

CEDEFOP

INFO about Vocational Training in the European Union

Letter from the Director

As you may have noticed, this issue of Cedefop Info features the Centre's new logo and a change in the title graphics. In keeping "Cedefop" distinct from "Info", we wished to make the point that our newsletter is an information channel not just for our own work, but for vocational training in the EU in general.

We regularly receive news stories, articles, comments, essays and reviews in all the EU languages, especially from the members of our documentary information network (see p. 20). These are carefully considered, selected and edited by the editorial board for publication in three languages (EN, FR, DE). Not all selected items can be included, as the printed version of Cedefop Info only runs to 20 pages at most. However, those omitted for reasons of space are posted as soon as possible on the Internet, where you will find the latest, most extensive information on vocational training in Europe. If you have interesting items on vocational training in your member state to contribute, please send them to the documentary network member in your country.

In case you have not yet seen our Work Programme 2000 and our Operational Guidelines and Medium Term Priorities in the Electronic Training Village (<http://www.trainingvillage.gr>), you will find the necessary references on pages 2 and 3. The 1999 Annual Report, just approved by the Management Board, has also been posted on these pages. Should you need a printed version, we will be happy to send you a free copy of any of these three documents in EN/FR/DE.

Apart from the new publications presented on pages 8 and 16, I would like to draw your attention to the Cedefop report, An age of learning: vocational training policy at European level. This appeared in English in February and immediately generated considerable interest – and a generally positive reaction. French, German and Portuguese versions should be available by the middle of this year. A summary of the report is on pages 1 and 2 and in the Village (www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/policyreport), where you will also find an on-line order form and a virtual 'blackboard' for your comments.

The Electronic Training Village now has over 7500 residents and continues to grow not only in membership but in new services, such as the e-learning house. There have also been developments on Cedefop's own website. After months of intensive work and completion of the necessary testing, the reorganised, newly designed Cedefop website was officially launched on the occasion of the Management Board meeting of 23 March by the Chairman of the Board, Mr Oliver Lübbe. The site

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An age of learning:
vocational training policy at European level
Reference document 3005
2000, 146 p., languages: EN, i.p.: DE, FR, PT
Cat. no.: HX-25-99-075-EN-C, price: EUR 19
May be obtained from the EU sales offices

Cedefop upgrades its multilingual website

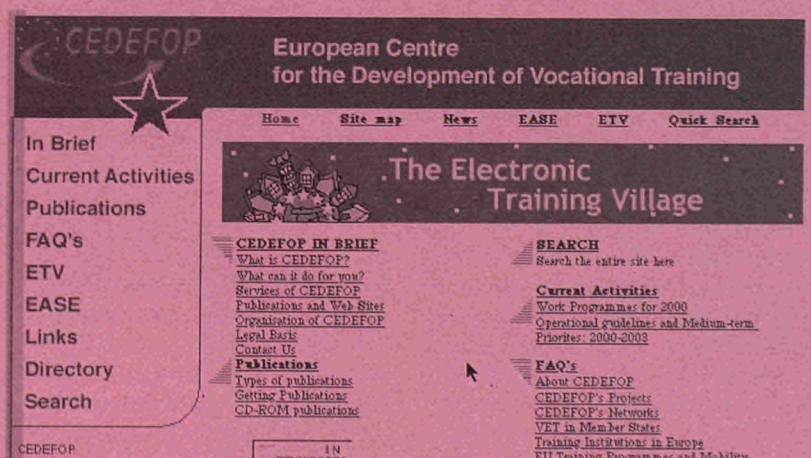
As of 23 March 2000, Cedefop's site on the World Wide Web (www.cedefop.eu.int) is now available in all eleven official languages of the European Community.

Since going on the Web in November 1996 with a trilingual website (French, German and English), the server has received some 4.5 million hits with close to 2000 people per day consulting its pages. With the spread of Internet access throughout Europe the number of visits to the site has been more than doubling on an annual basis. The decision to increase the language choice to eleven is a response to the demand for such electronic information resources from throughout the European Union.

The newly designed Cedefop site offers the user complete language choice and updated information on the tasks and activities of Cedefop, its services and contacts.

cedefop.eu.int also offers direct access to the Electronic Training Village (www.trainingvillage.gr), the interactive website designed specifically with vocational education and training specialists in mind. This service is also currently being redesigned to offer simpler navigation and improved access to its resources.

Source: Cedefop/CMC



France/Germany

Franco-German training agreement

At the 74th Franco-German Summit on 30 November 1999, France and Germany signed a co-operation agreement on vocational training.

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An age of learning Vocational training policy at European level

Vocational training policy report 2000

Vocational training helps realise many diverse economic and social aims, including a high level of employment, social cohesion and competitiveness. To contribute to these aims, the policy framework defining its objectives must be effective.

'An age of learning' is a report prepared and published by Cedefop, which aims to stimulate debate on vocational training policy at European level. It analyses vocational training policy developments at European level over the past 40 years. It also looks at action in the member states and the impact of economic and social change on vocational training.

It concludes that there is a need for a more clearly focused policy framework at European level. The issues the report raises are discussed below.

A context of change

Successive policy frameworks at European level have identified common issues, acted as a reference point for national vocational training policies and provided the context for practical co-operation, such as pilot projects and exchanges.

But the pace of economic and social change has quickened. European producers need a well-trained workforce.

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Europe 3, 4; Austria 7, 14; Belgium 5, 9, 11, 12, 15, 18, 19; Denmark 10, 19; Finland 7; France 1, 5, 6, 7; Germany 1, 3, 5, 12, 13, 19; Ireland 8, 11; Kosovo 5; Netherlands 5, 6, 11, 15, 16, 19; Norway 11, 14, 18; Portugal 16, 17, 19; Spain 15; Sweden 9, 19; United Kingdom 8, 14, 18.

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Letter from the Director

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now provides information on Cedefop's work in all the EU's official languages (see p. 1).

On March 24, the Management Board discussed in depth the reform recommendations made by the quadripartite Working Group on Human and Financial Resources of Cedefop 2000-2003. It was decided that the Working Group

and the Director, in co-operation with the Staff Committee, should further develop these recommendations, which include:

- introducing activity-based budgeting in the coming year, like that of the European Commission;
- making better use of human resources, e.g. by applying activity-based management with greater individual responsibility and an increased emphasis on training and career development;
- increasing own revenue through the improvement and extension of paying services;
- using the latest information and communication technologies;

□ disseminating electronic and printed information, including an electronic ordering system (e-commerce) tailored to the needs of target groups;

- preparing an agreement with the candidate countries as soon as financial and human resources are released for this purpose;
- supporting the European Commission in its dissemination of Leonardo da Vinci project work and results. In doing this Cedefop should take account of the particular needs of member states, e.g. by providing input into their electronic networks. The Commission and Cedefop have defined a framework for co-operation which allows Cedefop to support the Commis-

sion in a more structured and targeted way.

We were able to collaborate successfully on concrete issues related to this last point with the Directorate-General for Education and Culture of the European Commission during the conference launching the Leonardo da Vinci II, Socrates II and Youth programmes, which took place in Lisbon on March 17-18. This conference was organised by the Portuguese Ministries of Education and Labour on the occasion of the Portuguese presidency of the European Council. Other participants included the Commissioner responsible for Education and Culture, Ms Viviane

Reding, the President of Portugal, the Portuguese Prime Minister and other ministers, the Education and Labour Ministers of several EU member states and candidate countries and high-ranking experts in vocational training from member states.

Johan van Rens
Thessaloniki
Early April 2000

An age of learning:

Continued from page 1

Jobs for unskilled workers have decreased in number and those requiring a capacity for reasoning and management as well as technical know-how have increased. Change has put a premium on a high level of education, which is having ever more influence on career prospects. And it poses serious challenges for vocational training systems.

Towards lifelong learning

Throughout the EU, efforts have been made to raise skill levels. Member states have sought to reduce the numbers of young people leaving school without qualifications and to give those who do leave sufficient vocational training to find a job.

It is also agreed that people need access to learning throughout working life. But making lifelong learning a reality has far-reaching implications. Lifelong learning blurs traditional distinctions between initial and continuing vocational training, between formal and non-formal learning and between general education and vocational training. Establishing a system of lifelong learning requires a fundamental re-examination of the role of vocational training, what it comprises, what is expected of it, how it is delivered, how it is financed and how the widest possible access to it might be achieved.

How systems change will be determined by the interaction of a wide range of interests, including government at various levels, the social partners and individuals. This implies a need for consensus building. For systems to change effectively, all those involved need to understand the strategy and objectives being pursued.

A European framework

Irrespective of differences in vocational training systems, the challenge of responding to change is common to all member states.

But facing common challenges is not new in this area. In the past, they have been met by pooling ideas, identifying common objectives and agreeing joint action. Accordingly, the EU has been seen as a reference point for developing national policies and areas of co-operation. The joint opinions of the social partners have also been a reference point at EU level for both sides of industry in developing their approaches to vocational training.

There is a need for a clearly focused policy framework at European level to act as a reference point to support member states' efforts to reform their systems. Such a framework could identify common policy issues and define the links between vocational training and the European Employment Strategy. It could encourage debate on

ways of making lifelong learning a reality and help build consensus across the EU on the objectives of vocational training and the measures for achieving them. It would also help establish an effective system for the exchange of information and experience at European level, providing a forum for discussion and analysis and helping to improve policy-making.

A strong political commitment is essential to implement such a policy framework at European level, with clear roles for the Education Committee, the Social Affairs Council, the European Parliament and other European institutions and bodies.

Many elements of a framework already exist. Policy-makers meet regularly at European level. A number of organisations, including Cedefop, collect information on vocational train-

ing developments. The results of the European vocational training programmes, such as Leonardo da Vinci I, are sources of new material to feed into the debate.

The challenge is to draw these elements into a coherent system. To benefit fully from exchanges of views, it is important to have a clearly focused policy framework, agreed and monitored at a high political level – one which provides a reference point from which member states can draw, should they wish, in order to develop national policies and one within which actions in the Leonardo da Vinci II programme could be determined.

Concluding remarks

Many issues concerning lifelong learning affect the content and organisation of vocational training. These are the responsibility of member states. A

vocational training policy framework at European level must recognise that there is no single European solution.

But a clearly focused framework, which is supported by the various interests involved, and which facilitates exchanges of information and experience in a structured way, could contribute significantly to the decision-making process in member states.

Because the prosperity of the EU as a whole depends on the economic performance of its constituent parts, there is a common European interest in monitoring developments in vocational training in member states and in helping them implement policies to improve their systems. This interest was recognised by the Council Resolution of 17 December 1999 on 'Into the new millennium': developing new working procedures for European co-

operation in the field of education and training (OJ C 8 of 12.1.2000), which established a 'rolling agenda' for future work in the field of education and training. "An Age of Learning", along with other Cedefop publications, particularly the second report on vocational training research to be published during 2000, will, it is hoped, be useful contributions to the development and implementation of this rolling agenda.

An executive summary in the eleven official EU languages can be downloaded (www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/policyreport) free of charge.

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 Source: Cedefop/JMU

Cedefop Work Programme 2000 follows a result-oriented strategy

"Operational guidelines and medium-term priorities 2000-2003" set the course – Cedefop publishes second research report on VET

With its ambitious Work Programme for the year 2000, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop), as the reference centre of the European Union for information on vocational education and training, wishes to contribute to deepening understanding of developments in vocational education and training throughout Europe. Cedefop's networks bring together a wide range of expertise and facilitate the exchange of information, experience and good practice.

Cedefop's task is to support the European Commission in the promotion of vocational education and training and lifelong learning at Community level and to contribute to the work of the member states and the social partners by facilitating exchanges of information and experience. Cedefop delivers information on vocational education and training, promotes research and identifies innovation. It supports the specific needs of its partners, provides forums for debate and establishes links between policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners. Through its products and services, Cedefop serves the European Commission as well as member states, the social partners, the European Parliament and other policy-makers, including local and regional authorities, vocational education and training researchers and practitioners, the associated countries of Iceland and Norway and, through its study visits programme, central and eastern European countries.

The Work Programme 2000 is based on a result-oriented strategy, "Developing knowledge and experience", which takes forward the medium-term priorities for the period 2000-2003, as agreed by its Management Board: promoting competencies and lifelong learning, facilitating new ways of learning for a changing society, supporting employment and competitiveness and improving European understanding and transparency.

To promote competencies and lifelong learning, Cedefop is elaborating a systematic framework for lifelong learning, examining, for example, the importance of information and communication technologies as a learning tool, above

all for distance learning. The Centre is also developing a new initiative to validate competencies acquired through non-formal learning. Cedefop promotes new forms of learning in two further projects. The work of its vocational education and training experts will focus on developing a typology of innovation, observing innovative VET practices and disseminating their results.

In supporting employment and competitiveness, Cedefop will continue to work on the financing of vocational education and training. The Centre supports the European Employment Strategy by devoting attention to the role of vocational training and that of training-related guidelines, especially for SMEs. In improving mutual understanding and transparency in Europe, Cedefop will, among other activities, continue its work on the Transparency Forum and implement the proposals elaborated by the forum for a European approach to the transparency of qualifications.

Cedefop is also developing a mobility forum in the Electronic Training Village by setting up a self-assessment instrument and starting an electronic opinion poll. In co-operation with the Danish Centre for International Training Programmes (ACIU), Cedefop will be organising a conference on "Internationalising vocational education and training in Europe" on 23-25 May in Thessaloniki.

The services provided by Cedefop focus on four operational guidelines: providing information on vocational education and training, promoting and interpreting research and the identification of innovation, providing support to meet the specific needs of Cedefop's partners and offering forums for debate and links between policy-makers, social partners, researchers and practitioners.

Cedefop's activities in this framework include the provision of updated descriptions of training systems and the publication of the third issue of "Key data on vocational training in the EU". The library and documentation service co-ordinates the documentary information network, which provides data for the information services available on the Electronic Training Village (ETV). Cedefop is also establishing an on-line news service on vocational education and service within the ETV. Further activities lie in the field of external and interactive communications, including enhancing the content and design of

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Towards the Learning Region – education and regional innovation in the European Union and the United States

Cedefop has recently published a book entitled 'Towards the Learning Region – Education and Regional Innovation in the European Union and the United States' (eds. B. Nyhan, G. Attwell and L. Deitmer). It provides an overview of innovative regional, education-led strategies throughout regions in the European Union and United States. The publication has its origins in the "Akron Forum on Regional Collaboration to Develop Learning Strategies for the Global Economy", which took place on 9-11 February 1998 in Akron in the State of Ohio, USA. The Akron Forum was sponsored by the Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission and the US Information Agency. The book contains sixteen papers, written by experts from the educational, economic and regional development fields in the US and the EU. They analyse the ingredients of regional innovation and describe successful case studies.

