force as from 1 January 1999. The previous fragmented institutional legislation, based on institution types, has been replaced by more concise and concentrated functional legislation; 26 acts have been superseded by eight. The new acts focus primarily on the regulation of educational objectives and content, levels and forms of education, and students' rights and responsibilities. The new legislation essentially increases the powers of the providers of education. To safeguard educational quality, a statutory evaluation system is introduced to monitor the achievement of the given goals. The new acts will be equally applied to municipal, state and private education.

The reform of the school acts inspired very lively debates in both the media and in expert circles. The Parliamentary Committee for Education and Culture heard an exceptionally large number of experts; more than 300 experts presented their opinions to the Committee at different stages of the process.

Sweden

Expansion of undergraduate higher education

Undergraduate higher education is at present expanding significantly in Sweden. The Government is creating 68,000 new study places, equivalent to around 30% of the number of places. Between 1997 and 1999, there will be 16,000 new places per year and in year 2000 there will be an increase of 20,000 new places. Following the increase in the number of places, there will be an increase in the allocation of resources. It is intended that while the expansion is carried through, a high quality will be maintained. There are two reasons for this

expansion: a will to meet the increased demand for higher education caused by a rising number of people wanting to study and a will to meet the needs of industry and society. Industry especially has underlined the need for more graduate students in the areas of technology and science. Therefore, the main emphasis of the expansion has been put on these areas.

Alongside the expansion of undergraduate student places in higher education, there has been an increase in the state grants for research at higher education institutions. Close co-operation between education and research is an important condition for high quality education. The decision by the Government to give three of Sweden's 26 state university colleges university status as from 1 January 1999 should also be seen in this context.

Cyprus

Reform of the education system

The education system in Cyprus is undergoing major reforms following an appraisal study by the Unesco (IEEP) team. These are the first set of reforms and/or improvements some of which are proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. Some of the most important ones are described below:

Primary Education

- New primary school pupils will now begin at age 5 years and 8 months instead of 5 years and 6 months as hitherto.
- The maximum number of pupils in the first and second year classes will be reduced from 32 to 30 and from 34 to 32 respectively. Both of the above will be in effect by September 1998.

Secondary Education

- All schools will be connected to the Internet and the use of computers to enhance training will be encouraged. A lot of planning is underway.
- A new procedure for the appointment of new teachers is proposed by the Ministry of Education and Culture which is expected to secure the best teachers for schools in Cyprus. This proposal is awaiting approval by the Cyprus Parliament.

Pedagogical Institute

In the academic year 1998/99, the Pedagogical Institute is planning to begin the design of standardised testing in mathematics and science. This will enable the Ministry of Education and Culture to study the quality of education in these subjects on a yearly basis. Other subjects will follow in the near future.

Greece

Assessment of pupils in the *Lykeio* (upper secondary education)

The new system provides a great many opportunities for the assessment of pupils' knowledge and skills without increasing the burden of examinations. It effectively supports the principle of equal opportunity in the field of education by providing special measures to identify the weaknesses of pupils experiencing difficulty at school. It offers the latter additional support teaching free of charge, and additional opportunities to improve their performance throughout their schooling with the school's assistance (optional additional examinations every four months).

The main innovations are as follows:

- The school year is divided into two periods of four months each.
- Oral examinations and final examinations after each four-month period are still marked on a 20-point scale, while examinations that pupils take to move to the next class and at the end of their secondary education are marked on a new 100-point scale.
- Diagnostic tests are only required during the first year of the *Lykeio* and only in Greek (ancient and modern), mathematics, physics, chemistry and foreign languages. Examinations are optional in the other subjects.
- The system of repeat examinations has been abolished. Nonetheless, pupils who have done poorly at school have an additional opportunity to sit an optional written examination at the end of the four-month period.
- Exercises based on synthesis and creativity have been introduced, which are only counted if they contribute positively to a pupil's assessment.
- The option to use the "file" of the pupil's work has been introduced.
- The method of informing parents and teachers has been systematized.
- The number, type and content of the subjects in the written examinations pupils must sit to pass to the next class and complete their secondary education have been defined clearly for each subject taught at a unified *Lykeio* that leads to a written examination. In the first year, teachers who actually teach the courses to pupils in that year determine the examination subjects. In the second year, a central *Lykeio* examination board draws up a single list of subjects from which the board in each *Lykeio* selects the examination subjects. In the third year, all *Lykeia* offer the same examination subjects and which have been selected by a central examination board. The subjects are sent to the *Lykeia* as an electronic file shortly before the beginning of the examinations in order to ensure confidentiality.

The above contributions were provided by the Eurydice national units in the countries concerned



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Leonardo da Vinci

Initial impact of the projects

Promising results

The Leonardo da Vinci programme is intended as a European laboratory for innovation in the domain of vocational training. Between 1995 and 1997, Leonardo da Vinci financed some 2,272 transnational projects and partnerships seeking innovative approaches to a wide range of training problems. The results are documented in a new compendium.

A first stock-taking

Of course, the various projects at present under way have already undergone prospective analyses, published in various places. However, this is the first retrospective account of the significant results that the project partnerships have achieved and of the real impact they have had on their targets. The results are impressive.

Analysis of an initial sample of 47 projects funded in 1995 and in 1996 has demonstrated the ability of the Leonardo da Vinci programme to come up with innovative answers to new needs in very many fields or sectors of economic activity.

Not only has the programme made it possible to improve the vocational training initiatives aimed at undertakings and their employees, but it has often had a considerable impact on vocational training systems in Europe.

What kind of impact?

Impact is a difficult concept to define, since it can take so many different forms. It may refer to the cooperation dynamics within the partnership, or throughout a transnational network. It may consist of outstanding scientific contributions to methodology or technology, or improving skills for the most manual of crafts. Impact may also mean achieving dynamic effects in several countries, but it may also come down to establishing local level training structures for proximity services. Last but not least, projects may have a lasting impact on vocational training systems in Europe.

The impact of each project has been analysed from different angles, sub-divided into information objects, that is, small entities that can be easily handled by the general public.

Ten action themes

This initial *Compendium of the impact of the Leonardo da Vinci projects* is divided into 10 general themes:

- 1 new skills and qualifications;
- 2 language training;
- 3 learning;
- 4 university-enterprise cooperation;
- 5 vocational guidance and integration into the workforce;
- 6 equal opportunities;
- 7 local or regional dynamics of employment;
- 8 adaptation to industrial change;
- 9 dynamics of training by sector;
- 10 open and distance training.

Each theme includes a number of projects that have been shown to have productive impact.

Did you know?

The Bioformation project should strengthen the competitiveness of European companies in the domain of molecular biology, and reach no less than 400,000 professional people. Its results are already being exploited by around 5,000 SME/SMIs and laboratories in seven European countries. The project website is visited on average 150 times a day.

Highly specialized English, Italian and Spanish language training material for SMEs and their training structures is available on Internet. Combined with a CD-Rom produced by the same partnership, this distance training material gives wide scope for interactivity and, above all, takes the profile of each individual user into account. An on-line tutor is also available to assist and assess learners. This project received the *European Award for Initiatives Promoting Language Learning* in 1998.

Thanks to the training undertaking they founded, young growers are learning the techniques of organic horticulture, and of the fabrication, marketing and distribution of foodstuffs derived from apples. This project received first prize in the "Entreprise Junior" competition in Vienna in 1997, and the fourth prize of the similar competition in Copenhagen the same year.

The Visplane project has developed a system of training on a virtual network on CD-Rom, which makes it possible to train airport staff in the art of crisis management through the simulation of real-life situations. This tool is already in use at Rome, Milan and Manchester airports, who in turn offer the help of their safety teams to other airports that are interested.

The hotel industry must try to lower its fixed costs without reducing the quality of the reception and the comfort it offers to its customers. The Hotem project offers training in optimum energy management in hotels. The result is striking: users of this multimedia CD-Rom can reduce their energy bills by 20%.

An open system, available on Internet

Of course, this kind of impact analysis is meaningless unless it is applied to a maximum number of projects. Likewise, it is essential to measure this impact in the long term; for example, the full effect of a dynamic European network will be felt only after several years.

This has given rise to the idea of designing a website to contain the first impact analyses, plus all those that could be added as the different Leonardo da Vinci projects reach maturity.

This website can already be reached from the Leonardo da Vinci page on the Europa server:
<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/leonardo.html>

For ages, the little village of Vannes-le-Châtel, in the region of Lorraine in France, has lived from the glass industry. In the 1980s, glass underwent a major economic crisis. Innovative, alternative solutions have had to be adopted. Hence the creation at Vannes of the European Centre for Research and Training in Glassmaking and the launch of the "journeyman glassmakers" project, with the support of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. This is how it happened.



Journeyman glassmakers, journeying across Europe

The road from the south through Domrémy-la-Pucelle, birthplace of Joan of Arc, as well as from the north, through Toul and Nancy, crosses long stretches of woodlands before reaching Vannes-le-Châtel, a village of 450 people, huddled down in the valley. On the edge of the village stand the old buildings of the Daum Crystal Factory, named after the inventor of the glassmaking school of Nancy at the turn of the century.

The business was founded in 1765 and still employs around 250 salaried workers. It has always been a major element in the life of this corner of Lorraine. The nearby forests have been a godsend for the local glassmaking industry; in the first place, because for very many years they provided the fuel to fire the furnaces, and then, because the ferns in the undergrowth, mixed with potassium and silica, give superior quality glass.

In the 1980s, however, the Lorraine glassmaking industry, and more particular the Daum Crystal Factory, began to feel the effects of the general crisis. Competition from abroad began to hurt and gradually employment fell. The decline of the local factories was also due largely to internal factors. Although the demand was still for quality products, the condition was now that they be less luxurious, and above all, less expensive. However, the glass foundries in Lorraine were often family businesses, little given to research and innovation. This meant they were not able to find new outlets in time.

A small-scale village with large-scale ideas

The mayor of Vannes-le-Châtel started looking for solutions to give new dynamism to the local economy. Despite the glass crisis, he stood by the business with an apparently mad-cap scheme to transform his village into a European centre for glassmaking. First, the "Glassmaking Platform" was created at Vannes, and then, in 1991, Cerfav (Centre européen de recherches et de formation aux arts verriers), the European Centre for Research and Training in Glassmaking.

Cervav director Denis Simermann describes the choice that was made at the time. "On the national level, glass is only a minor sector. Our insight was that, in order to develop something new, we needed to act on the European scale straight away. Our desire was to rehabilitate the various glassmaking professions. In this specific field, no one has a monopoly of skills. The only way it is possible to think and work is to compare ideas from one country to another."

At the outset, he admits, the Daum Crystal Factory and the other undertakings in the region viewed the Cervav people with a mixture of derision and suspicion. Yet as time went on, the project received a number of grants from vari-

ous public bodies – including the Lorraine Regional Authority and the French State – and was even awarded the coveted title of National Centre of Innovation in the field of glassmaking. Attitudes also began to change as local collaboration developed. The managers of small companies began to follow advanced courses at Cervav, which offered the services of an engineer to make specialized feasibility studies for the companies requesting them.

The other pole of activities of the Centre is the training of young people. Denis Simermann explains that this training is conceived of as a kind of bridge "between the art schools and the professional colleges". Each year, 50 or so apprentices come to stay at Cervav in order to become acquainted with the different techniques of hot glass (glassblowing) or of cold glass (engraving or stained glass). Most of them, after their stay at Vannes, obtain jobs as salaried workers or set up shop as independent artisans.

Parallel to this, another more specialized training course is offered: the project of European journeyman glassmakers. Since 1995, this initiative has been directed at young people who are out of a job, as well as fine arts students interested in glassmaking technique.

70 partner undertakings in Europe

Thanks to Leonardo da Vinci, Cervav has set up a network of 70 companies specialized in glass in Sweden, Italy, Denmark, Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain and, of course, in France¹. These partners commit themselves doubly by signing a journeyman glassmakers' charter: first, to be ready to delegate instructors to Vannes-le-Châtel, and secondly, to take on student journeyman glassmakers for courses.

With the support of Leonardo da Vinci, Cervav has, in particular, been able to offer the "journeyman" European grants for courses lasting for a longer period. This contribution is very precious, as the director of the Centre observes, although he regrets the cumbersome nature of the procedure for obtaining Community grants.

Since the project was started, 40 or so journeyman glassmakers have travelled around Europe in this way. On their return, approximately a third of them have set up their own workshops. In this case, after helping the trainees to set up their own projects, Cervav continues aiding them in different ways during this very trying period when they are starting up their businesses. Now, Cervav would very much like to develop its European dimension even further, not only by sending young Frenchmen abroad, but also by hosting, starting with Vannes, a good number of trainees from all the EU countries.

So after these years of crisis, Vannes is smiling again. Despite the difficulties, the Daum Crystal Factory has managed to keep its head above water. At Cervav itself, nearly 20 new jobs have been created. Around the Centre, glassmaking discovery tours have been set up for visitors. Several workshops have established themselves under the protective wings of Cervav. A hostel has been created. Each year, almost 150 trainees stay there – and consume locally. There is unmistakable new dynamism: the bistro and the grocer's, which were on the point of shutting down, have gained a second wind – vital signs of the strengthening pulse of village life.

¹ Portugal, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which are three countries with a strong tradition of glassmaking, should soon be joining the network of journeyman glassmakers.

