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REPORT

ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PETRA PROGRAMME

- Action programme for the vocational training of young people
and their preparation for adult and working life -

(presented by the Commission under
Article 8 of Decision 91/387/EEC)

This Report is presented by the Commission to the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee, the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training and the Education Committee.

INTRODUCTION

This interim report has been prepared by the Commission to take stock of the development of the Programme from its beginning in 1988 to June 1993. Though the current Programme will only end on 31 December 1994, the report is submitted at an early stage to inform and underpin, at the various stages concerned, discussion on the preparation of future Community action in the field of vocational training, on the Commission's working paper of 5 May 1993 (COM (93) 183). A final report on the implementation of the Programme covering the period 1992-1994 will be presented by the Commission by 31 December 1994. That final report will be accompanied by a final report on the external assessment of the Community action in the framework of the PETRA programme.

Part A of the report illustrates the progress made in fulfilling the main function of the PETRA Programme, namely to support and supplement policies and activities in the Member States aimed at achieving a number of specific objectives set out in the Council Decision of 1 December 1987 and amended by the Decision of 22 July 1991.

It draws on the reports presented by all Member States in June/July 1993 which were required under Article 8 of the Decision of 22 July 1991 and which were subsequently complemented by a series of bilateral consultations between the Commission and the individual Member States which took place in July to September 1993. The Member State reports and the bilateral consultations have provided a wealth of information on the steps taken by each Member State to implement the objectives and give expression to the common framework of guidelines laid down in the Decision.

Part B of the report contains the results of the interim external assessment of the Community action implemented under the PETRA Programme to achieve the objectives of the Council Decisions and to support and complement the activities of the Member States. This interim external assessment is required by the Decision of 22 July 1991. It should be noted that this phase of the external assessment was carried out in early July to mid-September 1993, i.e. earlier than provided for in the Council Decision, in order to make the results available for examination alongside the Commission's proposals for an action programme for implementation of a European Community Vocational Training Policy. A final external assessment will be carried out in the course of 1995.

Part A : Report from the Commission

The central function of the PETRA Programme : support for policy development in the field of initial vocational training

Part B

Report on the Interim External Assessment of the Community Measures implemented under Decision 91/387/EEC.

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Part A
Report from the Commission

The central function of the PETRA Programme : support for policy development
in the field of initial vocational training

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1. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROGRAMME

1.1 Council decisions and objectives

1.1.1 PETRA was launched in 1988 on the basis of the Council Decision of 1 December 1987 concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for a working life, and was initially intended to run for five years, up to 31 December 1992. However, during the initial phase of the Programme, it became evident that the issue of initial vocational training was attracting increasing attention in the policy agenda of the Community - reinforced in the context of discussion and debate on the implementation of the Internal Market and, later, on the occasion of the Maastricht Treaty on European Union.

1.1.2 During the first phase of PETRA, this was clearly reflected, inter alia, in:

- o the meetings of the European Council in 1988 and 1989, which affirmed the importance of improved access to vocational training for the completion of the Internal Market, stressed the need for Community action for the development of human resources, and emphasised the importance of the Community action programmes in the insertion of young people into vocational training and their integration into working life as a decisive element of the social dimension of the Community;
- o the Social Charter (adopted on 9 December 1989 by 11 Member States), which included the right of access to vocational training for all workers, and more specifically states in Article 23 that "following the end of compulsory education, young people must be entitled to initial vocational training of a sufficient duration to enable them to adapt to the requirements of their future working life; for young workers, such training should take place during working hours";
- o the Conclusions of the Council and Ministers of Education meeting within the Council of 14 December 1989, which called for a stronger and broader response, at Community level, to the new challenges faced by technical and vocational education and training in the Member States.

States, and invited the Commission to adapt and reinforce existing Community programmes in this field;

- o the views expressed by the Social Partners, in the framework of the Social Dialogue. In their joint opinion of 26 January 1990 on education and training, they emphasised the importance of high quality education and initial vocational training leading to recognised qualifications as an essential and irreplaceable condition for the successful integration of young people into working and economic life. Furthermore, in their joint opinion of 6 November 1990 on the transition from school to adult and working life, they identified concrete priorities and defined more clearly the role to be played by the various parties in the preparation and motivation of young people for working life;
- o and the Resolution of the European Parliament (16 February 1990) which called for stronger Community programmes in support of the education and training of young people and their mobility.

1.1.3 The Commission responded to these developments by submitting to the Council, in November 1990, a proposal concerning an extension and development of the PETRA Programme, including the previous Young Workers Exchange Programme. This proposal formed the basis for the Council Decision of 22 July 1991 which extended the objectives of the 1987 Decision and provided a consolidated framework for a new phase of PETRA to run from 1 January 1992 to 31 December 1994. PETRA has thus provided the first practical example of the Commission's strategy to rationalise and coordinate Community action in the field of initial vocational training.

1.1.4 The Decision of 22 July 1991 incorporated the objectives set out in the 1987 Decision but, at the same time, amended them by emphasising a number of specific issues and adding others which responded to new emerging needs. Thus, the new phase of the PETRA Programme has a comprehensive set of principal objectives (Article 1 of Decision 91/387/EEC) which can be summarised under six main points:

- o to support the policies and activities of Member States that are aimed at ensuring that all young people in the Community who so wish receive one year's, or if possible, two or more years' vocational training, in addition to their full-time compulsory education, and leading to a recognised qualification;

- o to support and supplement activities of the Member States which are intended to raise the quality and standards of initial vocational training, diversify training provision so as to offer choices for young people with different levels of ability, and enhance the capacity of vocational training systems to adapt to rapid economic, technological and social change;
- o to add a Community dimension to the design and implementation of vocational training policies in Member States, especially in view of improving the comparability of vocational qualifications;
- o to stimulate and support cooperation and the development of transnational training partnerships between training providers, industry and other promoters of local and regional development;
- o to develop opportunities for young people in initial vocational training, young workers and young people taking part in advanced programmes to benefit from periods of training or work experience in other Member States (including the continuation and development of Community action formerly implemented under the Young Workers Exchange Programme);
- o to foster Community cooperation in the sphere of vocational information and guidance.

1.1.5 In this new context, the PETRA Programme has evolved to form a coherent unified framework for Community action in the field of initial vocational training of young people and their preparation for working life. It is aimed at all categories of young people in vocational training, and all forms of youth training leading to a recognised qualification. In this way, the Programme now fulfils a strategic role in the development of Community policy on initial vocational education and training. In its new enlarged phase, it already provides a first operational response, in terms of initial vocational training, to each of the broad objectives set out in Article 127 of the Maastricht Treaty.

1.2 Actions of the Programme

1.2.1 Since 1992, the new phase of the PETRA Programme has benefited from considerably increased financial and technical resources, both at Community and Member State level, and from the positive effects of bringing together, in a single programme framework, relevant activities which previously had distinct and separate operational structures.

- 1.2.2 The Community Actions implemented through the PETRA Programme, to achieve the objectives of the Decision and support and supplement the activities of the Member States to this effect, can be summarised under four main types of operation:
- 1.2.3 **Action I** - support for training and work experience placements in another Member State, for young people in initial vocational training, young workers and young unemployed, and young people in advanced programmes.
- 1.2.4 From the beginning of the Programme in 1988, transnational training placements were an important part of its activity. Since 1992, Action I has provided a structured framework for the development of such placements on a larger scale and has incorporated the Young Workers' Exchange Programme, which up until then had been run as a separate activity. To qualify for Community support, the placement projects must show evidence of their capacity to provide a significant added value for the beneficiaries involving, for example, experience of new training methods, equipment and content, or new vocational experience; they must be duly certified and, where a young person in initial training or in an advanced programme is concerned, they must be integrated into, and recognised as part of, the training process which he/she is undergoing in his/her own Member State.
- 1.2.5 For 1992 and 1993, provision was made for the organisation of placements for more than 20,000 young people; by the end of the Programme, it is anticipated that a total number of 40,000 young people will have taken part in Action I placements.
- 1.2.6 **Action II** - support for transnational cooperation to link innovative training projects from different Member States, including Youth Initiative Projects (YIPs), in a European Network of Training Partnerships (ENTP).
- 1.2.7 Up to the end of 1991, approximately 500 projects had joined the Network involving directly more than 60,000 young people and 10,000 staff; an additional 330 projects were admitted for participation in the years 1992 and 1993. Since 1992, the activities of the Network have focused more sharply on the joint development and transfer of training modules, the joint training of trainers and on new thematic and sectoral priorities. No new projects will join the Network in 1994 as there would not be sufficient time before the end of the current programme to organise and complete partnership activities. In the period 1992-1994, it is estimated that approximately 100,000 young people and 20,000 teachers and training staff will participate directly in the work of the ENTP.

- 1.2.8 The bar which projects had to clear for selection to the ENTP was set very high. All projects proposed by the Member States were carefully scrutinised in relation to their relevance to the priority themes/sectors of the Programme, their innovative capacity and potential multiplier role, and the quality of their planned arrangements for transnational cooperation. The rapidly increasing number of applications has clearly promoted competition in terms of quality and has ensured a final selection of projects which represents a pool of innovative experience and advanced expertise in a number of different fields.
- 1.2.9 Most partnerships in the ENTP have a multi-lateral character, involving projects from three or more Member States, generally including a diversity of training institutions and bodies; most projects also work closely with local partners (different providers of training, firms, chambers of commerce and craft, trade union bodies etc.) in their own catchment areas. A substantial number of the projects are multi-site, i.e. not restricted to a single training establishment, or else form part of a major national or transnational initiative, other than PETRA. All these characteristics have enhanced the capacity of the ENTP to operate as both a generator and distributor of a wide range of knowledge and expertise.
- 1.2.10 In addition to training projects involved in the ENTP, almost 800 YIPs have been supported through the Programme in the period up to June 1993 (i.e. innovative projects in which young people themselves are mainly responsible for the planning and organisation, and which focus on information on the transition from school to vocational training and working life, and/or encourage the development of entrepreneurial skills, creativity and responsibility among young people); a further 120 projects will receive support from the Community in 1994. It is estimated that the total number of young people directly involved in the Youth Initiative Projects, since 1988, will reach a figure of 25,000 by the end of the Programme;
- 1.2.11 **Action III** - Support for national systems for the exchange of vocational guidance data and experience, and examples of good practice in vocational guidance, through the establishment of a Community network of national contact points and the training of guidance counsellors/specialists on Community aspects of guidance.
- 1.2.12 During the first phase of PETRA, transnational cooperation on the development of new curricular approaches to vocational guidance had been the main focus of more than one hundred projects involved in the ENTP (see above). Since 1992, however, a more structured Community framework has been implemented for concertation and cooperation between the Member States' vocational guidance systems. Action III forms the spearhead of Community initiative in this field and aims to

improve transparency of training opportunities between the Member States, and to enable the national guidance services to provide more effective advice to young people on those training and career options which are available throughout the Community.

- 1.2.13 In all Member States, agreements between both Ministries of Employment and Education have resulted in the designation of national resource centres, to cooperate in a Community network on the exchange of vocational guidance information, and of effective methods and models of good practice. By June 1993, 27 centres had been nominated to work with their counterparts in other Member States, and act as reference points and resource agencies for guidance counsellors and other expert staff, or relevant bodies and services, in their national context. Each national resource centre is also involved in one or more multilateral, transnational development project to work out solutions to common problems or needs, especially with regard to the Community dimension of vocational guidance (e.g. implementing a computerised system for exchanging information and data by linking up existing data bases; enhancing the role of industry and the Social Partners in the vocational guidance process; promoting common quality standards in guidance services and developing tools and practice to facilitate transnational mobility of young people).
- 1.2.14 The work of the network of guidance resource centres is complemented by three large transnational partnership projects, each involving at least four Member States. These partnership projects focus on the joint development of training material and joint training activities for guidance experts to increase awareness, knowledge and experience of the evolving Community context in which vocational guidance services have to operate.
- 1.2.15 Finally, Action III promotes the dissemination and use of relevant information material prepared at Community level, e.g. the European Handbook for Guidance Counsellors, and comparative information on the structures and functioning of vocational guidance systems in all Member States;
- 1.2.16 Complementary measures - including support for the dissemination of the results of the Programme; transnational cooperation in research on the vocational training of young people; and technical assistance at Community level, and in Member States, for the implementation, coordination and evaluation of the Programme.
- 1.2.17 These measures can be grouped under two main categories: the first concerns activities to facilitate the operation of the different Actions of the Programme, and to inform potential beneficiaries and a wider audience about its content, procedures and outcomes; and the second includes activities to

support cooperative research and studies to analyse the effectiveness of current policy and practice in the initial vocational training field, or to tackle central issues/problems of common concern which emerge from the implementation of the Programme.

- 1.2.18 As regards the first category, major attention has been, and will continue to be, devoted to information about the PETRA Programme. Since 1988, the PETRA Programme was presented at, or contributed significantly to, more than 200 major information events at Community or national level (including launching conferences, thematic seminars, national and international training fairs) and numerous regional events within the Member States. This activity was backed up by the provision of information material (e.g. Vademecum, project directories, thematic publications, leaflets, PETRA Yearbooks) and services offered to the media. A further essential element was the creation of a network of National Coordination Units (NCUs). The NCUs are a crucial lubricant in the functioning of the Programme, assisting its implementation within the Member States but also cooperating in the transnational management of its individual Actions.
- 1.2.19 As for the second category, PETRA has provided support for transnational bi-lateral and multi-lateral research partnerships, involving more than 70 research institutes nominated by the national authorities, to work on a set of specific themes directly related to the objectives of the PETRA Decisions. These partnerships have now completed their work, and their results are being made available to underpin Community-level cooperation in the provision of vocational training and to support further development in policy and practice. Two major studies are currently being completed, with expert assistance from all Member States, on the social and legal status of young people involved in transnational training placements, and on the recognition and certification of transnational work experience and training placements. Further continuing work is concerned with improving and completing information on the participation of young people in vocational training.
- 1.2.20 Finally, complementary measures are also taken to ensure close coordination with the study visit scheme for practitioners and policy-makers in the field of vocational training which is administered by CEDEFOP, on behalf of the Commission. These visits are organised on a thematic basis and are undertaken in small groups each comprising participants from several Member States. Until, June 1993, nearly 800 training specialists from all Member States had benefited from visits which had a special thematic focus on the priorities of PETRA.

1.3. Management and Consultation Procedures

- 1.3.1 In the management of the Programme, the Commission is assisted, at Community level, by a statutory Advisory Committee involving representatives from the relevant authorities in the Member States (in most cases the Ministries of Employment and Education) and observers from European Social Partners' organisations. The task of the Committee is to provide advice to the Commission on the operational guidelines governing the Programme, the financial balance between the various Actions and the continuing assessment of the Programme. The Committee has assisted the Commission to take account of national priorities and sensitivities in the design and implementation of the programme.
- 1.3.2 PETRA is, in part, a decentralised programme and reflects the implementation of the principle of subsidiarity. At Member State level, technical assistance for the implementation of the Programme is provided by National Coordination Units (NCUs) which are responsible for the decentralised administration and financial management of transnational training and work experience placements (Action I), help with the selection and animation of ENTP and Youth Initiative Projects (Action II), submit projects on vocational guidance (Action III), and organise information activities and the dissemination of the results of the Programme. The NCUs were designated by their respective Member States and receive matching financial support from the Community. They meet regularly, on invitation from the Commission, to coordinate their work at Community level.
- 1.3.3 Each year, bi-lateral consultations are held between the Commission's departments and representatives from the relevant authorities and Social Partners' organisations in each Member State, to foster dialogue on developments and progress which relate to the objectives of the Programme and the Council Decision.

1.4 Financial Resources

- 1.4.1 Financial support from the Community, provided within the framework of PETRA for the four-year period 1988-1991 amounted to 39.99 MECU. An amount totalling 64.2 MECU was provided for 1992 and 1993, and a budget of 39.0 MECU has been proposed by the Commission for 1994, making an estimated total of 103.2 MECU for the period 1992-1994. The increase in the financial resources of the programme over the years has been particularly important, evolving from 8 MECU in 1988 to

a (proposed) budget of 39 MECU in 1994. This progression is due, to a large extent, to the continuing support of the programme by the European Parliament.

1.4.2 The financial resources of the programme have not been sufficient to satisfy the increasing demand for participation in its different activities. The allocation of financial resources to the various Actions of the Programme is summarised below:

MECU	1988-1991	1992-1993	1994*
Action I : Transnational training and work experience placements			
- young people in initial vocational training;		8.844	6.300
- young workers, young people in advanced programmes, young unemployed		22.008	13.500
Sub-total Action I	(-) ¹	(30.852)	(19.800)
Action II			
- ENTP	20.648	18.870	10.980
- YIPs	5.031	2.154	1.200
Sub-total Action II	(25.679)	(21.024)	(12.180)
Action III : Cooperation in the field of vocational guidance			
- national resource centres		1.230	0.720
- development projects		0.900	1.500
- transnational projects on the training of guidance counsellors		0.870	0.520
Sub-total Action III	(-) ²	(3.000)	(2.740)
Complementary measures			
- information and dissemination activities	2.823	1.896	1.940
- National Coordination Units	3.082	2.720	1.520
- Community-level Technical Assistance	6.385	2.900 ³	-
- cooperative research and studies	2.021	1.800	0.820
Sub-total complementary measures	(14.311)	(9.316)	(4.280)
TOTAL	39.990	64.192	39.000

* Amount proposed by the Commission in the pre-draft budget for 1994

¹In the period 1988-1991, transnational training placements and exchanges were organised within the framework of the ENTP.

²In the period 1988-1991, activities in the field of vocational guidance were included in the work of the ENTP.

³This figure only includes Community-level technical assistance for the year 1992. From 1993 onwards, the allocation for this assistance is included in Part A of the Commission's budget.

2. IMPACT AND PROGRESS WITH REGARD TO POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1 Background

2.1.1 The Council Decisions of 1 December 1987 and 22 July 1991 set out, in Article 1, clear objectives for the PETRA Programme and, in Article 2, a common framework of guidelines in the field of vocational training for young people, reflecting priorities and needs of all Member States and the Community as a whole. The definition of concrete common objectives, together with a joint programme for action at Member State and Community level, was also an important step forward in ensuring coherent policy development and in concentrating efforts on areas and problems where they are most needed. The added value of this approach includes:

- o at general policy level, a more transparent and better articulation with overall Community goals;
- o for the training systems a new focus on quality, innovation, adaptation and convergence;
- o for the operators a stimulus for transnational cooperation, exchange of experience and familiarisation with training elsewhere in the Community;
- o for the young individuals a new perspective on their future life which can (re-) motivate their vocational training aspirations and provide better access to a wider range of opportunities and choices in the Community.

2.1.2 In this section of the report, policy developments and progress are reviewed in regard to the principal objectives (Article 1) and to the Common Framework of Guidelines (Article 2) set out in Decision 91/387/EEC, summarised under ten main points (2.2 - 2.11). Where appropriate, specific reference is made to the Community level actions which were implemented to support and complement the activities of the Member States, in particular the transnational training and work experience placements, the European Network of Training Partnerships (ENTP), the Youth Initiative Projects (YIPs), measures aimed at fostering vocational information and guidance, and the cooperative research activities.