There are numerous examples of regional and inter-regional co-operation in Europe. Many of the schemes supported by the educational, economic and social development programmes of the EU (such as the Leonardo da Vinci programme) are described in the publication. Throughout many parts of the United States regional development strategies can be evidenced in the formation (or transformation) of

metropolitan regions into dynamic entities facing up to the challenges of what is called the "new economy" – new in the sense that it is based on information and communication technology and is global.

Innovative community-oriented education, training and development agencies are beginning to play a major role in these developments both in

the US and the EU. On the one hand, educational institutes are acting as catalysts for the production of new ideas, and on the other, they are acting as brokers or mediators enabling different bodies to begin to work together, developing the know-how to turn these ideas into reality. A theoretical model for this kind of education-led arrangement has been called a "learning region" in the EU – a con-

cept that is outlined in many of the papers in the book.

The publication is divided into three parts. Part one, entitled 'Regional development and learning in the EU and US: the context', has six papers providing an overview of the political, economic, educational and social objectives that are driving regional development in the EU and US. In part

two entitled 'Regional case studies – theory and practice', five case studies are presented in relation to their theoretical and/or political contexts. These examine how infrastructures, based on co-operation between private, public and non-governmental organisations, have been put in place to deal with educational, economic and employment challenges. Part three, entitled 'Descriptions of regional projects', contains four papers providing overviews of projects which are in different stages of development.

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Source: Cedefop/BN

Shaping social innovation – Conference on the "valorisation" of LdV I survey and analysis projects

An international Leonardo da Vinci I (LdV I) Programme conference took place at the University of Bremen on 2-3 December 1999. The title of the conference – 'Shaping Social Innovation' – reflected one of the main aims of the research/survey and analysis measure of LdV I, namely, to examine educational strategies to promote social innovation.

This conference, which was organised by the Institute of Technology and Education of the University of Bremen on behalf of the European Commission (DG Education and Culture), was attended by over 80 people. It was the third large-scale international conference organised in the framework of the survey and analysis strand of the LdV programme. The previous ones took place in October 1996 in Berlin*

and in February 1998 in Rome. The aim of this conference, which came at the end of the LdV I programme, was to valorise the contribution of survey and analysis projects related to four themes: employment; small and medium sized enterprises; regional development and social dialogue. This was done through four parallel workshops, the conclusions of which are briefly summarised below.

Vocational education and training (VET) and the promotion of employment

One of the questions addressed in this workshop was how to equip people, in particular young people, with the qualities associated with 'employability'. The concept of 'employability' was seen to refer to the ability of people to manage themselves in different organisational contexts. This calls for a

'self-organising capacity', which was seen to be closely related to the notion of 'key qualifications' or 'core/key competencies'. However, the latter are often misunderstood to mean a bundle of unrelated key competencies. In fact, the 'key qualifications' concept should be interpreted in relation to the integrating notion of a 'self-organising capacity'.

VET and small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs)

One of the issues debated in this workshop was the feasibility of using SME workplaces as places of learning. Even though this idea is fine in theory, in reality, due to the pressures of competition and the emergence of short-term contractual arrangements, many SME employers can justify neither the financial nor the time investment. One of the solutions proposed is the promotion of stronger co-operation between SMEs and innovative VET institutions which have a capacity to introduce new learning approaches ena-

bling key people in the firm to integrate learning with daily work patterns without incurring large costs and losing too much time.

VET and regional/local development

The main challenge for VET institutions in a regional development context is to change from being separate formal teaching agencies to becoming part of what can be termed "developmental coalitions". Those who are successful in this regard find that they use new terminology to describe their role – they see themselves as "forums for development" or "change agents".

VET and social dialogue

Discussion in this workshop focused on assessing the impact of social dialogue on VET systems. There was consensus on the fact that social dialogue is going through major transitions in most European states due to the impact of industrial restructuring, responding to global competitiveness

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Cedefop Work Programme 2000 follows a result-oriented strategy

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the ETV to intensify co-operation with national and international organisations involved in vocational education and training.

In the year 2000, Cedefop will publish three issues of the European Journal for Vocational Training (partly in co-operation with the European Training Foundation (ETF)) and of Cedefop Info. The planned publications also include a series of hard-copy and electronic publications on the results of Cedefop project work. In close co-operation with the services of the Commission, Cedefop will also participate in vocational education and training fairs and exhibitions throughout Europe.

Cedefop's second research report on VET, to be published in the year 2000, deals with five main areas: steering and performance of VET; learning, knowledge and skills; the labour market and difficulties in matching skills and jobs; individual performance and social exclusion; and training and employment in enterprises. A further activity by means of which Cedefop promotes research co-operation is the development of the Cedefop Research Arena (CEDRA).

Some 750 vocational education and training experts will benefit from the Study Visits Programme in 2000. A topic for the first semester will be a presentation of the vocational training systems in the member states. Three "Agora" seminars (forums for debate on vocational education and training issues) will also be held on topics such as job rotation, alternative education and training processes or vocational and social guidance.

The Training of Trainers Network (TTnet) is to be further expanded through the association of additional countries with its activities. Two transnational workshops on the professionalisation of trainers are planned.

Cedefop's Brussels office guarantees an exchange of information between Cedefop and the EU institutions and programmes. The office contacts the countries that will be holding the Council presidency in the coming 18 months and ensures that they are informed of the Cedefop products and activities that are of relevance to the themes of their presidency. The office also maintains contacts with the Brussels headquarters of the social partners.

Source: Cedefop

Germany/Europe

New structure for Leonardo II co-ordination

Europass makes training placements abroad transparent

As the responsible German authority, the Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF) has adopted a new structure for the co-ordination of the EU vocational training programme, Leonardo da Vinci II. Whereas there were previously a total of seven German Leonardo project managers, the EU programme in Germany will now be co-ordinated by a single body, the National Agency Training for Europe, within the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB). The agency is now responsible for the contract management of the essential parts of the programme and the co-ordination of pilot, language learning and research projects; it will also serve as the contact point for information and advice on the Leonardo II programme.

At the end of 1999, 600 representatives of the political and economic sphere, associations and educational/training institutions met in Hannover at the conference to launch the EU initiatives "Europass" and "Leonardo II" as of January 2000. Edelgard Bulmahn, German Federal Minister for Education and Science, stated that Leonardo II carried forward the "tried and tested actions of the previous programme", while taking new initiatives, including training networks and transnational partnerships which, as the minister emphasised, are to "make transnational co-operation more sustainable". Bulmahn informed the conference that Leonardo II was to run for seven years with a budget of EUR 1.15 billion.

The introduction of the Europass was "an important step towards the creation of a European training area", said the minister. The document, which attests training pathways in European partner countries in several languages, "plays an important role in promoting the transparency of qualifications acquired abroad". Bulmahn, who expects the monetary union to give Europe a "gigantic push towards integration", appealed to conference participants to use this opportunity to improve training co-operation in Europe in a concrete and tangible way.

More information on both EU initiatives at the BIBB website: <http://www.bibb.de> under "LEONARDO II/Europass".

The names and addresses of all the National Agencies for Leonardo II are available on the website of the DG for Education and Culture, europa.eu.int/comm/education/leonardo/leonardo2_de.html

Source: BMBF/BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Tackling social exclusion effectively requires a change of mentality from the "socially included"

The socially excluded should not be undervalued. Assuming that skill requirements in different sectors are fulfilled, they constitute a potentially rich human resource, not a burden to society. The long-term unemployed and others affected by social exclusion should therefore not be considered "unemployable". These were some of the conclusions to come out of a European Training Foundation's fact-finding exercise that took place at its headquarters in Turin on 27-28 January. Representatives from a wide variety of central and eastern European countries had gathered to provide their input into the Foundation's current work in the field of social exclusion.

Adela Rogojinaru, an expert at the European Training Foundation (ETF), pointed out the all too familiar problem of employers failing to employ the 'socially excluded' because of their perception that such groups are a 'problem'. "This in the longer term will have to change", she said.

The seminar is the start of a process that will ultimately see the drawing up of a set of country-by-country reports on social exclusion. Designed to support this initiative, it provided an opportunity for participants to discuss methods of identifying and assessing social exclusion in central and eastern Europe. It also provided the possibility of evaluating policies and identifying examples of good practice both in the central and eastern European countries and elsewhere.

Social exclusion as a phenomenon is growing in importance in the Foundation's partner countries. The Foundation currently estimates that social exclusion could be affecting as much as 50% of the entire population in some of the central and eastern European countries. Vocational education and training reform alone cannot solve the problem, but the Foundation believes that, together with other social and structural measures, it can provide a useful tool in alleviating the problem. Without any attempt to address vocational education and training reform, the problem is set to get worse.

The meeting provided ample scope for a detailed discussion of the causes of social exclusion, difficulties encountered on the ground and

ways to tackle the problem. Participants highlighted groups vulnerable to the problems of social exclusion that required particular attention, such as women, children (including school dropouts), minority groups, people with disabilities and the poorly skilled. Practical everyday problems, such as the tendency for prejudice against the socially excluded, were also examined.

Representatives from the partner countries provided an array of information that needs to be considered in work in the field of combating social exclusion. The following areas were brought up for the fact-finding exercise by most of the countries represented:

- the need to improve regional vocational labour market requirements forecasting,
- the need to improve national mechanisms to measure and assess the social exclusion problem,
- a special focus on SMEs as a potential and unexploited source of employment,
- social partnerships as a way of stimulating employment.

Anastasia Fetzi, who is from the Foundation and organised the seminar and who works in the field of social exclusion summarised the task ahead: "Social exclusion is a process rather than a sudden event", she said. "It is caused by members of society being out of work for too

long a period with no prospect of re-entering the employment market. The subsequent lack of financial resources, the possible breakdown in the individual's relationships and other pressures can lead to a loss in personal self-esteem. It can ultimately result in a negative attitude towards the society in which the individual concerned lives".

One possible way of combating the problem is through the concept of a "social economy". In a nutshell, this involves different actors at local level getting together to develop employment opportunities at community level. The point was elaborated upon by Ms Rogojinaru, who suggested that the idea that the

state should *solely* be responsible for helping and supporting the socially excluded should be reconsidered, a point of view also echoed by expert Peter Grootings. He developed the argument further, stressing that the state in central and eastern European countries was too weak to carry all the responsibility for solving the problem of social exclusion. Other forms of intervention and other initiatives from different actors will need to be considered.

For more information concerning the European Training Foundation's work in the field of social exclusion, please contact Tristan Macdonald at the European Training Foundation
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Source: ETF

Innovative practices to promote the integration of excluded young people

Cedefop supports the European Commission in the dissemination of innovative practices in the field of vocational training through its project on 'Innovations in Vocational Training', a focal point of which are initiatives designed to combat the exclusion of young people from the labour market. The first phase of the project involved an analysis and comparison of case studies from a number of EU member states, including Denmark and Spain.

An alternative training concept used in Danish 'production schools' (produktionsskole) motivates young people to learn

Numerous production schools designed to promote the vocational integration of low-skilled unemployed young people were opened in Denmark. Attendance at these schools is generally for a period of 12 months, but those finding a job or a training place may leave at any time. Over 5 000 young (some unemployed) people are currently attending one of the 107 production schools in Denmark.

What makes the Danish production schools so innovative is the fact that training and tuition are not delivered within a set curriculum or modules, but imparted in the form of so-called 'lines', thereby tailoring training to students' individual needs. The basic idea is learning by doing: whenever a problem occurs in a given working step, the relevant theoretical tuition is organised to solve or cope with the problem, e.g. a problem in the calculation of quantities of timber or the dimensions of pieces of wood or

items of furniture is followed up by tuition in mathematics.

Many production schools offer lines with a strong environmental leaning. Practical training and theoretical tuition are combined in the fields of agriculture and forestry, landscape management, tourism and textiles.

Work and activity areas are frequently selected in collaboration with industry and commerce. Activities are learned and subsequently performed on a routine basis. Training is often combined with language learning and multimedia skills. Danish, social studies, mathematics and current affairs are taught to varying degrees by all production schools on the basis of this problem-based learning approach. Many production schools offer their students the opportunity of a placement in (local) public- or private-sector enterprises. National and international youth exchanges are also organised as part of the schools' activities, the focus being on basic education, history and culture, social skills and specific vocational or sectoral skills. Production schools cover about 1/5 of their financial requirements through the

provision of services or products for the local market, the remainder being state-funded.

International partnerships play an increasing role for many production schools

The Pile Mølle production school offers a number of training lines – e.g. 'nature and the environment', 'children and the environment', woodwork and metal-processing and tourism – which involve an increasing number of cross-border training and tuition elements. The production school's EU Centre coordinates, among others, two of the EU-sponsored projects which focus on cross-border youth training exchange.

EU 'Prodyouth' project to open a production school in Spain

The Youthstart project Prodyouth is currently attempting to set up a production school along Danish lines in the Spanish province of Murcia.

In the Spanish context, particularly innovative is the alternative learning concept designed to promote learning motivation by encouraging

young people to learn and perform activities that provide skills to a much greater degree than at the 'escuelas de taller' (workshop schools) for excluded young people. Motivating young people is a fundamental problem for many of the 'escuelas de taller', and even those workshop schools which function effectively fail to provide the same level of skills and learning motivation as the Danish production schools.

The Murcia initiative focuses on learning and working in the field of organic farming, landscape management and rural tourism, with particular emphasis on knowledge related to the relevance and practical application of new technologies in agriculture. An ecology camp is also in the pipeline. However, alongside the long-term funding of this project, the project is faced with the problem that Spanish legislation prohibits schools from being profit-oriented. In order to circumvent this legal obstacle, an association is to be founded to perform these activities on behalf of the project.

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Shaping social innovation Continued from page 3

and deregulation. The positive news, however, is that many national social partnership arrangements encompass topics related to training and in particular to lifelong learning, moving away from what was in some countries an almost exclusive focus on wage agreements. On the general European front, a viewpoint was that joint opinions on training seem to be running out of steam. The central issue in this regard was felt to be one of renewing and reforming the European tradition of social dialogue, because it gives the EU a unique 'cultural' competitive advantage. It should not

be seen as a structural factor placing a brake on competitiveness.