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Marlène, at the "Danish School"

After studying painting and sculpture in the North of France, Marlène fell in love with glassmaking, and registered for the Cervav "journeyman glassmakers" training course. She was particularly interested in the technique of glass-blowing and the Scandinavian school of coloured glass. At the end of her training, her idea was to create her own workshop (she has already found a name for it: the *Verre à soi*), in the form of a mobile furnace on wheels, with which she hopes to make demonstrations for the local population during the markets held on the village squares. In the framework of the journeyman glassmakers programme, Marlène went to Denmark for six months which she spent on the island of Copenhagen. She was hosted by a couple of glassmakers specialized in the production of domestic objects in coloured glass. Marlène was enchanted with her apprenticeship in Denmark, which enabled her to perfect her technique while learning about the organization of a small business. In particular, she appreciated being trained in furnace maintenance, a very difficult part of the manufacturing process.

Back in France, Marlène is now planning to set up shop near Vannes. Soon the *Verre à soi* (a pun on "silkworm") will become a reality.



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Training 2000

Europe's showcase of vocational training activity

A first and highly successful products fair was organized by DG XXII in 1996, in the context of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, bringing together the results of the previous programmes – Comett, Force, Petra, Lingua, and Eurotecnet. This year, Training 2000 provided a showcase for the work of over 100 projects from the Leonardo da Vinci programme itself.

As soon as Training 2000 was announced on the web, it generated many enquiries from all over the world, although mainly from EU and pre-accession countries. At least 1,500 visitors attended the event, held on 3-4 December in Brussels. Amongst them were several members of the European Parliament.

Artist's workshop

The objective of Training 2000 was to create an opportunity for effective European dissemination and transfer of the results and products from the Leonardo da Vinci programme. It was designed to facilitate the demonstration and discussion of projects in progress as well as those nearing completion or finished, which emphasised the importance of dissemination throughout the life of the project. This approach has been described as looking into the 'artist's workshop' as opposed to viewing exhibits in a 'museum'. It provided an opportunity to build awareness with key target groups of the potential results of projects before they are finalized, and to gain feedback from real users during the project development phase.

On arrival, visitors were provided with a print catalogue and searchable databases were available on PCs around the hall so that exhibits could be researched by project title, beneficiary type, language, objectives, etc. These PCs also provided schedule and location information on presentations, workshops, etc.

To facilitate the introduction and follow-up between visitors and exhibitors, each participant received an electronic name badge, which, when registered on each exhibition booth, recorded all contact details. This provided exhibitors with information to quantify and analyse the type of visitor interest and recorded information for follow-up. It also pro-

vided the Commission with overall information on visitor types, countries of origin, etc. which will be useful for future planning and targeting of dissemination events.

Training 2000 was designed around the three following focal points:

1. Islands of experts

There were several islands at the centre of the Training 2000 exhibition hall.

The **European Commission**: DG XXII and the Technical Assistance Office for the Leonardo da Vinci programme provided advice on the dissemination of project results. Experts were available to discuss copyright agreements, contractual obligations relating to commercialization, good practice in dissemination, etc. In addition, a database of all results from the programme was available for consultation with an expert, and a range of project results were demonstrated.

National Coordination Units provided information to projects and non-project visitors on how to transfer and disseminate results to their countries, and helped to identify key actors whom projects should contact.

Furthermore expertise could be sought on **publishing** results, either in print or on new electronic media, including the Internet, as well as on **broadcasting**.

2. Project presentations

Throughout the two days, there were rolling presentations of over 60 Leonardo da Vinci projects. It gave the opportunity to promoters to describe their projects' objectives and demonstrate their main deliverables. Participants could interact, ask questions to projects' developers, and see the results to date in detail.

3. Workshops

Training 2000 was aimed at supporting dissemination of project results and encouraging good practice in dissemination activities. To this end, three workshops, in English and French, took place during the two days. These 90-minute workshops were aimed at describing best practice with advice from subject experts and experienced projects. Participation was limited to ensure interactivity. A report is available on the world wide web.

The first workshop, "Negotiating with publishers", was meant to advise promoters on publishing their projects' results by external publishers. The second, "Vocational education and training –broadcasting opportunities and approaches", dealt with practical issues linked to the opening up of new dissemination channels and delivery of education and training as cable and satellite television expands rapidly. The third workshop, "Intellectual Property Rights and copyright", allowed the Commission to clarify its position in respect of Leonardo da Vinci projects as illustrated by different experiences.

A discussion forum, accessible through the Training 2000 web page, was opened in October to collect questions in advance. Additional questions can be asked to experts now as the Forum remains open after the event on the web: <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/training/index.html>.

Training 2000 took place a few days before the 1999 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals. In this context, it provided an important opportunity for promoters planning to participate in the call, to see project results to date and to discuss the potential for multiplier proposals in 1999.

Strong commitment by local agencies and industry

The 1998 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals elicited 3,288 applications to carry out transnational projects (pilot projects, placement and exchange programmes, survey and analysis projects), each with an average of over 11 partner organizations.

Initial trends in the 1998 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals

The five Community priorities in the 1998 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals are the same as for the last three years. This has bolstered the cohesion of the programme, and has allowed new approaches to develop around themes which can form the basis for a genuine European training policy, along the path mapped out by the White Paper *Teaching and Learning: Towards the Learning Society*.

In terms of quantity, it should be stressed that the number of applications received has increased considerably compared with the previous call.

As a general rule, the quality and innovativeness of the project proposals is even higher than in earlier years. These proposals are targeted directly at the social, economic and industrial developments of today's Europe.

Making young people and adults more employable

The concern to get people into jobs and employment are again the cornerstone of the 1998 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals.

Strengthening the employability of young people through career guidance and by making initial vocational training more consistent with the emerging needs of the labour market, are, of course, once again the prime focus of attention by the would-be partnerships.

At the same time, a significant number of applications are directed at the reinsertion of the long-term unemployed, and at the job security of those in work.

Innovative concepts for alternance training

It is interesting to note that, as well as a significant increase in the number of programmes to place students and young higher education graduates in enterprises, alternance training also features in many Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects. The innovative initiatives stress in particular the concept of alternance, forms of supervision and tutoring, and integrating the company work placement in the trainee's course. On top of this, the work placement contributes further to the transfer of competence and technology towards enterprises, and in particular SMEs.

Several proposals also focus on specifically European forms of alternance training, including apprenticeships.

Continuing training at the centre of concern

Guided by a concern for bringing people back into the work force and keeping them in it, the 1998 Leonardo da Vinci project proposals carry further the processes of recognition and validation of the skills acquired by employees throughout their working lives.

This is a type of project on which the Commission had placed particular emphasis, as an essential pre-condition for the creation of a "European area" for cooperation in training. Globally, this year's proposals are more solidly anchored in the individual sectors of economic activity, and in particular manufacturing. This

is clear expression of the positive development which can be seen towards approaches upstream from the training provision. Proposals of this type start from an analysis of skill needs in a given sector. These are then formalized by developing skill and training reference bases, curricula and tools, and then testing and validating acquired skills. Such proposals clearly show how genuine training engineering is occupying an increasingly important place in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. On the other hand, the renewed prominence of the more industrial sectors confirms the trends which analysts are just beginning to perceive, which tends to prove that Leonardo da Vinci is in direct contact not only with the development of the employment and training market, but also that of economic and industrial activity.

New Internet job profiles

Information and communication technologies are omnipresent in the Leonardo da Vinci proposals. Internet in particular has a place in almost all projects, either as a mean of communication, information and promotion, or as a vector of training or test validation. The new profiles which Internet is generating are also targeted, in particular electronic shopping, a promising and employment-generating sector.

Mobilizing local authorities and social partners

The local anchoring of proposals has spurred many municipal or local authorities into action in projects aimed at improving the quality of and training for proximity services such as assistance to individuals and local employment agencies. Similarly, cooperative-type projects in the social economy sector often display considerable creativity in the search for job-creation initiatives and actions to reconstitute a social fabric in urban or rural areas.

flash!

Results of the 1998 selection round

At the end of the evaluation process, 708 projects (614 from the 18 participant countries and 94 from the pre-entry countries) were selected based on qualitative analysis criteria, and in conformity with the five priorities defined by the Commission. This represents the take-up of almost 25% of eligible projects. The total financing granted to the selected projects is over ECU 92 million (almost 81 million for the 18 countries participating since the start of the programme, and over 11 million for the pre-entry countries), giving average funding of ECU 130,179 per programme.

Selected projects

The 708 transnational projects selected following the 1998 Leonardo da Vinci call for proposals are sub-divided as follows:

- 511 pilot projects (72%)
- 162 placement and exchange programmes (23%) giving a total of 7,146 transnationally mobile people (not including the 17,600 beneficiaries of a mobility programme under Strand 1)
- 35 surveys and analyses (5%).

The introduction of telematic networks and virtual resource centres, in regions where traditional infrastructures are lacking, have also fostered a growing number of proposals.

The development of new and particularly advanced profiles in highly competitive sectors (such as aerospace, chemicals and telecommunications) and the search for recognition, if not certification, of acquired skills also feature among the objectives of several proposals. In this area, the involvement of the social partners, both national and European, is remarkable. In this respect it is interesting to note that projects selected earlier, aimed at designing frameworks to validate skills acquired by non-formal paths, are extended this year, in training systems, by the addition of partners authorized to certify or deliver diplomas, thanks to the strengthening of cooperation between the public authorities, social partners and bodies representing the sectors concerned.

Intense interest in pre-entry countries

The participation of pre-entry countries has now reached 10% of the total volume of proposals submitted in 1998. Participation by partner organizations from these countries now represents practically 18% of the total number. This year, Poland and Slovakia joined the four countries which were already admitted as full members of the programme in 1997 (Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Romania). The enormous interest in the pre-entry countries for the Leonardo da Vinci programme clearly illustrates the programme's considerable drawing power in these rapidly changing countries, where vocational training needs are particularly acute.



The European social partners and vocational training

Further information

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Dialogue, par excellence

Vocational training is a favoured field for European social dialogue. *Le Magazine* looks at its precise purpose, the social partners involved and its concrete achievements.

European social dialogue was given a notable boost in 1985 when Jacques Delors was appointed head of the European executive. From a simple forum for consultation, it became a veritable institution for the European Commission, under the guidance of DG V which was charged with promoting relations between European social partners, also at the logistic and financial level.

The social partners are officially grouped into three inter-professional organizations: the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), for employees; the Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), and the European Centre of Public Enterprises (CEEP), for private- and public-sector employers.

The Commission frequently consults these three organizations. They meet and work together, organize joint seminars, conduct joint research and studies, and sometimes draw up common opinions of an essentially political nature.

On 31 October 1991, the ETUC, UNICE and CEEP took a decisive step forward when they adopted an agreement setting out the exact role they intend to play in defining European social policy. This agreement took much of its inspiration from the protocol on social policy, annexed to the 1992 Maastricht Treaty.

A new legislative route

With the entry into force of the new Treaty, the social partners acquired the right, under certain conditions and on certain subjects, to consider questions which the Commission indicates it would like to deal with. Discussions between the social partners can now result in a collective agreement of legislative force: this agreement can be transposed directly at national level by the social partners themselves (by means of national collective agreements) or adopted in the form of a European directive following a proposal by the Commission and adoption by the Council. This represents a minor institutional revolution, opening up a new route for creating European law based on agreement between the social partners.

The ETUC, UNICE and CEEP have already made use of this mechanism on two occasions: the agreement on parental leave (adopted in December 1995) and the agreement on part-time work (adopted in June 1997). Both have since been translated into European directives. It should be pointed out that when the Amsterdam Treaty was signed in June 1997 the United Kingdom decided to sign the Social Protocol (which it had not done in Maastricht). Consequently, directives resulting from social agreements (under the conditions laid down in the protocol) now apply in all 15 EU Member States.

The ability to conclude agreements with the possible force of European law does not only apply to inter-professional social dialogue. It also applies to the trade union and employers' representatives of the various sectors who, with the support of the European Commission, debate at the same table. The agreements concluded between the social partners can, if necessary, be extended by European directives. Moreover, the Commission now considers it a priority to relaunch social dialogue in the individual sectors.

A favoured field

Vocational training has long been a favoured field of European social dialogue, reflecting the traditional close involvement of the national social partners in this field, both at the interprofessional level and in individual sectors of activity and enterprises. In Denmark, for example, training problems are jointly managed by the unions, the employers and the State. In Germany, the social partners are actively involved at company level while at the same time influencing the direction of policy decided by the federal government and the Länder. In France, agreements between the social partners are laid down in law. Each country therefore has its own particularities.

In European social dialogue, vocational training issues are considered by the "education and training" group (mandated by the Social Dialogue Committee) which is chaired by DG XXII of the European Commission. This group is very

active and generates a great many common opinions which reflect the importance the social partners attach to training. Examples include: the development of access to continuing training, equality between men and women, the adaptation of companies to structural change, and the promotion of measures for the recognition and equivalence of qualifications at Community level.

In 1996, the social partners decided to make a more in-depth study of four subjects: lifelong learning, career guidance, the recognition of qualifications, and financial resources. Reports on these four subjects were completed in 1998 and submitted to the Social Dialogue Committee.

Social dialogue, for training as in other fields, is also developing in different sectors. Various agreements or recommendations have been adopted in this respect, such as for transport, the retail trade, industrial cleaning and telecommunications.

Varied participation

At the same time as engaging in this "autonomous" social dialogue, the social partners are closely involved in implementing Community policy and sit, alongside representatives of the Member States, on the European Consultative Committee for Vocational Training which discusses policy initiatives taken in the sector. They are also consulted by the Leonardo da Vinci Monitoring Committee.

In this capacity, the ETUC, UNICE and CEEP have recently adopted a common opinion on the proposal for the second phase of the Community programme. In this they express the desire to "play a continuing role in defining, implementing and evaluating the new programme at European and national level". The social partners are no longer asking to be considered as mere "observers" but, in future, to participate fully in the work of the Leonardo da Vinci Committee.