- 2.1.3 In reviewing Member States' progress in the implementation of the Decision, account needs to be taken of the demographic and labour market context in which initial vocational training systems have to operate. Three main aspects should be considered (2.1.4 - 2.1.6).
- 2.1.4 In the current period of demographic decline, vocational training institutions are facing increased competition for young people in the training age group. In 1988, the first operational year of the Programme, the total number of 15-19 year-olds was 26.1 million in the Community and about one-third of these young people were estimated to participate in full-time or part-time initial vocational training. In 1995, the total number of 15-19 year-olds will have fallen by 16%, and in the year 2000 by 19% (see table 1). To retain only the same number of young people in vocational training as in 1988, training systems will need to attract 37% of the relevant age group in 1995 and 39% in the year 2000; even larger efforts will be required to increase the number of participants in initial vocational training.

Table 1: Young people (15 to 19) in the European Community (1988 = 100 = 26.1 million)

(low population scenario)

	1980	1988	1995	2000	2010	2020
B	114.4	100	87.6	87.6	87.0	73.2
DK	105.8	100	88.4	74.3	86.7	77.6
D(West)	123.6	100	77.1	82.9	85.3	62.5
GR	98.9	100	98.9	98.0	71.8	74.3
E	96.5	100	95.7	77.8	62.9	61.2
F	99.2	100	85.8	89.3	87.7	81.2
IRL	95.4	100	98.2	96.0	68.1	62.1
I	98.9	100	82.0	67.8	64.8	61.5
L	115.5	100	89.5	95.0	103.6	82.1
NL	103.7	100	76.1	75.5	84.7	76.6
P	104.8	100	96.3	84.6	67.6	67.7
UK	107.7	100	79.3	84.7	88.5	75.4
EC	106.8	100	84.1	81.3	78.7	69.1

Source: EUROSTAT

- 2.1.5 Although the unemployment rate of young people under 25 in the Community fell from 19.7% (5.3 million) in 1988 to 18.2% (4.6 million) in 1992, it remained approximately twice as high as the overall rate (9.8% in 1988, and 9.5% in 1992) (see table 2). Over the last two years, unemployment rates, both the overall rate (1990 : 8.3% and 1992 : 9.5%) and the one for under 25 year olds (1990 : 16.8% and 1992 : 18.2%), have been rising. The rise in the latter, however, was less sharp than in the first : while overall unemployment increased by 14.5%, youth unemployment only increased by 11.5%. The share of young people in the average number of people registered at unemployment

offices also dropped. Whilst in 1988, young people accounted for 33.5% of the unemployed, in 1992 they accounted for only 28.6%. These statistics reflect both demographic trends and the tendency of young people to stay longer in education and training. Not all young people, however, run the same risk of becoming, or staying, unemployed. Young women still face a higher risk of unemployment, but this has been decreasing over the last years; their unemployment rates in 1988 were 28% higher than those of young men in 1988, 19% higher in 1991 and 13% in 1992. School-leavers without a qualification continue to form a group of young people for whom the risk of unemployment is up to four times higher than for those with a qualification. There is no doubt that successful basic education and initial vocational training provide the key to young people's integration into the labour market, in all Member States. Training systems will therefore have to pay special attention to the development of opportunities for young people leaving compulsory school with low levels of achievement.

Table 2: Unemployment rate of young people aged under 25

	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992
B	20.3	18.1	17.0	16.7	17.6
DK	8.7	10.8	11.1	11.2	11.4
D(West)	6.8	5.5	4.5	3.8	4.0
GR	25.8	24.8	23.2	24.6	NA
E	40.2	34.0	32.0	30.9	32.5
F	22.1	20.4	20.1	21.3	21.8
IRL	25.0	21.8	20.9	24.5	27.6
I	32.9	31.8	29.2	28.4	28.1
L	4.8	4.3	3.9	3.2	3.8
NL	14.7	13.1	11.6	10.8	10.6
P	13.1	11.6	10.6	9.2	10.3
UK	12.4	10.2	10.8	14.2	15.8
Total EC %	19.7	17.6	16.8	17.5	18.2
Total EC (figures)	5,301,580	4,595,270	4,264,910	4,355,650	4,563,580

Source: EUROSTAT

- 2.1.6 At the same time, growth in employment and opportunities for vocational careers occur primarily in more highly skilled occupations; within occupational sectors, a trend towards increased skills requirements is evident for most jobs. It is becoming widely acknowledged that initial training systems need to place more emphasis on developing a wide-ranging set of core skills, including the capacity of learning to learn, autonomy, initiative, self-employment and adapting to new requirements.

2.2 Raising the participation of young people in education and initial vocational training

- 2.2.1 Since the beginning of the PETRA programme, several Member States have taken specific action aimed at increasing the number of young people in initial training, so as to ensure that the highest possible number of new entrants to the labour market have a recognised vocational qualification. The main types of action can be summarised under three general headings:
- 2.2.2 **fixing quantitative targets for participation in education and vocational training.** In France, for example, the policy aim is to ensure that, by the end of this century, three out of four young people should obtain a qualification at Baccalauréat level; a »Baccalauréat professionnel« has been introduced which may be obtained by young people on successful completion of a two-year course following their initial vocational qualification. In 1992, more than 10% of all new Baccalauréat graduates had already obtained a »Baccalauréat professionnel«. In Italy, the new law on upper-secondary education proposes that, by the year 2000, 80% of an age group will obtain an upper-secondary leaving certificate through completion of either general, scientific, technical or vocational courses. In Spain, within the context of the recent reform, the target for the year 2000 is to retain 80% of all young people in school, up to the age of 18, and to give them the possibility to choose between a specific training course (middle level) or the "bachillerato". A new technical "bachillerato" has been created which is very close, in terms of content, to initial vocational training.
- 2.2.3 In Ireland, where for historical reasons there are very high post-compulsory participation rates in general education, a more vocationally oriented Leaving Certificate has been proposed in the Government's Green Paper "Education for a Changing World", published in 1992. The objective announced in that Paper is that the 5% of young people currently participating in the vocational programme of the Leaving Certificate will be increased to 30% in 1994. In the United Kingdom the Government has endorsed the targets set by the Confederation of British Industry which require that, by 1997, 80% of all young people attain a National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) at Level 2 (basic craft), or its academic equivalent; while at least half of the age group should attain NVQ Level 3 (advanced craft), or its academic equivalent, by the year 2000;
- 2.2.4 **establishing an entitlement, or right, to obtain a vocational qualification or to take part in vocational training.** In 1991, the Dutch Government announced that everybody, of any age, should have the right to obtain a »starting qualification«, i.e. a vocational qualification at the level of an initial apprenticeship course and this is underpinned by actions at the lower-secondary stage to prevent early

leaving, by projects which aim to enhance the success rate of upper-secondary training and, within the context of the "Youth Work Guarantee" scheme, by specific efforts to motivate unqualified leavers to enrol in apprenticeship courses. In France, the right of young people to a vocational qualification is inscribed in the "Code du Travail" (1991 and 1992) and training must lead to a qualification corresponding to the short or medium term needs of the economy. In Portugal, the Government and the Social Partners signed, in July 1991, a formal agreement to make every effort to ensure that young people will receive at least one year of initial vocational training, after completion of their compulsory schooling; the national authorities are currently re-designing the training courses (run under the responsibility of the Employment Ministry), and will no longer organise initial training courses of less than one year's duration.

- 2.2.5 In the United Kingdom, all young people under 18 who have left school and not found employment are guaranteed the offer of a suitable training place under the Youth Training Scheme, lasting one or two years; training credits are now being made available to 16 or 17 year old school-leavers, i.e. vouchers representing a real money value and enabling them to »buy« appropriate training. These Youth Credits were introduced in 1991, in a number of pilot areas. Coverage is gradually being extended to achieve the Government's target that by 1996, every 16 and 17 year-old will have the offer of such a credit, on leaving full-time general education;
- 2.2.6 **extending provision of initial vocational training.** In a number of Member States, continuing efforts have been made to extend and strengthen their apprenticeship systems (DK, F, NL, P). Some have established new types of provision, e.g. the vocational schools in Portugal, or created the legal basis for it, e.g. the new Institutes for Vocational Training in Greece which have been set up under the 1992 law and cater mainly for those young people who, after completion of post-compulsory secondary education, do not proceed to higher education.
- 2.2.7 In Germany, the existing network of inter-firm training centres has been further developed to complement, in particular, the training capacities in small and medium enterprises. The network has been extended to the new »Länder« to offer full training courses where other opportunities in the dual system are not yet available in sufficient numbers.
- 2.2.8 In 1993, the Danish Ministry of Education launched an action plan "Education for All" as a special measure to tackle the problem of the so-called "rest group" of young people - approximately 1/4 of any youth cohort - which never completes any kind of education or training. One of the measures in the plan is a new two-year basic vocational training course, the EGU (adopted by law in June 1993),

the main component of which is practical work experience in enterprises combined with 20-40 weeks at school. The objective is to give young people vocational, social and personal competences which will enable them to gain a foothold in the labour market or to continue in further education and training.

- 2.2.9 In Spain, young people who leave secondary education without a certificate and young people up to the age of 21 without formal qualifications, benefit from the "Programas de Garantía Social", organised by the Education authorities. These programmes aim at preparing young people and at ensuring their integration into work or their re-integration into education or training.
- 2.2.10 All these actions are aimed at making the option of vocational education and training more attractive to young people, by raising its status or facilitating access to it. Along these lines, in Belgium, a specialisation year, following the third grade of full-time vocational training, has been introduced to enable young people to move to higher education, thereby enhancing the equality of status between vocational and post-compulsory general education. In Germany, similar objectives are reflected in a new initiative launched in 1991, offering new opportunities and special support to particularly gifted young people in vocational training, and in the discussion and implementation of new regulations facilitating progression from vocational training to higher education. In Italy, a major reform project, "Progetto 92", has tackled head-on the danger that vocational schools could continue to be seen as the less attractive alternative to technical and grammar schools. After a three year pilot period, the project will be implemented, between 1993 and 1996, in all vocational schools, thereby catering for some 20% of the age group. Projects aimed at raising the status and attractiveness of vocational training for young people are equally common in reforms in other Member States (especially France, Spain and Portugal).
- 2.2.11 In Germany, the unification process involved the application, from 1 September 1990, of Federal Legislation on vocational training to the five new »Länder«. This meant a radical change of the training system in the territory of the former GDR, which caused problems in ensuring adequate provision of training places for young people, especially as the collapse of a large number of enterprises resulted in a serious reduction in the number of company-based training opportunities. Major initiatives were taken, at national level, to counteract the impact on the training situation, which had the desired positive effects; in September 1993, as in 1991 and 1992, the overwhelming majority of young people who applied had actually been placed in training, and the remaining small minority had received a placement offer.

- 2.2.12 In many of these actions, PETRA projects were actively involved; e.g. in the development of the »baccalauréat professionnel« in France; the "Pre-Apprenticeship Training for Girls" scheme in Ireland; the creation of vocational schools and the strengthening of the apprenticeship system in Portugal; the extension of Youth Training in the UK; the diversification of inter-firm training centres in Germany, and the restructuring of training provision in the new »Länder«; »Progetto 92« in Italy; and the "Programas de Garantía Social" in Spain. One of the main contributions of these PETRA projects was their attempt to add a special focus on Community aspects to major national initiatives aimed at increasing young people's participation in vocational training, by using the experience and outcomes of their transnational cooperation.
- 2.2.13 In relation to the primary objective of both the 1987 and the 1991 Council Decisions, i.e. to ensure that all young people who so wish receive one year's, or if possible, two or more years' vocational training, some indication of progress can also be gained from the analysis of participation rates in post- compulsory education and training. The Commission's 1990 Interim Report on PETRA [SEC(90)432 final] highlighted considerable disparities between the individual Member States, as regards the number of young people over the age of 16 retained in full or part-time education and training, using the latest data available for the period preceding the adoption of the 1987 Decision (i.e. the 1985/86 school year, in most cases).
- 2.2.14 In all Member States, participation of the 16/17-year-olds has gone up since then, by an annual average increase of between 0.5% and 4.3% of the total age group, according to the individual Member State (with the exception of Germany, where retention rates had already been close to 100%). In most Member States, the end of compulsory full-time schooling is now fixed at age 15 or 16; in terms of the primary objective of the Council Decisions, the 16-17 year-olds thus form the »heart« of the PETRA target group. There are some indications that in Member States which have achieved retention rates of over 95%, the "saturation point" as regards participation for the 16 and 17 year olds has been reached. At the same time, an increasing number of young people stays on longer, as shown by the sustained growth in participation rates for the 18 and 19 year olds since 1990. Table 3 shows the development related to the individual age groups.

Table 3: Increase in participation, in % of the age groups concerned
Young people in full or part-time education and training

Member State	B	DK	D	GR ¹⁾	E ¹⁾	F	IRL	I	L ²⁾	NL	P ¹⁾	UK
Years of Comparison	86	86	86	86	86	86	86	88		86	88	87
	88	90	90	87	88	91	90	91		89	90	90
Age	19			+5								
	18	+3	+10	0		-3	+22				+3	
	17	+11	+5	0	+1	+2		+4			+12	+3
	16	+4	-3	0	0	+4	+5	+11	+6		+10	+14
	15	0	-2	-1	+3	+8		+5			+7	+4
	14					+10					+4	
	13										+12	
											+8	

black line indicates the age at which full-time compulsory schooling ended in the years for which data is provided.

grey line indicates the age at which part-time compulsory education/training ends.

1) Due to incomplete data, mainly on part-time training courses, percentages may not show the full actual increase in participation rates.

2) Comparable data for Luxembourg not available

2.2.15 In analysing the actual participation rates of 17-year-olds, in comparison with those observed in 1986, two interesting points can be noted (see table 4):

- o while in 1986, only one-third of the Member States retained more than 80% of this age group in education and training, now 7 Member States have reached or passed this benchmark (B, DK, D, F, IRL, I and NL);
- o the disparities between Member States have shrunk though still remaining considerable; whereas in 1986, the highest participation rate was 96% of the age group (Germany) and the lowest 39% (Portugal), the latter went up to 49% in 1990 and to 65.5% in 1993; Belgium and France now show figures very close to those for Germany, and in all other Member States retention rates have moved nearer to those in the leading group identified above.

Table 4: Participation in full-time and part-time education and training (in % of the age-group)

Member State		B	DK	D	GR ¹⁾	E ¹⁾	F	IRL	I	L ²⁾	NL	P ¹⁾	UK
Year		88	90	90	87	88	91	90	91		89	90	90
Age	19		52	60			76				56		
	18	72	77	81	44	41		62			74	40	37
	17	93	80	96	59	56	97	83	81		88	49	74
	16	96	87	99	76	64		95			98	54	89
	15	96	97	99	82	84		98			99	60	100
	14	100			100	100		100				73	
	13								99			85	

black line indicates the age at which full-time compulsory schooling ended in the years for which data is provided.

grey line indicates the age at which part-time compulsory education/training ends.

1) Due to incomplete data, mainly on part-time training courses, percentages give an underestimation of the actual participation rates.

2) Comparable data for Luxembourg not available.

2.2.16 The available data on retention rates does not provide, on a transnationally comparable basis, information on the split between general education and vocational training. There is an indication that, in some Member States, participation in post-compulsory general education has risen faster than in vocational training. Another problem continues to require major attention in all Member States, i.e. the number of young people leaving the education and training systems without having obtained a formally recognised qualification. Comparative data is not readily available, given the complexity of situations in the individual Member States. Estimates based on available national statistics suggest that, for the Community as a whole, between 7% and 10% of the 16 to 25 age group have not obtained any formal qualification, and an additional 10-20% do not gain a further qualification beyond the completion of compulsory school.

2.2.17 The data does not fully reflect recent developments which have taken place in the field of initial vocational training. Over the last few years, considerable efforts have been made in all Member States – whether with underpinning support from, or informed by, the actions of the Programme, or in parallel to them – to improve training provision for young people. In statistical terms, many of the effects will only become visible at a later stage. Much of the progress achieved so far has had its main impact on the qualitative rather than the quantitative aspects of training. These developments are reviewed below.

2.3 Raising standards, improving quality, and diversifying training provision

2.3.1 Qualitative improvement of training provision forms a central part of current reform or new legislation launched in a number of Member States, including action to strengthen the functioning of the part-time training centres in Belgium (decree of 1990); the re-organisation of initial vocational training in Denmark and the Netherlands, and of Youth Training in the United Kingdom; »Progetto 92« in Italy; the new middle and higher level vocational courses in Spain; the new Law on Technical Secondary Education and Further Vocational Training in Luxembourg; the vocational training institutes (IEKs) established by the new National System of Vocational Education and Training in Greece; and the development of a new type of vocational school, "Escolas Profissionais" in Portugal, where, at the same time, the old technical/professional courses were replaced with new technological courses.

2.3.2 These initiatives differ in approach and encompass a wide variety of objectives and specific action. A common element, however, is their attempt to introduce greater breadth into vocational courses, thereby, avoiding premature narrow specialisation (e.g. in Italy the number of different training qualifications in vocational schools was reduced from 130 to 18, while in Denmark the number of vocational education and training courses has been similarly restricted to approximately 85 compared with the previous 300.) Another element is related to assessment or certification, recognising the need for more polyvalent qualifications. In Ireland, this is reflected in the proposals for a new standard-based apprenticeship scheme and the establishment of a National Education and Training Certification Board. Similar aims are intended in the United Kingdom with the introduction of General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) and general Scottish Vocational Qualifications (GSVQs) which assess whether an individual is prepared for entry into a broad range of related occupations, including the possibility that this may entail progression through higher levels of education. In some cases these reforms also involve more decentralised responsibilities for management and finance (DK, NL, P, UK), or more autonomy for individual training establishments (B and I), thus introducing a more market-oriented approach to training and encouraging competition for quality.

- 2.3.3 Other measures include training in the use of new technologies (all Member States), the development of foreign language learning in vocational schools (e.g. France and Germany), the development of jointly recognised certification (e.g. the agreement between authorities in Germany and Ireland to develop a system of accreditation for apprentices undertaking transnational training and work experience programmes which is the direct result of two PETRA projects), or the up-dating of training content in specific fields (e.g. training for the service sector, or commerce, in the new »Länder« of Germany).
- 2.3.4 Young people have different training needs and often require assistance in identifying which particular type of training would be most suitable for them : fully school-based courses, with work experience placements, apprenticeship type courses, combinations of these in long or short courses, etc. To suit these various needs, several Member States (Denmark, Ireland and the Netherlands) are experimenting with regional training centres in which different training options, and sometimes also guidance and pre-vocational options, are provided. In other cases, in addition to school-based and apprenticeship courses, continuing training programmes for adults are included in order to be able to take account of the qualifications acquired either in training institutions outside the mainstream system, or in the work place. Some Member States (Denmark, Greece, the Netherlands) are developing classification systems for vocational qualifications while the United Kingdom has already introduced its system of National Vocational Qualifications.
- 2.3.5 The principal factor determining standards in initial vocational training is the quality of the teaching and training staff. Most, if not all, of the national reforms mentioned in this section are accompanied by major efforts to train the teachers and the trainers. In Italy, as part of "Progetto 92", all of the 45,000 teachers involved were informed about the objectives of the programme, 60% took part in events at which the modular structure was explained, while 40% participated in courses about new teaching methods. Some of the PETRA Research Partnerships were focused on this issue, but the widest range of activity in this field was developed within the framework of the ENTP. The great majority of projects used the opportunity presented to them through the transnational partnerships, to exchange staff and carry out joint staff training activities, with a view to widening their staff's awareness of industrial standards, attitudes and practices in other Member States. Since 1988, approximately 30,000 trainers, tutors and teachers who have participated in, or are still involved in, the Programme were introduced to the Community dimension and increased their knowledge about the policies, practices and attitudes in other Member States. They are now able, in their day-to-day training practice, to apply this European experience and thus underpin the implementation of reform activities in their respective Member States.