Overall review of the survey and analysis measure of LdV I

Mr Sergio Corti of DG Education and Culture of the European Commission gave an overview of the achievements of the survey and analysis measure of LdV I. He pointed out that in total 170 survey and analysis projects were financed following four calls between 1995 and 1998. Community funding for surveys and analyses amounted to 36 MEURO. If matched funding is taken into account, the total invest-

ment in research amounted to 60 MEURO.

Another topic that got an airing at the plenary sessions was the role and impact of research/survey and analysis activities on policy-making and practice. A viewpoint put forward was that, in the implementation of the programme, survey and analysis projects were too remote from the pilot projects and policy-making aspects of the LdV Programme. It was felt that if action pilot-projects and research projects were combined, then better progress could be made. Regarding

the dissemination of the results of research, the view was expressed that the linear research project model, in which dissemination comes after the projects have finished, should be replaced by a concurrent or accompanying dissemination model.

Transition to LdV II

The themes of the workshops at this conference were similar to the objectives of the new LdV II Programme. This was in order to generate material/results from LdV I which could be a starting point for thematic clusters to be built into LdV II. The successor

to the survey and analysis strand in LdV I is entitled in LdV II the 'Reference Material' measure. In discussions on the new programme it was felt that the work of the former survey and analysis measure could also be carried on through the 'Transnational Network' measure of LdV II.

* As a follow-up to the Berlin conference a reader entitled 'Building a European co-operative research tradition in vocational education and training – the contribution of the Leonardo da Vinci programme's surveys and analyses', edited by Agnes Dietzen and Michael Kuhn was published (in English) by the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung (BIBB), Berlin, 1998.

Source: Cedefop/BN

page 5 Bi- and multilateral co-operation F/D: Franco-German training agreement; D/Kosovo: Reconstruction aid for vocational training in Kosovo; NL/B: GENT-4: Co-operation between the Netherlands and Flanders; **page 6 NL:** Staff development and internationalisation of VET; NL: Knowledge: to give and to take; **Training policy** F: Apprenticeship in France – a new reform; **page 7 F:** Reform: accrediting work-acquired learning and creating regional networks of vocational training operators; F: Reform: the creation of a new individual right; A: Federal Economic Chamber supports top apprenticeship model; FIN: 1999-2004 Development plan for education and research adopted; Impressum; **page 8 UK:** "Learning and skills" bill published; IRL: Focus on lifelong learning.

Bi- and multilateral co-operation Training policy

Bi- and multilateral co-operation

France/Germany

Franco-German training agreement

At the 74th Franco-German Summit on 30 November 1999, France and Germany signed a co-operation agreement on vocational training.*

From now on the two countries will compare, jointly assess and bring closer together their programmes to combat youth unemployment. These are "New services, youth jobs" and "Fresh opportunities" for France and "Promotion plan for disadvantaged young people" in Germany. To increase the mobility of pupils and trainees in initial and continuing training, the two countries will be making efforts to remove the remaining statutory, social and financial obstacles. Joint research will be con-

ducted on qualifications, especially in occupations related to new information and communication technology, transport, organic agriculture and safety. France and Germany will also launch joint schemes for lifelong training, some within Community programmes, such as joint training programmes for Mediterranean countries and central and eastern Europe.

* The statement can be accessed on the Foreign Ministry Internet site: <http://www.france.diplomatie.gouv.fr/actual/evenements/fral/sommet5.html>

Source: INFFO Flash, Nr. 533-534, 16/12/1999-15/01/2000

Germany/Kosovo

Reconstruction aid for vocational training in Kosovo

Project manager BIBB commences with construction occupations, sanitary technology and automotive services

A vocational training consultancy programme for Kosovo is to be launched this year upon a German initiative. Following the cessation of warfare, the economy and society of this crisis-ridden region are now in urgent need of specialised workers to cope with everyday life. At the end of 1999, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) was commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF) to draw up a blueprint for consultancy aid for Kosovo. The proposals build upon the experience of the "Transform" consultancy for self-help which assisted the states of central and eastern Europe in reforming their vocational training systems during the 1990s. The BIBB also acts in Kosovo as project manager and co-ordinator of the consultant aid programme financed by the BMBF.

Following an evaluation of the situation in the field and talks with German and international

experts, BIBB experts concluded that technical support is currently required above all in the fields of construction, sanitary technology and automotive services. Together with German experts and in co-ordination with German and international political representatives active in the field, BIBB experts in Kosovo assessed the forms of help for self-help which are most urgently needed and practicable in the reconstruction of the vocational training and continuing training system of the region.

The experts have selected a relatively intact technical middle school in Peje in which training workshops for construction occupations and automotive technology will be held following its renovation in the spring. A training centre for sanitary technology is to be set up in Pristina. The BIBB is thus laying the foundations for the continuation of German consultancy aid which is to be integrated into a wider European or international context.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

The Netherlands/Belgium

GENT-4: Co-operation between the Netherlands and Flanders

GENT-4 is the name of the co-operation programme between government agencies for education in the Netherlands and in Flanders. The acronym GENT stands for Gehele Europese Nederlandse Taalgebied (Entire European Dutch Language Area). In this area, some 21 million people speak Dutch or Flemish.

In the field of vocational education and training, the co-operation includes exchange of students and teachers. But research is also being carried out, and in December 1999, two publications resulted. Both aim to contribute to a better mutual understanding between people involved in VET in Flanders and in the Netherlands by offering an opportunity for comparison and for learning from each other.

In 'Sleutelaardigheden in het beroepsgerichte onderwijs in Nederland en Vlaanderen' (Key skills in vocational education and training in the Netherlands and in Flanders*), a comparison has been made of the methodologies used for integrating key skills in the Dutch and the Flemish qualification and training struc-

tures. The publication starts off with precise descriptions of VET in the Netherlands and in Flanders and concludes that both systems are to a certain degree quite similar. Both countries have a nationally defined qualification structure. Qualifications are divided into three components (general, personal development; transfer to subsequent education or training on a higher level; occupation related). The procedures to arrive at the qualification structure seriously take into account the demands of the social partners and the labour market. But there are differences as well. In Flanders, the dual system is less developed than in the Netherlands. The sectoral approach in defining the qualification structure, gives the Dutch social partners a rather autonomous position. As a

result, parts of the structure have little cohesion and transparency. In Flanders, there is a more centralised and co-ordinated role for the social partners.

In both countries, the integration of key skills in the curriculum is still in a developmental phase. The first step was aimed at arriving at a clear and unequivocal definition. Now both countries use almost identical definitions. Key skills belong to the kernel of an occupation, have transfer value and contribute to personal development. In both countries a list of key skills has been produced. The next steps will be geared at integration at the micro level, i.e. in the curriculum. The Flemish system will start this in September 2000. Evaluation will follow in the year 2004. At

the moment, discussion in the Netherlands mainly takes place within the National Advisory Committee on Vocational Education and Labour Market and the national bodies responsible for maintenance of the qualification structure and is concentrated on core competencies.

Even in one language area, such as Flanders and the Netherlands, the same words can have different meanings. In the second publication 'Nederlandse en Vlaamse begrippen in het beroepsgerichte onderwijs en volwasseneneducatie' (Dutch and Flemish concepts in vocational education and adult education), almost 200 commonly used terms are included. Each term is defined within the Dutch context, the Flemish context or both. Cross-references for comparable concepts in both systems are provided.

In some cases, different words are used for similar concepts. For example, the Flemish 'complementair gedeelte' (complementary part) and the Dutch 'vrije ruimte' (free space) both refer to the possibilities VET institutions have to define the con-

tent of part of the curriculum by themselves. On the other hand, the same words can refer to slightly different concepts. For example, 'kwalificatie' (qualification) refers in the Netherlands to a legally defined concept, while in the Flemish context this legal status does not yet exist. The list of concepts can be consulted via the Internet: <http://www.cinop.nl>

* Blokhuis, F., Coeck, G., Vermeesch, F., Vilters, I.: *Sleutelaardigheden in het beroepsgerichte onderwijs in Nederland en Vlaanderen*. CINOP en Ministerie van de Vlaamse Gemeenschap, 1999, ISBN 90-5003-288-5, price: 22.50 NLG (EUR 10.21), available at:
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Source: CINOP

France

Reform: accrediting work-acquired learning and creating regional networks of vocational training operators

The accreditation of learning acquired at work is to be included in the next reform bill, together with the creation of a national body bringing together representatives of the Ministries (Education, Labour, etc.) and the social partners. Under the (provisional) name of 'Commission nationale de Certification', it will be asked to draw up a national register of qualifications, diplomas and titles with comparable status, for the purpose of creating bridges between systems.

A series of experiments is already being planned with a view to **creating a network linking vocational**

training operators at regional level. The first such scheme, signed on 14 October 1999 for the Centre region, will cover a period of 18 months. Initial and assessment costs will be shared equally between the state and the region (1.5 million francs, i.e. EUR 230,000). The aim of this experiment is to link the various networks which provide information and guidance on employment and vocational training to young people, and eventually those that link all other target groups. The second such scheme was signed on 10 December 1999 for the region of Poitou-Charentes.

Source: Centre INFFO, Documentation

France

Reform: the creation of a new individual right

Following the announcement by the Prime Minister last September on the reform of training, Nicole Péry, Minister for Vocational Training, embarked on a series of bilateral discussions with the social partners, which concluded in December 1999.

The object of these discussions was the establishment of a new individual right to training. While deplored the repeated refusal of MEDEF (Mouvement des entreprises de France) to engage in discussions with the government, the Minister for Training felt that things were moving "on the field". The purpose of this new right is to offer every employee and jobseeker an opportunity for "individual advancement based on co-investment with the employer, on condition that the employee does so of his own free will and has his own plan", stated Nicole Péry. This new right will be incorporated into the Labour Code in parallel with the "obligation to adapt", introduced in the second law on the 35-hour week (Article 10 of the Law, which has since become Article 932-2 of the Labour Code).

Sources: Centre INFFO, Documentation/INFFO-Flash n° 530 dated 1-15 November 1999/ Les Echos, Wednesday 22/12/1999/Liaisons Sociales – quotidien/bref social n° 13058 Friday 24/12/99

Finland

1999-2004 Development plan for education and research adopted

A new long-term (1999 to 2004) Development plan* for education and research was adopted in Finland towards the end of 1999. It sets both quantitative and qualitative objectives within a framework, which will be implemented by annual decisions concerning curricular frameworks, the number of places and courses, and resource allocation. Progress towards the achievement of the objectives will be monitored and evaluated annually.

The basic policy definition of the recently elected government's programme emphasises expertise and knowledge, which will benefit all the country's regions equally. The future of Finland is linked to knowledge and expertise and the ability to utilise this know-how and expertise in an innovative fashion.

During the period, the aim is to target vocational education and training at those areas that are threatened by labour shortage. In 2004, 49 000 students will be offered places, some of which will be provided in the form of apprenticeship training. The aim is for at least 42 000 people to obtain vocational qualifications at this (upper secondary) level in 2004 (the cohort of 18-year-olds will be just over 60 000).

The degree level provision of polytechnics will be expanded and re-targeted at fields within areas such as conservation, culture, arts, crafts and design. In 2004, 25 000 entry places will be available, while 19 000 polytechnic degrees will be completed. The completion rate should increase so that 80% of polytechnic students finish their degrees within the standard time. Education for teachers at vocational institutions will be increased.

At a second level, vocational education and training competence-based examinations will be gradually developed during the period, in order to ensure quality. Competence-based examinations will require skills demonstrations organised in co-operation with employers, in which students will show how far they have achieved the objectives of their vocational studies and the required vocational skills. The competence-based examinations will form an integral part of VET and will be scheduled to run through its entire period.

For the purpose of supporting the reform of current on-the-job training and ensuring its implementation, dissemination of information related to on-the-job training, training for on-the-job instructors, teacher training and pilot projects will be developed in co-operation with the social partners. A further aim is to have 20 000 on-the-job instructors participate in training that includes at least two credits and to have 10 000 teachers take part in training related to on-the-job training with an average of four credits (one credit being equivalent to 40 hours of study).

Legislation governing polytechnics will be reformed, taking into account

an international evaluation of the recent polytechnic reform. There will be investigation into opportunities of concentrating Swedish-language polytechnic education into three Swedish-language polytechnics.

Professional postgraduate degrees worth 40-60 credits at polytechnics will be launched gradually in a few fields as dictated by the needs of the labour market. Based on the experience gained, decisions will be made concerning the expansion of the postgraduate degree system. Measures to strengthen research and development will especially focus on regional development and on support for business activities in the SME sector.

Arrangements for financially supporting the adult population during periods of study will be developed once the working group set up by the Prime Minister's Office has presented its proposals. The use of study vouchers as a form of financing adult education and training will be investigated through experimentation.

* Koulutus ja tutkimus vuosina 1999-2004

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Source: NBE

Austria

Federal Economic Chamber supports top apprenticeship model

Further upward trend in the number of apprenticeships

A further increase in the number of apprentices was recorded in Austria in 1999. At the end of last year, there were a total of 127 351 apprentices, approx. 1.5% more than in 1998. Some 95% of trainees bring their apprenticeships to a successful end. The highest increase in apprentice numbers was in the banking and insurance sector.

Georg Piskaty, head of the training policy group of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, pointed out that the continuing upward trend in the number of apprenticeships since a low point in 1996 is partly due to the emergence of new jobs, compensating for the downward trend among traditional occupations.

Piskaty is lobbying for a training offensive to include, among other things, models for a "top apprenticeship" – apprenticeships plus an upper secondary school-leaving certificate. The Federal Economic Chamber is in favour of introducing the top apprenticeship model for particularly demanding training occupations of 3 1/2 to 4 years in duration, with the vocational baccalaureate being taken at the same time as the apprenticeship certificate in the respective specialised field.

Experts have called for vocational induction courses for youngsters with a poor compulsory school-leaving certificate; corresponding courses could be delivered by the job market service and adult education institutions.

Source: APA-Journal 18 January 2000/Der Standard 16 February 2000/Cedefop/

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"Learning and skills" bill published

The development of learning and skills in the 'knowledge economy' has become a key message in the government's learning and employment strategy. Following a report on e-commerce by a government research unit¹ and a memorable quotation by Tony Blair, in which he claimed that the UK would "succeed in the future by its brains or not at all", a new bill emphasises the need for a system that has the dexterity and depth to deliver the continually evolving skills needed for success in the knowledge economy.