Leonardo da Vinci: the compendium of social partners

The social partners are very active within the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The 1997 call for proposals generated no fewer than 428 projects submitted by the social partners or equivalent bodies, or the content of which related to social dialogue. These projects have recently been brought together in a compendium published by the European Commission in French, English and German.



Trends and developments

in vocational training in Europe

The case of Austria

Further information

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Unemployment among young people in Austria is low, recent statistics putting youth unemployment at just 6%. And the country is proud of it, as education and culture minister Elisabeth Gehrler made clear at a conference in Vienna at the start of Austria's first EU Presidency.

Training – and vocational training in particular – is doing very well in this new EU Member State where the link between training and work is clearly established. A link further strengthened by recent developments in implementing training policy involving Leonardo da Vinci projects. Within the partnerships forged within these projects, the Austrian public authorities coordinate cooperation between the promoters and ensure that the projects develop as they should.

Austria's education and vocational training system takes account of the abilities and personal interests of young people, and the co-existence of schooling and apprenticeship plays a major role in the system. Almost 80% of young people aged between 15 and 18 opt for vocational training and attend schools providing technical and occupational training; 40% opt for apprenticeships which include two complementary elements, in-company training and instruction at a vocational training school. Under this dual system, apprentices spend most of their training at a production site or service provider, experiencing real working conditions. This not only provides direct integration into working life, but also an increased ability to manage social relationships and to solve problems. It is a considerable advantage to be employed as a skilled worker immediately after completing training, both for the apprentice and for the company.

But before the time comes to make their choice, young people have been able to receive a very broad general education which has already prepared them for a fast-changing world.

There have also been some interesting innovations in the field of career advice. Teachers themselves follow special training courses, equipping them to provide a careers advisory service in schools. Among other things, this service helps girls to also look outside the traditional female occupations, by interesting them in technical training for example. Another distinctive feature, reflecting business requirements in an increasingly international economy, is that foreign language learning begins in primary school. Since 1995, there has also been a legal obligation to teach apprentices English.

Knowing your job is one thing, being able to communicate outside your linguistic region in order to pursue a successful career is another.

The autonomy of the individual school is also a very important factor, especially in technical and vocational training schools where this allows a personal choice from among the specializations offered by the teaching programme and proper account to be taken of regional economic needs. The teaching programmes and scope for specialization are thus adapted to the needs of the economy and apprentices receive adequate training in companies. Experts on school administration, the economy and industry work together with the social partners in continually updating the programmes. The main objectives of the training are: the acquisition of in-depth professional skills; the development of the individual's personality; professional mobility and flexibility; creativity; the development of a critical spirit; social commitment; team work and (tele)communication. A particularly effective tool for meeting these objectives are the "training companies", also known as "virtual companies". These are modelled on an actual company, thereby allowing trainees to understand the complexity and processes of working in a real company. The training company is a compulsory element in the study programme at middle business schools and secondary business and management schools in Austria. They are also recommended for technical and vocational training schools.

Another recent development concerns the equal status of general education and vocational training. Whereas previously access to higher education, such as university, was reserved for certain kinds of pupils, the "vocational school certificate", introduced by a 1997 act, grants access to higher education for those who complete their training in the dual system, at a middle vocational and technical training school during at least three years, a nursing school or a medico-technical school.

It should also be stressed that the organization of vocational training in Austria and its recent development take account of current and likely future economic, technological

and social change. The key words are: recognition and transparency of the skills acquired; the employability of persons having followed a training programme; training which goes beyond an apprenticeship in a specific trade to also take into account the individual's aspirations; a structural search to match the training available with the qualifications companies are seeking; promotion of the concept of lifelong learning; the inclusion of new subject matter in training, such as foreign languages and key skills (while also being sure to eliminate subject matter which has become obsolete!) and the introduction of new training media.

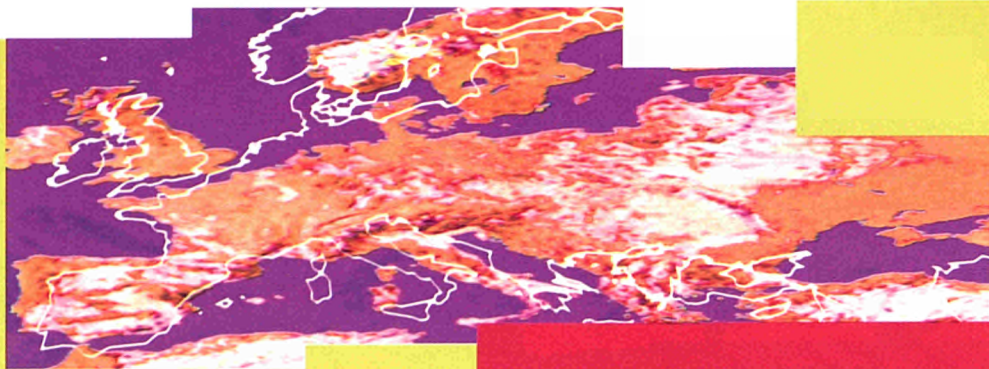
EURO-TAO:

European vocational school certificate

A Leonardo da Vinci project conducted with the support of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs involving a partnership of major companies, employers' organizations and trade unions, chambers of commerce, qualification bodies, public authorities and research centres in six countries (Austria, Finland, France, Germany, Liechtenstein and the United Kingdom).

It is aimed at young people during and after their initial vocational training and seeks to create links between practical vocational training and training within a full-time school system, while at the same time respecting the differences between the national training systems. Its ultimate objective is to create a European vocational school certificate for young people who complete an apprenticeship which qualifies them for a place at university or elsewhere in higher education.





Further information

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Vocational training: the changing scene

Belgium

Leverage funding for innovation-oriented training

The Flemish regional government is allocating an additional FB 665 million (approx. ECU 166 m) to in-company training. The new resources are geared to supporting training projects resulting from investment in new products or processes.

To qualify, projects have to meet four basic criteria:

- Only companies and sectoral organizations can apply for the extra funds. Thus, the government clearly indicates that it wants the demand side of the training market to take the initiative in the renewal of training programmes.
- The fund is called 'leverage' as it is to be combined with additional financial means from the companies themselves, the European Social Fund, the sectoral organizations and/or the paid educational leave framework.
- Each project has to prove that it reinforces the chances of workers, jobseekers or self-employed people on the labour market.
- As the fund is part of the global innovation policy of the government, only training projects set up to support the development of new products, the renewal of obsolete production methods and organizational procedures are eligible.

Source: VDAB, Brussels

Finland

Length of upper secondary vocational training extended

The government's development plan for 1995-2000 decided in principle that the duration of courses for all qualifications in upper secondary level vocational education would be extended to three years. This broadens the contents of the courses and increases the value of qualification in working life.

In June 1998, the Ministry of Education specified the principles and timetable for this reform, which will be carried out gradually between 1999 and 2001. All the new courses last three years.

The new qualifications will be designed to provide extensive basic skills to carry out different tasks in the sector concerned, as well as more specific professional skills and expertise in one specialist area.

All the qualifications will include a six-month on-the-job training period. In some areas, three-year courses exist already – e.g. business and administration, marine skills and laboratory technology, which will be reformed this year.

Skills tests will be included in all courses and students have to demonstrate that they have acquired the occupational skills required. These tests will be planned and carried out in cooperation with the social partners.

The Ministry of Education has also made decisions concerning new qualifications in construction technology, heating and ventilation technology, land survey technology and in the health and social services sector. These reformed courses will be on offer from the beginning of August 1999.

Source: NBE, Helsinki

France

Training on satellite TV in January

Under the terms of an agreement signed between the Delegation-General for Employment and Vocational Training (DGEFP), the National Centre for Distance Learning (CNED), the Association for Adult Vocational Training (AFPA) and the Social Management Institute (IGS), a satellite TV training channel called TSF, or "Television formation par satellite", should come on the air in January 1999. The partners are now studying the content.

This solution contains one disadvantage, but equally a decisive advantage. The disadvantage is that the non-interactivity of television makes it inferior to networked computers; the advantage is that its promoters can be sure that it will reach a wider audience, given that television is found in almost every home, and that satellite dishes (or cable equipment) are spreading rapidly. However, even though they can be picked up by the general public, the programmes will be directed at major public and private organizations and enterprises and also SMEs. "It is conceivable," in the view of the project's promoters, that this system "could also offer a solution to the training needs of a certain number of professionals in the public sector (firefighters, the police, health personnel, transport operators etc.) right across the country, who need in-house training activities, given the difficulty of being absent from their place of work".

Initially the programmes will be produced at the partners' own production centres, that is the CNED's television studio and "Electronic Campus" at the Poitiers Futuroscope, and AFPA's and the IGS Group's Paris facilities.

Source: Centre INFFO, Paris

Ireland

Resolving IT skill shortages

Cooperation between industry, education and government has provided an insight into the growing skills shortage in the high technology sector in Ireland. The Expert Group on Future Skill Needs quantified the future skill requirements of the sector from professional to technician level until 2003.

Forecasting that the growth in demand for IT jobs will continue, the report anticipates a shortfall of computer science professionals and technicians and of engineering professionals. This will happen even taking into account additional sources of skilled professionals and technicians such as returned emigrants, immigrants, existing employees trained by FAS-Training and Employment Authority, post upper secondary education and in-company courses.

Practical proposals to address the shortfall include:

- conversion courses – one-year intensive courses in specific fields of expertise targeted at graduates,
- employee upskilling – night and part-time study for people already employed in the IT sector,
- full-time education – new higher education places would be required to deliver an extra 400 professional graduates annually and 2,000 new technician places,
- improved completion rates – from the current 80% (degree level) and 65% (technician level) to 85% and 75% respectively.

Source: FAS, Dublin

Italy

Training for conscripts

An agreement signed in May between the Ministries of Defence and Labour launched a vocational training plan, 'Eurotraining', for 170,000 conscripts.

The project is divided into two initiatives, which started this autumn. The first is addressed to 60,000 conscripts and envisages courses in computer science and English, which will run alongside normal military training. Agreements have been made with some large companies, such as Telecom and Microsoft, involving a total of 150 training centres. The second initiative, which will be available during off-duty hours, is addressed to young conscripts wishing to learn or specialize in crafts such as electrician, plumber, carpenter, blacksmith, mechanic.

Young people from the south (who account for 60% of conscripts) will be given preferential treatment, and half of the programmes will be located in the Mezzogiorno. The courses will be organized in training modules, each lasting 80 hours and aimed at occupational profiles already operating in the logistics of the defence sector.

The initiative is aimed at relaunching the institution of military service, which has been somewhat overshadowed by the extension of non-military opportunities for conscientious objectors.

Source: ISFOL, Rome

Norway

Reform of continuing vocational training

On the basis of a Green Paper prepared by a committee comprising the social partners, educational institutions and the public authorities and published in October 1997, the Norwegian government presented a White Paper on the CVT reform to the national assembly (*Stortinget*) in May. It suggests major principles and supports the proposals agreed in the Green Paper. In September, the Storting started discussing the White Paper.

Agreed principles underlined in the White Paper include the following:

- The reform will include all adults in and outside the labour market and will have a broad, long-term perspective.
- Employers, employees and the government must all make a contribution when it comes to funding, organizing, adapting, developing and implementing the reform.
- The reform must be based on a broad concept of knowledge, comprising both theoretical and practical knowledge, as well as creativity, initiative, entrepreneurial and cooperative skills. Attitudes and values are also part of this concept of knowledge.
- In view of the corporate structure and the distribution of the population in Norway, it is important to give special attention to the development of skills in small and medium-sized enterprises and to development in the regions.
- As far as possible, education and training for adults should be aimed at meeting demands and be flexible, available and adapted to the

needs of the individual and the enterprise, and build on the individual's competence, both formal and non-formal.

- A system must be established to document and assess adults' non-formal learning. This system should be recognised both in the workplace and in the education system.
- Admission to upper secondary education and higher education must be based on the total competences of the individual, both formal and non-formal.

Discussion continues concerning:

- legal and practical arrangements for training leave,
- financing arrangements and distribution of costs between taxation, employers and individuals,
- recognition, assessment and documentation of non-formal competence,
- organization and responsibilities with regard to delivery of training.

Source: NCU, Oslo

Portugal

Development of adult education and training

Recognition of the right to lifelong education and training, and changes in the nature of professional activity in modern society in particular, have brought about a reshaping of adult education in Portugal.

The fact is that the working population has a low level of training, little general education and few professional qualifications. According to figures collected in December 1997 by the Instituto de Emprego e Formação Profissional (IEFP), 280,000 young people aged under 25 have not completed their mandatory schooling (9 years), whilst 68% of registered job-seekers have less than 9 years of school education.

In July 1998, the government created a "mission group" for developing adult education and training. This group is preparing education and training courses for adults, structured at three levels:

- vocational qualification, level I
- 9th school year, level II
- 12th school year, level III

Apprenticeships and experience acquired outside the formal teaching system entitle the learner to a certain number of credits which will form part of his or her skills portfolio. Local units will soon be created, where adults will be able to establish their skills levels with the help of an educational psychologist.

The remit of the government's mission group is to launch and carry out a "knowledge society project", aimed at:

- setting up a national adult education and training agency
- cooperating with local authorities, and with teaching and vocational training institutions, social partners and private persons, to develop regionally-based-education and training units for adults.

This mission group will operate for six months, prior to the setting up of the National Adult Education and Training Agency.

Source: CICT, Lisbonne

Sweden

Introducing apprenticeship

The Swedish government has launched a system of apprenticeship for young people which will be an integral part of the upper secondary school. Municipalities and schools will be mainly responsible for its implementation.