2.3.6 Similar effects of transnational cross-fertilisation are also observed from the large number of ENTP projects which concentrated on the joint development of training modules and materials (often linked with training activities for staff). Much of their work reflects new thinking on standards and quality in initial vocational training, related to current reform initiatives.

2.3.7 These projects now form a pool of innovative experience and advanced expertise in their respective fields. They have demonstrated their potential, in a local, regional or national context, to help achieve progress in the definition and delivery of new vocational curricula and profiles, by offering models of high quality, which are enriched by experience gained through transnational cooperation.

2.4 Enhancing adaptability of initial vocational training to change

2.4.1 All the reform initiatives referred to in paras 2.3.1-2.3.4 above are also clearly aimed at adapting initial vocational training to changing needs. Decentralisation of responsibility for the provision of training has especially helped to make vocational training more responsive to local and regional requirements. In a number of Member States (DK, GR, E, F, IRL, NL, P, UK), these developments are supported by new approaches to involving industry and the Social Partners in a more active and effective way in the definition of skills needs, vocational profiles and curricula. Attention is also being focused on exploring and further developing a modular organisation of training, enabling a more flexible response to new emerging requirements. The reform of the Danish vocational training system, for example, has built in a high degree of mobility both horizontally and vertically, with the possibility to supplement one course with another, on either a full-time or part-time basis.

2.4.2 In the Programme, some of the Research Partnerships worked on new models for more effective planning of training provision at regional level. The ENTP projects, through their commitment to practical cooperation with a variety of partners in their local or regional context, have underpinned responsiveness to new needs. Through transnational training placements and partnerships projects, new approaches have been developed to enhance more "transversal" skills which increase young people's capacity to adapt to changing requirements in the workplace. New experience was gained through the work of the ENTP, in the joint elaboration and implementation of training units covering specific content topics. A major contribution of both the transnational placements and the ENTP projects is to be seen in the fact that they have highlighted practical ways of facing a number of needs and changes with regard to training in a new, evolving Community context.

2.5 Developing a Community dimension in initial vocational training

- 2.5.1 A number of Member States have deliberately explored the opportunities offered through the Programme to introduce or reinforce a Community dimension in their initial training provision. In Denmark, two new laws inspired by the PETRA Programme were passed in February 1992 entitling all young people in vocational training courses to spend all, or part of, the practical work experience component in another EC or EFTA country. The periods spent abroad are fully recognised and accredited and financial support is made available from a training fund created by a training levy paid by employers. The main objective is to internationalise the aims and content of Danish training courses and despite the limited experience so far, many vocational schools and Trade Committees would like to see placements abroad as an integral and compulsory part of vocational training courses.
- 2.5.2 Similarly, in early 1992, the Dutch Government published a discussion paper to outline its new policies for the internationalisation of education and training. Amongst other activities, this policy involves the promotion of a new exchange programme for teachers and trainers; financial support for transnational exchanges of young people within the framework of PETRA; and the establishment of a national support agency for transnational exchanges. As a result, in 1993, almost all of the 140 upper-secondary MBO training colleges have participated in at least one of these transnational programmes.
- 2.5.3 The experience gained through the transnational work of the PETRA programme has directly contributed to these developments. In France, an important number of Academies have set as a priority the development of transnational, and in particular, European activities and thus, all training bodies are encouraged to participate in Community programmes and, particularly, in PETRA. Other Member States have used »their« projects in the ENTP to provide a »Community window« in national reform initiatives. In Ireland, contact with the initial training systems of other Member States has been a major positive element which has informed the debate on the development of the Irish system.
- 2.5.4 Through the PETRA Programme, the Community has played a particularly active role, since 1988, in the development of transnational vocational training placements for young people. Compared to general youth exchange activity or mobility of university students between the Member States of the Community, opportunities for exchanges in the field of initial vocational training were, and still are, very under-developed; some studies conducted during the first phase of the Programme suggest that only between 0.5% and 1% of young people were benefiting from a placement period in another Member State which formed part of, or complemented their initial vocational training. Since 1992,

the placement element has been formalised in Action I and now constitutes a structured framework for the organisation of training and work experience placements in another Member State ensuring that such placements are undertaken in conditions which promote the development of vocational knowledge and skills.

- 2.5.5 In some Member States, PETRA placements have provided young people with the first opportunity to experience training and work situations abroad, and they represent the largest part of transnational training placements available to young people from that country (Greece, Italy, Portugal), while in other Member States, they have provided an important stimulus to further improve the quality and increase the number of transnational placements (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands). The Programme continues to contribute to the broadening of experience in this field, and particular efforts are being made to overcome the organisational, linguistic and other obstacles to young people's participation in transnational placements. NCUs are pooling experiences and examples of good practice as well as developing guidelines and materials for foreign language provision designed to meet the specific needs of the PETRA Programme and its public. In addition, studies are currently being carried out, within the complementary measures of the Programme, on the social and legal status of young people while on placements and the accreditation and recognition of transnational training and work experience placements, in order to provide a systematic overview of current regulations and practices in the Member States and to identify the areas where further cooperation and coordination are needed.
- 2.5.6 The development of a Community dimension in initial vocational training provision introduces a new quality into the systems. Practical European experience which is generated by, or mediated through, the process of initial training has a strong effect on young people's awareness of the Community, which is probably stronger than many other ways of learning about Europe (e.g. through tourism or the media), because it relates to a central aspect of life for each young person, i.e. preparation for a career and for working life. Training which takes account of the enlarged Community framework for work and careers, and reflects the specific needs and opportunities of a new economic space without frontiers, is an important product sought on the developing European market place for training. In addition, a number of Member States, and in particular Germany, have reported that the provision of opportunities for transnational training and work experience placements clearly contributes to raising the attractiveness of initial vocational training for young people.

- 2.5.7 By publicising and providing financial and technical support to transnational exchanges, the Programme has provoked an upsurge of interest, at all levels in the training world, in Community aspects of training and in cooperation with partners in other Member States. Through its operations, the Programme has lowered the threshold of access to cooperative work in the Community for many training institutions which had little or no previous experience in this field, and has directed their attention to the European dimension of training. It has also promoted the idea, amongst training establishments, of »shopping around« for innovative »products« (methods, materials, courses) and other training support, and of offering, in turn, their own specific experience and practice. To some extent, this has fostered a form of entrepreneurial spirit in the establishments involved in transnational placements or in the ENTP, which was enhanced through their search for partnership at the local/regional level, and helped them to play a more pro-active role on the training market.
- 2.5.8 In a large number of training partnerships, this has led to the joint development and application of curricula and training materials. In some of the partnerships, where young people completed a jointly-developed new training module in another Member State, the results were fully credited for (part of) a vocational qualification, by all the Member States participating in the respective partnerships.
- 2.5.9 In all Member States, enterprises were encouraged to take an active part in the Programme, and a number of projects both under Action I and in the ENTP were actually initiated by firms. Through their involvement in transnational training cooperation, and the opportunities offered to their young workers or trainees to benefit from a training placement in another Member State, firms were able to develop European experience amongst their staff, including SMEs where such opportunities rarely exist because they do not have the resources needed for transnational cooperation. In Germany, experience under Action I has shown that professional organisations and chambers of trade and crafts can be instrumental in involving SMEs in transnational training and work experience placements. They can provide an operational framework at local and European level which compensates for the lack of organisational infrastructure in individual firms, guarantees that the quality and content of placements correspond to specific needs, and makes it possible to capitalise on transnational experience gained by other SMEs in a particular sector or local area. In addition, some professional organisations, chambers, and regional authorities use the framework provided by PETRA to create, or develop, their own networks for transnational cooperation and joint exploitation of training resources, especially in border regions, but also between more remote parts of the Community.

2.6 Improving cooperation within Member States and transnationally

- 2.6.1 Cooperation and coordination between different types of training provision, and between different partners involved, especially vocational schools, firms and the Social Partners, has been an issue of continuing concern in a number of Member States.
- 2.6.2 In Belgium, a new tripartite Flemish Education Council was set up, in 1991, to bring together all parties concerned with education and training in a common approach to identifying training needs, and to feed relevant information to vocational schools, training establishments and employment services; similar committees were also set up at regional level. This institutional effort was followed up by the creation of the States General for Technical Education in 1993, which brings together representatives of Education, Social Partners and the Government to regroup study disciplines in certain areas and adapt training programmes to the needs of the labour market. In the French Community of Belgium, the formal signature of the "Apprenticeship Charter" in March 1993, by the national educational authorities and the social partners, marked the beginning of close cooperation and concertation between schools and enterprises.
- 2.6.3 In Denmark and the Netherlands, the recent reforms have resulted in much stronger involvement of both sides of industry in the management of vocational training provision, and Trade Committees are now responsible for updating the practical training content of courses and for setting standards for final examinations, as well as for conducting assessments. At the same time, they also have great influence over the theoretical elements of vocational education and training at national and at regional/local level. The Organisation for Vocational Education and Training, established under the new (1992) Law in Greece, and which involves representatives from different Ministries and the social partners in its management board, is responsible *inter alia* for policy development, the implementation, planning and coordination of training provision, and cooperation with national and international bodies.

- 2.6.4 In France, in addition to the work of the High level Committee on Education and Economy (HCEE), created in 1987, a National Committee on Education and Professions (CNEP) was set up with the participation of the Social Partners to examine all decisions which concern both areas. In the United Kingdom, many of the detailed responsibilities for the management of training, and the provision of training which meets the skill requirements of a particular geographical area, have been decentralised to Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) or Local Enterprise Councils (LECs), in the case of Scotland. These TECs and LECs are locally based, employer-led bodies which provide a focus for cooperation between education, training and the world of work.
- 2.6.5 New formal agreements were also made in Portugal between the national authorities and the Social Partners, to cooperate more closely in the development of training provision. In Ireland, the Social Partners are playing a full part in discussions on initial training. The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation (IBEC), in their policy statement of June 1992, underlined the need for all young people to have the opportunity of a structured training programme organised and controlled by industry and providing certification with national and international recognition. In Italy, new partnership arrangements are being developed, as part of »Progetto 1992«, between the Ministries of Education and Employment, but also with the Regions and industrial/commercial associations. In Luxembourg, the new Law on technical and vocational education urges schools to establish stronger links with the world of work, through support for cooperative projects with industry. In Spain, the "Plan Nacional de Formación Profesional" proposed by the General Council for Vocational Training with the participation of the Social Partners was approved by the Government. This plan necessitates a close cooperation and coordination between all bodies responsible (the Ministries of Education and Employment and the Social Partners) in the initial vocational training of young people (formación reglada), training of the unemployed and continuing training of workers (formación ocupacional).
- 2.6.6 In the implementation of the Programme, the Commission has fostered a multi-partner approach. Most of the developments, referred to in paras 2.5.1-2.5.9 above, have enhanced the added value which can be obtained from transnational cooperation. At project level, the development of multi-lateral partnerships provided access to a broad range of different types of expertise and European experience; a number of projects have developed permanent links which continue after expiry of Programme funding. Through projects' links with local or regional consortia in their respective catchment areas, the Programme has reached a large number of organisations and individuals who benefit directly or indirectly from it.

2.6.7 By networking projects throughout the territory of the Community, PETRA has also created practical facilities to promote cooperation between the more advanced and the less developed regions, and between »the South« and »the North«. More than 60% of the ENTP projects (1988-1991) in Greece, Spain, Italy and Portugal were engaged in partnerships with projects in other than these four Member States. This trend has been reinforced in the new generations of projects; 94% of the 1992 generation of ENTP projects from the above Member States are developing transnational activities with partner projects in other than these Member States. All the transnational guidance projects for the development of the Community network of Guidance Resource Centres also involve at least one "Southern" Member State.

2.7 Encouraging more diversified forms of vocational guidance

2.7.1 The issue of vocational guidance is attracting growing attention in all Member States; the need for innovation in the guidance systems and the development of existing, or the creation of new, services appears to be a common concern. The move towards a market economy in the systems and processes of vocational training, and the increasingly complex problems faced by individuals in making decisions about their training and future career, require diversified approaches to ensure that relevant guidance and counselling support is offered to young people (and their parents) throughout their transition from school to training and working life. Vocational guidance has a central role to play in facilitating access to vocational training, and in reducing the number of people who drop-out from education and training, often as a result of ill-informed decisions. Vocational guidance must be recognised as a key to the development of human resources, underpinning policies which strive for a better match of training provision, vocational qualifications and prospective areas of local or regional development.

2.7.2 A major new challenge to be faced by the guidance systems in all Member States is the evolving Community context in which they have to operate. Whether they realise it or not, the process of European integration now offers many citizens of the Community a wide range of opportunities for training and work, outside their own Member State. In parallel, the national, regional and even local training and labour markets are inevitably becoming interlocked with developments in other Member States and in the Community as a whole. It is therefore essential for guidance and counselling services to provide information, advice and experience which enable individuals to become aware of opportunities which exist elsewhere in the Community and to make decisions on their training and career which can take account of the prospects of development in the Community.

- 2.7.3 With the establishment of the Single European Market, trans-European cooperation in vocational guidance, despite the existing differences between Member States in this area, became more imperative. In Germany, the objectives and operations of the PETRA Programme (in particular Action III of the programme devoted to vocational guidance and counselling) have supported and accelerated decisions concerning the introduction of a Community dimension into guidance services, involving the provision of information on training opportunities in other Member States and cooperation with relevant agencies in them. In France, the new focus on implementing a Community dimension in guidance has also encouraged cooperation between the different competent Ministries and their services, and advanced the regionalisation of the guidance service. In the framework of the implementation of the reform of the Spanish system, new guidance departments are being created in all education centres. In Ireland, the need for a complete overhaul of the system of vocational counselling has been recognised. PETRA has given an impetus to this, and in particular, to the use of data bases in the guidance system. In Italy, a new National Council is now concerned with the development of educational and vocational guidance. In the United Kingdom, recent Government legislation now opens up management options for the provision of the Careers Service. A phased process of tendering for the management of area Careers Services has been introduced with the aim of ensuring that the resulting services move closer to employers and become more responsive to local needs and conditions. Similarly, a new system has been introduced in the Netherlands in which schools, i.e. the demanders, "buy" with earmarked resources, guidance services from new regional guidance organisations, i.e. the suppliers, which are themselves the result of a merging of a number of regional level guidance bodies. The implementation of these national initiatives draws on, or is being informed by, the new opportunities for transnational cooperation which are provided through the European network of guidance resource centres, special development projects, and training activities for guidance staff which are established under Action III of the PETRA Programme.
- 2.7.4 This work under Action III is complemented by other Actions of the programme. Several ENTP projects work directly, or indirectly, on different aspects of guidance and jointly developing new material, methods and practices. A large number of YIPs has also been concerned with providing easily accessible, local information services for young people, outside the institutional frameworks. Some of the transnational Research Partnerships have also focused on the effectiveness of guidance methods and on new models to meet the guidance needs perceived by young people.

2.8 Improving knowledge of developments in the labour market

- 2.8.1 In the Programme, one important approach in helping training institutions, trainers and young people to be better aware of local, regional or specific sectoral needs is the promotion of local cooperation. Some ENTP projects develop and implement more effective information systems to link training to existing or emerging job opportunities, mostly on the local labour markets. The majority of projects establish links with enterprises in their area, enabling them to gain first-hand experience of the evolution of skill requirements and to reflect this in their training programmes. At a more general level, the Programme provides a major contribution, through specific research work, resulting in a Community-wide overview of Member States' strategies to identify relevant developments in the labour market, and of the approaches used to respond to new skills requirements.
- 2.8.2 To develop an instrument for the analysis of the quantitative and, in particular, qualitative developments on the labour market, the French Community of Belgium is currently establishing an "Employment Observatory", which will be a source of information for the providers of initial vocational training.
- 2.8.3 The Community-wide network of resource centres for vocational information and guidance (Action III) also enhances knowledge about the characteristics of the labour market in each Member State. One of the transnational development projects initiated under this Action is especially related to the participation of the Social Partners, encouraging their involvement in the process of vocational guidance so as to foster awareness of the needs of the labour market in the provision of vocational guidance services.

2.9 Promoting equality of opportunity for young women

- 2.9.1 Community action under the Programme was particularly aimed at supporting and supplementing measures taken by Member States to enable young women to participate, on an equal basis, in all vocational training programmes. In numerical terms, PETRA has succeeded in achieving almost equal participation of girls and young women in placements under Action I and in the ENTP and Youth Initiative Projects, though they were not equally represented in all sectors of training. An analysis of the questionnaires returned by 4,618 (52%) of the young participants in Action I placements in 1992 indicates that 46% were female. A similar percentage applies to the ENTP projects. Questionnaires returned from 244 of the 392 ENTP projects operational in 1992 show that 11,536 girls have been directly involved compared with 13,334 boys. Finally, in a new group of YIP projects, 48% of the

young people who were managing and running these projects were female. The trend of distribution between men and women in the placements and in the ENTP projects follows the traditional pattern, i.e. a majority of women in the services sector and a majority of men in the more technical areas. The issue of "increasing the participation of young girls and young women in non-traditional vocational training" was put forward, in the selection of ENTP projects, as a transversal theme in 1992 and was reinforced as a priority in 1993. Within the ENTP, 87 projects have addressed as their main focus the need of girls and young women and their training in non-traditional technical or vocational fields. The results of these projects were considered by all Member States concerned, as a very positive contribution to reinforcing and encouraging further initiatives in the mainstream training systems.

2.10 Developing training opportunities for disadvantaged young people

- 2.10.1 Whatever definition is used to describe the group of »disadvantaged«, or young people »at risk«, the number of those who leave the education and training systems without a vocational qualification is considered to be unacceptably high, by all Member States. Since 1988, all Member States have continued, reinforced, or set up new initiatives to improve training opportunities for these young people.
- 2.10.2 In Germany, the national programme for the vocational integration of disadvantaged young people provides vocational preparation and training together with social and special pedagogical help. It is implemented through a large variety of organisations, public and private, catering for 60,000 young people. Similar objectives are pursued by the Irish "Youthreach" programme, a joint education/employment action, offering two years of education and training to those who have dropped out of school for six months or more. In Spain, the network of some 600 workshop schools ("escuelas taller") and craft centres ("casas de oficios") provides up to three years' training, involving part-time practical work for unemployed young people; it links training for local development to possible job creation, mainly in aspects concerned with the preservation of the environment and cultural heritage.
- 2.10.3 Other examples include the "Youth Work Guarantee" in the Netherlands, the network of Production Schools and the recent "Education for All" action plan in Denmark; and the "credit formation" plan and the operation of the "missions locales" (local task forces) in France.