The 'Learning and skills' bill² sets out revised proposals for a new framework for post-16 education and training, and follows consultation on the White Paper 'Learning to Succeed' (see Cedefop Info 3/1999). Where currently college-based and workplace-based training are funded and administered separately – by the Further Education Funding Council (FEFC) and Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) respectively – the national Learning and Skills Councils (separate councils for England and Wales) proposed in the bill will be responsible for both as well as for adult learning and adult vocational guidance and for advising government on training targets.

The bill also proposes new arrangements for inspection and a new support service for young people. The national councils will be supported by a network of local Learning and Skills Councils.

During the consultation period between the White Paper and the bill, the major stakeholders – the further education sector, the work-based training sector, employer organisations and unions – all made strong representations to government. Employers comprise the biggest single grouping (40 per cent) on the local Learning and Skills Councils, but representatives were concerned that the employers' influence would not be as strong as it was on the TECs. The Confederation of British Industry was worried that the new Council would not be flexible enough to meet the needs of businesses and local communities and warned of a 'Big Brother' approach to education and training. The Trades Union Council – who had no voice on the TECs – welcomed their own inclusion in the new councils and warned against employer domination.

In October the government announced that the new National Council would be located on the site of the FEFC in Coventry; this was seen as a victory for the college sector, particularly as a report by consultants involved in choosing a location for the new Council said that leadership and management were the most important criteria affecting the decision.

The bill is expected to be approved during the current parliamentary year, and the key proposals should

come into effect in 2001. According to Education and Employment Secretary David Blunkett, who announced the plans, the bill "will transform post 16 learning and skills delivery. It will give us the platform we need for success and prosperity in the knowledge economy. The skills system we inherited was bureaucratic and complex, and failed to deliver consistently high performance. Business and Government must work together to raise skills levels. The UK performs badly in comparison with the rest of Europe on the proportion

of the workforce skilled at critical intermediate levels. Our vocational skills system has been historically poor and we are determined to put that right in the next century. The plans we are publishing today will secure a step change in our learning and skills performance."

In Scotland, the Executive's lifelong learning agenda, set out in its 'Opportunity Scotland'³ White Paper, has been further developed through a consultation⁴ on post-school education and training provision for 16-18 year-olds.

¹ "E-commerce at its best – UK" is available from the Cabinet Office Performance and Innovation Unit, Horse Guards Road, London, SW1P 3AL, United Kingdom Tel. (44-208) 72 70 52 86

² The "Learning and skills" bill is published by the Stationery Office and is available from

The Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, United Kingdom Tel. (44-208) 73 00 11, Fax (44-208) 73 82 00

³ "Opportunity Scotland" is available from the Publications Centre, PO Box 276, London SW8 5DT, United Kingdom Tel. (44-208) 72 70 52 86, Fax (44-208) 73 82 00, Internet: www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-wl/lbg-00.htm

⁴ The consultation paper Opportunities and Choices is available from the Scottish Office, Victoria Quay, Edinburgh EH6 6QQ, United Kingdom Tel. (44-131) 556 84 80, Internet: www.scotland.gov.uk/library/documents-wl/oac-00.htm

A Prospectus setting out further details of the Learning and Skills Council is available from the Post-16 Unit, W3A, Moorfoot, Sheffield, S1 4PQ, United Kingdom and on the DfEE website: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk>

Source: IPD

Ireland

Focus on lifelong learning

The National Economic and Social Council, which advises government on economic and social strategy, has recommended new proposals to make ongoing education and training a top priority and to make the workplace more 'family friendly'. Previous reports of the Council have centred on how to combat unemployment, but the challenge now, the report states, is to make the economic success that Ireland is currently experiencing more self-sustaining. The report seeks to address the needs of a workforce facing almost full employment and a rapidly changing, knowledge-based economy.

It states that the key focus for workers must be adaptability and lifelong learning and that employers must work towards creating the environment to facilitate the same adaptability. The Council recommends that the social partners be given a more direct formal role in the development and implementation of the National Action Plan for Employment as well as in the areas of lifelong learning, childcare and work organisation changes.

The Council argues for a strategic framework to promote lifelong learning and identifies the following priorities:

- early childhood education;
- tackling high drop-out rates at both second and third-level education: Good quality career guidance

and more flexible ways of learning are proposed. The latter would allow a broader range of students to participate and would also enable students to balance study, work and family commitments;

- vocational training: The Council welcomes the broadening of the education system from its traditional academic orientation to include other important vocational and life skills, but says access to all available certificate options offering these vocational and life skills should be widened. Access to other programmes, such as the Vocational Training Opportunities Scheme, should be improved through the introduction of part-time options and greater modularisation;
- literacy and numeracy skills: International surveys have highlighted Ireland's low literacy and

numeracy levels particularly among older-age groups;

- progression pathways: The establishment of the new National Qualifications Authority (see Cedefop Info 2/99) is welcomed, and the Council proposes that it should establish links with similar bodies in other countries so that students can maximise the benefits of their training when working or pursuing further training abroad;
- company training: Companies have an important role to play in developing lifelong learning. The needs of those with poor educational attainment who are undertaking low-skilled and low-paid work should be a particular focus. Employers and trade unions should devise appropriate mechanisms to promote lifelong learning in the workforce;

The development of new forms of work organisation is one way for firms to cope with economic change, the report states. Although the incidence of new forms of work organisation is comparable in Ireland to that of other countries, the depth of change is much less well developed. General skills training, where all workers are instructed in problem-solving, communication skills and team working, is particularly important for the development of new work practices.

* National Economic and Social Council: Opportunities, challenges and capacities for choice. 1999. (Report no. 105) ISBN 1-898724-02-4. Price: EUR 19.05. Available:

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A summary version of the report is available on the NESC website at: <http://www.nesc.ie>

Source: FAS



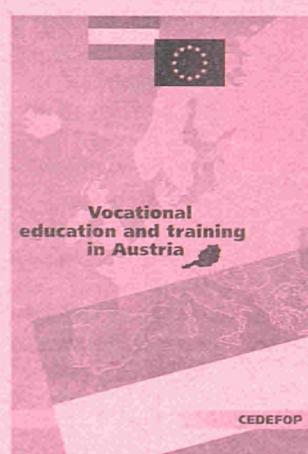
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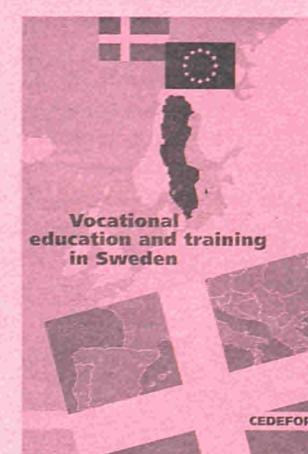
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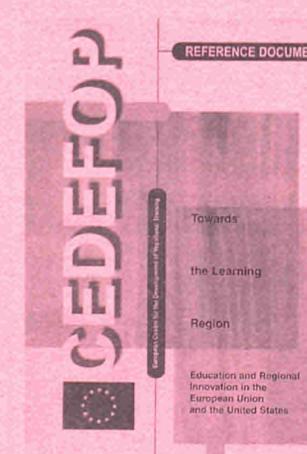
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Initial training policy/Continuing education and training policy/ Employment policy

Initial training policy

Sweden

Modifications in vocational education at upper secondary level

The Swedish upper secondary school system was reformed by the government in the early part of the 1990s. Two compulsory changes were made: an extension from two to three years and similar core subjects for all students. Since then, further development and modifications within the framework of the reform have been made annually. During 1999 the government decided on the following developments and modifications in the upper secondary school system.

- The new modern programme aims for each of the 16 programmes; the National Board of Education has been asked by the government to modernise the course aims in all programmes.
- The previous term, "branches", used for areas of specialisation within each programme, has been changed to "programme strands", which have been adapted to developments that have taken place in each programme since 1990.
- A new technology programme has been added to the previous 16 programmes.
- A new alternative (PRIV) for students who, due to various reasons, have had problems in qualifying to start the upper secondary school in a national programme. PRIV makes it possible for a student to take part in training within the programme of his or her interest at the same time as he or she follows a compensatory programme in order

to be qualified for permanent studies in a national programme. PRIV will be available as of the school year starting in September 2000

- The schools Minister Ingegerd Wärnérsson has invited the social partners to participate in a working group in order to further develop co-operation between school and working life throughout the country.

- A new modern apprenticeship system was launched in 1997

through pilot projects. The Ministry of Education has now proposed a prolongation of the pilot projects before deciding on a permanent model for apprenticeship. The working group (see above) is involved in the further development of the new apprenticeship system.

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Source: SIPO

Continuing education and training policy

Belgium

Educational leave: a right for certain part-time workers

As of 1 September 1999, people working 4/5 time, part-time employees doing variable working hours, and part-time workers covered by the Vande Lanotte plans for the defensive and offensive redistribution of working times have been entitled to time-off for education.

This right is granted solely for training or educational courses recognised by the Ministry of Employment's Accreditation Committee. For part-time workers, the principles and the ceilings are in proportion to their working hours. It should be borne in mind that educational leave entitlement corresponds to the number of hours of actual attendance of a course. For full-time workers, the ceiling is 120 hours for one or more vocational courses, 80 hours for one or more general educational courses and 120 hours for a general course and a vocational course taken in the same year.

A full-time worker on educational leave retains the right to remuneration of up to BEF 70 000 (EUR 2 825)

for the hours of absence. Part-time workers will also benefit in proportion to their hours of work. Since certain university or comparable

courses take place in the evenings or at weekends – which may create problems for some workers – they have been grouped together in one

day per week. Up to now, workers enrolling for such courses were not eligible for education leave. From now on, any person who actually works at nights or over weekends may take advantage of the right on condition that the training held once a week at most covers the courses

normally held in the evening or at the weekend.

The scheme will continue on an experimental basis until 1 January 2001.

Source: FOREM (CIDOC)/L'esperluette, no. 22, October-November-December 1999

Belgium

Customised training course provides work for 500 workers aged 40+

500 jobseekers aged over 40 have received training in customised workshop training courses in order to fill existing job vacancies. This means that more than one out of seven jobs filled during the first nine months of 1999 by the linked-work-and-training system has involved the placement of an older jobseeker, with women over 40 accounting for 20% of new appointments. It is becoming increasingly difficult to fill job vacancies. The Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service ('Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en

Beroepsopleiding – VDAB) offers a solution to this problem in the form of customised in-company vocational training. In collaboration with the firm in question, VDAB devises a suitable training programme, completely tailored to the specific requirements of the job. Candidates thus acquire the necessary skills for the job in minimum time, so that at the end of the training course the firm may draw on the highly skilled and highly motivated personnel that it needs.

Continued on page 10

Customised training course provides work for 500 workers aged 40+

Continued from page 9

The qualities and dynamism of the over-40s are frequently underestimated. The relatively high representation of this age group among those jobseekers engaging in a customised training programme is evidence not only of their wish to find a job, but also of their flexibility in combining work and training. The VDAB initiative is designed to combat the frequent trend to pass over older workers. This policy merits encouragement since it offers these jobseekers new opportunities in an increasingly tight job market.

Moreover, this approach is very effective: 88% of participants in these schemes find a job, generally in the company in which they have received training; this percentage is even higher in the 40+ age bracket.

But vocational training is not only an ideal springboard towards the labour market for older jobseekers. 50% of jobseekers engaging in a customised vocational training programme have at most completed lower secondary school, and one out of every six has been unemployed for over two years. This workshop training therefore opens up an opportunity which would otherwise not be available.

Further information at: www.vdab.be

Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration / Icodoc

Denmark

Reform of vocationally oriented further and higher education

From August 2000, the number of short higher education programmes will be reduced to 15; 13 are entirely new.

The reform of short higher education programmes (KVU) has been on its way for quite some time. The new act on short higher education (*Lov om korte videregående uddannelser*) was adopted in 1997. In 1998 a new advisory structure was set up, and a combined KVU Council, the Vocational Academy Council, was created, representing social partners and other stakeholders in this field of education.

The aim of reducing the number of KVU programmes from about 75 is first and foremost to ensure broader and more focused programmes that can compete with other further and higher education provision. Secondly, the new KVU programmes are to provide the students with skills that prepare them for future labour market needs. Thirdly, the reduction of KVU programmes is to make the area more transparent and intelligible to students. Finally, the reform of the KVU programmes is an important part of the overall objective of the government, according to which 50% of a youth cohort is to complete a further education programme.

The 13 new programmes will cover the following fields of training:

- agriculture
- textile, clothing and design
- food industry
- hotel and tourism
- finance
- construction
- technology and energy
- IT and electronics
- industrial production
- laboratory technicians
- IT and communication
- retail trade
- international marketing

The programmes for computer specialist and transport logistician will continue unaltered. The duration of the programmes will be two years (except for construction), and they will aim at qualifying the students for middle management positions in private and public enterprises. Except for a few of the new programmes, students who have completed a relevant vocational edu-

Denmark

Major reform of continuing education and training for adults on its way

The overall aim behind the reform is to create a transparent, coherent continuing education and training system promoting lifelong learning for all adults

With the passing of the budget for 2000, a major reform of continuing education and training for adults in Denmark came one step closer to realisation. An agreement for the reform elements has been worked out between the government and two of the opposition parties. The Ministry of Education is preparing the final bill for the reform, to be introduced in parliament at the end of March 2000. The reform is expected to be implemented in 2001.

In this article, the main elements of the reform agreed so far will be described. The final bill may prove to differ on various points.

Main priority: training for adults with a low level of educational attainment

The reform provides for a change of policy focus. The new system will emphasise the upgrading of the skills of adults with a low level of educational attainment. Public funding will above all be directed at upgrading the general skills of this target group, whereas companies are expected, to a higher degree than today, to finance company-specific courses.

A new adult education and training system co-operating with the existing education system will be created. Adults will have better possibilities of having prior working and training experience recognised, and basic skills courses will be strength-

ened. Furthermore, a new basic vocational training programme for adults will be introduced.

The new basic vocational training programme will provide adults with both basic and vocational skills at youth education level. An innovation will be that adults in this programme will not have to enter a training agreement with a company in order to acquire vocational skills. The basic training programme will be modularised, and it will be possible to complete all modules within six years. This should open the way for a better interaction between work and training.

Further education for adults

The education and training system for adults will also include further education for adults who have completed upper secondary education or vocational education and training. The intention is to give adults on the labour market the same opportunities as young people to obtain further education.

Further education programmes for adults will be provided at three levels:

- further adult education (videregående volksenuddannelse – VVU) equivalent to short-term higher education;
- diploma degree equivalent to a bachelor degree; and
- master degree.

The admission requirements are expected to be a minimum of two years of relevant work experience and relevant educational background. Further education for adults will be organised as part-time studies under the Act on Open Education.