Since the 1970s there has not been any real apprenticeship system in Sweden, although the social partners have established their own systems for employees within certain branches, such as building. As a pilot project, apprenticeship systems were introduced in 20 municipalities in September 1998. The effect of the system is a prolongation of upper secondary education from three to four years. During the third and fourth years the students will be apprentices at work places for a total of 500 hours.

The objectives of the apprenticeship programme are:

- to meet the changing needs of competence within working life,
- to give employers the opportunity to influence the contents of training and how it is implemented,
- to give students the opportunity to spend a larger part of their training within a national upper secondary programme in the workplace. The student should reach the same educational level after the apprenticeship as within traditional education, and like all other kinds of upper secondary education, apprenticeship should also prepare for higher education.

Source: SEP, Stockholm

United Kingdom

Lifelong learning through the University of Industry

An important element of the government's lifelong learning strategy is the University of Industry (Ufi). In a recently issued prospectus, its role, objectives, priorities and resources are set out.

Unlike the Open University, which was established nearly 30 years ago, the University of Industry will not be a learning provider.

Instead it will act as:

- an endorser of other providers, of approved syllabi, courses and learning aids, encouraging them to fill gaps in provision and directly commissioning material as necessary,
- a broker, answering public enquiries, matching needs with what is available and providing information and referral services,
- a change agent, publicizing the value of learning for adults,
- a directing force identifying skills shortages and coordinating action to investigate causes and to address them.

The objectives are, by 2002, to have:

- 2.5 million individuals and employers using the University for Industry's learning information services,
- over 600,000 a year following learning programmes identified by Ufi,
- separate targets for the priority areas listed below.

The immediate priorities will focus on:

- the basic skills of literacy and numeracy,
- information and communication technologies in the workplace,
- small and medium-sized businesses,
- four industrial sectors – automotive components, multimedia publishing, environmental technology and services, and distributive and allied trades.

Access to the service will be by open and distance learning means only, including CD-Rom, Internet and analogue TV from the home, employers' premises and learning centres.

After a series of pilot projects to test specific aspects of the intended service, the university will be launched in 2000 at a cost of about £50 million (approx. ECU 75 m).

Source: IPD, London

Slovenia

Decentralization and strengthening the institutional framework

Within the overall restructuring of the vocational education and training system in Slovenia, in the context of an ever-changing economy, EU accession has become a major priority. Funds provided from the Phare programme budget have been allocated specifically for this purpose.

Slovenia will concentrate on decentralizing its vocational training system (putting the emphasis on the promotion of so-called bottom-up initiatives), dissemination of results and the further modernization of curricula, as well as a system for recognition of continuing training certification and issues such as support for drop-outs and counselling.

Over the past few years, Parliament has adopted six new educational acts laying the foundation for wide-ranging reforms to the structure of initial and adult vocational education and training. The new legislation draws attention to the importance of the role of the social partners in the decision-making process and identifies the partners, for vocational training purposes, as the Chamber of Economy and the Chamber of Craft and Trade Unions.

The law on the organization and financing of education emphasises the importance of decentralization, and this is currently being studied in the framework of a Phare project. A total of 14 administrative regions will be set up, each with an education committee to which certain financial and administrative powers will be delegated. The Slovenian authorities have made the creation of a strong institutional capacity with highly qualified staff a major priority for the future of vocational training management.

Source: European Training Foundation, Turin (info@etf.eu.int)





The Electronic Training Village

a virtual reality

The Electronic Training Village, created and managed by Cedefop, is the new interactive website on vocational training issues in Europe. As well as providing information on what is happening, it is designed to act as a contact point between institutions and individuals working in the field of vocational training. It aims to provide a space in which researchers, policy-makers and practitioners can share information and experience, and generally make useful links with other participants.

The new website opens with a welcoming message by Commissioner Edith Cresson, a presentation of contents and an invitation to register. Continuing access to the Electronic Training Village is restricted to residents, that is to those prepared to register and who are genuinely interested in VET and capable of contributing to discussions within the village.

Source: Colin McCullough, Cedefop, F +30 31 490 102.
For information on visiting, and registering in, the village
contact www.trainingvillage.gr

The Electronic Training Village consists of a series of virtual buildings, including:

- The **News Agent**, where the latest news from Cedefop including information on recent VET developments in Member States and other organizations is available.
- The **Library**, where it is possible to download free Cedefop publications and access the European Research Directory, a bibliographical database with some 23,000 references, a database with records relating to about 7,000 organizations involved in VET in the EU, a database of VET acronyms and EU and national level reports on apprenticeship.
- The **Bookshop**, which offers summaries of books and a host of Cedefop publications, downloadable for the visitor.
- The **Speakers' Corner**, where participants can exchange opinions on any subject in the field of vocational training.
- The **Community Centre**, where participants are invited to add their names and fields of interest to a "Who's Who in Vocational Training?"
- The **Pub**, where live chats will be regularly scheduled.
- The **Conference Centre**, where virtual conferences on specific vocational training issues will be held several times a year.
- The **ListServer Row**, where participants can request inclusion on mailing lists geared to specific topics of interest in vocational training.

More buildings will be added to meet future demand.

So far, interest has been keen, with new residents joining the village in a steady stream. Nearly 1,000 specialists active in VET issues have registered and regularly receive updates on the areas of interest they have indicated.

From information to interaction

In the Electronic Training Village the accent from the outset has been on interaction and dialogue.

Subscribers, upon registering and stating the areas of particular interest, receive unsolicited updates of news and publications delivered to their computer screens, free of charge. In addition they are kept abreast of upcoming "village" events, such as electronic conferences and workshops. Currently *ListServer Row* houses three (moderated) mailing lists related to mobility, transparency of qualifications and financing issues.

The first virtual conference opened on 21 September when the ETV became the official host of the follow-up to one of the symposia at the European Conference on Educational Research (Ljubljana, 17-20 September) on the topic "Transnationality in vocational training research - what is it?". The *conference centre* published the keynote addresses, moderated three discussion groups and published the conference proceedings electronically.

Currently some 34 million people in Europe have Internet access. Conservative estimates put the figure at 76 million in 2002. The ETV plans, through synergy with all those working in Europe to promote knowledge and discussion of training issues, to become the common European website and the centre of electronic reference.



The Mediterranean, a land of exchanges

Welcome to Euro-MED Youth

The official starting signal should soon be given for Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action. This new programme places the spotlight firmly on cooperation between citizens and will supplement the Youth for Europe actions devoted to exchanges with non-EU Mediterranean countries. The main difference will lie in the budget allocated to these youth exchanges: it is set to double.

Setting it up

The Euro-Mediterranean Youth Action programme, or Euro-MED Youth for short, is the result of a kind of joint venture set up between DG IB (in part responsible for external relations) and DG XXII of the European Commission. Over the two-year period during which the programme is set to run, DGI will be allocating ECU 6 million, through its Mediterranean (MEDA) support actions, while DG XXII will contribute ECU 3.7 million, under Youth for Europe and European Voluntary Service for young people. Although DG IB is allocating most of the funds, it has proposed that DG XXII should be principally responsible for management and coordination, given the solid experience Youth for Europe has acquired over recent years in relations with the Mediterranean region.

Changes

So what changes will 1999 bring? The basic criteria remain the same: a minimum of two partners from each side of the Mediterranean with 12 non-member countries eligible. A new element is that NGOs in the Mediterranean countries can now submit applications for Community funding for exchange projects. Also, a part of the European Voluntary Service budget will go to projects which include non-member Mediterranean countries.

Euro-MED Youth will provide financial assistance for the appointment of coordinators in each of the Mediterranean countries in question. They will be recruited on the basis of their knowledge of the local voluntary sector.

The objective

This Euro-Mediterranean programme is a response to the request made by the foreign ministers of countries from the two zones, who met in Barcelona (1995) and then in Malta (1997). The idea behind Euro-Med Youth is to encourage the democratization of civil society in the Mediterranean partners "by stimulating active citizenship within the local communities, by promoting the active involvement of young people, especially young women and youth associations, and by increasing the employability of these young people."

If local, voluntary projects for young people are going to make any headway in non-member Mediterranean countries, they must acquire more support at the political level, while retaining their autonomy. For this, each of these countries must have access to a system of national coordination which brings together the NGOs and which is able to capitalize on the actions in the field. This is why the European Commission lent its support to the creation of a Mediterranean Youth Forum. Set up in cooperation with the EU's Youth Forum, it opened its doors in Malta in May 1998.

The benefits of *cooperation*

Youth exchanges with non-member Mediterranean countries first began, on the Commission's initiative, back in 1992, under the priority youth actions. But it was in 1995, when the third stage of Youth for Europe was being launched, that these exchanges really took off. Under Action D of the Community programme, cooperation was extended to include 12 countries to the east and south of the Mediterranean Basin. In order to obtain European financing, these exchange projects must be based on a broad multilateral partnership.

Specifically, there must be an agreement between at least two EU Member States and two countries located in the eligible Mediterranean region.

Between 1995 and 1997, some 3,000 young people participated in exchanges between the two sides of the Mediterranean. These projects have generated very positive dynamics, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, in which respect a number of points can be highlighted.

Projects with non-member Mediterranean countries are usually preceded by a very intense preparatory stage, often involving study visits and the training of youth workers in order to better target projects and of course avoid any kind of social tourism. The work with these Mediterranean countries and regions is complex, as the contexts can themselves be delicate. Relationships with Islam are a good example of this. On the European side, this demands respect and discernment, to say the least.

The second strong point is that exchanges with non-member Mediterranean countries produce a real knock-on effect. In many cases the action continues in the form of regional Mediterranean partnerships, independently of any European funding.

Traditionally, southern Europe has always shown a lively interest in Mediterranean cooperation. But, through Youth for Europe, a great diversity of countries have been involved in exchanges. Germany and the Scandinavian countries, for example, are very much involved.

The subject of the exchanges also reveals a great deal about them. Some of the projects are devoted to conflict solving, such as those set up on the initiative of organizations in the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. Other projects bring together young European immigrants, giving them the opportunity to renew contacts with the country of origin and to draw stimulating personal conclusions from the experience. Other projects relate to cultural or artistic disciplines. But few exchanges – regrettably perhaps? – are concerned with environmental protection.

Just like other Youth for Europe actions, exchanges with non-member Mediterranean countries pay special attention to young people from deprived backgrounds and the fight against social exclusion. Finally, equal opportunity is very much present, even if, in some Mediterranean countries and regions, the situation is more difficult in obtaining mixed participation. Nevertheless, since 1995, 51% of participants in exchanges with non-member Mediterranean countries have been boys and 49% girls.

Key dates

- **1992:** the first youth exchange projects began with Morocco, Tunisia and Algeria.
- **1995:** launch of Youth for Europe III. Twelve Maghreb and Mashreq countries were by now involved, together with Cyprus, Israel, Malta and Turkey.
- **November 1995:** conference in Barcelona of foreign ministers from both sides of the Mediterranean. A proposal was submitted to set up a Euro-Mediterranean youth exchange programme. The aim: "to encourage understanding between the cultures and exchanges between the civil societies."
- **June 1996:** second Euro-Mediterranean conference of foreign ministers in Malta. The call for a "youth" programme was repeated.
- **May 1998:** inaugural meeting, in Malta, of the Mediterranean Youth Forum.
- **September 1998:** first European Commission agreement on setting up the Euro-MED Youth programme.

Further information

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Morocco - Seeing both sides of the coin

To resolve the causes of racial violence at a football match, a Dutch youth club took a group of young people to Morocco.

The coal mines in Geleen, a town of 40,000 people in the province of Limburg at the southernmost tip of the Netherlands, have now closed, but a large immigrant population, from southern and eastern Europe and North Africa, remains. And when times are hard, even the most peaceful of cultural activities may spark discord. One day, at a football match between two youth club teams from Geleen and Eupen, 40 kilometres away in the German-speaking area

of Belgium, members of one team started throwing insults at opponents of Moroccan origin.

The organizers of Buurthuis de Linde, a youth centre in the Lindenheuvel neighbourhood of Geleen, observed this and decided that the way to build mutual understanding was to take a racially mixed group of young people to the Maghreb to find out what society there was really like. A group of 24 teenagers from four countries - The Netherlands, Belgium, Tunisia and Morocco - thus made a joint visit of discovery to Morocco. Importantly, some of the European visitors were of European origin, others of African.

The group deliberately strayed off the beaten tourist track. They visited parliament and a farm cooperative. They gave a radio interview.

They acquired direct experience of some problem issues, such as child labour and the position of women. "A crucial part of the experience," says Marlies Levels, a youth worker with 10 years' experience in the neighbourhood, "was that the visitors stayed in Moroccan homes and got to know what daily life is like."

A better sense of identity

The experience has certainly brought about behavioural change, Ms Levels says: "There was learning on all sides. Dutch people in general only see North Africa through tourist brochures or television news stories about Islamic fundamentalism. Even Dutch youngsters of Moroccan origin have a very one-sided view of the country,

origin have a very one-sided view of the country, because their parents tend to idealize their homeland as a sort of protection against a sometimes hostile culture in Europe. Since the trip, the 'Moroccan Dutch' youngsters can appreciate what being Moroccan really means. It has given them a better sense of identity. I think that now they are far more inclined to see the advantages of living in Europe, and hence, they feel more settled and are more likely to build stable careers. They used to say all the time 'Morocco is best', but now they see both sides of the coin."

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Sweden - Women's development in six cultures

A Swedish youth initiative brought together teenage girls from three European and three Maghreb countries in Tunisia. They discovered they had a surprising amount in common.