- 2.10.4 A particular added value of the Programme, in support of such initiatives, is to be seen in the involvement of young people from a disadvantaged socio-economic background who are generally under-privileged in educational and training terms and, more specifically, have few opportunities to participate in transnational training activities. In Denmark, transnational placements organised in connection with training projects for unemployed young people with few or no qualifications have proved to be an effective pedagogical instrument in helping these young people regain their self-confidence and independence, motivating them to re-enter the training system and to gain better qualifications. A large number of ENTP partnerships have shown a particularly strong bias towards developing training for disadvantaged young people. About one-third of the total number of young participants belong to this group. In addition, many of the Youth Initiative Projects have offered a stimulating new learning environment for young people who had failed in the mainstream training systems or were otherwise disadvantaged (representing e.g. 44% of all YIP participants in 1989).
- 2.10.5 In the framework of the vocational guidance activities of PETRA, disadvantaged young people also benefit from the links which are being established between the national guidance systems to promote exchanges of information and experience and to improve arrangements for them. A further contribution was made by some of the PETRA Research Partnerships which jointly worked on the evaluation of different types of national measures aimed at this group.
- 2.10.6 Taking account of social exclusion and the widespread problems of unemployment in the Community, especially amongst young people, and of the difficulties encountered so far in involving disadvantaged groups in transnational placements, further new measures will be introduced in 1994 with the aim of significantly increasing the participation of disadvantaged young people, in Action I transnational placements.

2.11 Promoting creativity, initiative and enterprise of young people

- 2.11.1 In adapting initial vocational training to meet new skill requirements, priority should be given to the development of transversal qualities and competencies rather than specific job related skills, thereby promoting and fostering creativity, initiative and enterprise amongst young people. This concept is now reflected in new approaches to youth training in all Member States. Denmark is one of several Member States where the reform of the vocational training system has placed an explicit emphasis on the development of transversal skills by requiring that one third of the subjects taught in vocational education and training courses must be general subjects aimed at strengthening the individual's personal development and enabling students to play an active role in society. In Germany, in the

continuing reform or re-organisation of training curricula - already completed in a number of vocational fields - particular importance is attached to improving training methods which value personal development, motivation, responsibility, and versatility of young people.

2.11.2 Since its beginning, the Programme has played an essential role in promoting such approaches, by providing a framework for pilot action and facilitating extensive transnational exchange of experience in this field. Central to this work was the development of methods to foster »key« competencies, which prepare young people to cope better with the fast-changing requirements in the work place, with new patterns of employment and, indeed, possibilities for self-employment. Both the ENTP and the Youth Initiative Projects have concentrated very strongly on these aspects and developed a variety of models involving specific forms of project work, new methods of assessment, or training of teachers and trainers. This work has attracted wide-spread attention amongst vocational schools, training centres and firms. Placements under Action I provide a valuable complement to these developments in national training systems by providing a real environment for "putting theory into practice" which enhances the individual's acquisition and further development of "transversal" skills.

2.11.3 One of the ENTP training partnerships, involving a consortium of several large national and multi-national companies, is now implementing a jointly developed approach to »enterprise training«; its first results demonstrate the transferability and adaptability of this approach across the boundaries of national systems. A specific Research Partnership was set up, in 1991, to analyze the effectiveness of different »enterprise training« schemes.

3. PERSPECTIVES AND OUTLOOK

3.1 The PETRA Programme

- 3.1.1 The remaining period of the PETRA Programme up to 31 December 1994 will concentrate on ensuring that the ongoing work is completed successfully. A particular new effort will be made to enhance the participation of disadvantaged young people in the Programme (socially excluded young people, including the unemployed but also those who are otherwise disadvantaged) and to harness the innovative powers of its different Actions in their favour. The reinforcing of this priority reflects the Conclusions of the Presidency of the European Council in Copenhagen in June 1993 which, *inter alia*, urge for more intensive action to reduce unemployment and social exclusion in the Community, especially where young people are concerned.
- 3.1.2 The main thrust in the final year of the current Programme will be directed towards enhancing the visibility of the results achieved through the PETRA Actions, and the dissemination of models of good practice and of successful approaches aimed at achieving the objectives of the Council Decisions. This will require a concerted effort involving a partnership between the Commission and the Member States. It will make a substantial contribution towards articulating the operational level of PETRA with Member States' strategies to improve training policies, and towards increasing the impact of PETRA on developments in the mainstream training systems.
- 3.1.3 Action to improve visibility and to widen the dissemination of the outcomes of the Programme will help to ensure that the results achieved so far can be fully exploited in the preparation and implementation of future Community action in the field of vocational training. It will also ensure that the EFTA-EEA countries can assimilate relevant experience, to assist their participation in future Community action, and create the conditions for fruitful cooperation on the vocational training of young people with the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. Finally, improved visibility of, and access to, information on the achievements of PETRA will help demonstrate the "returns on investment" in cooperative Community action and bring the Community closer to its citizens.
- 3.1.4 To assist Member States in maximising the dissemination function of the Programme, the Commission is intending to offer support to specific activities, particularly, those which enable the results and outputs to be known and acknowledged in training systems, policies and practice in Member States.

A limited number of major publications on the results of the Programme will be prepared, in cooperation with the Member States and their National Coordination Units.

- 3.1.5 These publications will include a Compendium containing an authoritative and comprehensive overview of PETRA projects and their "products", but also they will focus on a range of thematic areas in which PETRA has achieved quality results. The thematic areas will cover both experience related to specific fields of policy development, and more methodological aspects related to improving transnational cooperation in initial vocational training, and will demonstrate the main outcomes of the work of the research partnerships and studies implemented during the Programme.
- 3.1.6 As a way of fostering dialogue and stimulating progress during the attainment of policy priorities, the Commission will develop the practice of consultations with Member States based on positive experience, already gained from such bi-lateral consultations in 1992 and 1993. This will provide continuing opportunities to exploit the results of discussions, in the Member States, on the Commission's Memorandum concerning "Vocational Training in the European Community in the 1990s".

3.2 Community Action in the Area of Initial Training

- 3.2.1 After 1994, it will be important to ensure that a number of key issues are given further attention in the development of future Community action in the field of initial vocational training. Priority should be given to six main areas:
- 3.2.2 **Reducing the number of young people who enter the labour market without a basic qualification**
- 3.2.2.1 There are unacceptably high levels, and also alarmingly persistent and harmful patterns of youth unemployment in most parts of the Community: youth unemployment rates continue to be much higher (twice as high on Community average) than the general rates; young people without any vocational or educational qualification (i.e. an estimated number of 4-5.2 million, or 7-10% of the 16-25 age-group) face a risk of unemployment up to four times higher than more qualified young people.
- 3.2.2.2 Despite the clear commitments of Member States and positive actions already undertaken, there is little hope that these patterns are going to change in the near future, unless a new concerted effort is made to improve the opportunities for those most at risk. Highest priority must be given to facilitating access to, and improving, training provision for those who have left, or are at risk of leaving, the

education and training systems without a basic qualification. The hard core of this group comprises young people without any formal qualifications (i.e. the 7-10% mentioned above), but attention should also be given to those who have obtained no further qualification beyond completion of compulsory school (i.e. an additional 10-20% of the 16-25 age-group). The total estimated size of this priority group is 9-15.5 million young people. For these young people, the lack of vocational qualification impedes successful integration into the labour market because the demand for unskilled labour is steadily decreasing, and also represents a major barrier to participation in, and motivation for, continuing training.

3.2.3 Increasing the attractiveness of vocational training

3.2.3.1 The overall increase in participation rates of young people in post-compulsory education and training conceals a significant shift in the educational choices made by young people; the trend shows increased participation primarily in the field of general and higher education but a much less marked increase in participation in vocational training. In a number of Member States, firms, especially small and medium sized enterprises, are already facing problems in recruiting skilled workers, despite the high levels of unemployment. This problem is reinforced by the demographic developments which will affect the training market until well into the next century. The shrinking size of the number of young people in the training age group means that, in future, a higher proportion needs to undergo vocational training if the current supply of skilled workers is to be maintained.

3.2.3.2 The systems of initial vocational training do not, at present, attract a sufficient number of young people, many of whom see vocational training as inferior to, and offering fewer perspectives than, other forms of post-compulsory education and training. The PETRA Programme has supported, through a significant number of developmental projects, Member State action aimed at raising the profile of vocational training as a real alternative for young people, after completion of compulsory school. However, further efforts are required to enhance the impact of such innovative action on the mainstream systems.

3.2.4 Introducing a practical Community dimension into initial vocational training

3.2.4.1 The introduction of this dimension adds a new quality, and also attraction, to current provision. It forms an essential pre-requisite for enabling both firms/employers and individuals to develop a wider perspective for industrial activity and career prospects, and to explore the enlarged framework offered through the process of European unification. The notion of a Community dimension must not be restricted to the aspect of mobility. It implies a transformation of attitudes and behaviour in businesses and in individuals' aspirations.

3.2.4.2 PETRA has paved the way for further large-scale initiatives. Through support for transnational training placements, which form an integral part of the individual's training courses as well as through transnational cooperative projects on curriculum development and the training of trainers, PETRA has demonstrated successful approaches to integrating Community aspects into initial vocational training. It has also revealed the practical difficulties involved in transnational cooperation between training institutions. The analysis of this work can inform the development of strategies at Community level, to remove existing barriers to such cooperation.

3.2.5 Developing initiative and creativity through initial vocational training

3.2.5.1 Employers are putting more and more emphasis on qualities such as the capacity to work in a team, flexibility, responsibility, imagination, initiative and adaptability to change. At the workplace, new transversal skills are required, including the ability to make decisions more autonomously, to carry through a plan, to evaluate one's own performance, to solve problems and to communicate effectively.

3.2.5.2 Training systems are challenged by this emphasis and need to seek new ways of organising the learning process, e.g. through the creation of more realistic motivating learning environments and new forms of project work. "Enterprise training" and the promotion of "core skills" are new concepts, as yet to be fully implemented in initial vocational training. PETRA has pioneered such approaches through its European Network of Training Partnerships and its Youth Initiative Projects. A major challenge for the future will be to support the generalisation of these concepts within the mainstream training systems.

3.2.6 Reinforcing vocational guidance provision and adding a Community dimension to it

3.2.6.1 The vocational guidance systems in each of the Member States have to cater for a training and employment market which is becoming increasingly European as a result of European unification and economic integration. Guidance systems must, therefore, develop a genuine Community dimension in their approach in order to provide information enabling the general public to take advantage of the new opportunities arising from the Single Market and to exercise their citizens' rights within the European Union. National action in this field can only be successful if it is part of a common effort by all Member States to increase the provision of accessible and accurate information about the possibilities and conditions for training throughout the Community. Such provision will respond to emerging or anticipated needs, and help to make best possible use of the training measures in the Community. The PETRA Programme is the most advanced Community initiative in this field, supporting as it does systematic action to enhance transnational cooperation between the national systems of vocational guidance and to develop, through the training of guidance staff, a new profile of counsellors responding to the needs in a European context. It will be important to gradually extend this pilot action so as to anchor it, as a stable element, in Member States' vocational guidance provision.

3.2.7 Improving the strategies and methods for the dissemination of innovation in initial vocational training, within the Member States and transnationally

3.2.7.1 Community action, such as the PETRA Programme and other relevant initiatives, has been very successful in developing innovative models of good practice aimed at adapting initial vocational training to changing need and circumstances. The impact of this developmental work on the training systems in the Member States could be considerably enhanced if increased emphasis was placed on the dissemination of innovative approaches. In many Member States, effective mechanisms for dissemination are lacking, and where they exist, they do not take account of the transnational potential of innovation. Future Community action should, therefore, include clearly defined strategies and activities specifically aimed at the dissemination of innovative practices in order to increase responsiveness to change within the mainstream training systems.

PART B

A Report On The External
Assessment Of The
Community Measures
Implemented Within The Framework
Of The PETRA Programme
[Article 8 of Decision 91/387 EEC]

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1. SUMMARY OF THE PETRA PROGRAMME

- 1.1 PETRA is the European Community Programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life. The PETRA Programme was first adopted by a Decision of the Council of Ministers of the European Communities on 1 December 1987 (Decision 87/569/EEC) for a period of four years, starting from 1 January 1988. This Decision was amended by Council Decision 91/387/EEC on 22 July 1991. The second Decision gave rise to the current second and enlarged phase of the PETRA Programme which started on 1 January 1992. This second phase will run for three years until the end of December 1994.
- 1.2 The aim of PETRA is to support and supplement, through measures at Community level, the policies and activities of the Member States which are doing their utmost to ensure that all young people in the Community who so wish receive one or, if possible, two or more years initial vocational training in addition to their full-time compulsory education, leading to a vocational qualification recognised by the competent authorities of the Member State in which it is obtained.
- 1.3 The objectives of the PETRA Programme are:
- to complement and support Member States' policies to raise the standards and quality of initial vocational training, diversify vocational training provision so as to offer choice for young people with different levels of ability, and enhance the capacity of systems of vocational training to adapt to rapid economic, technological and social change
 - to add a Community dimension to vocational qualifications, in order to contribute in particular to the comparability of these qualifications between the Member States of the Community
 - to stimulate and support practical co-operation and the development of training partnerships trans-nationally between training providers, industry and other promoters of local and regional development

- to develop opportunities for the young people referred to in the decision, to benefit from periods of training or work experience in other Member States
 - to foster Community co-operation in the sphere of vocational information and guidance.
- 1.4 The Programme is intended for young people, up to twenty-eight years of age who are receiving vocational training; are in employment or are available on the labour market and have received initial vocational training or practical work experience; or who are taking part in an advanced programme in order to complete their training.
- 1.5 The second phase of the Programme provides, for the first time, direct support for placements in another Member State of young people within the target group. As part of this initiative PETRA has incorporated a previous Community Programme for the Exchange of Young Workers.
- 1.6 The second phase of PETRA also introduced support for measures aimed at fostering Community co-operation in the sphere of vocational information and guidance.
- 1.7 The Community measures within PETRA contain three Actions and Complementary Measures.

ACTION I

Support for training or work experience placements in another Member State. Two kinds of support are provided. The first is for young people in initial vocational training [Action 1(a)]; the second for young workers - young unemployed [Action 1(b)] and young people taking part in advanced programmes in order to complete their training [Action 1(c)].

ACTION II

Support for trans-national co-operation for the joint development of training modules and joint training of trainers, through participation in the European Network of Training Partnerships (ENTP). Action II also includes Youth Initiative projects set up and managed by young people themselves.

ACTION III

Support for National Systems for the exchange of vocational guidance information and experience and examples of good practice in vocational guidance, through the establishment of a Community network of National contact points and the training of Guidance Counsellors/Specialists on Community aspects of guidance.

COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

Support for the dissemination of the results of the Programme, trans-national co-operation in research on the vocational training of young people, Community studies on aspects of initial vocational training, evaluation, as well as technical assistance at Community and Member State level for the promotion, implementation and co-ordination of the PETRA Programme.

- 1.8 The Commission of the European Communities has overall responsibility for the Programme. It is assisted by the PETRA Advisory Committee, which is made up of representatives of the Member States and observers from the European level organisations of the Social Partners.
- 1.9 The Commission is also assisted by the PETRA Youth Bureau in Brussels, which is responsible to the Commission for the technical implementation of the Programme and liaison with the National Co-ordination Units and other competent authorities in the Member States.

1.10 Technical assistance in the different Member States is provided by National Co-ordination Units (NCUs), which have been established by Member States, and receive support from the Commission. The NCUs are concerned with the operation of PETRA at National level, and co-operate with the Commission and the PETRA YOUTH Bureau, and with NCUs in other Member States. Other tasks of the NCUs are the dissemination of information on the Programme, assistance to the Commission in carrying out complementary measures, including the dissemination of results, and the monitoring of the activities of the Programme.

- 1.11 At the time of the adoption of the amending Decision of 22 July 1991, the financial resources deemed necessary for the implementation of the three-year Programme were estimated at 177.4 million ECU. However, the Programme was allocated 29 million ECU in 1992 and 35.496 million ECU in 1993 by the budgetary authorities, financial resources which are significantly less than those originally foreseen.

2. THIS REPORT

The Context

- 2.1 Article 8 of the Council Decision adopting the extension of the PETRA Programme provides for two objective external assessments, the first to be carried out in 1994. However in order to ensure enough time for the first assessment to take place, the Commission, after advice from the PETRA Advisory Committee, launched the process in the course of 1993. This report, therefore, deals with the impact of Community Measures during the period 1992 and 1993.
- 2.2 The Commission set up a monitoring Group composed of Members of the PETRA Advisory Committee from the Member States and the Social Partners, relevant Commission officials and relevant personnel from the PETRA Technical Assistance Office.
- 2.3 The partnership created by NI-CO Education Services Ltd (from Northern Ireland) and ACRONYM Ltd (from Greece), together with their Community-wide network of national researchers, were chosen to carry out the assessment.
- 2.4 The proposed methodology was discussed with the Commission and with the Monitoring Group. This methodology is based on the terms of reference attached to the call for tenders, which provided for three exercises:
- i. the assessment of the Community measures of the Programme, in terms of their relevance and coherence as a tool in support of policy making in the field of initial vocational training;
 - ii. an examination of the results achieved so far through each Community measure;
 - iii. consideration of organisational arrangements designed to manage and implement the Programme.
- 2.5 The discussions with the Commission and with the Monitoring Group suggested that, although all three exercises were to be covered, more

emphasis should be placed on the political relevance and performance of the Programme. This is due to the fact that the report should be one of the elements which will contribute to the discussions on the next generation of Community programmes in the field of education, training and youth.

- 2.6 It was agreed with the Commission that the report should cover the analysis of performance and effects at "policy level" and an appreciation of the main results of each Action. The present report contains such an analysis and includes some initial suggestions and recommendations. Although the present report is the result of substantial research work and analyses, it reflects the views of a particular - albeit influential - group of actors (the policy makers, the programme managers, the social partners).

The Research Questions

- 2.7 All of our methodology is based a number of questions which we aim to address through our work. Such questions span a wide range of topics and are inspired by the tender document which set the basis for the
- 2.8 The present report covers the following questions:
- * what is the understanding (the interpretation) of the Programme in the Commission and in the Member States?
 - * how did the Programme work as an instrument to implement, support and develop initial vocational training policies at Community and Member State level?
 - * what use is made of the PETRA Programme in each Member State?
 - * what is the appreciation of the Programme's results so far?
 - * what is the "added-value" of Community intervention?
 - * what are the choices made in relation to Programme organisation/management at Member State level?

Our Research Work

2.9 For this first part of the evaluation our team has carried out a number of in-depth semi-structured interviews with the following actors:

- * relevant officials in the Commission
- * senior policy makers in the Member States (Ministries of Education and Labour as appropriate)
- * PETRA Advisory Committee members
- * representatives of the Social Partners in each Member State
- * relevant personnel in the PETRA Technical Assistance Office
- * the directors of the technical assistance offices of other relevant EC training programmes
- * relevant personnel in each NCU
- * other experts/consultants in some Member States.