New funding arrangements

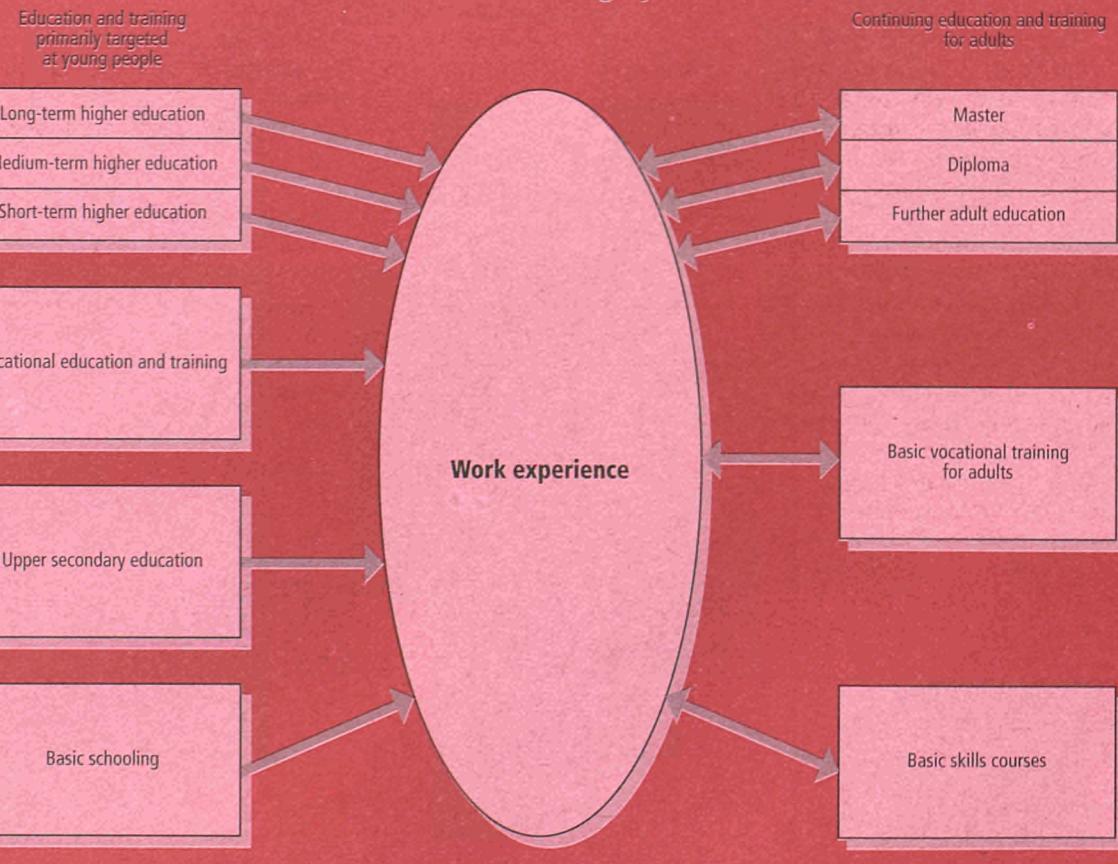
In Denmark, the public sector plays a key role in financing and providing continuing training. A major proportion of the continuing training on offer is provided free of charge by the public sector and is thus financed from taxes. The reform envisages the private sector taking on more responsibility for both the provision and funding of continuing and further training for employees.

A new fund, called the Labour Market Training Fund (Arbejdsmarkedets Uddannelsesfinansiering – AUF) and built on the same principles as the Employers' Reimbursement System (AER), will be established under the Ministry of Labour. All employers will contribute to the fund on a per capita basis for each full-time employee and will then have the right to receive support from the fund when their employees participate in continuing training courses.

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Source: DEL

New education and training system for adults



Source: The Danish Ministry of Education: <http://www.uvm.dk/nb/nb9920/06.htm>

Skillnets to meet training needs in enterprise

An employer-led Training Networks Programme is currently underway in Ireland. Emanating from the Human Resource Development White Paper (see Cedefop Info 3/97) and from calls from employers' bodies for industry-led company training, it is geared towards addressing a major structural weakness in Irish enterprise – the high degree of under-investment in training in the majority of small and medium-sized enterprises.

Firms in Ireland invest on average 1.5% of payroll costs on training courses, and in small and medium enterprises the level is much lower. International best practice companies invest 3-5% of payroll in the development of their people. The most recent study undertaken by the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland found that employers, while acknowledging the need for a higher level of training, were hampered by financial costs and the scarce availability of courses geared towards the smaller business.

The programme, with a budget of EUR 16.125m over 3 years, is funded by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the European Social Fund and will run for 3 years. It is administered by Skillnets Ltd., a company with a board comprised of 6 employer and 3 employee representatives, with 3 representatives being nominated by the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The effectiveness of the network approach to training has al-

ready paid dividends in the success of the Plato small business development network and the NETMET model of learning networks developed by the FAS-Training and Employment Authority.

Skillnets is focused on improving the level and quality of training and development activities in enterprises which already invest in training. It also aims to increase the level of training in enterprises and sectors where little training has taken place to date, particularly in SMEs. The focus is on mobilising groups of companies to develop strategic answers to their joint training needs. It hopes to tap into the reservoir of best practice enterprises with experience that can be shared with other companies. The self-directing nature of the programme allows companies to determine the aims of the network and the way it operates and ensures it is of direct relevance to their business needs. By pooling resources and by group-purchasing solutions to common training prob-

lems, the cost of accessing training can be reduced for individual network members, a factor of importance for SMEs.

Any group of enterprises or any enterprise-led association can form a training network, providing that it has a strategic and long-term com-

mon interest to pursue in relation to the development of human resources. Areas of common interest may be sectoral, geographic or focused on specific training/development needs, e.g. management, technical, operative. Networks will analyse skill needs, identify training measures and organise delivery of training activities for identified sectors, regions or groups. Financing is available under three strands for:

- fully developed proposals for training networks which are ready to start immediate activity,

- the development of project proposals for a new training network,
- research and best practice projects on the nature and dynamism of the networking process.

Where appropriate, Skillnets will work jointly with the networks to explore certification options.

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Source: FAS

Norway

The competence reform – recent development

The Storting, the Norwegian parliament, has decided that all employees will be entitled to individual educational and training leave. The arrangement is valid for all employees who have been active in working life for at least three years and with the same employer for at least two years. Training beyond basic education and upper secondary training must be related to the working life, and one must attend an organised education and training provision. Financial support will be provided by the State Educational Loan Fund.

Based on an agreement between the government and the social partners made during the wage negotiations in April 1999, a total of NOK 400 million (approx. EUR 45 million) will be allocated for development projects over a period of 2-3 years, starting with NOK 50 million in 2000. The money will be spent on joint actions between providers of training and working life, with the aim to develop the market for continuing education and training. The use of ICT and multimedia will be an important element in the projects.

Source: NCU Norway

Belgium

IMEC and VDAB: partners in technology

A framework contract of indefinite length on the recruitment, selection and training of new personnel in the microelectronics sector has been signed by the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding – VDAB) and the Inter-University Microelectronics Centre of Leuven (IMEC). The background to this contract is the acute shortage of adequately trained workers, in particular production operators and maintenance engineers, in the microelectronics sector as a whole. This problem is also evident from the VDAB's annual analysis of job vacancies which are difficult to fill.

The recruitment and training of adequately skilled personnel are of strategic importance for the booming microelectronics sector in Flanders. The global microelectronics sector grew by 14.4% in 1999, with a further expansion of 17% expected in 2000 and an estimated average growth rate of 13% over the next five years. In comparison with a mean economic growth of 3-4%, microelectronics is a thriving sector. In collaboration with the firms active in this sector, VDAB and IMEC wish to guarantee a permanent inflow of young blood by conducting joint promotion, recruitment and training actions. These actions are also designed to convince foreign investors

of the availability of a skilled workforce in Flanders and therefore to attract new businesses to the region. Moreover, the economic development of Flanders is also characterised by a considerable growth of those sectors requiring specialised skills.

As far as the sharing of tasks between the two bodies is concerned, recruitment, selection and training are above all to be carried out by VDAB, with IMEC acting as the tech-

nological partner. IMEC will therefore primarily be responsible for the training of VDAB instructors. The training programmes are to be tailored to the specific needs of industry.

Two projects have already been launched in this context. The first is at Custom Silicon Configuration Services (CS2), a chip packaging firm at Zaventem which wishes to double its production capacity in the short term and is therefore seeking to

recruit around 60 new employees. Sixteen new production operators have been recruited as a result of collaboration with VDAB-Consult. The candidates first of all participated in a basic training course delivered by VDAB, followed up by a specialised training course implemented by IMEC; these training courses run for a total of about one month.

Training may also be on-the-job. The access modalities for these custom-

ised VDAB training programmes have just been expanded to include young people who are newcomers to the labour market. This system will considerably reduce the training costs to be borne by employers.

VDAB is currently testing a second group of eight would-be candidates for CS2, and a parallel project is underway at Alcatel Micro-Electronics, Oudenaarde.

Further information: www.vdab.be
Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration / Icodoc

Netherlands

Innovation on the agenda for vocational training and adult education

In September, the Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science published the 'Agenda BVE' (Agenda for vocational training and adult education). It contains his view on what should happen in the coming years, if the sector is to fulfil its tasks in relation to participants, the labour market and society as a whole. The agenda is meant to be the starting point for a process in which all parties involved in vocational education and adult education will contribute towards a policy for further development. The Minister does not want to impose his views. Parties involved include the associations for regional

colleges and for national bodies for vocational education, the social partners, the municipalities and other ministries.

The dominant consideration of the agenda is the immense importance of vocational education and adult education for the individual, the labour market and society as a whole. The 1996 Act on Vocational Training and Adult Education (WEB) and the establishment of the regional education and training centres have created the right framework for performing this broad societal task.

Two leading principles have been identified for further development:

- reinforcement of quality, accessibility and regional co-operation;
- promotion of institutional autonomy and de-regulation.

In the agenda, a number of relevant themes, which deserve attention in the coming years, are described in very general terms. They include: lifelong learning; maintenance and further development of qualification structures; reinforcement of the teaching and training process, ensuring the quality of teaching staff and

their legal and financial status; quality assurance and public accountability. Most of these refer to policy documents, published in previous years, which the Minister wants to put into a more coherent framework for innovation.

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Source: CINOP

High demand for further training

BIBB survey reveals a particularly high demand for language skills

A survey conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) shows that firms attach increasing importance to further training. At the end of 1999, employers were asked by experts to comment on "imparting and promoting additional skills", defined as competencies acquired in the course of apprenticeship or following the completion of training programmes at

least 40 hours, with a content extending clearly beyond the compulsory curriculum.

Of the 940 training firms participating in the survey, more than half (57%) indicated a high to a very high demand for additional skills. The same proportion of firms offer their junior staff further training during, or as a direct follow-up to,

apprenticeship. Language skills, followed by key competencies in team and project work and additional communication and IT skills, are in particular demand.

A good two-thirds of the surveyed firms predict a growing demand for additional skills over the next three years; however, 41% have so far not introduced further training pro-

grammes, and 72% have no plans to do so in the future. A good two-thirds are concerned about an increase of in-company training costs. 50% gave lacking training capacity and excessive trainee costs and 46% the lack of corresponding provision in the region as the decisive factors for not offering additional training programmes. More than a third of the firms which have so far not in-

troduced further training programmes, as well as a third to half of those already active in the field, are in favour of public funding to support a wider introduction of further training programmes.

For further results of the survey, go to www.bibb.de, click Forum/Aus den Projekten/Referenzbetriebssystem (RBS), followed by "Information Nr. 16".

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Employment policy

Belgium

Education sector to recruit young supply teachers

The Flemish minister of education opts for VDAB as opposed to the private sector

The Flemish authorities have concluded a management agreement with the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding -VDAB).

The agreement takes the form of a draft decree relating to the 'supply pools' of young teachers: teachers having just completed their studies are guaranteed a year of work, agreeing to a series of temporary teaching assignments in return. With these pools, the Flemish minister of education wishes to bind young talent to the education sector at an early stage. Schools with a need for supply teachers can draw upon the pool of available candidates.

The temping agency group Randstad Interlabor, which was in favour of a public call to tender, has therefore been left out of the running. In the Netherlands, where supply teachers are sought by temping agencies, Randstad Interlabor has 40 specially equipped agencies, and bureaux have been set up upon the request of groups of schools. Flanders, in con-

trast, has opted for collaboration with VDAB. 'It goes without saying that the VDAB is a preferred partner. When one starts off a project, what one needs is certainty', commented the ministerial spokesperson. 'This is a management agreement similar to that concluded with VRT (Flemish radio and television) so there will be no public call to tender'.

The preliminary draft decree will soon be on the agenda of the Flemish government. The teachers registered in the supply pool, whether beginners or with experience, will be assigned to a basic school which will offer them guidance and support, with their salaries being paid by the Department of Education for the period of an academic year. According to the governmental memo, the supply teachers are to be assigned on a flexible basis within different networks, but they will nevertheless be able to choose a region and an educational project themselves; schools will then be able to select candidates.

For more information: www.vdab.be
Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration / Icodoc



Germany

New Internet hotline for IT occupations

Job centres appoint permanent contact persons

IT firms can now advertise their job vacancies through a new Internet hotline set up by the Federal Employment Office (BA). The job centres are also appointing permanent contact persons with whom IT firms can discuss personnel problems and solutions. For example, firms can now obtain a work permit for highly skilled foreign nationals if there is a shortage of such experts in Germany. A total of 884 highly skilled foreign nationals were granted a work permit in the course of last year.

At the beginning of March 2000, job centre records showed 12 000 job vacancies for data processing experts; at the same time, 31 700 qualified men and women were seeking employment. In January, 1400 data processing experts were placed.

Further IT training courses are currently being financed by the job centres for 37 000 workers. Last year, 13 500 new training contracts were

concluded in the IT sector; a considerably greater number of contracts are expected to be concluded in the coming training year. Last year 21 700 applications for IT occupations were received by the job centres, clearly exceeding the number of job vacancies.

Further information from the job centre homepage: www.arbeitsamt.de where a link leads to the IT hotline.

Source: Federal Employment Office (BA)/Cedefop/SK

Belgium

Target: the moon. "HOTJOB": a new gateway to employment and training

Looking ahead to a millennium geared towards new information and communication technologies, on 9 November 1999 FOREM (Office wallon de la formation professionnelle et de l'emploi – the Walloon Department of Vocational Training and Employment) officially launched its new Internet site, HOTJOB (<http://www.hotjob.be>).