In the town centre of Malmö at Sweden's southern tip is Sophielunds Fritidsgård, a municipal youth initiative working to discourage delinquency, drug use and violence. To build the self-confidence and sense of identity of the town's teenage girls, they brought together a group from three European countries - Sweden, Norway and France - and three North African ones - Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. After mutual

introductions were made by fax, electronic mail and video, the project arranged a week's visit to Hammamet in Tunisia in August 1998, for 43 young women, aged between 15 and 23, evenly split between the two continents.

The project's theme was the development of women in six different cultures. "We chose to run an all-girls group, because their needs are more urgent than boys', and if boys are present they tend to grab all the attention," says project leader Anna Ekberg. "We wanted to give the girls an opportunity to grow as individuals through experiencing an adventure." The youth leaders had something to gain too: they hoped to learn new approaches by comparing the different ways they worked with young women.

Learning by doing

The organizers aimed to encourage the participants to recognize the similarities and differences in their development, first as humans and then specifically as women. They let the participants choose what activities they did together, so that they had to think about what they each had to offer the others. "At first, the Scandinavian girls were very careful compared with the outspoken North Africans, but they soon relaxed, and the group connected very well. The girls were intrigued and excited by the differences between them, but by the end, they were surprised to discover how similar they were," Ms Ekberg continues. "From talking to them, I believe they all grew a lot: they became

self-aware, and found they had the courage to do things. They learnt how to take responsibility and to function in a group. And above all, given the multicultural context of the project, they learnt not to prejudge other people."

Ms Ekberg points out a special benefit that the experience brought to those participants who are bicultural: "If you are living in one culture at home and a different culture at school and with your friends, you tend to live a split existence. But the project showed how the two worlds can work together. In Tunisia, girls found that being able to speak Arabic was an advantage, as they could interpret for us." The week was a success and the organizers hope to repeat it next year with the same group, but in Norway.

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A change of scene for a change of outlook

Eight unemployed young people from the Strasbourg suburbs joined a camel expedition in the Tunisian desert. This once-in-a-lifetime experience in the company of other young people from Finland, Italy, Northern Ireland, Algeria and Tunisia acted as a trigger. By escaping the confines of their neighbourhood and meeting new people they acquired a sense of identity and returned with renewed dynamism.

Like many other French suburbs, the Neuhof district, to the north of Strasbourg, is facing serious social problems, with unemployment, drugs and petty crime. The situation is so bad that buses no longer enter the area because the drivers fear attack.

At the heart of the Neuhof district, where three-quarters of the population are of immigrant origin, Euro Contact Jeunes is patiently trying to get things moving, with the help of Strasbourg city council and various social organizations. Hamid Khelifa, the associa-

tion's coordinator, explains the approach. "By organizing activities such as football or cross-country biking, we establish contact with these young people. During these activities you find they start to confide in you. This enables us to change attitudes. Indirectly, we have a preventive effect, even if that is not our priority objective."

Discontent in Neuhof, continues Hamid, has a lot to do with the difficulty these young people have in creating a sense of their own identity. They feel torn between the culture of the country they are living in and that of their country of origin and their parents. Ill-at-ease, they withdraw into the local neighbourhood and adopt a passive, negative attitude. "The young people here are insular. They are just sleepwalking through life. They must be shaken out of it!", says Hamid.

Rebuilding an identity

The project, entitled *Du désir au désert*, was part of this process aimed at getting these young people to act, through creative individual projects. By travelling to another place, Tunisia, as part of a multicultural group, the young people of Neuhof would hopefully be able to obtain a better idea of who they really are and thus rebuild an identity.

In all, 48 young people participated in the project, coordinated in Strasbourg. The eight youngsters from Neuhof were joined by young people from Finland, Italy and Northern Ireland plus eight young Tunisians and eight young Algerians.

They travelled to Tunisia in May 1998, after a long period of preparation. They all gathered in Djerba before continuing in multinational groups to a remote village where they stayed with Tunisian families. From there they set out on their desert trek, by camel, with cultural visits along the way. Every day, explains Hamid Khelifa, each "national" delegation organized a debate with the other young people on a subject of particular interest to them. The young people from Strasbourg spoke of life in the suburbs, the fight against drugs, their desire to be part of the European Union. Step by step, far from their homes, in contact with new people, they came to feel French citizens above all else. In their contacts with the Tunisians, the Strasbourg group also realized the differences between the reality of present-day Maghreb and the way it is presented by their parents who no longer live there

A trigger

Since they returned to Strasbourg the Neuhof "eight" cannot stop talking about their trip. Personal contacts have also been established between the Finnish, British and Italian members of the group. They write regularly, making plans to visit each other. The most striking thing about it all, Hamid Khelifa tells us, is to see how these young people who had all previously drifted into unemployment have now become so much more dynamic. Two of them have set up a small business, in the form of a mobile snack bar: "They understood that their lives must not be confined to just the local neighbourhood." Two others have embarked on a training course, one as an electrician and the other as a painter. Seeing the Tunisian craftsmen at their work no doubt counted for a great deal in this decision. Among the girls, one has started a computer course, and another is actively seeking employment. The trip triggered something off in these young people, producing more than could have been hoped for.

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Further information

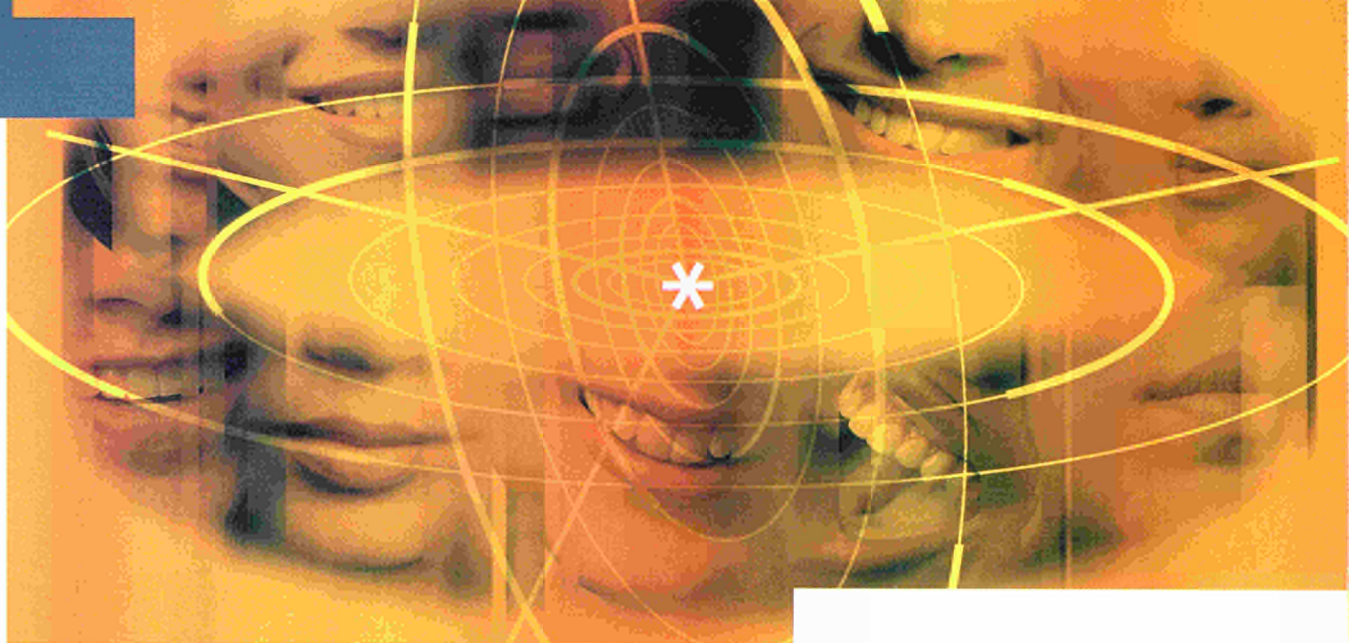
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Dialogue Youth

Improving communication with young people

A nine-month pilot project brought together four very different youth information services for an experiment in working together. If all the networks could be joined up, the European Commission reasoned, young people would be better informed, and their voice more loudly heard. It wasn't easy, but a blueprint for more effective use of the media now exists, and is to be taken further next year.

"Young people continually say that they have difficulty finding out about European programmes, so we are committed to improving access to information," says Augusto Gonzalez of the Commission's Directorate-General XXII. "We want to encourage the development of powerful information tools to reach young people Europe-wide. By bringing media such as radio and youth card magazines together for the first time with more traditional paper and telephone-based youth information services, our idea was to encourage different networks with different strengths, traditions, and users to cross-fertilize. In this way, we wanted to get young people's voices heard inside the European institutions."

The Dialogue Youth pilot project brought together four contrasting organizations:

- the European Youth Forum is the primary avenue for lobbying on youth issues at European level, representing national youth councils in 38 European countries along with a varied range of 60 international organizations.
- Eurodesk Brussels Link focuses on providing information on the EU and its funding programmes to youth organizations. It works through 19 national and 200 local offices.
- AMARC-Europe, the European Association of Community Radio Broadcasters, has unrivalled links with 1,500 grass-roots broadcasting stations.
- EYCA, the European Youth Card Association, represents 27 national organizations promoting privileged access of people under 26 to transport, lodging and many other services which encourage their development and quality of life. Its members' magazines have a combined circulation approaching 3 million.

Learning to work together

The project took on board the vision of raising the profile of youth information and reaching a wider audience through partnership, and in November 1997 took on two full-time workers, who oversaw the project's activities for the following nine months. Work gathered momentum, and a 3-day planning event in Brussels at the end of February attracted 80 people from 26 countries. Joint groups on topics such as youth mobility and social exclusion were set up, and an info-pack, web page and CD were published. Spin-off actions included a reception and art exhibition to celebrate International Women's Day and a live satellite and Internet broadcast on International Day Against Racism, in which 20 radio stations took part. The Dialogue Youth networks also covered the Youth Forum conference on human rights in Bucharest in April, the Congress of Europe at the Hague in May, and the youth employment conference linked to the Cardiff summit.

In June, Dialogue Youth pulled out the stops to report on the cliff-hanging conciliation discussions between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers on the budget for the European Voluntary Service programme. A team of community broadcasters transmitted interviews with negotiators in four languages and ran a live phone-in, rejigging the reports to cope with the day's delay that the decision underwent.

Synergy is possible

Bob Payne of Eurodesk says: "The idea of putting four existing networks together is a very good one; in practice it was not so easy. The pilot project was very short, and our networks

had never worked together before. We have very different characters and approaches – radio stations and magazine publishers, for instance, work to different lead times, so coordinating our work wasn't always easy." But Brian Carthy of AMARC-Europe believes that generating synergy between different media can work: "News doesn't all have to happen at once: for instance a live radio phone-in can be the basis of later written reports. Information is relevant for a certain period, and it's a question of getting the different media to work in a complementary way." Hrönn Petursdóttir of the European Youth Forum echoes this optimism. "The pilot was a valuable experience," she says. "It enabled us to identify our various aims and to clarify the benefits and potential of cooperation. It showed us that working together will help us to be much more effective. What we want to do in 1999 is to get a long-term project under way to build a network centre in Brussels, involving little by little a much broader range of organizations working with young people."

A question of subsidiarity

The experiment shows that subsidiarity is just as much of an issue for NGOs as for EU Member States. No one likes having a new umbrella body foisted on them, and they will naturally object to having a new bureaucracy coming between them and their direct contact with the centres of power. "You can only cooperate successfully if you're secure to start with," says Bob Payne. "As we're such a disparate group of organizations, we need to find a way of working that reassures the partners that they're not about to be taken over." But on balance, the advantages of collaboration outweigh these fears. "There certainly is a role for some sort of support or coordinating unit that not only helps youth organizations to work together and to make use of each other's events and resources, but also can take proactive action to involve partners in new activities. And above all it needs to be flexible enough to cope with new organizations and to keep moving forward."

"I think it can work, but it depends on two things," says Hrönn Petursdóttir. "First, Dialogue Youth has to be flexible – it is in effect a cooperation agreement, a formalized way of working together. Secondly, we have to be very clear that it does not replace any of us, it facilitates our work."

Brussels and Strasbourg join forces

Under the Youth for Europe programme, the Commission lends considerable support to projects aimed at strengthening the European dimension of the training of youth workers. This is a sector in which the Council of Europe also possesses considerable expertise. So why not join forces? In future, the youth services of the two institutions will be working hand-in-hand in supporting better targeted projects.

Youth for Europe is a living programme, active at grass-roots level and in tune with young people. As their expectations evolve, so must Youth for Europe. Hence the need for the Community programme to embrace change and, when necessary, to engage in a little soul-searching.

The Youth for Europe strand of action devoted to the training of youth workers (Action B), clearly illustrates this readiness to adapt.

Initial assessment

Since 1995, the European Commission has funded a series of pilot projects designed to strengthen the European dimension of the training of youth workers.

As the programme arrived at mid-term, it was time for an initial assessment. The verdict? Although projects supported by the Commission have been of high quality, there is nevertheless room for improvement in certain areas. The organizations which benefit from training schemes for youth workers have an excessive tendency to keep what they have learned to themselves. In future, there is therefore a need to support projects able to demonstrate their ability to share training results widely, by ensuring a multiplier effect.

But this was not the only conclusion. Organizations thus far aided by the European Commission (under Action BII - Cooperation in the field of training) have tended to be in the traditional sphere. Yet alongside these, an informal movement is growing up, consisting of more culturally-oriented associations for example. This new generation of youth organizations is already represented in other areas of Youth for Europe and especially in the recent European Voluntary Service scheme. It is time training actions also awarded it greater priority.