2.10 The interviews provided a substantial amount of information, covering all (and more) of the questions listed above.

Our Analysis Work

2.11 Apart from analysing the contents of all the interviews carried out at both Community and Member State level, we have gone through a large number of documents which were made available to us in Brussels and in each Member State. We have also carried out statistical analyses of the 1992 data on ENTP and YIP projects collected through the questionnaires for the PETRA/SYS database, located in the PETRA Technical Assistance office. Therefore, the majority of comments are based on the analysis of the 1992 projects.

3. IMPACT OF THE PETRA PROGRAMME

- 3.1 The trans-national measures within PETRA are designed to add a European dimension to training activities and opportunities for young people in Member States by stimulating and supporting practical co-operation.
- 3.2 With the possible exception of the new measures designed to promote co-operation in the field of vocational guidance, such co-operative activity depends on the involvement of those who actually provide the training and opportunities for young people, namely training organisations within each of the Member States.
- 3.3 The principal actors within PETRA therefore are the training organisations within Member States. It is only through interaction with and between training organisations in Member States that the primary objectives of PETRA can be achieved.
- 3.4 This basic premise is not only the necessary starting point for any assessment of the impact and success of the PETRA Programme but it provides the key to an understanding of both the potential and the limitations of the PETRA Programme.
- 3.5 The first achievement has been to promote new links between training organisations in different Member States. In 1992 alone we estimate that more than 1500 training organisations within Action IA and Action II were involved in some form of trans-national co-operative activity. The promotion of such links is a necessary first step in the development of trans-national co-operation within Initial Vocational Training as unlike universities, few Training Organisations have a tradition of the international exchange of information, ideas, staff and students.
- 3.6 It is also evident from the interviews conducted in all Member States that there is a very low level of understanding in every Member State of training systems and methodologies in other Member States. The development of trans-national links between Training Organisations is one of the most effective ways of promoting the understanding which is necessary for the development of new forms of co-operation, of creating the conditions in which young people from one Member State can receive periods of training

in another Member State and of generating an appreciation of the value of the qualifications obtained by young people of a Member State.

3.7 Initial Vocational Training is at very different stages of development in different Member States. In consequence the objectives which Training Organisations have in participating in trans-national projects vary considerably and reflect both the priorities of individual Training Organisations and of the National training system of which they are a part. The 'European Dimension' embodied within PETRA has quite different meanings in different Member States. It is one of the strengths of PETRA that the Programme is sufficiently flexible to permit individual Member States to place emphasis on what they perceive to be their particular priorities. Thus, for example, in Greece the primary benefits of trans-national co-operation are seen in promoting the acquisition of additional expertise in terms of structures, methodologies and specific skills. In the Netherlands PETRA is seen as providing enrichment of educational programmes; in Flanders it is breaking down parochialism, is encouraging a wider view of the outside world and is the only Programme in that region which makes training and work placements abroad possible. In Spain PETRA is seen as reinforcing priorities within the recently reformed education system. In Italy it has helped promote a more flexible curriculum and has assisted in the recognition of placements in industry. In Denmark it is seen as the stimulus to international co-operation and awareness of other vocational training systems whilst in Germany it is seen as adding a Community dimension to vocational qualifications and encouraging mobility, exchanges and the promotion of linguistic abilities. In Portugal it is seen as promoting more modern approaches to initial vocational training.

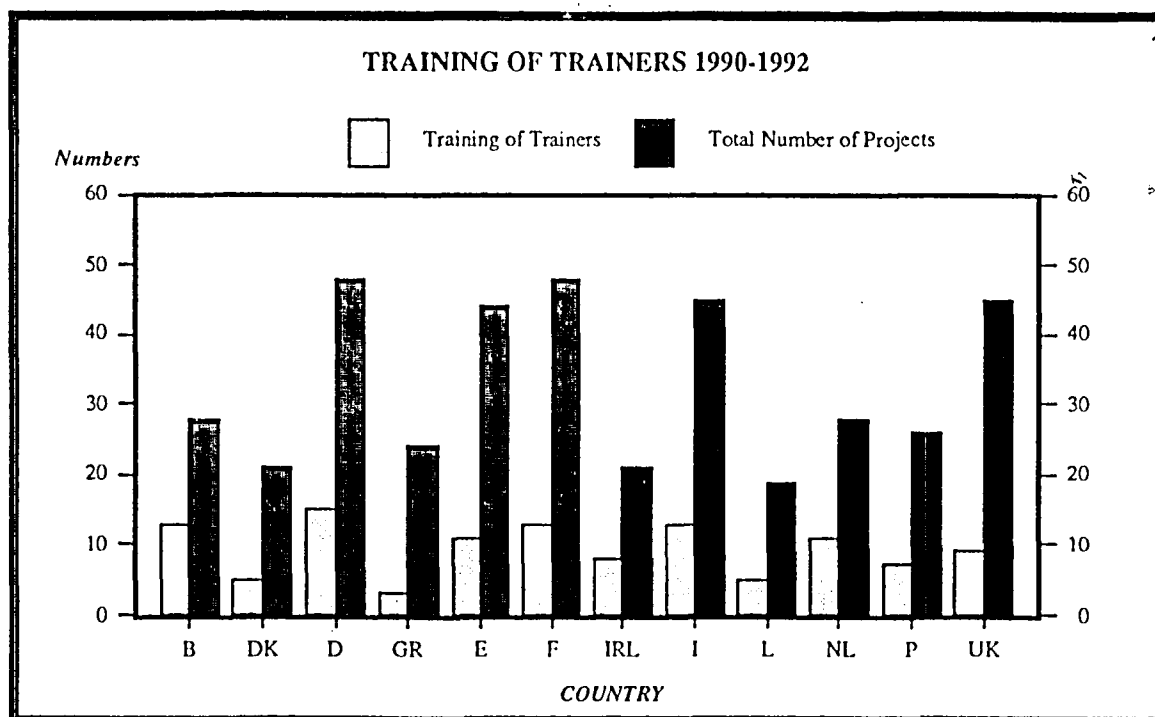
3.8 The initial impact of PETRA therefore is on individual training organisations. More specifically those impacts can be seen in terms of:

- promoting an understanding and a transfer of practice from training systems in other Member States
- supporting particular objectives which can range from encouraging broader perspectives to the acquisition of specific skills, the

development of new methodologies and training modules or the development of existing skills such as language capabilities.

- 3.9 There is a view in all Member States that the objectives of PETRA would be better met if resources were concentrated on projects and exchanges which involve trainers as this would generate a greater multiplication effect than projects which provide trans-national experience only for young people. There are equally in every Member State those who consider that the mobility of young people is an essential feature concerned with promoting the European Dimension within initial vocational training. In fact, to quite a large extent, both of those objectives are already being met within PETRA. Later in this report reference is made to the involvement of trainers and young people within the different actions of the Programme but at this point it is perhaps relevant to note (Figure 1) the substantial number of Action II projects which are concerned with the training of trainers.

Figure 1



- 3.10 It should also be observed that through arranging for young people to undertake part of their training in another Member State, a Training Organisation acquires a fuller appreciation of the systems, methodologies,

content and standards of training outside their own country. Equally the point has been made by several Member States that providing training for young people from another Member State obliges Training Organisations to look more closely at their own provision and indeed, as was pointed out by the Netherlands, obliges organisations to ask themselves, first of all, why do we want an international dimension and secondly how do we provide it.

3.11 While the initial interactions within PETRA are between Training Organisations the impact of the Programme would be much reduced and indeed it could be said to have failed in its objectives if the impact of the Programme were to be confined to the individual organisations and young people who have participated in one of the Actions within PETRA. Equally however it would be unrealistic, since PETRA is a relatively new Programme and a small budget Programme, to attempt to judge its success to date solely on the influence which it has had on policy developments at national level.

3.12 Within Member States PETRA is impacting, to varying degrees at present, at three distinct levels:

- individual organisations
- regional or sectoral interests
- national policy

3.13 The maximum impact to date is on individual organisations.

As time passes PETRA can be seen in many Member States to have an increasing impact at sectoral and regional level and at national level. It is important however not to undervalue the impact which PETRA has already had within many Member States. In some Member States, including Ireland and the United Kingdom, PETRA has either contributed directly through the development of products to sectoral training policies or in combination with other Community training initiatives has encouraged a reappraisal of attitudes. Thus, for example, in Ireland the national tourism training agency as a result of work piloted through PETRA has incorporated new language training programmes into its national courses. In the

United Kingdom arguably the main contribution of PETRA and other Community training programmes has been to promote across training organisations a new awareness that there is a European Dimension to training. This is reflected by the inclusion for the first time of European modules by major validating/examining bodies. In the Netherlands PETRA is encouraging schools to work together structurally instead of incidentally whilst in Flanders the Programme is promoting co-operation between the three main educational networks. In Luxembourg several projects have given rise to training modules which are being integrated into nationally available courses. In Italy training innovations in particular sectors including commerce have been boosted by experience acquired through PETRA. In Spain PETRA is seen as helping to give greater coherence to some aspects of the educational system.

3.14 It is possible also to detect the influence of PETRA in policy developments at national level within a number of Member States. In Germany the Conference of Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs has decided that all trainees are now to learn a foreign language where this requirement was earlier restricted to specific trades and professions. In the Netherlands PETRA has been used as a model for the development of national exchange programmes by the Department of Education and Science and several national programmes have been introduced whose format is strongly influenced by PETRA. In Luxembourg PETRA has been seen as influencing the recognition within new vocational training legislation of mini companies as a form of training provision. In Greece the adoption of a European Dimension within new laws establishing a national system of vocational education and training is seen as a consequential extension of Community programmes such as PETRA and FORCE (Formation Continue en Europe), the European Community action programme on Continuing Vocational Training.

3.15 In every Member State the view was strongly expressed that PETRA is making an important contribution to a process which, while it may reflect differing needs in different Member States, is seen everywhere as adding to the European Dimension in initial vocational training. It is recognised that simply because it is a process in which the principal actors are the Training Organisations themselves that it is going to take time for the benefits to

become fully apparent. There is a very widespread view that the Programme should be seen as being but halfway through its useful life. There is also an appeal, particularly from countries such as Greece and Portugal, that if the PETRA initiative is carried forward into whatever new Community training programmes may emerge that it should be carried forward with as little change as possible. Continuity and stability within training programmes are seen as particularly important by those countries whose Training Organisations have as yet little experience of European programmes.

- 3.16 The necessary focus, if PETRA is to achieve its objectives, on training providers and the differences in national priorities reflected by those providers carry with them a number of implications for the Programme.
- 3.17 The first is concerned with the nature of trans-national activities and particularly of placements for young people in initial vocational training.
- 3.18 Such placements within PETRA must form an integral and recognised part of an initial vocational training course; be targeted on specific vocational educational fields related to the participant's vocational training needs and must be duly certified by the host organisation or other competent body in the host country.
- 3.19 One approach, emphasised by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, is that priority must be given to obtaining recognised qualifications; that such qualifications are concerned primarily with the specific skills required by industry; that key competencies or transversal skills are obviously important but these are gained through focusing on specific skills; and if sight is lost of the primary objectives, the quality of training is lost and the quality of a trans-national experience can degenerate until, in an extreme form, it becomes simply 'Euro-tourism'.
- 3.20 An alternative view expressed for example by Germany endorses the need for recognised qualifications but places the primary emphasis within a trans-national experience on key competencies or transversal skills (self-confidence, decision making, ability to accept new ideas, awareness of wider horizons and opportunities). It is argued that specific skills are needed to meet the short-term needs of the market place but vocational

training is not intended, in the first place, to fill the immediate short-term needs of industry. It is primarily concerned with the personal development of individuals and their adaptability to the constantly changing needs of industry. It is also suggested that there is an increasing emphasis by employers on the need for transversal skills.

- 3.21 PETRA is sufficiently flexible to accommodate both views but concerns about specific skill training impose a constraint on the Programme as it makes some promoters in Northern European States less inclined to develop projects with promoters in Southern States in which training systems are less developed.

4. INTERFACES

- 4.1 PETRA is at the interface between education and training. One of the positive effects of PETRA which has been reported by the majority of Member States is that such co-operation is normally working well and that PETRA has had an effect in promoting at National level co-operation between education and employment interests and that where such co-operation exists PETRA functions most effectively. Conversely in the few instances such as the French community in Belgium where education and employment interests appear to be less willing to promote co-operative activities, both the effectiveness and the impact of PETRA is correspondingly reduced.
- 4.2 This is reflected in the variety of arrangements which Member States have made for the establishment of NCUs. In some Member States such as Portugal, Greece and Ireland NCUs occupy the middle ground between education and training. In other Member States such as Germany and the Netherlands the functions of NCUs have been split between different organisations with responsibility for the different actions of the Programme being much more closely identified with either the education interests or the employment interests within that Member State. Whilst a division of responsibilities has an effect on the interaction between the different actions in the Programme particularly in achieving coherence between Action IA and Action II, of much greater importance is the extent to which there is co-operation between education interests and employment interests in the support and direction which they give to the operation of PETRA within a Member State.

5. THE ROLE OF INDUSTRY WITHIN PETRA

5.1 In this report, the term industry covers all sectors of the economy. There is concern in all Member States about what is perceived to be the relatively limited involvement of industry within the PETRA Programme. It is correct that industry has a low profile as promoters of projects and this can be seen from the analysis of Action II projects in the following table (Figure 2).

Figure 2

Projects Which Entered The Network In 1992 - Organisers

	B	DK	D	GR	E	F	IRL	I	L	NL	P	UK
Total Number of Projects	11	8	21	10	16	17	8	17	6	12	11	17
Total Industry LED	2	2	5	1	1	3	-	5	1	-	-	3

5.2 However in all Member States initial vocational training is primarily the responsibility of public sector organisations and it is to be expected therefore that it is those organisations which will most often take the lead in promoting trans-national activity. It is noticeable that in Germany where industry has a more defined role within the National Training System, that a higher number of projects are industry-led.

5.3 This simple analysis does however conceal what in many Member States is a more active involvement of industry within the PETRA Programme.

5.4 Many Member States, have effective National PETRA Advisory Committees on which the Social Partners are represented. In Flanders, Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Portugal, United Kingdom and Ireland, for example, the Social Partners (with the exception of the Trades Unions in the Netherlands) are actively involved in advising on the implementation of the Programme and in encouraging participation by their members.

5.5 Participation is also evident in local consortia which are becoming an increasingly important component of ENTP projects. Unfortunately

statistical information is not yet available for 1992 but NCUs report that local partnerships of three-four or even up to ten local interests are common. In many local partnerships local companies are involved particularly in the development of training modules both as active participants and as resource providers.

- 5.6 Action IB is also dependent on the willingness of employers in the host country to provide work experience for young workers and young unemployed from another Member State.
- 5.7 Overall however the role of employers within PETRA is supportive rather than pro-active which would suggest that while employers have expressed themselves as being in favour of trans-national co-operation within initial vocational training, they do not regard it as having a high priority in relation to their particular needs. Interviews by the assessment team with employers' representatives reinforced this view.
- 5.8 It was argued that the main benefits of trans-national experience come through the development in young people of key competencies or transversal skills within which are included the development of self-confidence, self-awareness, a broadening of attitudes, a willingness to accept new ideas and the ability to accept responsibility. Many employers see such training as desirable but outside their field of responsibility. It is argued that it is the function of industry to create wealth and a corollary of that is the argument that industry-funded training should be focused on activities which lead to a financial return in the short term. Three months work experience in another Member State, especially for young staff who will normally be in junior positions is a high cost exercise which, it is often considered, is unlikely to bring a readily definable gain to the sponsoring company in the short term and is generally only justifiable for personnel being groomed for key positions within the company. Even if a company is not contributing directly to the costs of the young person who is on a work experience placement in another Member State there are still significant disruption costs for the employer in arranging and training a short-term replacement and bringing that replacement up to an acceptable level of efficiency. The view was strongly expressed by employers' organisations that only in a very limited number of cases could the employee be expected

to acquire additional specific skills for which local training was not available and which would bring significant short-term benefits to an employer. At the present time many companies, especially small companies, either cannot afford the costs involved or consider that they have other training priorities.

- 5.9 PETRA can be seen as contributing to the needs of industry through training organisations and with the support of industry. It is perhaps unrealistic to expect that the Programme should do more than this.

6. LINGUISTIC SKILLS

- 6.1 The availability and acquisition of linguistic skills are a relevant consideration in all aspects of PETRA. In some Member States including Spain, the Netherlands and Germany, one of the significant benefits which PETRA is seen to offer is the opportunity to promote awareness of the importance of improving linguistic skills. In other Member States and regions including Greece, Portugal and Flanders, linguistic problems are seen as a major barrier to trans-national co-operation and placements, especially when trying to ensure the inclusion of socially disadvantaged young people in projects.
- 6.2 Current practice in promoting language learning, especially in the pre-departure preparation of young people, varies considerably between Member States. Ireland, for example, advises 80 hours of language training as part of the preparation for a three-week placement while the United Kingdom requires only that young people should have a basic introduction to the language of the country which they are to visit.
- 6.3 It is for each Member State to decide on the emphasis which they wish to place on language training, particularly in pre-departure training for young people involved in Action I and Action II projects and for staff involved in Action II projects.
- 6.4 However a case can be made and has been argued strongly by Member States such as Greece and Portugal with a lesser used language, high levels of disadvantage and a less well developed tradition of exchanges that additional resources should be made available on a selective basis to assist geographical areas with special difficulties. There would also appear to be a case in some projects for a more formal link with LINGUA, the European Community Programme aimed at improving foreign language competence in order to promote mobility and communication among the citizens of the European Community.
- 6.5 Whilst the means of teaching other languages is a matter for project promoters, PETRA Programme Managers may wish to consider emphasising more strongly the benefits of including within pre-departure training, techniques associated with non-verbal communication as a

supplement to linguistic skills. It can be seen to be useful to promote the value which time spent learning a lesser used language can bring in assisting with an introduction and an appreciation of the cultural traditions and values of a country which may be very different to one's own.

- 6.6 Although, unfortunately, no statistics are available, NCUs report that language often influences the choice of a project partner and that this is, perhaps inevitably, distorting the geographical pattern of projects. There are quota rules within PETRA which seek to counter-balance this by laying down that no more than 30% of a Member State's quota of young people may be sent to another Member State but it can be expected that countries in which English, French, German and/or Spanish are the most widely taught languages will continue to concentrate their search for a partner in the countries in which those languages are spoken.