Jointly financed by the Walloon Region and the European Social Fund, HOTJOB is intended to serve as a platform for encounters between jobseekers, workers, students, employers, etc.

A forum where various key operators in the market can drop in and meet, HOTJOB is also a new centre that will in the near future be offering clear, structured, top-of-the-range information in its six main sections (people, companies, kiosk, scoop, info? and customer service).

In bringing together top-flight schemes promoting jobs and training, HOTJOB is open to all quality partnerships – public- or private-sector, Belgian and European.

HOTJOB is also a truly virtual community, with features such as its forum, queries fair and on-line magazine.

It differs from conventional sites both in design and in the variety of its content and its graphic images. HOTJOB is a site that aims at being youthful and resolutely dynamic.

HOTJOB is also designed to use technology as a means for integration, not exclusion. Too often even today, access to the Internet is the province of skilled people having a solid technology infrastructure. This is why, in order to promote equal access to a wide range of qual-

ity information, FOREM has installed the gateway in places open to the general public free of charge, which are called Espaces Ressources Emploi. These employment resource centres, set up at 12 locations, are equipped with leading-edge infrastructure, consisting of 350 Macintoshes permanently on-line to the employment and training gateway.

Access to the HOTJOB site is absolutely free for both individuals and companies. Users can tap into a wealth of relevant and constantly updated information, as well as to services offered free of charge to individuals. Many of the services for companies are also free, although the companies may be asked to pay for certain specific services. On-line products are, however, free of charge to non-profit-making associations.

Lastly, it is part of HOTJOB's philosophy to be widely accessible to a multicultural community. In the future it will offer language versions in English, Dutch and German.

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Website: <http://www.hotjob.be>

Source: FOREM (CIDOC)

page 13 New training organisations and programmes D: New IT occupations are pioneers for open-design training courses; D: Key projects to identify globally available knowledge for VET; D: Qualifying on the job: a gradual approach to "late" training; **page 14 UK**: First 'learndirect' centres now open; UK: Vocational education research – establishment of the Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice to promote VET research; A: Training à la carte; NO: Development of ICT skills and the use of ICT in education and training; **page 15 Certification systems – quality of VET** B: Jobseekers subject to a test; NL: A swing towards core competencies; E: National Institute for Qualifications; **page 16 P**: System for monitoring the vocational integration routes of graduates; **Vocational training statistics** NL: School leaver survey – women with a technical qualification earn higher wages; Cedefop publications.

New training organisations and programmes/Certification systems – quality of VET/Vocational training statistics

New training organisations and programmes

Germany

New IT occupations are pioneers for open-design training courses

BIBB Secretary General Pütz: "A qualitative leap for the German training system"

A new model for the design of training occupations is taking shape in Germany in the form of open-design training occupations. The pioneers are the four newly created training

occupations in the field of information and telecommunications technologies (IT).

The training courses for these occupations eliminate the division between training and continuing training units and instead integrate commercial, technical and services-ori-

ented qualifications. Flexible structures make it easier to gear training content to the needs of companies by including both modern organisational developments and European and international interdependences in vocational training. Dr. Helmut Pütz, secretary general of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training

(BIBB), has referred to this approach as a "qualitative leap for the German vocational education and training system".

The new generation of occupations continues to involve specific vocational skills but leaves greater scope for company and personal variations.

Training firms may choose to add skills, giving rise to dynamic occupational profiles and allowing for updating. Optional units may serve as initial or continuing training modules.

In Pütz's opinion, training in the new occupations shows the direction the future development of training regulations will take: training will be process-oriented, giving apprentices an insight into the overall business process of a firm, with the focus on customer orientation.

Germany

Key projects to identify globally available knowledge for VET

The search for modern strategies for self-directed learning

The Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF) hopes to gain access to knowledge available world-wide from five key projects selected as the winners of the 1997 competition of ideas, "The use of globally available knowledge in initial and continuing training and innovation processes". With the aid of modern media and information and communication technology, the five key projects are developing new search and learning strategies to promote self-directed learning. The methods tested in the projects are to high-

light how new information and communication technologies can be used in vocational training in a targeted and demand-led way. The themes of the key projects, allocated a total funding of EUR 70 million, include the establishment of continuing training networks.

The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has been appointed by the Federal Ministry as the co-ordinator of the key projects "innovation in training and continuing training". The magazine

LIMPACT presents the results of the work of the key projects and serves as a forum for debate with the specialised public.

The first edition of LIMPACT, no. 1/2000 with details of five key projects and their current status, has now been published in German. The magazine may be ordered free of charge for one copy and at a charge of EUR 2.55 for additional copies from BIBB, Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10, D-53113 Bonn Fax (49-228) 107 29 54, E-mail: pt-iaw@bibb.de For detailed information on the key projects, visit the bibb homepage at www.bibb.de/pt-iaw.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

For example, half of the curriculum for IT occupations involves core skills in electrical engineering, information technology and business administration, whereas the second half consists of modular training in compulsory subjects. The incorporation of commercial and technical content is a core element of this training programme, which can therefore no longer be assigned to a specific occupational field. The open design of the occupational profiles for these new IT occupations makes it possible to accommodate future developments in technology, services and sales.

Further information from the BIBB homepage at <http://www.bibb.de> or directly from BIBB, Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10, D-53113 Bonn Tel. (49-228) 10 70

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Germany

Qualifying on the job: a gradual approach to "late" training

Success of modular second-chance programme

A new continuing training model offers an opportunity, especially for unskilled and semi-skilled workers, to acquire a vocational qualification. The model allows adults to acquire a "late" vocational qualification while in employment on a step-by-step basis, with a "training passport"

providing evidence of completed training modules.

The advantages of this modular approach for late qualification to all players have already been demonstrated by two pilot projects: "Different ways towards subsequent acquisition of a vocational certificate", sponsored by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) and

the Federal Ministry for Education and Science (BMBF), and "The organisation of modular continuing vocational training by regional cooperation", with the support of the EU community initiative, ADAPT.

The model qualification passport designed by the BIBB is intended to provide evidence of vocational and personal skills and may be attached

to a job application. The document is helpful to chambers of trade and industry, since it proves that candidates have completed qualifying courses in continuing training; thus, it guarantees access to examinations organised by these institutions. For employees, the gradual 'late' qualification model offers workers a greater degree of personal flexibility in training. Separate certification for

discrete training modules allows workers to interrupt the learning process, or change employer, without having to start from scratch when they return to training.

For more information visit the BIBB website at <http://www.bibb.de> under "Nachqualifizierung". Material on the series of pilot projects concerning late qualification while in employment ("Berufsbegleitende Nachqualifizierung") is available in DE from BIBB, Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10, D-53113 Bonn Tel. (49-228) 10 70

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

First 'learndirect' centres now open

The first wave of 'learndirect' centres providing on-line learning and information on learning resources has now been opened: 68 in England, 5 in Northern Ireland and 4 in Wales. Developed under the government's University for Industry (Ufi) initiative, these are being run as a pilot scheme, and up to 1000 centres will be opened by autumn 2000 when 'learndirect' will be fully operational. Ufi is not a university or educational establishment in the conventional sense. It is a public-private partnership whose strategic aims are to stimulate demand for lifelong learning and to improve access to relevant high quality learning. In particular it will use information and communication technologies to achieve its objectives, and it will work with businesses and education and training providers to make learning available at times, places and formats that suit learners.

The development of the centres is being overseen by Ufi Ltd, a private limited company appointed by the government to carry forward the Ufi initiative. The government will support Ufi Ltd during the development phase and will provide £44 million (EUR 70.4 million) of funding during its first year (1999-2000). Ufi Ltd will be independent of government, though the government remains the major stakeholder. In its development plan* Ufi identified four priority target groups:

- adults with low basic skills;
- employees in small enterprises;
- employees in the retail, automotive component, environmental and multimedia industries;
- industries and businesses which need to improve their information technology skills.

Ufi has a target of providing information to 2.5 million people per year by 2002 and creating demand for one million courses and learning packages by 2004. It will cater for a wide range of levels, from basic skills to postgraduate learning and from general management to spe-

cific technical skills. Learning needs will be met by the 'learndirect' network and by existing suppliers.

The 1000 or so 'learndirect' centres will be the cornerstone of the scheme. These centres will be run by consortia of employers, trade unions, voluntary groups, colleges, universities and training providers. The 68 centres which opened in November are based in a range of accessible locations, such as shopping centres, football clubs, churches and railway stations, as well as more conven-

tional locations like libraries and community centres – reflecting Ufi's commitment to make learning accessible to all. The development centres currently offer a trial range of 24 online courses on information technology and business and management skills. During the trial period Ufi will be gathering feedback to improve learning material to be ready for full operations in autumn 2000.

Ufi has now taken responsibility for the government's Learning Direct free telephone helpline (44 800 100

900; free within UK only). This was launched in February 1998 and has taken over a million calls. This service has also been renamed 'learndirect' and will be marketed by Ufi as part of its overall campaign to promote lifelong learning. Ufi has set aside £10 million (EUR 16.1 million) for marketing activities over the next two years.

Ufi Ltd operates in England, Wales and Northern Ireland; the Scottish Ufi, a parallel but distinct initiative, is expected to be launched in au-

tumn 2000. It has been allocated EUR 26 million by the newly devolved Scottish Parliament and is also being aided by an ADAPT project, which attracted funding of EUR 6.5 million.

Further information:
The Innovation Centre,
217 Portobello Street, Sheffield S1 4DP,
United Kingdom
Tel. (44-114) 224 29 99, Fax (44-114) 270 00 34,
E-mail: enquiries@ufi.cvc.com,
Internet: <http://www.ufiltd.co.uk>

* A new way of learning: Developing the University for Industry concept, available from Ufi as above.

Source: IPD

United Kingdom

Vocational education research – establishment of the Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice to promote VET research

In December 1999 Malcolm Wicks, Minister for Research in the Department of Education and Employment (DfEE), announced the establishment of a new research information and dissemination centre for the UK, the Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice. This is in addition to dedicated research centres 'which will bring together a range of research and analytical expertise to focus on key policy questions.' The move was prompted by the lack of research into vocational education and other further education issues. The first two centres are being launched early this year and will deal with the economics of education and the wider benefits of learning.

Further education and skills training has been undergoing fundamental changes, with the establishment of the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and the demise of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). It is hoped that policy developments made in the future will be based on rigorous research into their implications carried out at the research centres.

Wicks identified several vocational training research areas in which the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) will commission work through the Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice and the academic research organisations involved in the initiative:

- performance variations in Further Education colleges;
- ethnic minority achievement variations in the FE sector;
- success rates in course completion;
- effectiveness of different teaching methods and,
- students' post-college destinations.

Speaking at the Further Education Research Network conference, where he made the announcement, Wicks said: "In re-focusing the further education sector on raising the levels of performance and widening participation, the sector needs research into the crucial areas of performance and outputs to gauge how it responds. Good policy making requires a solid knowledge base. A clear understanding of the problems

is needed to develop successful solutions."

"...[The Centre for Evidence Informed Policy and Practice] will provide a database of current and recent educational research as well as promote a series of systematic

reviews of evidence on key policy issues. The aim of the centre is to make the key lessons from research much more accessible to and usable by policy makers and practitioners such as teachers."

Further information:
DfEE Public Enquiry Unit
Tel. (44-171) 925 55 55, E-mail: info@dfee.gov.uk

Source: IPD

Austria

Training à la carte

Now a vocational training network matches women with enterprises

The Graz Nowa training network has launched a new initiative to provide training opportunities for women returning to the labour market following a career break by matching the needs of industry with the interests and potential of women job-seekers. The firms collaborate in the planning of training content and implement practical training units, which tailor the training programmes to their needs.

The training programmes consist of a theoretical part held in an adult education institution, inter-disciplinary personality training imparting key competencies, and practical on-the-job training. In the four years since it was set up, the Nowa initiative for women has trained women as institutional consultants, website designers, specialists in hearing aid acoustics, public relations specialists and electricians, among other things. Nowa managing director Heike Cortolezis reports that the programme attracted some 150 women in 1999 alone.

In addition to the tailor-made training courses for individual firms, Nowa also delivers model training courses for sectors, in occupations such as CAD designer and EDP engineer. The association also runs an Internet café where women interested in new information and communication technologies can find the information they need.

Further information from Nowa – Netzwerk für Berufsausbildung, Rudolf-Hans-Bartsch-Strasse 15-17, A-8042 Graz, Tel. (43-316) 48 26 00 17

Source: Der Standard 19/20 February 2000/Cedefop/SK

Norway

Development of ICT skills and the use of ICT in education and training

The "Second International Technology Study*", an international survey investigating the use of ICT in primary, lower secondary and upper secondary education in 26 countries, has established that the PC density is generally high in the Norwegian school system. In primary and lower secondary schools, there is one machine per 13 and 9 pupils, respectively. In upper secondary schools there is one for every 4 students. Only Singapore has a higher machine density at this level.

In late 1999 an arrangement for the transfer of newer, used PCs from industry to the schools was launched. During the year 2000 an estimated 8000 machines will be transferred.

The Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs (KUF) will provide an additional NOK 150 million (approx. EUR 19 million) to support the increased use of ICT in the schools. The funding will be spent on the purchase of new machines and software, the training of teachers and the implementation of specific educational projects in the schools. The Ministry will also triple the investments in the development of electronic teaching aids.

83% of all primary and lower secondary schools are connected to the Internet, and new connections are made every day. All upper secondary schools are connected.

It is the wish of the Ministry that schools at all levels increase their use of the Internet in their daily activities. This year, all lower secondary schools

receive NOK 10 000 (approx. EUR 1200) each to cover expenses related to the use of the net. Furthermore, an agreement on inexpensive access is being set up with the largest telecommunications company, ensuring that no school will pay more than NOK 1 500 per month, irrespective of the level of actual utilisation.

Since 1996, Åmot lower secondary school has run development projects related to girls' use of ICT. With support from both KUF and local industry, the school has achieved a reduction in the gap between boys' and girls' use of, and knowledge about, ICT. Separate ICT courses for girls have been arranged, where the exercises are closely related to girls' interests, such as the writing of a diary. The girls have also built their own PCs (www.amot.gs.hm.no).