The Commission has been making major efforts to help with the training of youth workers for many years now. But it believes it can do an even better job by working in closer cooperation with the Council of Europe which also has solid experience in this field - in terms of methodology and teaching tools certainly, but also in terms of infrastructure with its two Youth Centres, one in Strasbourg and the other in Budapest.

It is clearly in the interests of both the Council of Europe and the Commission to join forces.

Pro-active approach

At the beginning of 1998, the Commission defined its future approach. It was to be resolutely pro-active. There would be two changes. Firstly, the "European training" of youth workers would be more open to the new generation of youth organizations. Secondly, the fields of training would be narrowed in order to avoid spreading resources too thinly and to better meet local needs in the field. After consulting the organizations in question, the Commission drew up a list of priority topics. The emphasis in future will be on managing youth organizations, language proficiency and communication in an intercultural perspective, public relations, and the use of new technologies. Special attention will also be paid to working with young people from deprived backgrounds in a European context, with young disabled people, and to combating racism and xenophobia. Another important point is that in future there will be regular assessment of the pilot projects selected.

Joint action

The Commission's more political overtures have also been quick to produce results. The Council of Europe's Youth Directorate immediately declared itself favourable to the idea of a joint action. In September 1998 the two institutions concluded a cooperation agreement, by the terms of which the Council will make a contribution of ECU 120,000 in addition to the ECU 500,000 allocated by the Commission to strand B II. It will be directly involved in training projects linked to management, languages and more specifically involving organizations for young gypsies. The Council of Europe will also be making available its teaching skills. In partnership with the Commission, it will be involved in the assessment process and work on establishing links and networks between trainers.

The agreement between the Commission and Council of Europe will apply until April 1999. A new cooperation agreement could then be signed between the two partners through to the year 2000 with a view to setting up a new Youth for Europe programme. At the time of going to press, this agreement had not yet been concluded.

Four initial pilot projects

By April 1999, between 200 and 300 youth workers should have received European training.

Two initial selection rounds for pilot projects have been organized so far in April 1998 and in September 1998, both reflecting this new pro-active approach. Twenty-one applications were submitted for April, seven of which were finally adopted. Three of them aim to develop teaching methods or materials. The other four relate to setting up actual training courses, due to be launched in autumn 1998:

- The first action will provide training for youth workers specializing in liaising with young disabled people. The course should lead to the award of a certificate recognized in the various countries. In addition to six EU Member States, Hungary is also participating in this project.
- The second project, named "Cocktail", organizes courses given by a multinational team of youth workers working in close cooperation with Youth for Europe's national agencies. All 15 Member States are to participate in this project, together with Hungary, the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania.
- The third project is directly coordinated by the European Youth Forum and thus brings together a very wide range of organizations. It is notable for its particularly innovative methodology based on a mix of plenary sessions, work in small groups, role playing and outside visits. In addition to the 15 Member States, this project also involves Poland, Hungary, Romania, the Czech Republic, Slovakia and Cyprus.
- Finally, the fourth project, which brings together Portugal, the Netherlands, Austria and the United Kingdom, aims to set up a network of "resource persons" who could be of service to Youth for Europe.

Further information

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Solidarity

at the heart of Europe

European Voluntary Service: from a pilot action to a programme

Since 31 July 1998, European Voluntary Service has been a programme in its own right. It results from an initiative by Commissioner Edith Cresson and represents the culmination of many long months of legislative work at the Commission, the Parliament and the Council. The programme runs until 31 December 1999, when it will become part of the future Youth programme due to be launched on 1 January 2000.

Further information

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European Voluntary Service – to begin with a negative definition – is not a substitute for military service. Nor is it a kind of civilian service and nor does it offer paid employment. The most distinctive thing about it is in fact its uniqueness. It allows a young person to perform a tangible act of solidarity for the benefit of a host community and, in so doing, to participate in a European experience which is of direct personal benefit. The concept is based on the idea of exchange and sharing. On the one hand, there is the young person with his or her energy, the desire to be involved, the prospect of actually doing something, and all that a new view can bring. On the other hand, there is the host structure and receptiveness, integration, and recognition. Links are forged which serve as a bridge for young people seeking a reason to get involved and make something of themselves.

The programme is all the more assured of success as it is able to draw on the lessons learned during the pilot action, in connection with initial training of volunteers, support during their stay, projects for an appropriate period, actions also in non-EU countries, the possibility of financial aid in order to make the most of what has been learned and the wide range of supporting measures.

All candidates must satisfy two minimum conditions: they must be aged between 18 and 25 and live in an EU Member State, or in Iceland and Norway which also participate in the programme.

A contribution from both sides

What does all this mean in practice? For the young volunteer, the first step is to choose a host structure where he or she will spend the period of voluntary service. These organizations, whether NGOs, local or regional authorities, associations, or whatever, are selected following Europe-wide calls for proposals. These are the key players in setting up a project as they must express a need, be open to the influence of an external presence for a period of between 6 and 12 months, and show that they are likely to be receptive to the act of solidarity which the new volunteer is to perform. Positive educational or training support is expected, such as language instruction.

There is no exhaustive list of the activities a volunteer can perform during the project. They may be social, cultural, environmental or humanitarian. It is all a question of imagination, good will, dynamism and matching supply and demand (or vice versa). The young person, who is at the centre of the project, can only participate after having first been prepared by the home organization and accepted by the host organization, thus guaranteeing that the volunteer has the necessary profile and that the voluntary service can be effectively performed with an assured impact, both upstream and downstream.

An experience to build on

The programme does not abandon the young person to his or her own devices. A number of provisions are made in this respect, including the formal testimonials the volunteers receive at the end of their stay – a valuable contribution to their CVs. Additional support can also be envisaged in the case of the real prospect of a genuinely interesting and practical follow-up.

Anyone who is interested in this opportunity for personal fulfilment and to undertake an act of solidarity can obtain information from the Commission or the national agencies which assist each Member State in implementing the programme.

There is also of course the Internet:
<http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/volunt/index-fr.html>

An initial test on a big scale

The pilot action which made it possible to test the programme's implementation allowed more than 2,500 young people to contribute to projects of all kinds rooted in local realities.

Eva, a young Austrian, worked with young drug addicts in Italy. David, a theatre fan from France, used theatre techniques to help unemployed people reintegrate into society. Rebecca, from the UK, worked on a campaign to protect bears in Greece. All three share the same spirit of solidarity. And – thanks to voluntary service – they were all the better equipped when it came to deciding on a course of study or career.



A partnership coordinated under Tempus by St Kliment University in Sofia and Montpellier I University in southern France resulted in the creation of the Human Rights Centre. Today the Centre plays a major legal and political role in Bulgaria. Launched in 1994, this pilot project is founded on cooperation between universities located in various parts of the country – in itself a strategic priority.

Tempus



Human rights

Rouja Ivanova is a lecturer in European law and civil procedures at Sofia's St Kliment Ohridsky University. But as a visitor to her office, you are first treated to a brief history lesson.

St Kliment Ohridsky is Bulgaria's oldest university. Yet it was founded "only" 111 years ago. In Bulgaria, explains Mrs Ivanova, the quite recent foundation of universities is linked to the country's independence: for a long time it was part of the Ottoman Empire. Following an initial war of independence in 1878, it was not until 1908 that Bulgaria was finally free of foreign domination and declared a sovereign state.

She then skips to 1989 when the communist system which took control at the end of World War II was replaced by a liberal regime. A new constitution was adopted in 1990. Shortly afterwards, Bulgaria joined the Council of Europe and signed the European Convention on Human Rights which now applies to the country's constitution and its laws.

Making legal and political news

Bulgarian membership of the Council of Europe has meant considerable changes for the country's politicians who pass the laws and the lawyers who see they are correctly applied. "Previously," stresses Rouja Ivanova, "fundamental rights were defined in Bulgaria, but without any real protection mechanisms." These mechanisms therefore still need to be put into place. Existing laws must be brought into line with international standards while new laws must take account of the present framework.

This job of legal tidying up is all the more necessary as fundamental rights has become a key issue in present-day Bulgaria. A number of sensitive issues are very much in the news, starting with the status of Bulgaria's large Turkish minority. Recent economic change has also brought rising unemployment and inflation. Corruption is growing and new forms of crime are making their appearance. In such a climate it is important for private property to be better protected while at the same time guarding against possible abuses by the forces of law and order. Furthermore, the passing of a new press law is the subject of heated debate, in Sofia, centering on the essential guarantees of independence to be granted to journalists.

"The protection of human rights and the development of democracy are closely linked," stresses Rouja Ivanova. But she has to acknowledge that the Bulgaria of the 1990s lacks both managers and lawyers specialized in this complex discipline, who must also be well versed in European human rights jurisprudence and legal theory. The needs are urgent. Everything remains to be done.

Capillary effect

A former scholarship-holder at Nancy University, where she studied European law in 1980/81, Professor Ivanova retained a network of contacts and friends from her stay in France. Following Bulgaria's change of regime, she decided to reactivate it. In 1994, in cooperation with Montpellier I University in France, she set up a three-year Tempus project on "the protection of fundamental rights"¹.

This project aims to train, by a capillary effect, the skilled experts in the practicalities of human rights which are so lacking in Bulgaria. A broad partnership was immediately formed around the four Bulgarian universities involved in the project: St Kliment in Sofia and the law faculties in the towns of Blagoevgrad, Velikotirnovovo and Bourgas. It includes the Union of Bulgarian Jurists, the National Police Academy and the National Assembly.

There are four complementary strands to the project. The first seeks to modernize existing university courses to include the principles of European law on fundamental rights. St Kliment, for example, has not only set up a special course on human rights for all law students but also covers the issue in the context of other courses, such as criminal or social law.

To induce other universities to follow this example, it is necessary to retrain teachers and increase their awareness of the subject. This is the purpose of continuing training actions – strand two – which essentially take the form of seminars. The third strand concerns the setting up of a new course for final-year students or persons already working. This leads to the awarding of a "higher specialized certificate in fundamental rights law".

Positive appraisal

Three years later, Mrs Ivanova gives a more than positive appraisal of the results achieved by working with the European partners². "Thanks to Tempus, we now have a computer network linking the four universities. Our project has also helped draw the attention of Bulgarian lawyers to human rights issues."

She believes the most significant result to be the lasting effects and continuing action beyond the term of the Tempus contract. For the fourth consecutive academic year, about 20 trainees are following the diploma course. "The first year, two-thirds of these courses were given by European experts. The second year, two-thirds of the teachers were Bulgarian. The third year, they were all Bulgarian." Another example is the way officials from the National Police Academy attended the specialized training. As a result, the academy (which is administered by the Interior Ministry) now runs its own courses on the protection of human rights.

Meanwhile, the Inter-university Human Rights Centre has now been officially founded in the form of a non-profit-making organization. In addition to running courses and seminars, such is the quality of its research that the Centre is frequently contacted by Bulgarian or international bodies, especially MPs and civil servants from the National Assembly.

¹ This action for the protection of fundamental rights was supported by the Tempus programme in the framework of a standard three-year Joint European Project.

² The Tempus project was coordinated by the St Kliment Ohridsky University in Sofia and Montpellier I University (contractor). Other partners in the European Union were the universities of Barcelona (Spain), Louvain-la-Neuve (Belgium), Athens (Greece) and Paris X-Nanterre (France).

Kamelia, Theodora, Martin and friends...

The Inter-university Centre for Human Rights is based in Sofia, at the offices of the Association of Bulgarian Lawyers, where *Le Magazine* met a group of students, in the large lecture hall with its old-world charm. There was Kamelia, Theodora, Martin, Rayna, Svetlana, Philippe... Some were in the final year of their five-year law course. Others were about to embark on a career as a lawyer or judge. They were part of the group of 17 trainees to have successfully completed the specialized course in fundamental rights during the 1997/1998 academic year.

These young people already speak with the assurance of the practiced lawyer, the attention paid to presenting a precise argument. Svetlana spoke proudly of her work in "protecting minorities" which was part of her course. At the request of a human rights organization in Bulgaria, she and her colleagues carried out a comparative study of the legal instruments available to defend minorities in Hungary, France and Germany. A copy of the students' report even went to the National Assembly, which took note of a number of points. Several of the students on the course in

1997/1998 entered the René Cassin competition, named after the founding father of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Competing against other international teams, the young Bulgarians had to produce, over a five-day period, a mock trial at the Court of Justice in Strasbourg. The competition left some strong memories, but also a little bitterness. This is due to the difficulties they encountered in obtaining visas to travel inside the European Union. They asked *Le Magazine* to report their account. They feel they were subjected to humiliating treatment at European embassies

in Sofia. They had to wait in interminable queues, answer indiscreet questions about their private lives, present "ownership documents" and "bank account numbers" to their hosts abroad, etc. They all described such a procedure as "a flagrant violation of the European Convention on Human Rights". In 1989, the iron curtain came down. "Schengen," protested the young Bulgarian lawyers, "must not be allowed to erect a new wall, this time facing the other part of Europe".

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in Bulgaria

The challenges of Bulgarian higher education

A dose of liberalism, a measure of regulation

Following an initial anarchic phase of liberalization and privatization, beginning in 1995 the Bulgarian authorities attempted to better coordinate the country's various universities on the basis of a number of common criteria. For Tempus, which supports this process, the present priority is "institution building" and encouraging cooperation between universities and the professions in a civil society.

When Bulgaria acquired a new political regime in 1989, the country inherited a higher education system dominated by an all-powerful Soviet-style State which was as centralized as it was inflexible. An initial law on higher education, passed in 1991, shattered the edifice, encouraging the autonomy of institutions and authorizing the creation of private bodies. Universities sprang up everywhere. Today there are 42 universities for a country with a population of 8 million. Each institution creates its own disciplines and develops its own curricula. Not long after the 1991 law, students could choose between no fewer than 520 different specializations.