7. SPECIFIC TARGET GROUPS

- 7.1 While PETRA relates to training systems within Member States which are concerned, for the most part, with the generality of training needs within that Member State, specific emphasis is placed in the Programme on the involvement of women, disadvantaged groups and SMEs. Insofar as those training systems themselves seek to provide for the needs of these special groups and make applications to PETRA which focus on their needs, PETRA may, particularly within Action I and Action II be able to respond to such needs. It is not known how many project applications to NCUs are concerned with the specific needs of, in particular, women, the socially disadvantaged and SMEs. Of national projects selected to enter the ENTP network in 1992 in the Northern Member States almost 50% of Belgian and Irish projects specifically include reference to disadvantaged/unemployed/unqualified young people. In Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands around 25% of projects specifically include this target group. The number of national projects in the Southern Member States which specifically refer to disadvantage is much lower but that may be misleading as those States may regard a substantial part of their work as being concerned with disadvantage.
- 7.2 Within ENTP projects the needs of women are specifically referred to only within projects in Belgium, Denmark, Spain, Ireland and the United Kingdom and in no instance in more than 10% of projects.
- 7.3 National project themes concerned with SMEs are identified only in Belgium, Germany, Ireland and the United Kingdom and across the Community account for 4% of national projects entering the ENTP network in 1992.
- 7.4 A Programme such as PETRA which interacts with training organisations which are concerned with the generality of needs within the training sector can assist with the needs of special groups where those are identified by project promoters but cannot, of itself guarantee a balanced or co-ordinated response to the needs of those groups. Clearly some developments/projects within initial vocational training are applicable to different groups of

trainees but, by definition, groups with special needs often require special consideration.

- 7.5 It is suggested that PETRA has been of assistance particularly through Action II projects, in developing provision for groups with special needs but that the primary objectives of PETRA are much wider than this. There is a policy choice to be made, namely either to continue to support the needs of special groups as a priority within wider objectives or to provide particular support for special groups as a separate activity. In our view, if it is considered that there are special groups of sufficient size within Member States which merit particular consideration involving trans-national co-operation, there is a strong case for establishing separate Actions within a programme such as PETRA.

THE YOUNG UNATTACHED

- 7.6 By young unattached we refer to young people, many of whom will be early school leavers, who are not engaged in education, training or employment. They form a substantial group within the Community. YIPs are intended as one response to the needs of these young people. Some of them may apply for placements within Action IB depending on how strictly the criteria for the Programme are applied and if, which may be unlikely, they can secure or provide the financial contribution which will be required from them. PETRA has helped to draw attention to the needs of these young people but they are largely outside the ambit of the Programme as it is currently structured. Unfortunately it would appear that they may also be outside the ambit of the other Community training and youth programmes.
- 7.7 There does seem to be a need within whatever new Community Programmes may emerge from the Commission Guidelines for Community Action in the field of Education and Training of 5 May 1993 (COM(93) 183 Final) to include measures which recognise courses or activities which may not themselves lead to qualifications but pave the way for young people to enter formal courses of initial training.

8. PROMOTION OF PETRA

- 8.1 PETRA has been actively promoted by all NCUs and the PETRA Technical Assistance Office particularly at the beginning of the second phase of PETRA. Promotion Conferences, Seminars, Mailing Lists, Publications, Videos and even, in the case of Greece, television and radio have been used extensively to ensure publicity.
- 8.2 Part of the reason for the extensive publicity was the concern felt by NCUs to seek a spread of applications both geographically and on behalf of the different groups within society catered for by Training Organisations. The existence of PETRA would now seem to be well-known amongst Training Organisations across Europe. However that has also brought its own difficulties. In many Member States the Programme is heavily over-subscribed. For example, in 1992 the UK received 245 completed applications for its allocated eighteen Action II projects. In Spain there were 170 applications for eighteen Action II projects whilst Portugal received 1,200 applications for Action I.
- 8.3 In addition, alongside a desire to publicise the Programme, is the belief in Member States such as Ireland that, the impact of PETRA is increased by encouraging applications from selected Training Organisations which either already have a high profile nationally or which are developing projects with the capability of attracting widespread National interest.
- 8.4 A high rate of applications and/or a desire to promote high-profile projects have led a number of Member States to scale down their promotional activities. This can be seen as unfortunate as there is a widespread view in Member States that promotion of PETRA is in itself a valuable means of promoting the concept of a European Dimension in Initial Vocational Training.
- 8.5 There is perhaps a case for a supplementary strategy which would enable the profile of PETRA to be maintained and contribute to its overall objectives. An unsuccessful applicant may not have submitted a very good application but they have registered an interest in trans-national co-operation. Rather than simply refuse the application and, possibly, blunt an emerging interest there may be ways in which they could be encouraged.

There are obvious resource limitations at present within NCUs but there is perhaps scope for the initiation of procedures which might find further expression in whatever Community training structures emerge post 1994. For example, a database of applicants could be established by each responsible NCU and persons on that database could receive regular information about PETRA; information about other Community Programmes related to education and training; invitations to conferences and seminars; copies of reports of new developments within vocational training; information about vocational training systems in other Member States.

9. DISSEMINATION

- 9.1 In any programme dissemination of products, experience and ideas is essential if the programme is to impact on more than participating institutions or individuals. This is particularly true of PETRA which is concerned with changing attitudes and broadening knowledge and experience within National systems.
- 9.2 Dissemination is seen to be necessary in two respects:
- of products, knowledge, ideas and experience within a Member State which arise from projects in which that Member State is involved and which could have a wider application within the training systems of that Member State
 - of knowledge about training systems and practice in other Member States which may be helpful in influencing development of a Member State's training system or facilitate the training of young people in another Member State or promote convergence of standards of training across the Community.
- 9.3 Insofar as the first objective is concerned, the initial requirement is to ensure careful selection of the projects to be supported as otherwise the quality of the product will not merit dissemination. This is clearly recognised within the selection procedures of all the Member States.
- 9.4 It is also necessary to consider at whom dissemination is directed. This will vary according to the product but the main target groups would appear to be:
- Other Providers of Training. The size of this group will vary according to the nature of the product. A specialist training module, for example, is likely only to be of interest to organisations providing almost identical training. On the other hand more broadly-based information about practice in another Member State may be of concern to a wider audience.

It does seem likely however that within the providers of training, the level of interest will usually be higher amongst Training Organisations than within industry. As indicated earlier in this Report, whilst companies may be interested in general terms in training practice and standards in other Member States, their primary concern is more often in being able to have their specific needs met locally

- Policy Makers. Whilst Policy Makers have an interest in practice in other Member States and in innovation, experience in all Member States would suggest that the key people who assist new ideas or developments within Training Organisations influence broader policy are the Professional Advisers who support Sectoral, Regional and National Policy Makers.

- 9.5 Products and ideas developed within a Member State as a consequence of participation in PETRA appear to have most impact where a sectoral, regional or national body have had a direct link with the project at an early stage - where co-operation and even a sense of co-ownership have developed. The success of this strategy can be seen, for example, in Flanders where activities under Action IA of PETRA are now integrated in the school curriculum.
- 9.6 Apart from the involvement of key actors from an early stage in projects, there is a need to ensure a steady flow of information and a transfer of knowledge, values and experience arising from PETRA within the Member State.
- 9.7 Nowhere as yet does there appear to be a coherent dissemination strategy. There is a higher level of activity in some Member States than in others. In France for example the NCU publishes articles in various magazines and has arranged a number of seminars. Denmark also publishes articles and has arranged a number of conferences which were well attended. In Germany conferences have been held to promote the transfer of information and experience and a special journal is issued by the Federal Institute of Vocational Training (BIBB) which includes detailed information on individual PETRA projects. Ireland arranges conferences and publications on specific issues likely to be of interest to training organisations.

Luxembourg finds it relatively easy to ensure that the outputs of projects are disseminated. On the other hand in the Portugal and the French community in Belgium dissemination is largely the responsibility of individual training organisations and in the United Kingdom it is considered to be the responsibility of regional training authorities.

- 9.8 Most NCUs point to a lack of resources as the primary reason for dissemination not being more effective.
- 9.9 There are several areas within PETRA where a case has been made for additional resources but it does appear to us that if the maximum return is to be obtained from existing investment, priority should be given to financial support for the development and implementation of enhanced dissemination strategies in every Member State.
- 9.10 Reference has been made to the lack of knowledge evident in all Member States about vocational training in other Member States. National dissemination strategies could usefully be reinforced by the development of new initiatives at Community level to promote trans-national awareness of vocational training structures, priorities and innovatory developments in the different Member States. This would be complementary to work currently undertaken by CEDEFOP, The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.

10. SYNERGY

- 10.1 A degree of synergy between PETRA and related Community programmes is beginning to emerge in some Member States but it is limited. There is some inter-action with LINGUA (Action IV - the exchange of young people in vocational training), EUROTECNET (The Community Action Programme to promote innovation in the field of Vocational Training in the new technologies) (arising from Action II of PETRA), IRIS (The Community Network of Training Programmes for Women), FORCE, YOUTH FOR EUROPE (The Programme which promotes the exchange of young people for cultural purposes in the European Community, HORIZON (A Community Action Programme to improve labour market opportunities for the disabled and certain other disadvantaged young people), NOW (A Programme intended to improve the opportunities for women in employment and vocational training) and EUROFORM (The Community Programme relating to the promotion of new qualifications, skills and employment opportunities induced by the Single Market and technological change).
- 10.2 In Germany for example a Working Group within the Federal Institute for Vocational Training is seeking to promote inter-action between these programmes.
- 10.3 In Greece one project has developed strong links with IRIS and EUROTECNET. In Flanders links are being developed with the European Social Fund.
- 10.4 At present synergy is more evident in Member States where national support agencies for different Community programmes are based within the same national organisation and where individual training institutions have developed a significant knowledge of Community programmes.
- 10.5 Beyond an exchange of basic programme information there are few concerted attempts by those responsible for programmes to co-ordinate their activities, mount joint initiatives or ensure that the products from one programme are available to projects within another programme.

- 10.6 Action III of PETRA has a strong complementarity to the EURES Network, (European Employment Services) but as yet linkages are not discernible at Community level or, with the exception of Spain, Italy and Ireland, within Member States.
- 10.7 Not only are the possible benefits of co-operative activities being largely lost but some Member States, for example Portugal, consider that the separate development of a large number of Community programmes and initiatives is having an adverse effect on Organisations which are seeking to come to terms with innovation.
- 10.8 Within the Commission itself there is awareness of the objectives and complementarities of the various programmes but with the exception of YOUTH FOR EUROPE and PETRA there is little indication of any co-operative initiatives in terms of publicity, training, dissemination or co-ordinated support for national activities or projects.
- 10.9 As Spain has observed the Commission appears to be replicating in Community programmes the bureaucratic divisions from which some Member States have long been seen to suffer.
- 10.10 A lead given by the Commission in promoting synergy between Community programmes could be expected to have beneficial consequences within Member States.

11. ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

- 11.1 Relations between the PETRA Technical Assistance Office and NCUs appear to be very good. However NCUs, and in some cases projects, are under pressure. There may be ways in which some of that pressure could be eased.
- 11.2 The first, and perhaps the most difficult, would be to address the issue of payments by the European Commission. The financial cycle of the European Community; necessary control procedures and the volume of payments processed by the European Commission within which PETRA related payments are but a tiny fragment, combine to make changes in payment procedures a significant problem.
- 11.3 However delays in payments are affecting projects. This is most noticeable where payments are made to small organisations with limited resources. The most acute cases are probably YIPs which, typically, are either unable or lack the confidence to secure interim funding pending Commission payments. YIPs receive funding for a one-year project. It is not uncommon for project work to be delayed until the first payment is received from the Commission and for that payment to arrive three months after the start of the project year. Cases can also be quoted of trans-national activities within Action II projects which were delayed until Commission payments were received. Delays in payment also directly affect NCUs both in terms of their own finances but, perhaps more significantly, through the additional time required to placate/encourage projects which are concerned about the non-arrival of funds.
- 11.4 Administrative procedures within all NCUs are heavily dependent on paper records. In a developmental programme such as PETRA it is inevitable that there will be constant demands for information originating from a variety of sources including the European Parliament, the European Commission, the PETRA Technical Assistance Office, other NCUs and their own National and local organisations and authorities. The inefficiency of paper-based systems results in every request being time-consuming if indeed they can be responded to at all.

- 11.5 The PETRA SYS database being developed within the PETRA Technical Assistance Office may relieve NCUs from some of the requests being made of them but as currently conceived is only a partial solution.
- 11.6 Parallel with the problems of information retrieval are those of communication. NCUs, of necessity correspond frequently with Brussels and with each other. FAX is a common means of communication but the time required to send FAXs, as distinct from the transmission time, is often under-estimated especially where the same FAX is being sent to all Member States. The time involved is increased by the difficulties which are still quite frequently experienced in sending FAXs to some of the peripheral Member States.
- 11.7 Consideration could usefully be given to the introduction of computerised administration and record-keeping systems in NCUs linked to the PETRA Technical Assistance Office and to each other and incorporating electronic mail facilities. The specification for such a system would require agreements on the extent of access permissible by other members of the network and should incorporate linkage to PETRA SYS.
- 11.8 The increase in efficiency would be significant and initial costs would be offset by savings in NCU staff time. Such a system would also facilitate a two-way flow of information between Brussels and NCUs.
- 11.9 There were calls particularly from Employers' Organisations in larger Member States such as France, for application forms and procedures to be simplified and, particularly in the United Kingdom, there were requests for some form of regional support structure.
- 11.10 At this point in time these would be difficult requests to respond to. The Notes of Guidance and Application Forms are necessarily detailed as they are one of the principal methods of conveying to applicants what is needed in planning and carrying out a project. This detail is also required to assess applications especially in large Member States where the applicant organisation is less likely to be known to the NCU. It would also be difficult in a small programme such as PETRA to justify regional support structures. However, post 1994, these are areas in which significant progress might be possible and regional support structures, where justified

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in large Member States, could lead to more readily available advice to applicants, pre-selection procedures such as those which currently exist in Ireland and perhaps simpler application forms. Meanwhile even simple steps which could be taken, such as standardising the percentage of grant payable as a first instalment to a project, would be worth considering.

12. ACTION IA

- 12.1 Under this Action support is provided to assist young people in initial vocational training leading to a recognised qualification, to spend a period of time on a training placement in another Member State. Placements normally last for three weeks although shorter or longer placements of up to 12 weeks may be considered.
- 12.2 Financial support from the Community is intended as a contribution towards organisational costs including the cost of a preparatory visit where this is required; preparatory language training; subsistence costs during the placement in another Member State; insurance costs; and up to 75% of the cost of return travel to another Member State.
- 12.3 Applications are submitted by the training institution in which the young person is enrolled and a selection is made by the NCU of the applicant's own country.
- 12.4 In 1992, budget provision was made for 5,276 young people benefited under this Action and it is estimated that in 1993 the number of young people participating will increase to 7,339.
- 12.5 The essential criteria are that placements should enrich the training of the young people by providing contact with new training methods, new equipment and content and different forms of training partnerships. Unfortunately complete and comparable statistics are not yet available to permit an analysis of the nature of placements, sectors of training, age or gender of the young people or of the patterns of movement. However the views and information provided by those responsible for all aspects of the management of PETRA has brought to attention a number of issues. It is the view of project managers in all Member States that both the young people and the training institutions concerned derive maximum benefit where the trans-national experience forms a genuinely integral part of an initial vocational training course whether the primary focus of the trans-national experience is on specific skills, transversal skills or both. All NCUs seek to encourage this through guidance notes and by requiring detailed information within applications as to how the trans-national placement is to be integrated into the course; details about the personal

preparation, language and inter-cultural training which the young person will receive, about the involvement of the partner organisation in the preparation phase; and about what arrangements will be made for monitoring and evaluation. Member States report a variety of difficulties that projects experience in trying to satisfy all the criteria which it is considered are necessary for a successful placement and have suggested a number of ways in which the value of placements can be enhanced. A number of Member States including Denmark, the Netherlands and Ireland actively promote the linking of Action IA placements to Action II projects. This practice does have a number of distinct advantages insofar as the quality of Action IA placements are concerned. As the receiving and sending institutions are working together within Action II it is likely that they will have an understanding of each other's structures, capabilities and needs and if the placement is at a fairly late stage in the Action II project it can, in some cases, provide an opportunity to test a training module which the institutions have jointly developed. Linkages between Action IA and Action II projects can also provide a better opportunity for reciprocal exchanges which most exchange organisations would suggest encourages both groups of young trainees and receiving organisations to make an increased effort to ensure that the incoming group has a successful experience. Linkage between Action IA and Action II projects can also be more cost effective as it can remove the need for preparatory visits.

- 12.6 Such linkages are really only feasible in Member States in which one NCU has responsibility for both Actions as otherwise co-ordination of activities between the two actions becomes very difficult.
- 12.7 There is an opposing view advanced particularly by some PETRA managers in Germany that such linkages are undesirable because they restrict the number of institutions which can participate in the PETRA Programme. This is a reflection of the debate on where the balance should lie within PETRA between quality and quantity. Clearly it is advantageous to PETRA in achieving its objectives if a larger number of organisations have the opportunity of trans-national experience but the objectives will not be met in full unless the quality of that experience can be assured.

- 12.8 There would appear to be a case for considering increased funding for projects where this is directly linked to supporting the quality of the trans-national experience. We have already referred to the needs of some Member States with lesser used languages for additional support with language preparation but there is also a case, as Italy has identified, for providing additional support for preparatory visits where a training organisation is entering into a new partnership with an organisation in another Member State.
- 12.9 Arguments have been advanced particularly by the German and French Communities in Belgium and in Italy for NCUs to have the flexibility to agree to 2-week visits without a corresponding reduction in financial support from the Community where a training organisation is new to trans-national work or where this is better suited to the needs of the institution and the students taking part in a placement. There is already the flexibility within PETRA which would allow NCUs to support shorter placements provided the average length of the total placements supported is retained. However maintaining an average of three weeks for placements within Action IA has merit as it helps to reinforce the fact that these are training placements, not simply exchange visits, and three weeks rather than 2, encourages more attention by placement organisers to the content of the placement.
- 12.10 While the young people participating in a placement are the most obvious direct beneficiaries, mobility within Action IA is intended as a means to an end and not as an end in itself. Whilst all NCUs agree both that the young people gain most where the placement is an integral part of the course and that the long-term benefits are to the institutions themselves, it would appear from discussions with a number of project managers that there is a need for NCUs to continue to stress these points within promotional literature. It would seem that there is still a tendency among some training organisations who approach PETRA to regard a placement as a 'bolt-on' experience to a course of initial vocational training.
- 12.11 It could be useful in promoting the concept of mobility within initial vocational training to give NCUs, as suggested by the United Kingdom and the Netherlands, the flexibility to include a number of teacher placements within PETRA.

13. ACTION IB

- 13.1 Under this Action support is provided for young persons who are in employment or who have had initial training or practical work experience and are seeking a job, to gain work experience in another Member State. Support is also provided for young people undertaking an advanced non-University course to complement their initial training. The majority of placements last for three months although shorter or longer placements can be funded in specific instances where NCUs consider this to be justified. Young persons will typically receive one month's language training in the host country followed by two months' work experience. Accommodation may be with host families, in apartments or in hostels.
- 13.2 Persons or a promoting organisation in the host Member State agree to accept responsibility for arranging induction; language training; work placements; accommodation; monitoring, support and evaluation and, in some cases, will also arrange cultural activities.
- 13.3 The implementation of this Action can be considered in terms of its impact on the young people who participate; on those responsible for sending and hosting groups of young people; on industries within Member States; and in terms of the effect which this Action has on issues of a more general nature which are of concern to Member States and the Community.
- 13.4 There is general agreement amongst NCUs that the young persons selected to participate in this Action gain considerably from the experience in terms of personal development and marketable skills. The three months in another Member State focused on language training and work experience is regarded as generating awareness and knowledge of working practices and social and economic conditions which enhance the value of an individual to an employer. It is seen as broadening the attitudes of young people, increasing their willingness to accept new ideas and promoting their self-awareness and self-confidence. It is also considered that on their return the young people have a positive influence on their peers and within their employment in terms of promoting a greater awareness of ideas and opportunities beyond national boundaries.