* "ICT and the Emerging Paradigm for Lifelong Learning". Available from IEA (International Association of Evaluation of Education Achievement) Secretariat, Herengracht 487, 1017 BT Amsterdam, The Netherlands Tel. (31-20) 625 36 25, E-mail: department@iea.nl at a price of US\$ 33 plus postal charges

Source: NCU Norway

Certification systems – quality of VET

Belgium

Jobseekers subject to a test

VDAB to introduce OECD test to evaluate basic skills

Adults using a social service such as VDAB (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service) or CPAS (Public Social Assistance Centre) are soon to be subject to an aptitude test designed by the British Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) on behalf of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), which promotes this test in most Western countries. The test, which enters into a considerable degree of detail, is designed to establish whether an adult is able to programme a video recorder, conduct an appropriate conversation with a politician or find a plumber in the yellow pages.

Last year the OECD commissioned a team of British sociologists to map illiteracy in the industrialised nations of the Western world. A group of didactic experts from the University of Ghent collaborated in the survey in Flanders, which revealed that around one-fifth of adults have serious problems in reading and writing.

The British sociologists indicated the ambiguity of guidelines and criticised the lack of basic education as the principal causes of illiteracy. Hitherto the level of competence of a final-year student of secondary education has been regarded as the minimum level to be attained by adults to make their way in life. Standards have now finally been established as a result of the test developed by the OECD.

The OECD test differentiates three levels: basic level, level 1 and level 2. Adults blocked at a given level are to be urged to upgrade their skills by means of a basic education course. Adult training centres are already preparing for the new test.

In the United Kingdom the government has announced the introduction of the new test system as of next March, and the Ministry of Education has already earmarked GBP 16 million for this purpose. In Belgium, VDAB has indicated its intention to implement the preparatory measures for the introduction of the test among its clients.

Establishing whether clients are in a position to find their way in society is by no means an easy matter. In the three-level analysis system of absolutely indispensable simple skills devised by the QCA, the final

level (level 2) approximately corresponds to that of a final-year secondary student. According to those responsible for the test design, the intermediary level (level 1) is absolutely essential if adults are to live a dignified life in society; those failing to reach this level must be offered remedial learning opportunities in an adult training centre.

Level 0 To attain the basic level, adults must demonstrate a number of simple basic skills, e.g. be able to speak clearly and comprehensibly and read display boards at the supermarket as well as information on household products; the authors point out that an understanding of information indicated on packaging is essential to get along in public life.

Those attaining the highest level will be assimilated to a final-year student of secondary education.

Level 1 Adults fulfilling the criteria of this level should be able, among other things, to read bus and train timetables, find a plumber in the yellow pages, read the gas meter and programme a video recorder. According to the test designers, they should be able to address a local politician appropriately on a current neighbourhood issue. A certain degree of knowledge of new media is also necessary: sending an e-mail to a colleague or chatting on-line should pose no problem.

Level 2 The following level goes further and includes everything adults must know and be able to do to be ready to play their role in society. Adults at this level should be able to use the Internet to find information or fill out all the necessary insurance forms in the case of an accident. According to the system designers, only those who display these basic skills, among others, will be able to play a full role in society.

Further information at: www.vdab.be

Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration / Icodoc

Netherlands

A swing towards core competencies

The importance of core competencies for the strengthening of the qualification structure in secondary vocational education

The National Advisory Committee on Vocational Education and Labour Market (Adviesraad Onderwijs Arbeidsmarkt, ACOA) plays an important role in Dutch vocational education and training. It is an independent committee, of which the terms of reference include 'to advise the national bodies for vocational training about the qualification structure and the attainment targets'. In practice, this implies that approval by ACOA is required before changes in the qualification structure can be implemented. Furthermore, it is ACOA's task 'to advise the Minister on all aspects of tuning between education and labour market'. In 1998, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science asked ACOA for advice on how 'to sharpen the conceptual framework for identifying key qualifications in the attainment targets'. In June 1999, ACOA published its response: 'A swing towards core competencies' (Een wending naar kerncompetenties).

In this, ACOA contributes to the strengthening of the qualification

structure for secondary vocational education within the currently existing framework, focusing on:

- improved transparency for all clients of the structure, i.e. students, national bodies, educational institutes and enterprises;
- sustainability, i.e. resistance to minute changes in occupational practice and
- sufficient breadth, i.e. specific enough for a good start in the labour market and at the same time general enough for further growth.

ACOA (re-)defines the terminology used in the development of the qualification structure and offers instruments (called 'formats') to incorporate core competencies in the qualification structure. The proposed introduction of 'formats' is new in the Netherlands.

ACOA proposes the use of core competencies, core activities and core problems, which describe the essence of an occupation or a group of occupations, as the leading principle

for the further development of occupational profiles and attainment targets. Core competencies are the abilities of an individual, which enable him/her to solve the core problems of an occupation in an adequate process and product-oriented fashion. Core competencies are multi-dimensionally structured and mutually connected. When the social partners succeed in clearly defining and describing core competencies, the educational establishment will be able to tune its products to the demands of the labour market.

ACOA does not propose creating a fully new qualification structure. Maintaining, updating and extending the existing structure will suffice. Furthermore, ACOA proposes to undertake pilots to further ascertain the feasibility of the 'formats'. These pilots should be an addition to those already executed in the care and metal sectors.

ACOA fully acknowledges that the social partners have the responsibil-

ity to create and maintain the qualification structure. With the conceptual framework and the formats at hand, the activities of the social partners within the national bodies for vocational education will become even more effectively structured.

In November 1999, the Minister of Education, Culture and Science reacted favourably to ACOA's advice. The Minister agrees that maintenance of the qualification structure, which is a continuous process, will benefit from applying the concept of core competencies. A prerequisite for successful implementation will be acceptance of the concepts and the 'formats' by all users of the qualification structure. The Minister therefore decided to initiate pilots proposed by ACOA.

Further information:
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Source: CINOP

Spain

National Institute for Qualifications

A conference on national qualification systems was organised by the Ministry for Education and Culture, in collaboration with the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, on 13 and 14 September 1999. The conference was attended by the director of the recently created National Institute for Qualifications who gave a presentation explaining its objectives and functions (cf. "Cedefop Info" 2/99, p. 11).

The presentation included the following information, taken from the article referenced below:

1) The National Institute for Qualifications has emerged as a necessary link in the new national vocational training programme, based mainly on the design of an integrated system of qualifications and vocational

training to provide a global, co-ordinated, consistent and optimal approach to issues relating to the qualifications and vocational training of various groups, organisations and enterprises in Spain.

2) The principal objectives of the Institute are: identifying vocational qualifications to be listed in a Span-

ish Catalogue of Vocational Qualifications, within the European framework; accrediting vocational competencies, both by means of formal training and through skills evaluation by skilled persons; incorporating qualifications into the vocational training programmes of the various sub-systems; evaluating the national system of qualifications, which nec-

essarily includes quality assurance; and monitoring the development of qualifications by means of studies and research.

3) The vocational qualifications managed by the National Institute for Qualifications must be structured into a system so as to be identified: this involves the identification of knowledge, skills and competencies – all activities on which the performance and realisation of working roles and situations are based at the required levels of employment (required qualification).

Acquired: this refers to qualifications acquired in the course of vocational and non-vocational life by means of initial or continuing training or by work experience. Recognised: recognition involves evaluating and certifying qualifications as representing skills with a specific value in the job market, enabling demand to be matched with supply.

Further information from: Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Instituto Nacional de las Cualificaciones calle Rafael Calvo 18, E-28010 Madrid Tel. (34-91) 319 89 45, Fax (34-91) 310 28 30

Source: Revista de la Confederación Española de Centros y Academias Privadas FORMADORES N°3/1999/INEM

System for monitoring the vocational integration routes of graduates

An increasing number of young higher education graduates in Portugal are unable to find a job at the end of their studies or can only do so by moving to a different region

This phenomenon has come to the attention of the responsible authorities, who have designed a system for monitoring the vocational integration routes of graduates of higher education. A body has been set up comprising INOFOR (Institute for Innovation in Training) and the DETEF (Department of Statistics on Labour, Employment and Vocational

Training), both under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity, and the Directorate-General for Higher Education and the Department for the Evaluation of Prospects and Planning, both under the Ministry of Education. The aim of this body is to detect successful and unsuccessful graduate routes. This system will identify the training

programmes, educational establishments, etc. that are the most valued in the training routes of their managers. Preliminary surveys were launched in February.

A number of educational institutions and Portuguese employers, conscious of the problem of unemployment affecting several thousands of

young graduates, have decided to build bridges to ease the transition between university and working life.

Source: CIDES – Centro de Informação e Documentação Económica e Social
Praça de Londres 2-1º Andar Centro INFFO
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Vocational training statistics

Netherlands

School leaver survey – women with a technical qualification earn higher wages

Dutch 1998 VET school leavers have been approached in order to gain insight into their careers. At the beginning of 1999, more than 14 500 school leavers received a questionnaire on which they could indicate their experiences since they left school. Each year, the Dutch research and consultancy bureau Velthuysen Toppen van Iren, which carried out the survey, offers ROCs (Dutch VET institutes) the opportunity to make use of this standardised methodology. In 1999, ten (out of 46) ROCs took part in the survey by making available the addresses of all students whose names had been removed from the institute's register in the previous year.

Almost 8 000 (54%) school leavers responded. This, along with other characteristics of the respondents,

allowed the researchers to conclude that the findings provide reliable indicators for three Dutch VET sectors: technical, care and administration. The survey took place six months after school leaving. Results were compared with the outcomes of a similar 1994 survey. Of the school leavers, whose ages ranged from 17 to 21 and who reached their qualifications in summer 1998, 61% entered the labour market. In 1994 this figure was 49%. This clearly reflects the currently improved labour market conditions in the Netherlands. Almost 70% of those working are in an occupation closely related to the subject of their studies.

As expected, school leavers with a diploma earn more than those without one. On average, men earned

EUR 806 per month. Women earned considerably less: EUR 712. Remarkably, no gender-related difference in wages was observed for school leavers entering technical occupations. Indeed, here, women even earn a bit more than their male colleagues. Possibly, this could be accounted for by the special motivation of female technicians and the great demand existing in enterprises.

More than one third of the school leavers continue their studies, mostly at a higher level in the same sector. Of the students who finish their studies at level 1 or 2, about 60% make a transition to level 3 or 4 studies. In the 1999 survey, 2% of the school leavers were still looking for a job – a considerable decrease compared with the 1994 situation (5%).

The survey was carried out at a time when the reform of the Dutch secondary VET system was at a halfway stage. In 1998, only shorter pathways (qualification levels 1 and 2) could have been completed under the new regime. Longer courses for levels 3 and 4 were still part of the pre-reform system.

Finally, the school leavers could indicate how satisfied they were with the time they spent at school. On a scale from 1 to 10, they rated the content of courses at 6.9, but a rating of 5.9 showed that they were less satisfied with the advice and guidance they received regarding work and further study.

Further information:
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The Netherlands
E-mail: vti@tip.nl

Source: CINOP

PANORAMA Agora – IV The low-skilled on the European labour market: prospects and policy options Towards a minimum learning platform Thessaloniki, 29-30 October 1998 Cedefop panorama 5097 Languages: DE, EN, ES, FR Cat. no.: 26-99-279-EN-C	CEDDEFOP Operational guidelines and medium-term priorities 2000-2003 Languages: DE, EN, FR Cat. no.: TI-27-00-661-EN-D	Work Programme 2000 Reference document 4006 Languages: DE, EN, FR Cat. no.: TI-27-00-580-EN-C	PANORAMA The impact of information and communication technologies on vocational competences and training Case studies in Italy, France and Spain Synthesis Report panorama 5091 Languages: EN, IT Cat. no.: HX-20-98-082-EN-C	PANORAMA The financing of vocational education and training in Germany Financing portrait panorama 5094 Languages: DE, EN Cat. no.: HX-22-99-046-EN-C	PANORAMA Supporting quality in vocational training through networking panorama 5098 Languages: DE, EN Cat. no.: HX-26-99-271-EN-C	PANORAMA Innovation and training in the agribusiness complex Synthesis report of a study in various product chains in five European countries panorama 5099 Language: EN Cat. no.: HX-26-99-287-EN-C	PANORAMA Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Spain panorama 5100 Language: EN Cat. no.: TI-28-00-155-EN-C
Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop	Free of charge on request from Cedefop

CEDEFOP publications

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Special target groups/In brief/Contacts/Conferences – Exhibitions

Special target groups

Portugal

SUB21 PROGRAMME

The adoption of a coordinated strategy for upgrading human resources as set out in the employment guidelines approved at the Luxembourg Summit in November 1997 introduced new requirements on how the member states of the European Union should develop their employment and training policies.

Mindful of these guidelines, in April 1998 the Portuguese government approved a National Employment Plan for the period 1998-2003, drawn up in co-operation with the social partners. The principal objective of this plan was to raise the basic educational level and occupational qualifications of the active population in a lifelong learning perspective by enhancing, among other things, the use of active employment policies as a means towards greater employability.

The suitable placement of young people in work is one of the chief priorities of Portuguese employment policy, especially since youth unemployment is a major problem of the labour market: according to information supplied by the National Statistical Institute, although unemployment stands at 5%, youth unemployment – understood to cover those between 15 and 24 years of age – is about 10%. Entering the job market can no longer be regarded as a one-off event; it has become a lengthy process. Because of this, it is now necessary to provide young people with opportunities for developing skills that make them employable and that allow them to find a job and keep it.

In pursuit of this objective, in September 1999 the Portuguese government launched its SUB21 programme, based on a philosophy of wide-ranging intervention at the level of various target groups. The programme employs a personalised, global and time-specific method designed to speed up the process of

finding appropriate employment for young people.

The programme is aimed at unemployed young people aged between 15 and 20 who either are seeking employment for the first time or wish to change their job, and who are not already in some other form of education or training. They may be:

- young people who have not completed the third cycle of primary education, or
- young people who have completed the third cycle of primary education but not their secondary education.

In general terms the SUB21 programme seeks to offer young people in such situations the chance to acquire training so that they can enhance such qualities as independence, initiative, the capacity for self-instruction, and the ability to work in a team, to gather and process information and to solve problems.

The general objectives of the programme are as follows:

- To enhance the educational qualifications and occupational skills of young people up to the age of 20 in order to make them more employable and improve their chances of finding a first, or another, job.
- To raise the number of those under 21 who complete their compulsory nine years of schooling, through forms of training in which the social and cultural, and the scientific and technical, are closely linked.
- To improve young people's awareness, and the general social standing, of work-based training.
- To provide all young people in this age group with the means to

enhance their social skills, such as oral and written communication in Portuguese and at least one foreign language, and to improve their knowledge of mathematics, of their rights and duties as citizens of Portugal and of the European Community, and of the new information and communications technology.