This chaotic situation also brought a series of difficulties upstream, first of which was European recognition of this myriad of courses. In Bulgaria too, this *laissez-faire* was the source of problems. The various "branches" of higher education were much too specialized. After five years at university (the rule at the time) most students found it very difficult to impress prospective employers with their hard-earned diplomas. With the new market economy, employers were seeking a workforce which was flexible and able to quickly adapt.

Equivalence

In 1995, Bulgaria passed a second law on higher education. While retaining the liberal principles introduced in 1991, the new legislation sought to correct some of the excesses of recent years by introducing greater coordination around joint policy priorities and simplifying the university landscape.

There would be two principle objectives. The first was to restructure higher education by adopting the same degree levels as are generally found in the EU Member States. Three degree levels were thus formally introduced. A bachelor's degree (the first four years at university), a master's (a fifth specialization year), and the doctorate (eight years in all). Rather than specializing from the first year, as had previously been the case, students were now offered a wider education in the early years in order to better equip them to face the realities of working life.

The second change concerned the validation of courses, by establishing a set of common criteria which also applied to the appointment of university lecturers. In 1996, a National Accreditation Agency was set up for this purpose. This sought to ensure compatibility with the European system of credit transfers.

As part of this same drive for rationalization, after 1995 a major effort was also made to avoid duplication between the various universities, establish bridges between the institutions, and reduce the plethora of courses. Three years later, the number of different courses had been reduced by 50%.

Regional cooperation

Since Bulgaria was admitted to Tempus in 1991, the Community programme has granted substantial aid to reforming higher education. The first benefit brought by Tempus was to increase the international mobility of students and lecturers, a dynamic which was all the more necessary as under the former regime Bulgaria had been isolated from Western Europe¹

As in other Central and East European countries, Tempus first helped transform the university system to achieve greater autonomy and independence. The European programme then embarked on more targeted actions, in particular by supporting implementation of the 1995 law. In this context, Tempus favoured inter-regional cooperation between the various universities. It also encouraged the development of devices to

perfect methods of accreditation. A specific example of this is the way it helped several universities to acquire internal evaluation systems allowing the freedom of local management to be reconciled with the obligations of national coordination.

In the near future, Tempus, in close cooperation with Bulgaria's education ministry, will be placing the emphasis on a number of other priority matters, such as improving the management at particular universities and preparing the country to join Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci. But the first priority is to be institution building, with the idea of helping universities to integrate into civil society by freeing them from their ivory towers within which, 10 years after political change, certain Bulgarian academic institutions still tend to seek refuge².

¹ For a full report on what Tempus has achieved in Bulgaria, see the Tempus impact study, published by the European Commission (DG XXII).

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Budapest a new role for higher education

Tempus "institution building"

Institution building is one of the more important instruments to be used during the pre-accession period to help the EU's associated countries to develop their institutional and administrative capacity, and 30% of each year's Phare budget is therefore to be devoted to it. Under the extension of the Tempus programme (Tempus II bis, 1998-2000), Tempus institution building has been introduced as a new priority area for the associated countries. Since Tempus has built up a large amount of intellectual capacity and many

innovative structures in the field of human resources development, the Tempus scheme is expected to play a central role in Phare overall.

How Tempus could contribute actively to Phare's institution building effort was explored in detail at a seminar organized by DG XXII in Budapest on 1-3 October.

It was stressed that in today's Europe higher education institutions have a new society-building role to play. They are already cooperating more with various economic and social partners and

with public authorities, but a more active marketing campaign to promote the new social and economic role of higher education institutions is still needed. Tempus institution building will give an impetus to the creation of a new type of relationship between the academic and the administrative worlds in those countries which are in pole position for entering the European Union.

Prague Education Europe takes shape

Conference of "education ministers"

Following an initial meeting in Warsaw (in April 1997), Europe's education ministers met in Prague on 26 and 27 June 1998, in the presence of Commissioner Edith Cresson. Two sensitive subjects were central to the political debate: improving the quality of schools and tracing the way forward for the Socrates II programme.

This summit, jointly prepared by the Czech Education Ministry, the British Presidency of the Council of Ministers, and the European Commission, was attended by EU ministers and their colleagues from the 11 countries already *en route* to EU membership. Also present, with observer status, were the representatives of the three Central and Eastern European countries still waiting for the green light.

The first subject discussed was the need to improve the quality of schooling as a basis for lifelong learning. Particular stress was placed on the importance of the moral and humanist dimension was given particular emphasis. Education must produce tolerant, balanced and active citizens. Other factors indicative of quality schooling were also identified: teaching must be viewed as a high

level profession; young people should be protected from the threat of exclusion; and schools should enjoy greater autonomy to meet their need for stability while also developing their capacity to reform.

The ministers also made a number of proposals for European cooperation, such as opening up the Community's school assessment networks to include the CEECs and Cyprus. Indicators must also be defined to facilitate the evaluation of systems at national level.

The second subject debated in Prague was future cooperation in the field of education. In this connection, EU ministers and acceding countries were able to engage in an informal exchange of opinions on the Commission's proposal for Socrates II. Following an address by Edith Cresson, the conference

participants welcomed the importance which the Community programme is to attach to simplification, decentralization and improving access for users.

Finally, the education ministers agreed on the need to continue their joint reflection on general policy issues on a regular basis by holding both major conferences and more informal exchanges. Following the Prague meeting, Austria organized a conference in Graz on 14-16 November on the specific subject of: "Southeast Europe: European cooperation in the field of education in the interests of peace, stability and democracy". Finally, the third European conference of education ministers is to be held in Budapest, in 1999, under the German Presidency. Step by step, the European area for cooperation in education is taking shape.

Tempus III Commission proposes extending the Tempus programme

To ensure its continuation, the Commission proposed in July 1998 that the Council adopt phase three (2000-2006) of the Tempus programme for the restructuring of the sectors of higher education in the Phare and Tacis countries. However, this will not be simply the extension of a programme strengthened by eight years' experience, since with this proposal the programme enters into a new phase.

The expectations of the future partners are very diverse, and the new programme will try to respond to them. Tempus III aims, in particular, to establish a new relationship between universities, businesses and government, and to promote a dialogue that can change attitudes and mentality through numerous forms of trans-European cooperation.

It is obvious that fundamental differences exist between the partner countries concerned

by the Tempus III proposal. A vast country such as Russia has needs in higher education that are different from those of Albania.

Tempus III will be open to the non-associated Phare countries of Central and Eastern Europe –Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia –which do not have access to the Community education and training programmes. These are countries that have taken part at a very late date in the Tempus programme, and for which the programme signifies an inestimable contribution to the reconstruction of their societies. The Tempus activities should concern four priority areas: the regional dimension, the modernization of national and local administrations, the management of change in university strategies, and promotion of the benefits gained by the associated Phare countries.

Tempus III will also be open to the New Independent States and Mongolia (which are eligible for the Tacis programme). Tempus will continue to work in a general framework, especially on the diversification, decentralization and modernization of the higher education sector, on the practical contribution of the universities to economic and social reforms, and on strengthening international academic links.

Lastly, the so-called associated Phare countries, which are candidates for membership, and which already benefit from the other Community educational programmes, will no longer be able to take part in the Tempus programme as beneficiary countries. They will nevertheless have the possibility of collaborating, like the countries of the G24 group, in Tempus projects with the non-associated Phare countries and with the Tacis countries.

The development of regional cooperation *Tempus*

The concept of regional cooperation is now developing rapidly, whereas only a few years ago it was an intermittent phenomenon which attracted little attention, despite very interesting alliances which have resulted and which have, in most cases, made progress. One of the reasons for this has been the general intensification of the international dimension in higher education. Another is the special attention given to the Europe of the Regions.

Regional cooperation is one of the primary aspects of the Tempus programme. In its initial phase, at the beginning of the 1990s, when the principal aim of Tempus was to improve the quality of higher education with the help of a considerable degree of mobility, no specialized support policies were necessary. Projects were selected on the basis of their technical and academic quality, without any limits to the subjects or to the aspect of reform. In point of fact, most of the partner countries then lacked any clear policy as regards reform.

Thus, during this initial phase of Tempus, many projects were developed, not only between Phare countries and those of the European Union – the basis of the existence of the programme – but also in the form of cooperation between regions in Phare and EU countries.

From 1994 onwards, with the beginning of Tempus II, the regional cooperation projects were considerably reduced because of the establishment of national priorities which are still defined in terms of the policies of each country. At this stage Tempus became an important instrument for national reforms. The orientations were different, and this made regional cooperation more difficult and of apparently secondary importance.

Another factor that contributed to the reduction of regional projects was the disappearance of regional budgets, which had been specially designed as part of the general framework of Phare. These projects were budgeted proportionally to the Tempus national amounts. Sometimes the consequence of this was (and still is) reticence on the part of the national authorities to “invest” their allocations in projects which were not limited to their own universities.

Since 1994, regional cooperation has been maintained with the Baltic States, at two levels: that of the transnational body Eurofaculty, and that of the universities in a certain number of fields. The reason for this is essentially the size of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, which encourages multiple cooperation projects and close collaboration.

First observations

The least observation that can be made is that regional cooperation contributes more than other types of projects to the wide dissemination of the progress of the project and of the results. Furthermore, this cooperation permits work on an equal basis between the countries concerned.

Regional cooperation, as it was spontaneously imagined from the very beginnings of Tempus, has proved particularly valuable as concerns reciprocal consultation and exchanges of staff, with a view to pooling experiences on an identical subject or the management of the project itself. In fact, this freedom which was given at the outset led to the establishing of regional networks which have continued functioning after the projects were completed.

A typical example of a constantly developing regional cooperation partnership is the project (JEP 11144) of the Baltic States which develops engineering courses in different disciplines and in different languages in the four local

technical universities. The partners of this project are now considering extending their project, which is currently based on the exchange of teaching material, towards an exchange of students. These four universities already recognize their diplomas mutually. It should be noted that the promoters of the project explain the success of this cooperation by the fact that each partner is active in a different branch of engineering. Their complementarity is the factor determining success, since it arouses reciprocal interest and the desire to exchange. Here the idea of competition does not apply.

With Tempus IIa, a new type of regional cooperation appeared, based on “institution building”, which is essential for the Phare countries’ membership of the European Union. Institution building is the third kind of activity that universities may engage in (along with teaching and research), namely, the training of staff, particularly administrators.

If Tempus III is created, this should develop regional cooperation by introducing a new dimension into it. The associated Phare countries will no longer “benefit” from the Tempus financing but will, on the contrary, be able to become “donors”, supplying services just like the countries of the European Union. This would allow regional cooperation partnerships that were not feasible in the past because of the budget structures of different programmes.

Hence as soon as Tempus III is started, regional cooperation projects can be expected between associated Phare countries (the CEECs that have applied for membership) and non-associated Phare countries, with the participation of EU countries as well as projects between associated Phare countries and Tacis countries. The immediate consequence of this will be collaboration between universities that were not able to work together within the framework of Tempus, a demonstration of the new professionalism of the universities of the associated Phare countries compared with the other countries, as well as their sense of decision, of partnership and of responsibility. In other words, the support and aid of countries which have depended on Tempus and have acquired experience thereby will be transferable to South-East Europe and Tacis countries. In this way Tempus III will make it possible for partners who have been acquainted with (similar) problems in the past or in the present to work together on solutions in a more appropriate manner. The transfer of experience should, indeed, be easier to a certain extent. Furthermore, the whole process of dissemination of information and of the results of the projects should be speeded up as a result.

What is the value of a general regional cooperation policy for Tempus?

The following rule must be observed: regional cooperation must not be in competition with the other forms of cooperation, whether within Tempus or with other programmes. On the contrary, regional cooperation must be seen as a harmonious complement, or even as a strengthening element for the other traditional forms of cooperation in Tempus.

It offers several plus points:

1. Regional mobility

Regional mobility may well attract a broader section of the population than that usually concerned by mobility as it is practised at present. It might well spread to other sectors than the traditional student sector, more professional or more directed towards fields that are usually under-represented or more specialized. It could attract certain categories of people who otherwise would not be prepared to move, such as those who already have a job, those with families, those with insufficient financing at their disposal, those who are handicapped, those belonging to minorities scattered over several neighbouring countries, and those seeking lifelong training. The list is long, and in this way Tempus will open its doors to new sectors of the population, giving mobility an increasingly democratic aspect.

2. Cooperation as support for the process of countries’ acquiring membership of the European Union

As has been shown above, the aid provided by the Phare associate countries to the others in the framework of regional cooperation projects ought to “accelerate their arrival at maturity” by emphasising their capacity to take on responsibilities just like the countries of the Union.

3. Cooperation as support for lifelong learning policies

It is obvious that this type of cooperation should facilitate the internationalization of such learning.

4. The quality of higher education

Close collaboration made possible by the proximity of the partners, and by constant comparison, should enhance quality.

5. Costs and viability

Regional cooperation should constitute a considerable advantage, especially in terms of the sharing of costly infrastructures, in particular in the areas of research, of human resources, of mobility and teaching.

6. Distance teaching

It is easy to imagine that this type of teaching should greatly reduce regional cooperation. However, experience shows that this is not the case; rather it would seem to be complementary and in no case to replace the direct personal contacts most people want.

Better mutual understanding

In the Tempus programme, regional cooperation can constitute an outstanding and very practical instrument for dialogue, openness of mind, tolerance, and mutual trust and respect, which in turn can help to promote peaceful co-existence between the countries concerned.