- 13.5 Programme Managers within PETRA consider that the normal one month's language training in the host country prior to work experience not only assists with or, indeed is normally necessary for a successful work experience, but provides an opportunity for induction and for the adjustment of the young person to life in the host country. That period of training and induction is strengthened by the support and companionship of a peer group who are facing the same challenges. This period of language training and induction distinguishes PETRA from other work experience programmes and is seen by those responsible for the Programme as a key element.
- 13.6 Placements are organised by the NCU of the host country or by a training or youth exchange organisation, or other promoting organisation.
- 13.7 This Action is the successor to the earlier Young Workers Exchange Programme and particularly in Northern Europe, notably in France, Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands a network of organisations exists which has considerable experience in arranging such placements.
- 13.8 In other areas notably in the Southern Member States participation in projects within this Action is stated to have been useful in gaining knowledge and understanding of the complexities in organising such placements. An example of this is the realisation expressed by Greece of the importance of preparing young people before they leave and of having a contract with the receiving organisation which details the programme components, the nature of the work experience, domestic and social arrangements; and insurance provision. Concern was also expressed by Member States including Luxembourg and Spain that where a contract was insufficiently detailed that some young people were being offered work experience below their ability level and, in some cases, were being used inappropriately as seasonal labour.
- 13.9 It has not proved possible yet to obtain complete and comparable statistics which would indicate the status of the young people who participate, occupational sectors, gender or the geographical distribution of placements. All NCUs however report a limited involvement of industry in sending young employees on placements and although attempts have been made, for

example in Ireland, to arrange industry specific programmes these have met with very little success. The role of industry within PETRA has been discussed earlier in the report.

- 13.10 For the young people who participate in the Programme the main problem is one of finance. Almost every Member State considers that the amount of grant-aid paid to individual participants is too low. The exact amount varies according to a number of factors including the GNP of the Member State sending the young people and travel costs from the capital of the Member State to Brussels. However, it is normally sufficient to pay 75% of return travel (the maximum permitted under existing Programme rules), language courses, accommodation, local travel expenses and, in some cases, for a limited cultural programme.
- 13.11 Southern Member States in particular would wish to see an increase in funding in support of pre-departure counselling and language training and for the preparatory phase including visits but there is agreement in all Member States that the main difficulty is in respect of financial support for the young person.
- 13.12 Depending on their individual circumstances some young people may be in receipt of an allowance/wage or they may receive payment from the employer in the host country who is providing the work experience. Many young employed persons will not receive payment from their employer when they are participating in the Programme and while some young unemployed persons can continue to obtain unemployment benefit or training allowance while on the Programme, many can not. This discriminates against young people, especially disadvantaged young people who may not be able to provide 25% of their travel costs and meet their incidental expenses during three months in another Member State. There are indications that in some Member States including Belgium and Germany some placement organisers may require young people to pay a fee before they are accepted on the programme. This would merit further investigation. Co-financing by the young persons may be acceptable in some instances but it is important for a full appreciation of the operation and impact of this Action within PETRA that all aspects of the financing of placements should be known to the Programme Managers within PETRA.

- 13.13 There are currently proposals to increase the rate of grant payable in respect of disadvantaged young people. This could ease the problem but there could be difficulties in allocating variable rates of grant. It is reported by NCUs that tensions can arise within groups of participants, particularly when participants are from different Member States, where variable rates of allowance/wages are paid, and there is a risk new proposals may lead to an increase in such difficulties.
- 13.14 It would seem equitable if all young people participating in the Programme were to receive equal allowances. There is an argument for all employers who provide work experience to pay a basic allowance to the young people but there is a general view amongst Member States that this is not feasible. It is considered that the benefits to an employer in accepting into his organisation a young person from another Member State for work experience are not as yet sufficiently accepted to make this a realistic proposition.
- 13.15 It does appear that there is a case for a standard allowance to be paid to all young persons participating in the Programme. This could be paid as a training allowance by the Member State from which the young person is sent on the Programme. This would be a marginal cost to individual Member States but a significant endorsement of a Programme of trans-national experience to which they have given their agreement.
- 13.16 In quantitative terms, the Programme aims to contribute in a small way to the concepts of mobility and European integration. Within the context of the Single Market it is seeking to encourage young people to think in terms of opportunities beyond national boundaries and in some Member States may be helping to make this concept more acceptable. The Irish Employment Service, for example, now has placement advisers based in the United Kingdom and in Germany. However if this Action is to have an impact and promote the concept of work experience in another Member State it can be argued that such placements need to be available to a significant number of young people. What constitutes a 'critical mass' is a matter for debate. The total number of placements budgeted for in 1992 was 3,489 but when viewed from the perspective of individual Member States, the current number of places is very low. For example, Greece had 115

places for over 250,000 young people who fall within the target group. Germany had 717 places with a target group of 6.8 million Young People.

- 13.17 If it is considered that this is a worthwhile initiative which should be maintained until such times as it can be accommodated within national policies it must be questioned whether the current size of the Programme is sufficient for it to make a significant contribution to attitudinal change.
- 13.18 One effect which this Action has had, and it is arguably its most important effect, has been to highlight the practical and often significant difficulties faced by young people who wish to seek training, work experience or a job in another Member State. It has focused attention on problems concerning the legal status of such young people, the recognition of qualifications and the different attitudes taken by Member States to the payment of unemployment benefit or training allowances when a young person is on placement in another Member State. These are issues which have been highlighted as a result of PETRA and are now being given more active consideration both at Community level and within Member States. Their resolution will in some cases, for example in Belgium and Italy, require national legislation.
- 13.19 There have been benefits from locating this initiative within PETRA notably the experience which some NCUs and training organisations, especially in the Southern Member States, have gained in arranging placements and the attention which has been drawn to barriers to mobility. It can be argued that to a considerable extent those objectives have been achieved.
- 13.20 With the exception of a small number of Young People, for example from France, Denmark and the United Kingdom, who undertake these placements as part of a course of advanced training, these young people are no longer part of a national training system and it is difficult to see what influence they will have on those systems. This Action, as has been pointed out by a number of Member States including the Netherlands and Spain, therefore lacks coherence with the rest of the PETRA Programme. There is a strong case for arguing that placements for young people who are no longer part of initial training, should take place within Community Action which does not target the development of qualitative training systems.

14. ACTION II

- 14.1 Action II provides support for trans-national co-operation in the joint development of vocational training modules and joint training of trainers through the participation of training institutions and projects, including youth initiative projects, in the programme's European Network of Training Partnerships (ENTPs).
- 14.2 This is the core activity of the PETRA Programme directed at supporting national innovation and vocational training and the development of the European dimension. Under the first phase of PETRA, 488 ENTP projects were supported. Within the second phase of PETRA, 154 ENTP projects were admitted to the Programme in 1992 and 169 in 1993.
- 14.3 Project proposals which must conform to themes and sectors on which the PETRA Advisory Committee has given a positive opinion, are submitted by a wide range of organisations concerned with initial vocational training including training institutions and social partners. The final selection is made by the Commission with the assistance of the PETRA Technical Assistance Office.
- 14.4 The evaluation team has observed two different attitudes within Member States towards selection of Action II projects.
- 14.5 Some Member States such as Greece, Luxembourg, Portugal and the United Kingdom encourage applications from as wide a spectrum of applicants as possible taking the view that participation is open to all relevant organisations concerned with training and that it is important that it should be seen to be so. Encouraging a broad base of applications is seen to assist in seeking a geographical spread within the Member State and a wide range of projects within which the needs of particular priority groups such as women and the socially disadvantaged are more likely to be reflected. It also increases the opportunity to bring new training organisations into the network.
- 14.6 An alternative view expressed for example by Ireland is that while it is desirable for the PETRA Programme to be widely known and while any training organisation can apply to participate in Action II of PETRA,

priority should be given to organisations which already have experience of trans-national co-operation and preferably a high profile within their own Member State or to projects which are linked to or are likely to be of particular interest to national bodies. The argument is that this approach increases both the possibility of a project being successful, since Action II projects are seen as being very demanding on participating organisations, and that it increases the likelihood of projects having an impact which goes beyond the participating training organisations.

- 14.7 The relative emphasis which should be given to either approach depends on how it is considered that PETRA should seek to achieve its objectives. The first approach would support a case for a significant expansion of the PETRA Programme. Italy, for example, would argue that an increase in the number of participating organisations would accelerate both awareness of the concept of the European dimension in vocational training and the development and dissemination of training methodologies and contents.
- 14.8 Emphasis on the alternative view would support the argument that PETRA need not be significantly expanded; that the emphasis should be on quality and innovation which can be promoted by encouraging projects of particular relevance to a Member State or by encouraging the emergence of 'centres of excellence'. This approach however is heavily dependent on an effective dissemination strategy within a Member State.
- 14.9 The question is not so much of choosing between two alternative strategies, since PETRA is a publicly funded Programme to which any training organisation is entitled to apply, but rather where the balance between the two approaches should lie. The assessment team would be disposed towards putting the emphasis on quality of projects rather than quantity as the best way of ensuring that the objectives of PETRA are achieved but, at the same time, considers that there is a case for some expansion of the Programme given the high level of interest amongst training organisations which is evident in many Member States.
- 14.10 When projects are accepted a directory containing a profile of each project is circulated and project organisers are invited to a contact workshop at

which, with the assistance of their NCUs they have the opportunity to find suitable partners.

- 14.11 As originally conceived and implemented the first year of the project's participation was devoted to developing new partnerships and planning the detail of trans-national projects. Support of 10,000 ECU was available to each project for this phase and, subject to satisfactory progress, a further 25,000 ECU was available to each organisation in the partnership for each of the two succeeding years in order to support the implementation of the project. For projects submitted to the programme for the first time in 1993 this timescale has had to be compressed into two years as the second phase of PETRA is due to conclude at the end of 1994. No new ENTP Projects will be admitted to PETRA in 1994.
- 14.12 During interviews with the assessment team every NCU was of the opinion that the concept of contact workshops and a first year contact phase has been singularly successful in providing a foundation for the development of successful projects.
- 14.13 A number of Member States however including Italy and Ireland have expressed the view that three years is barely sufficient for the implementation of a project and the establishment of more permanent linkages between institutions. The extension of this Action to 4 or 5 year programmes would command a wide degree of support.
- 14.14 In order to promote Community objectives and to facilitate the development of trans-national partnerships projects within Action II are focused on specific themes and sectors. These are determined with the assistance of the PETRA Advisory Committee. It is important that these should not be narrowed to the point that they become a constraint in the Programme and it is generally accepted that a good balance has been achieved although Spain and Luxembourg in particular would like to see Member States have more flexibility in the application of the criteria. We have analysed the themes and sectors addressed by national projects entering the network in 1992 but the data is of limited value as it reflects the choices made by NCUs and the Commission and may not necessarily be an accurate reflection of the spread of projects and themes contained within the applications from which the

projects were selected. Projects entering the network do however show a perhaps predictable emphasis of new technologies (46% of all projects).

- 14.15 The majority of national projects selected are focused on young people in post secondary/compulsory education but the flexibility of PETRA is reflected in the spread of projects in Member States such as Portugal, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Italy and France to include a significant number of project promoters from the secondary education sector and thus respond to the particular vocational training needs within their own Member State.
- 14.16 The number of trans-national partners can vary from one up to ten but two-thirds of all projects have either two, three or four partners.
- 14.17 Action II projects are required to complete a questionnaire for each year that they are involved in the project. Completed questionnaires were available at the time of writing for 1992 (the first year of the first phase of PETRA) in respect of:
- 70% of type A projects, ie projects within the contact phase
- 56% of type B1 projects, ie projects in their second year
- 60% of type B2 projects, ie projects in their third year.
- 14.18 Patterns emerging from our analysis of these questionnaires are useful indicators but caution must be exercised in drawing conclusions as data is not available for around one-third of Action II projects which were underway in 1992.
- 14.19 In the two-thirds of projects for which data is available, 24,840 young people were perceived as being direct beneficiaries from the work being undertaken by national projects. The highest concentrations were in Spain, Luxembourg, Belgium and Italy. It is not surprising, since PETRA is concerned with the initial training of young people, that 85% of the total were aged between 15 and 24.
- 14.20 Within the projects analysed, 3,438 staff were involved of whom an overall majority (60%) were men. Member States in which the majority of the staff involved were women were Portugal (56%), United Kingdom (52%) and

Greece (51%). The lowest percentage of female staff were in Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland.

- 14.21 The questionnaires which we analysed predefined 5 types of trans-national activity:
- the joint development of training modules
 - the joint training of trainers
 - the exchange of trainers/staff
 - the joint development of Actions/training materials for young people.
- 14.22 There is also the "other" category for other types of activities.
- 14.23 More than one selection is possible so one partnership can undertake more than one type of trans-national activity.
- 14.24 Overall in 1992 amongst the sample available to us the total number of activities was 686 but we cannot tell distributed amongst how many national partnerships and the total number of national projects involved was 224. On average therefore each national project was involved in about 3 different trans-national activities. The distribution across the different types of activities was fairly even. Twenty-four per cent were joint development of Actions/training materials; 18% were exchanges of trainers/staff; 17% were joint development of training modules.
- 14.25 Projects from Spain, United Kingdom, Luxembourg and Denmark have the highest average number of activities in which they are involved whilst the lowest average is found in Italy, Belgium and Greece. The emphasis within PETRA in different Member States is also visible in the analysis of activities. German projects show some preference for the joint development of Actions/training materials for young people while Dutch and Italian projects lead respectively the group of projects involved in the joint development of modules and in the joint training of trainers.

14.26 Insofar as the development of modules for young people is concerned the questionnaires classify these as:

- training courses in the form of modules
- training materials
- software
- joint assessment of certification
- reports, evaluation studies
- other

14.27 More than one selection is possible so that each trans-national partnership can aim to produce more than one output.

14.28 Overall in 1992 within the sample available to us a total of 463 partnerships outputs were realised. Two types of output account for more than half of the overall total; training modules (29%) and training materials (25%). Germany has the highest level of involvement in the production of training units; Germany and Spain have the highest involvement in the production of training materials; Italy has the lead in respect of software with the United Kingdom and France having the lead for joint assessment and certification. Reports and evaluation studies are led by Spain and the United Kingdom.

14.29 In the development of modules for the training of trainers, partnerships within the sample were working on 243 training outputs. Three main types of output are represented, namely training modules (27.5%); training materials (32%) and reports/evaluations (29%). Member States are quite evenly represented with the exception of Spain which is strongly represented within these activities.

14.30 Mobility within trans-national partnerships is but one possible co-operative activity and will, in some cases, be linked to Action IA projects. Within the two-thirds of Action II projects for which data is available, 2,386 young persons were identified as participating in a placement abroad. Of these

around 90% were aged between 15 and 24. Females accounted for 48% with 5 Member States having a majority of women participants. These were Greece (71%), Luxembourg (62%), Ireland (57%), United Kingdom (53%) and Denmark (53%).

- 14.31 The most represented group is that of young people who have completed compulsory education (49%) and they are most evident within German, Italian and United Kingdom projects. Technical upper secondary (15%) and vocational upper secondary (14%) are the other two most represented levels with Spain most evident in the first group and the Netherlands most evident in the second.
- 14.32 In 1992, 1,585 staff were directly involved in trans-national activities within the projects for which data is available. Overall women account for 39% and in no Member State is there a majority of women. The highest percentage of women is found in Portugal (49%). The lowest percentage of women staff involved in trans-national activity are in the Netherlands (31%) and in Belgium (28%).
- 14.33 In some Member States, notably in the Netherlands, comment was made about the level of funding made available to Action II projects. There does not however appear to be any strong pressure for the amount of funding to be increased as there is a generally held view that it is desirable for training organisations to find the balance of funding required from within their own resources. In some Northern Member States, including Ireland, the view was expressed that the relatively small amounts of money available to projects are seen to have some advantages in that it ensures that applicants have a genuine interest in trans-national activity and are not motivated by financial considerations.

15. YOUTH INITIATIVE PROJECTS

- 15.1 A Youth Initiative Project (YIP) is a project managed and controlled by young people. The essential features of YIPs are that a group of young people develop a project to provide a service to other young people or to the wider community. Through PETRA they may receive grant-aid for one year only of up to 10,000 ECU provided that this does not exceed 50% of the total project cost.
- 15.2 YIPs are seen as a means of enabling young people who are outside the formal education or training systems to become involved in a formalised activity which is a learning process in its own right and which, for some, may provide a route into more structured training or into employment. In most cases the young people will be supported by adult advisers and indeed, as Belgium has observed, are unlikely to succeed if they are not.
- 15.3 More than six hundred YIPs have been supported under PETRA since 1988. Between 100 and 120 new YIPs will be funded within PETRA in 1993 and YIPs will be the only new projects admitted to Action II of PETRA in 1994. Although the nature of projects varies considerably a significant number are concerned with the production of publications; in audio or audio-visual projects; with job creation often related to environmental issues such as recycling; or with social problems such as provision for the elderly, the homeless or drug addicts.
- 15.4 YIPs are required to complete a questionnaire at the end of their contractual year. At the time of writing questionnaires were available from 59% of YIPs funded during 1992, the first year of PETRA II. Analyses of these questionnaires provides some useful indicators but care should be taken in drawing firm conclusions as there is no data available from 41% of projects.
- 15.5 Within the sample available 1,578 young people participated directly in YIP projects suggesting that, on average, a YIP project involves twenty-nine young people. These young people tend to be concentrated at the low end of the age range. Thirty-five per cent were between twenty and twenty-four years of age and 28% were between fifteen and nineteen years. Sixteen per cent were younger than fifteen years and most of these were either in Spain or the United Kingdom. Overall there was a majority of

young men involved in YIPs (57%). Four Member States had a majority of women: United Kingdom, Denmark, Italy and Portugal.

- 15.6 A substantial percentage of the YIP participants had not reached a very high level of education. Seventeen per cent had only completed primary education and 22% had completed compulsory secondary education.
- 15.7 YIPs are seen as an opportunity for young people to work together to address issues which they see as important and in doing so to develop a variety of skills ranging from transversal competencies such as self-confidence, adaptability and decision-making to organisational and planning abilities and in some instances specific skills directly related to their project. Within PETRA National Advisory Committees there are varying attitudes towards YIPs.
- 15.8 Most, including for example Greece, the Netherlands, Denmark and Germany regard them as having a useful role in that they offer a supplementary form of provision for young people who, at least temporarily, have dropped out of the more formal systems. They are seen as being more effective where a link has been established with a formal training organisation which can provide specialist training where this is needed and they are perceived as having a beneficial effect on training organisations as they provide an insight for training organisations into alternative ways of providing for and working with young people. Some Member States, for example the United Kingdom, are actively trying to strengthen the links between YIPs and training organisations.
- 15.9 There is currently a small trans-national element within the YIP strand. This was anticipated by a pilot phase: the Youth Initiative Theme-based Partnerships brought together eighteen projects from the Community to work together in four partnerships of four or five projects over a two-year period. Currently thirteen YIPs have been invited to participate in Action II projects but these projects are still at the organisational stage.
- 15.10 Whilst the possibility of introducing a trans-national dimension to the YIP concept has been demonstrated any significant extension of the trans-national dimension in YIPs is likely to be difficult. By their very nature most YIPs are strongly localised projects responding directly to a

perceived local need and interacting with the local community and, in many cases, with local training organisations. Individual projects also tend to be short-lived: the young people move on.

- 15.11 A number of Member States including Spain, Luxembourg and the Netherlands consider that, while the development of YIPs should be supported, they should not be part of PETRA because since they are essentially local initiatives relating to the local environment their objectives are not coherent with the objectives of the PETRA Programme.
- 15.12 Concern has also been expressed about the risk of confusion arising from the establishment of a similar initiative, Youth Pilot Projects, which are being funded by the budget voted by the European Parliament for Priority Actions in the field of Youth.
- 15.13 The localised rather than trans-national dimension to most YIPs would certainly support the case for moving YIPs out of the PETRA Programme. The affinity between YIP organisation and methodology to youth service concepts and the existence of a parallel initiative within Priority Actions in the field of Youth would support the case for YIPs to be transferred to the Youth Sector. Against that however is the acknowledgement in Member States that links between YIPs and training organisations are mutually beneficial to both. There would appear to be a risk that the movement of YIPs out of the PETRA Programme would weaken the continued development of links between YIPs and training organisations.
- 15.14 There is a distinction between YIPs and Youth Pilot Projects which have social and cultural objectives. This distinction has been strengthened by the new more vocationally focused selection criteria for YIP projects and the arrangements for technical assistance from Brussels have facilitated a co-ordinated approach to the selection of projects. At Community level the two initiatives are currently working well together but at Member State level the distinctions do not appear, as yet, to be always as clearly understood. Part of the reason for this appears to be that detailed information issued by the Community tends to be programme-specific. It would be helpful if promotional material about one programme could include in some detail information about related programmes.

15.15 Reference is made elsewhere in this report to the desirability of more prompt payment of grants to YIPs. Member States have also expressed the view that the time involved in obtaining approval for individual projects from the Commission needs to be reduced. It is also considered that there would be merit in a greater involvement of those concerned with the management of the YIP initiative at Member State level in discussions on policy issues as an extension of existing consultations on administrative procedures. It could be to the benefit of YIPs to strengthen further the involvement and sense of ownership of Member States in the development of the YIP concept and the selection of projects.

16. ACTION III VOCATIONAL INFORMATION AND GUIDANCE

- 16.1 While vocational guidance does not represent a completely new area of activity for the PETRA Programme, the measures and activities foreseen for the second phase of the Programme are new and are still in their implementation phase. It is not therefore possible to undertake a comprehensive assessment of their results. Analysis has therefore been limited to a first impression of the activities initiated and a preliminary assessment of their potential to achieve their objectives.
- 16.2 Action III of PETRA represents the first structured attempt to provide for a framework to assist Member States in developing their vocational guidance systems further and introduce a European dimension to the services which they provide to young people.
- 16.3 Action III provides for:
- i. support for national systems for the exchange of vocational guidance data and information about good practice and effective methods in vocational guidance;
 - ii. support for additional training for guidance counsellors/specialists on European aspects of guidance.
- 16.4 Since January 1992 the activities which have been initiated under this Action are:
- i. networking of national systems to exchange data and information on vocational guidance by setting up national resources centres and financing development projects;
 - ii. trans-national projects aimed at the training of guidance counsellors on European aspects of vocational guidance.
- 16.5 Financial and technical support to national systems of vocational guidance has been provided for the establishment of a Community network of national centres which it is intended will develop and update data for use by guidance services in all Member States. These centres will be funded to exchange information and data relating to vocational guidance as well as to

training and employment opportunities in other countries of the European Community. In some cases the centres were already in existence, usually as guidance or employment services and were designated by the Member States as PETRA Guidance Services. This was the case in Denmark, Germany, Spain, France, Italy and Luxembourg. In other cases new centres were established by national authorities. In each case centres have a dual role. Trans-nationally they participate in the European network of guidance resource centres and nationally they co-operate with the various national guidance services.

- 16.6 In all twenty-seven centres have been designated by Member States. The national centres in Germany, Denmark, France, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom are now fully operational. In Belgium in both the French and Flemish communities and in Spain and Ireland the centres are expected to be fully operational by the end of 1993.
- 16.7 Portugal and Greece are planning to establish national guidance centres. These two Member States do not as yet have a national policy in the field of vocational guidance and their existing guidance services are marginally developed. There is a risk that unless these two Member States are able to define more clearly their national policy and objectives fairly quickly, they will be unable to benefit fully from activities being developed within this Action.
- 16.8 While trans-national links are clearly essential for the designated resource centres their first requirement for success is the establishment of effective links with organisations responsible for the national guidance policy and to the training world and the labour market. They cannot fulfil their role which is to be a focal point of national effort to introduce a Community dimension to guidance and develop further the existing policies and practices unless they have effective links with their national systems.
- 16.9 Funding has also been provided for 3 development projects intended to support the activities of the National Resource Centres and facilitate the establishment of the Community Network for the exchange of vocational information. These projects are co-operative projects between the different National Centres at the initiative of Member States. The first aims to

develop a community network of databases for exchanging information and data on guidance; the second to improve the quality of guidance, especially by introducing a European dimension; and the third to enhance the role of industry and the social partners in the process of vocational guidance.

- 16.10 There would appear to be some inherent problems with these projects. The United Kingdom and Netherlands expressed the opinion that the themes were to a certain extent imposed by the Commission and do not always represent the real priorities of Member States in the field of vocational guidance. It is considered that there should have been a more detailed analysis of national needs and priorities before the themes were determined. The United Kingdom and Netherlands in particular question the usefulness and cost effectiveness of the attempts to develop links between databases for exchanging information and data on guidance. Italy wishes to see a higher percentage of the funding available for this Action being devoted to the training of Guidance Counsellors.
- 16.11 Within Action III support is provided for the training of guidance counsellors/specialists on European aspects of guidance through funding of joint training activities for guidance experts and joint development of European training material and modules aimed at the training of the European Counsellors. Fifteen projects have been selected and grouped into three trans-national partnerships which involve at least three Member States and include at least one Southern Community country. The projects are innovative in nature and provide information/advice services to specialists or specialist organisations. The national organisations participating guarantee that these projects can successfully have a multiplier effect and an impact on national systems of vocational guidance. The result should be transferable to other organisations which have not participated in their activity.
- 16.12 Taking into account the limited number of the projects funded under Action III, analysis of these projects by geographical distribution, promoting organisation, contents and participants does not reveal any significant bias. All Member States are represented, partnerships are geographically mixed and participating organisations vary significantly from one country to the other. Represented within the projects are national

employment authorities; training institutes, NCUs, Ministries, Social Partner Organisations; regional and national guidance and training bodies and universities.

- 16.13 In a large number of Member States - Belgium (French and Flemish communities), Spain, France, Italy, Germany, Luxembourg and the United Kingdom, a number of national seminars have either taken place or are planned. Such seminars give a substantial number of guidance counsellors the opportunity to benefit from the experience and outputs developed within the trans-national projects for the training of guidance counsellors and specialists. However these projects tend to be less than effective when their links with the National Resource Centre are weak as is the case in the Netherlands. Efforts are required to ensure that the PETRA activities of vocational guidance work in parallel and that all the relevant authorities can benefit.
- 16.14 In a Member State the NCUs have responsibility for the implementation of the guidance activities at national level. In practical terms and taking into account the limited number of projects funded under this Action, NCUs play the role of intermediary in the submission of proposals to the Commission.
- 16.15 In some Member States (in Belgium (French community) and Ireland) the NCUs are also national guidance centres. In other Member States the NCUs have responsibility for the national centre and this is not always welcome by those responsible for the centre. Some conflict can be observed in the relations between the NCUs and guidance centres, for example in The Netherlands, Greece and Portugal.
- 16.16 At this stage in the development of activities within Action III there is a strong case for centralised management but within the variety of actors involved at this point in time some relationships do appear to be rather delicate and in need of careful handling.
- 16.17 There has been a considerable delay in the implementation of the activities of Action III which it would seem has been due to a large extent to the disparities which exist in the different Member States in the development of national guidance services. This has made it difficult to agree and

subsequently initiate trans-national co-operative activities which could be beneficial to all the participating bodies from the different Member States.

- 16.18 The financial resources which have been allocated to Action III are shown in Figure 3. (1994 estimates have been provided by the responsible Departments in the Commission.)

Figure 3

In 0,000 ECU	1992	1993	1994*	Total
Total PETRA	29.000	35.496	39.000	103.496
Total ACTION III	1.000	2.000	2.740	5.740
National Centres	0.600	0.600	0.720	1.920
Development Projects	-	0.900	1.500	2.400
Training Counsellors	0.400	0.470	0.520	1.390

* Commission proposal

- 16.19 In 1992 Action III received approximately 3.4% of the total budget allocated to the PETRA Programme while in 1993 it received approximately 6%. In 1994 it is expected that 7% of the total amount available to the PETRA Programme will be allocated to Action III activities.
- 16.20 It is clear that in order to establish and render fully operational the Community Network of National Resource Centres for the exchange of guidance information and data, a longer period than the 3 years of the PETRA Programme is needed. As far as the training of guidance counsellors in European aspects of guidance is concerned, a number of generations of projects will be needed in order to develop the appropriate methods and training material which will be required.
- 16.21 In whatever structures may emerge post 1994 it is suggested that the Commission should strive to establish programmes and activities concerned

with vocational guidance with at least a 5-year duration to allow for sufficient time for them to develop.

- 16.22 At this early stage in the development of Action III with the first results expected in 1994 it is rather difficult to address the issue of dissemination.
- 16.23 The national centres were selected or established by Member States with the intention that they should serve as a focal point for introducing a Community dimension for vocational guidance in that Member State. It is difficult at this early stage in their existence to say if they are fulfilling this task. Most of them however seem to have the necessary elements to become an impetus for the development of national vocational guidance policies.
- 16.24 The national seminars linked to the trans-national projects for the training of guidance counsellors are an encouraging sign and an analysis of the participating organisations in the trans-national projects would suggest that the national bodies involved have the capability to disseminate the outcome of trans-national co-operation. The wide spectrum of national organisations involved represent important networks which can play an important multiplier role. It would seem that the participating bodies in the trans-national projects for the training of guidance counsellors have been well chosen.
- 16.25 Action III has a relevance to the whole area of initial vocational training, especially guidance relating to placements for young people and the training modules. It is therefore important to ensure an interaction between activities taking place under the auspices of Action III and in the other areas of the Programme. This interaction would be beneficial both at Community level and at national level.
- 16.26 In 1992, 60 out of the 152 projects admitted to the ENTP under Action II of PETRA had a clear relevance to vocational guidance.
- 16.27 As yet there do not appear to be any effective links between activities within Action III of PETRA and other Actions within the PETRA Programme. It would make sense that such links should be established.

- 16.28 The initial impact of Action III has been different in each Member State depending largely on the state of development of vocational guidance in the particular Member State. For Member States with no national guidance system, PETRA's request to establish a national centre has acted as a catalyst to initiate national discussions on policy developments. In the other group of Member States where vocational guidance policy existed, PETRA has helped through trans-national co-operation and the exchange of information and experience to introduce reforms to the national systems. In Spain, Italy, Portugal and France, centres which analyse and provide information on professional profiles have been created.
- 16.29 PETRA has frequently underlined the absence of co-ordination between the different services responsible for guidance and their links to training provision. It has stimulated co-operation between the different guidance services and in some Member States (France, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, Portugal and Greece) it has promoted increased co-operation between Ministries of Employment and Education.
- 16.30 The fundamental point however remains that at this point in time the guidance services of the Member States are in a very different state of development. As a result, the PETRA activities, while encouraging and introducing a Community dimension and co-operation between national systems of vocational guidance are not equally beneficial to all Member States. It can be argued that trans-national co-operation will work as an additional motivation to the less developed countries to develop vocational guidance services but this will require significant resources. A pragmatic solution to the problem would be to provide for special projects within the less developed national systems in order to promote a transfer of knowledge and experience from the more highly developed national systems and narrow the gaps which currently exist.
- 16.31 At the present stage, community policy in the area of vocational guidance is targeted only at young people, as these are defined in the PETRA context. However, vocational guidance concerns equally other groups, for example, young people in secondary education and in universities, or, more importantly, the unemployed of all ages. Moreover, vocational guidance can be seen as a life-long necessity, and individuals of all ages need to have

the opportunity to be informed of the existing possibilities for training (or re-training) and employment in other countries of the European Community.

Therefore, it is recommended that community policy and action expands the range of its activities in the area of vocational guidance to cover all the different levels of guidance in order to ensure that all individuals receive guidance advice and information throughout their education and training, as well as throughout their active professional life. Due to the fact that PETRA is a programme for young people, it might be necessary to find another framework for community action in the area of vocational guidance. The proposed future Community Training Programme should ensure the existence of a significant strand for all aspects of vocational guidance.

- 16.32 The financial resources available appears to be adequate for the current level of activities. However, it is suggested above that consideration should be given both to special support for Member States in which guidance activities are less well developed and to an extension of activities to cover all the different levels of guidance. This would require a significant increase in the resources available to support community action within the area of vocational guidance and it is recommended that consideration should be given to providing the necessary funding.

17. COMPLEMENTARY MEASURES

17.1 The complementary measures are designed to support the development and implementation of the other Actions and activities of the Programme. They include the Research Network, the Community-wide studies, evaluation activities, as well as technical assistance at Community and national level and general dissemination activities. Dissemination is considered in Section 9 of this Report.

Research Network

17.2 In 1992, the PETRA Programme continued to fund 28 research institutes which had started their trans-national co-operation on 4 different themes, in the framework of the first phase of the PETRA Programme. These research partnerships are funded by the Commission for two years in order to examine together certain aspects of initial vocational training. These partnerships were initiated under the first phase of the PETRA Programme to promote trans-national European co-operation between research institutes in the field of vocational training.

17.3 The themes which have been selected for co-operative research work include:

- qualitative aspects of alternance-based vocational training;
- models for planning the provision of training at regional level;
- effectiveness of new curriculum models for vocational training;
- impact of "training for enterprise" schemes.

17.4 The research partnerships, are aimed to establish co-operation and links between research institutes across Europe. Their objectives are to improve the quality of research on training issues; produce high quality research reports; and produce policy recommendations. They promote European trans-national co-operation between research institutes in the field of vocational training, create research links between them, exchange ideas and experiences and promote better understanding between researchers and other experts participating in the partnerships.

17.5 Those responsible for PETRA at Community level have indicated to the Assessment Team that the Network of Research Partnerships will not be continued. The existing partnerships are currently finishing their work and no new institutes or themes will be introduced in the future. The Assessment Team believes that the Research Networks can make a contribution to the development of vocational training policy throughout the European Community under certain conditions. It therefore recommends that the Research Network expands to include new themes and institutes provided that:

- the selection of themes reflects national priorities
- the partnerships have as their objective the production of comprehensive results containing clear recommendations for policy development
- the outputs of these partnerships are widely disseminated at national level as well as at Community level

Community-wide Studies

17.6 Two Community-wide studies have been initiated by the Programme in the framework of the Complementary Measures. At the request of the Council of Ministers, the first study is dealing with "the social and legal status of young people in initial vocational training and related trans-national placements", while the second one is examining "the recognition and certification of trans-national training and work experience placements".

17.7 These two studies are carried out by experts or expert institutions which have been nominated by Member States, following a request by the Commission. Both studies are co-ordinated by the Commission.

17.8 The objectives of these two studies are to examine the current arrangements which exist in the different Member States in the area of mobility of young trainees, workers and young unemployed and in the area of recognition and certification of training and work experience placements, including trans-national placements, with the view to find and recommend solutions in order to allow that all young participants in PETRA placements face no

obstacles which hamper their participation in, and the recognition and certification of, trans-national placements.

- 17.9 The two studies were initiated in 1992 and are expected to be completed by the end of 1993. Therefore at the time when the Evaluation Team undertook its examination, the results were not yet available.
- 17.10 Most of the people interviewed at national level have stressed their satisfaction about the design and implementation of the two studies.

Selection of Themes

- 17.11 The selection of themes, both for the Research Network as well as for the Community studies has met with the approval of Committee Members interviewed, since these themes represent issues of equal development interest (Research Network) as well as of practical value for all Member States (Community studies).
- 17.12 Some Member States' representatives raised the question whether the PETRA research activities should concern national issues or limit their examination to issues linked only to trans-national activities. They argue that since the situation varies significantly between Member States, common research work is not always beneficial. Moreover, it is suggested that Community research should concentrate on trans-national aspects linked to PETRA, following the example of the two studies which began in 1992. The Assessment Team believes that both types of activity should be continued. Joint research on national issues can be beneficial to all participating institutes and countries provided that this research is linked to the development of national policy.

Synergy and Complementarity

- 17.13 Synergy and complementarity of the Research activities of the PETRA Programme were examined in relation to the other Actions of the Programme and in relation to other Community research activities in the field of vocational training.

- 17.14 The Community studies are clearly linked to the development of trans-national training and work experience placements (Action I). The synergy and complementarity of these two strands of the Programme are very clear.
- 17.15 At Community level, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) implements a number of research activities related to the vocational training for young people, as well as to general issues in the area of vocational training. The Assessment Team considers that there is the potential for more interactive links between the research activities under the PETRA Programme and those carried out by CEDEFOP. Two recommendations can be made: the establishment of a continuous exchange of information, including the results of research activities, and an effort to ensure that the CEDEFOP annual work programme takes into account PETRA priorities.

Impact/Influence of Research and Community Studies

- 17.16 Policy-makers at national level who were asked about the research partnerships were not always aware of their activities, which indicates that their research and results would not be taken fully into account in the design of national policies in the area of initial vocational training.
- 17.17 However a number of Member States including the United Kingdom, Greece, Portugal and Ireland research institutions have not had a long history of active interest in vocational training. Insofar as the Research Networks have stimulated such an interest they can be seen as having had a valuable role.
- 17.18 It is too early to assess the impact of the two Community studies, since they have not yet been completed. However, the Assessment Team considers that both studies have the potential to influence the way trans-national placements are organised and carried out. Their success will depend largely on the legal or other instruments which will be brought forward, as well as the political willingness of Member States to take the necessary measures to eliminate these problems.

Research Activities in the Area of Vocational Training

- 17.19 Research activities at Community level on issues relating to vocational training have always been complementary to the other actions and activities of the programmes, as is the case in PETRA. The Assessment Team believes that trans-national research deserves equal consideration to the other activities ie trans-national projects and placements. The Community has a significant instigator role to play in this area as well. Trans-national research can contribute not only to the other trans-national activities, but also to the introduction of innovation in the design and implementation of national policy. The establishment of a coherent framework for research, including evaluation activities, is considered by the Assessment Team as a step forward. Consequently, sufficient financial resources should be made available by the Commission for this type of trans-national activity.

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