Further information

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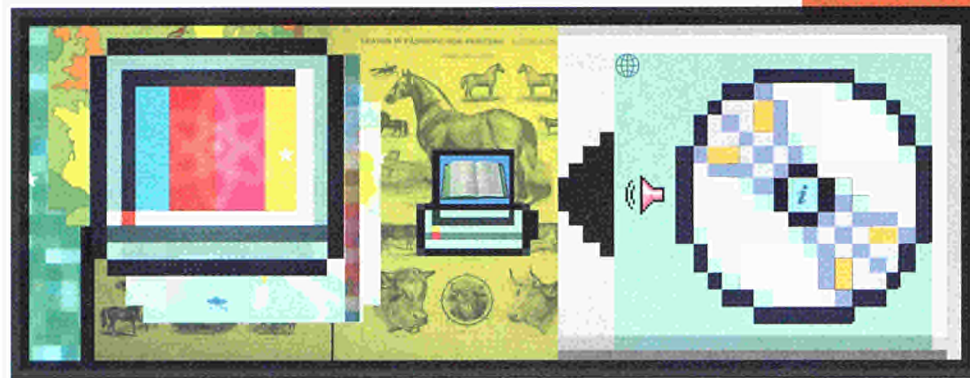
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A virtual school

for a *new kind* of manager

Since October 1998, 28 trainees aged between 28 and 75 from seven countries have begun distance training in "management in the field of higher education", a course previously unknown at European level. This pilot experience run jointly by the University of Twente in the Netherlands and the Open University in the United Kingdom originated in cooperation between Europe and the United States. It should soon be extended to include the CEECs and South Africa.

If it was not for the rather austere-looking concrete buildings, you would think you were in a large country village. Lying in the middle of a large forest, far from the noise of the city, the Twente Technological University enjoys a favoured location a few kilometres outside Enschede in the Netherlands, close to the German border.

Built in the 1960s, it is one of the newest university campuses in the Netherlands. Right from the start, Twente concentrated on applied sciences and an innovative interdisciplinary approach. A student studying mechanical engineering, for example, will take courses in physics, linguistics, social sciences and business management. Within the university, the centre for higher education policy research (Cheps) seeks to adopt this same open approach. Study projects are therefore targeted at three priorities linked to the necessities of working life: management, financing and quality control in higher education.

Adapting training to the challenges it must face

The world of higher education, explains Ineke Jenniskens, one of the young managers at the Cheps, has undergone radical change over recent years. Student numbers have increased, but funds have tended to be cut. Research centres are operating in a more competitive environment. More than ever before, they must show concrete results and compete for funding. The universities themselves are acquiring greater autonomy while having to face up to new responsibilities for management, marketing or quality control. The problem is that the managerial and administrative staff have not always been sufficiently prepared for them.

Higher education establishments are having to increasingly look to management techniques in the private sector for their inspiration. "Not copy them, just learn from them," Ineke Jenniskens is quick to point out. Because a university must meet its own educational and scientific needs and cannot be run in exactly the same way as a company.

It was this realization that led to the idea of setting up training courses in management in the field of higher education, designed for scientists charged with managerial responsibilities and managers employed at ministries or universities. This is a field in which the United States has many years of experience but where Europe, strangely enough, runs no specific course. This is the reason for the consortium bringing together the University of North Carolina in the United States on the one side and the Open University in the United Kingdom and Twente University in the Netherlands on the other. This consortium was one of the first to be selected by the European Union back in 1993 when launching the preparatory phase of educational cooperation between the Union and the United States.

The project is now taking shape: it will be a virtual school, within which international trainees will communicate solely by means of the Internet and e-mail.

In 1996 and 1997, during the preparatory phase, most of the efforts were devoted to defining training content and developing teaching materials. Various partners pooled their expertise, courses were developed and manuals written. This phase, notes Ms Jenniskens, proved very complicated, in particular when developing courses to be taught solely by means of distance learning techniques. Students on this project study by themselves and never physically meet. The sole link is through their tutors who, from their base at the Open University or Twente University, monitor progress and provide additional explanations and follow-up.

Many possible solutions

Three course units were finally defined, with a specialized manual for each one. The first provides a description of the academic organization. The second concerns management and decision-making. "These describe," explains Ineke, "the various leadership problems. We explain the various man-

agement techniques which are applied to teaching itself or to the management of technical resources or logistics." The third unit is concerned with quality management. "Depending on whether the aim is to improve the quality of a course or convince potential funders of the pertinence of a project, it is not necessarily the same information or the same methods which must be stressed." Here as elsewhere, there is not just one but many possible solutions.

Following a long joint US-European process of gestation, the distance courses, coordinated in Twente, were officially launched on 5 October 1998 with an initial multinational group of 28 students. They came from the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Finland, Belgium, Sweden, Portugal... and even Russia. Minimum entrance requirements were a good command of English (the only language used) and at least three years' experience in higher education. The youngest student is a 28-year-old Dutch girl who assists the governors of Wageningen Agricultural College on policy decisions. The oldest is a 75-year-old scientist, a former university lecturer in the United Kingdom, who still exercises important responsibilities.

Up and running!

Following this first nine-month series of virtual lessons, Cheps and the Open University (its Quality Support Centre to be exact) may be able to offer two other one-year modules leading to a master's degree. The partners are also planning to shortly adapt this distance learning project to the situation in other parts of the world. Starting next year, a similar course will be launched for the CEECs and also for South Africa, a country whose system of higher education is in urgent need of restructuring since the recent change of regime and with which the Cheps is in close contact. Developed on both sides of the Atlantic, this pilot project clearly knows no frontiers.

Transatlantic connections

Europe and North America are the two largest economic and scientific communities in the world. Two joint programmes for educational collaboration have been running between them since 1995. This autumn, 18 new projects were agreed, involving 350 new partner institutions.

The first pilot actions in educational cooperation between the EU and the US took place from 1993 to 1995, building on the experience of pedagogic cooperation built up in the Erasmus, Comett and Lingua programmes. A five-year programme bringing in Canada as well as the US was then launched, and this runs until the year 2000. It has a modest annual budget of about ECU 1.2 million with the US and ECU 600,000 with Canada, each partner providing matching funds.

When the two joint committees which manage the programmes met in Brussels earlier this year, they agreed that progress had been good. There are nevertheless areas that could be improved: in particular the geographical balance – more institutions in the south and east of the Community need to be encouraged to submit good proposals – and the relatively low involvement of vocational training compared to academic education institutions. Practical issues that are receiving attention include the level of individual project grants, accommodation arrangements and part-time work permits for participating students and teachers.

A new goal – sustainability

What the EU and the US and Canadian governments are aiming to do is provide seed money for innovative projects with demonstrable long-term potential. Thus the programmes consist of a limited number of demonstration actions, not a massive programme for student mobility which replaces the initiatives of Member States and institutions themselves. The programmes are designed to be a transatlantic bridge that others can use in the future.

To enhance the strength and capacity of this bridge, several changes have been made to the programme design since the pilot phase. Projects must be broader, involving at least three partners on either side, and last longer, for three years.

In addition, the initial designation of five thematic areas has been lifted, and an innovative proposal is now welcome from any discipline. Finally, a new criterion of sustainability was introduced, so that the projects selected are also those which are more likely to keep going after their three-year grant comes to an end.

18 new projects for 1999

The 1998 call for proposals has seen an additional 12 EU/US and 6 EU/Canada projects selected. These cover such areas as transport technology, earth imaging from space, links between vocational and higher education, regional development,

aerospace technology, architecture, the environment, business studies (with the US) and paper technology, forestry management, sustainable agriculture and mathematics (with Canada).

An external evaluation of the programmes is to report early in 1999. Meanwhile this eclectic range of multipartner, multicultural, multiregional projects will help to build mutual understanding among those engaged in the vital work of opening young peoples' minds to new ideas.

The complete lists of projects and reports of the joint committees for EU/US and EU/Canada are available on the Internet at <http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/frontus.html> and [call.html](http://europa.eu.int/en/comm/dg22/call.html)

European Training Foundation

New horizons

Further information

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The European Training Foundation was established four years ago to provide technical assistance for EU cooperation with East and Central Europe. Now the Council of Ministers has extended its mandate to cover the beneficiaries of the MEDA programme: Algeria, Cyprus, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Lebanon, Malta, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, Turkey, and the Occupied Territories of Gaza and the West Bank.

This promises to be an exciting challenge. A Memorandum of Understanding has been agreed as the basis for the ETF's cooperation with the Commission (DG IB and DG XXII) in the Mediterranean region. The next step is to develop specific proposals for the first activities, to be launched in 1999.

The first stage is to identify and nominate two representatives from each of the partner countries to take part in the ETF's Advisory Forum. The process of identifying suitable experts is important. EU delegations will discuss with partner country authorities the nature of the role and the skills

required. Advisory Forum members will act as key contacts in the partner countries to help implement change in their vocational training systems.

Then the intention is to begin with a couple of pilot projects, probably focusing on Tunisia and Syria initially. In particular, the ETF will aim to develop regular stocktaking reports covering developments in the field of vocational training in these countries. A reporting system will be piloted in Syria and Tunisia in 1999, the goal being to adapt the model and extend it to other suitable MEDA countries in the course of the year 2000.

On 19 November, the Governing Board formally met to give its opinion on the draft 1999 work programme, first outlined in February this year, paying particular attention to the proposed addendum on Mediterranean activities. The programme is being amended in the light of the Board's comments and will be re-submitted for approval, along with the 1999 budget, next February.

Listening to young people's views

Each year, almost half a million young people take part in European education, training and research mobility programmes. The European Commission invited 100 of them to Brussels in November, to take part in the 2nd Youth Conference.

The rejuvenated Charlemagne Building, scene of many a memorable ministerial combat in its years as the headquarters of the EU's Council of Ministers, hosted a meeting at the end of November for 100 young people from 24 countries, assembled to feed back to the European Commission their views on Europe's educational, training, researcher mobility and youth programmes. The young people, who all had first-hand experience of these programmes, came to Brussels on 26-28 November to take part in the 2nd Youth Conference, which followed the first event of its type held in October 1997.

Alongside Commissioner Cresson, the keynote was set by a young European who is keen to 'rebrand' both his own country, Britain, and Europe as a whole. Brought up in Brussels, 24-year-old Mark Leonard worked until recently as a researcher in a think-tank, Demos, close to the British government. He was the author of the report *Rediscovering Europe*, published by Demos just before the Cardiff European summit last June.

Not just a repeat

This year's event differed in several ways from its predecessor. For one thing, the target group was broader, as it covered those taking part in the European Voluntary Service scheme and in the Second Chance Schools. It also covered more countries – not only the EU but Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and the associated countries in Central and Eastern Europe.

Secondly, this year's discussion topics were broadened. Last year's conference was organized around the different programmes: educational exchanges, research mobility and voluntary service. But this year, the topics were more philosophical: creativity and the spirit of initiative; research, society and ethics; and strengthening local identities in the Europe of tomorrow. The debates ranged from such questions as the level of interest in communitarian "third way" approaches to entrepreneurship to the role of the EU in creating a knowledge society. Nor did they shy away from the thorny issue of the ethical limits that should be placed on research, and the democratic control of researchers.

1998's conference was also organized more participatively than last year's. While the first Youth Conference was prepared on the basis of a postal questionnaire, this year an organizing committee of a dozen was selected which included some of the most active of last year's participants. Although they have no formal representative role, they helped to decide the topics discussed. They also welcomed participants and organized one of the social events.

Pointers from 1997

What conclusions did policy-makers draw from the comments of last year's participants? By and large, these expressed themselves well-satisfied with their experience of international exchange, and Tempus participants from Central and Eastern Europe were especially happy to have had the opportunity to study in another country. All agreed that a period abroad was an asset to anyone's curriculum vitae.

There was also, predictably, adverse comment on administrative procedures. Some grants in particular, seemed to have suffered from payment delays. But on the issue of budgets, the young people displayed a generous cast of mind. Even though there were complaints that some European mobility grants are too small, the young people would rather see any extra money going to provide more places. And this generous spirit extended to their own accommodation in Brussels: the hotel used in 1997 was deemed too luxurious, and so this year a cheaper one was found.

"Last year's event was certainly lively, and many ideas came up," commented Barney Trench, a Commission official involved in the organization of both events. "The major issues were the legal status of researchers – some countries make things easy for researchers from other countries, but others do not – the provision of easy-to-use information, and the ponderousness of the administration."

Rapid reactions

Is the voice of youth being listened to? In the year that has elapsed since the first Youth Conference, the European institutions have shown themselves capable of quick reactions. The proposals made at the 1997 Youth Conference have resulted in changes to the Fifth R&D Framework Programme, and in several European training initiatives. The first is the European Training Pathways scheme, which promotes apprenticeships and alternate training. As the Council of Ministers has already adopted a common position on this, it should be in force by the beginning of the year 2000. Secondly, the European Voluntary Service programme has been launched. And thirdly, the proposals for a new generation of education, training and youth programmes made in April this year are making good progress, with a proposed increase in funding for mobility programmes for the period after 2000. Efforts have also been made to reduce red tape, improve management and speed up the payments process, with some success.

The value of the conference is not in doubt. "It enables us to get close to the young people who use EU programmes, and collect information from the bottom up," says Francis Gutmann of DG XXII. "It also gives us a means of publicizing their achievements and promoting the European idea. We know from a Eurobarometer survey that not everyone has access to the Internet, and that television is the most effective publicity medium. So since last year we have produced short video programmes on the three major European training and education programmes, which put them over in a direct, frank and clear way. We have also set up TV Link Europe as a resource for journalists."

As last year, the proposals arising from young participants at the conference have been collated and relayed to the Commissioner responsible, Edith Cresson, for further action.

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