Through this programme, the government assures all young people up to the age of 20 who are registered with employment centres, of training which enables them to gain an occupational qualification and therefore eases their entry into the world of work. In the case of those who have not completed their compulsory nine years of schooling, it allows them to improve their education through instruction in social and cultural matters.

The various measures referred to in the SUB21 programme include making the available training more flexible by varying the form and methods employed, so as to put suitable training within the reach of all young people. Such measures will include interaction between the social-cultural and scientific-technical aspects of training as well as work-based training in co-operating firms.

The SUB21 programme thus constitutes a strategic means for imparting greater dynamism to a body of inter-related measures and programmes, strengthening their interaction and improving their availability and acceptability to the young people concerned, as well as the involvement of employers. The following methods of vocational training have been considered in the context of this strategy for integration.

Pre-vocational training

This is aimed at young people who have not completed their first cycle of primary education (4 school years). It is organised in close con-

nexion with the training centres and the consulting vocational training coordinators at the Ministry of Education.

It consists of pre-requisites for vocational training, such as Portuguese, mathematics and training for citizenship. Completion is regarded as equivalent to the first cycle of primary education and allows access to qualifying training programmes.

Apprenticeship

This form of training, designed for young people who have completed their first, second or third cycle of primary education, is of great importance because it offers young people the opportunity to pursue an integrated course of training with a threefold purpose, namely, occupational qualification, a higher level of formally certified education and experience gained in the workplace.

Education and training

The education and training courses are a joint measure of the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity and are designed to improve on shortcomings in terms of educational and vocational qualification, particularly in the case of young people who have left school early – but who must have completed their second cycle of primary education, equivalent to six years of schooling. It offers them qualifying training plus a certificate of completion of third-cycle primary education. These courses are mainly directed to young people without qualifications and without a certificate of third-cycle primary education.

Training leading to a vocational qualification

The objective in this case is personal, occupational and social development that offers trainees the opportunity to join and leave at different points along the training route. This

training can meet young people's needs for initial qualifications, as well as those of adults, employed or unemployed, for an occupational qualification. Courses are organised in incremental modules and may be run by either public-sector or private bodies under the supervision of the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity through the Institute of Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP).

These modular training courses are designed for young people and adults who have completed at least the second cycle of compulsory primary education and who may be employed or unemployed and have no or insufficient qualifications

Further training

The IEFP's network of training centres regularly organises a range of short courses, lasting between 60 and 120 hours, for young people who already hold a level 2 occupational qualification; it enables them to acquire certain key skills for their social and working life, so as to enhance their employability and, logically, their chances of finding a job.

Training for employment

This is mainly aimed at young people who have completed nine years of schooling. It provides qualifying occupational training lasting one year at the least, as well as the necessary time in an actual work environment.

Practical work experience (traineeships)

This aims to provide young people, who already possess a qualification over and above their nine years of schooling, with training in an actual working environment so as to facilitate the transition between school or school-based vocational training and working life.

Source: Ministry of Labour and Solidarity
Institute of Employment and Vocational Training – IEFP
<http://www.iefp.pt/novidades/principioni.htm>



The Rosetta Plan: a co-operation agreement

At the interministerial conference on employment on 17 January 2000, the Belgian Ministers with responsibility for employment and training (at federal and regional level) agreed to strengthen the law on first jobs for young people and to amend the programme to combat unemployment set up following the Saint Eloi agreements.

The Ministers have now concluded a co-operation agreement that they will submit to their respective governments for approval.

This new agreement replaces, for 2000, the co-operation agreement of 3 May 1999 on the plan for supporting the unemployed.

The support plan of 3 May 1999 was widely criticised for its rigidity. It required low-skilled jobseekers who had dropped out of school to attend intensive 1 000-hour training courses, something that such young people are notoriously disinclined to attend. What they want is to start work as quickly as possible.

Furthermore, provision was made for these young people only after they had already been registered as jobseekers for six months.

Under this new co-operation agreement, from now on young people will be able to take advantage of **three employment and training measures** as soon as they leave school:

- a pathway towards entry into working life:
Anyone aged under 25 who has not obtained a certificate of upper secondary education and who has left school in the past three months is

entitled to the benefit of a support measure and specific work integration schemes.

In practice, the competent regional department will call in this target group. An agreement on entry into the working world is drawn up with each young person, taking account of his or her specific needs, with a view to progressing to a first-job agreement. Support will, therefore, no longer be perceived as a constraint but rather as a means of obtaining a first job.

The integration pathway may be no more than a 40-hour module of active job search, or it may include training modules. It will, therefore, be closely matched to every young person's special needs.

Financially, a budget of BEF 1 billion (EUR 24 789 352.4), derived from the 0.05% social security contribution will be made available to regional and language community agencies for placement and training with which to conduct specific measures.

- The first-job agreement:
Young people recruited under a first-job agreement by both private- and public-sector employers will as a priority be assigned to general projects meeting community needs.

At the end of a period worked under the first-job agreement, it will be easier for young people to find employment. The time spent on such work will be regarded as a period of unemployment or of registration as a jobseeker.

If there are too few school-leavers, other groups of young people may also be admitted to either the integration pathway or the first-job

agreement. The bodies determining whether there is a shortage of school leavers and whether other groups may be admitted to the schemes will be sub-regional employment committees, made up of the representatives of the social partners.

- The vocational transition programme:
The vocational transition programme funded by the Federal State and the Regions, and implemented by the Regions, will be extended to jobseekers aged under 25 who have not obtained a certificate of upper

secondary education, as of the first day on which they register as jobseekers.

This co-operation expresses the resolve of the Federal State, the Language Communities and the Regions to work together to combat youth unemployment, in accordance with the first European guideline.

Source: FOREM (CIDOC)

Further information:
Federal Minister of Employment and Work
Rue Belliard 51
B-1040 BRUSSELS
Tel. (32-2) 233 41 11
Fax (32-2) 233 44 88
E-mail: info@meta.fgov.be
Website: http://www.meta.fgov.be



Belgium

VDAB launches training course for childminders

The Limburg branch of VDAB (Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service) and the association 'Enfant et Famille' have joined forces to expand child care provision within the province. The lack of child care facilities is in fact one of the factors dissuading women from applying for jobs. In anticipation of a global project for the whole of the province of Limburg, VDAB and the association 'Enfant et Famille' are already preparing a number of concrete actions.

VDAB also wishes to counteract the shortage and quality of childminders by means of training courses. For some time now, 'Enfant et Famille' has observed an increasing shortage of private families acting as childminders. With

the development of job opportunities for women, there is an increasing need for child care.

Since November, VDAB has been training childminders in Genk in the framework of a project launched by the commune with the assistance of the Social Impetus Fund; training is to be provided for some ten childminders. As from next year, VDAB is to train childminders throughout the entire province and some 90 women jobseekers will be able to follow a training course as a childminder as from the year 2000.

Further information at: www.vdab.be
Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration / Icodoc

United Kingdom

Government initiatives aim to boost learning and employment for most disadvantaged

The UK Government is attempting to boost skills and access to employment for the most disadvantaged by introducing several new initiatives, including basic skills testing for adults and a 'Learning and Work Bank' employment website through the Employment Service.

In an attempt to establish reliable measures of UK adult literacy and numeracy levels, the government is developing new national tests. This is part of a £16 million initiative to improve the quality of adult basic skills provision. A recent government-commissioned report* highlighted the problems in adult basic skills in England and prompted the action. The initiative is aimed at the more than seven million adults who lack crucial basic skills in literacy and numeracy. In addition to the national tests, a new framework and qualification will be developed for those entering the basic skills teaching profession by the National Training Organisation for Further Education and the Basic Skills Agency.

The government has also unveiled plans to invest £18 million (ca. EUR 29 million) in the expansion of Internet job recruitment. The

service will be developed by the Employment Service and will cost approximately £12 million (ca. EUR 19.4 million). £6 million (ca. EUR 9.7 million) will be spent testing access equipment. Computers with access to the website will be located in local Jobcentres, but the site will be available to all computers with access to the Internet, and it is hoped that portals can be set up in public locations, such as libraries and shopping centres, for optimum access to the jobs on offer. Through the 'Learning and Work Bank,' vacancies posted through the government-run Jobcentres will now be available on the Internet with a new search engine that enables employers to look through databanks of applicants and assists jobseekers in finding the right type of employment opportunities to apply to. It will also provide information on learning opportunities and career choices.

In addition to the new initiatives outlined above, the New Deal programme for the unemployed continues to expand. In addition to the New Deal for Young People, which provides young people with either further training or subsidised employment or volunteer work experience, the New Deal is now also available for those long-term unemployed aged 25 or over. The New Deal for lone parents was established in 1998, and the New Deal for those aged 50 and over was established in November 1999. The aim is for every long-term unem-

ployed person over the age of 25 to be included in the New Deal programme by April of 2001.

For more information on the basic skills initiative outlined above, visit the DfEE website at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk>
* "Improving Literacy and Numeracy: A fresh start"
DfEE Publications, PO Box 5050, Sudbury, Suffolk CO10 6ZQ, United Kingdom
Tel. (44-845) 602 22 60, Fax (44-845) 603 33 60
For more information on the 'Learning and Work Bank' see the Employment Service website at <http://www.employmentservice.gov.uk> and for more information on the New Deal see the DfEE website or the New Deal website at <http://www.newdeal.gov.uk>
Source: IPD

In brief

Norway

Structural change in provision within upper secondary education and training

The Norwegian parliament, Stortinget, has decided to expand the training provision at upper secondary level. Two new Foundation Courses will be offered nationwide from August 2000, in order to strengthen the recruitment to important sectors. The two new courses are "Economy and Trade" and "Media and Communication".

Source: NCU Norwegen

Recruitment to technical education

A tight labour market combined with decreasing age cohorts in general has led to an increased competition for students between higher education institutions and between the different areas of study. A significant lack of engineers and ICT competencies explains the increased efforts in specific recruitment measures now made by the various higher training institutions. The University of Bergen has launched special preparation courses for students without a sufficient background in natural science for engineering studies. Specially adapted first year courses are also provided. As a result, recruitment has increased significantly, after a serious drop earlier in the 1990s.

Source: NCU Norwegen

Contacts

Belgium, Denmark, Netherlands, Sweden

TENTRANET: Tender Trade Network – a transnational network to facilitate SMEs' access to international calls for tender

Tentrinet: A transnational collaboration project has been initiated by Formation PME Liège (Belgium), Marketing Sales (Netherlands), Aalborgs Tekniske Skole (Denmark) and European Corporate Partner (Sweden) with the aim of providing appropriate training and/or guidance to SMEs to facilitate their access to international calls for tender and give them a more international outlook.

The project, set up in January 1998 on the basis of an ADAPT initiative ('adaptation of the workforce to industrial change'), seeks to develop the aptitudes and human resources of SMEs in order to enable them to participate more systematically in calls to tender and increase their chances of success in doing so.

The project target group comprises SME managers who have been selected to initiate and/or promote the internationalisation of their firms.

The main difficulties encountered in responding to a call for tender were highlighted by a survey conducted prior to the

project among a number of firms providing answers on a regular basis. A training programme was subsequently developed and then reviewed along with the partners, with each partner being given an opportunity to adapt the programme to their own specific requirements and establish their own approach.

The training programme includes, among others, the following learning elements:

- How to identify and qualify for different calls for tender.
- Correct estimation of the necessary resources and capacities within the SME.
- Understanding and grasping calls for tender, their benefits, and the possibilities of participation.
- Establishing partnerships.

A meeting was held in Brussels on 21 March to disseminate the project results, and a final report is available in English. For further information, go to our Internet sites: <http://www.udbudsraadgivning.dk>, <http://www.ifpm.be>, <http://www.liegeonline.be/fr/entr/clfpcm.html>

It is an important aspect of Cedefop's work to promote the exchange of information, encounters and co-operation between all those involved in vocational training. **Cedefop info** serves as a platform for this. Well-prepared texts of a concise nature have a better chance of obtaining a positive reaction through this multilingual publication.

The project, to be concluded at the end of 2000, is to lead to the development of learning methods in the techniques to be applied in answering calls for tender.

For further information on the results of the project or any query or suggestion, please contact the following addresses:

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Fax (32-4) 252 71 00

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Fax (45-98) 13 73 95

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S-402 34 Göteborg
Sweden
Tel. (46-31) 24 15 10
Fax (46-31) 42 89 10

Source: Centre de Formation permanente des Classes moyennes et des PME, Service international, Liège-Huy-Waremme, ASBL

Conferences – Exhibitions

Portugal

Forthcoming events ... LISBON 2000

Portugal to host the 50th anniversary commemoration of the International Vocational Training Organisation (IVTO)

The International Vocational Training Organisation (IVTO) is a non-profit membership association open to agencies or bodies with a national responsibility for promoting vocational training in their respective countries. It was founded in 1950 by Portugal, following the first international vocational training contest held in Madrid. Whereas Spain and Portugal were the only participants in 1950, IVTO now comprises active members from 31 different countries. The organisation's headquarters are currently in Amsterdam.

The role of IVTO is to promote the development of new technologies and vocational training by means of an exchange of experience between training and educational players. An international vocational training contest, the 'International Youth Skills Competition', is organised every other year to this end. The last 'World Skills Competition' was held in Montreal in 1999 and the next is to take place in Seoul in 2001.

As the founding member of IVTO, Portugal is to host the 50th anniversary commemoration in Lisbon. The Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP) is responsible for the practical organisation of the

various events to be held at the Parque das Nações international fairground in the week of 11-17 June. Around 150 000 visitors are expected at this event, which will make Lisbon the world vocational training capital for the year 2000.

Further information at:
<http://www.ivto.com/>
(site in DE, EN, FR)
<http://www.iefp.pt/novidades/principioini.htm>
Select: Eventos (<http://web.iefp.pt/webnovidades.nsf/eventos?openview>), followed by LISBOA 2000 (site in Portuguese)

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Estrutura de Projeto – Lisboa 2000
Eng.º Miguel Santos
Rua de Xabregas, 52
P-1900 Lisboa
Tel. (351-1) 868 29 67, Fax (351-1) 868 02 79,
E-mail: nop46504@mail.telepac.pt

Source: CIDES/Cedefop

Germany

Action days for lifelong learning

Lernfest 2000 on the UNESCO Global Dialogue

German continuing training institutions are currently preparing for this year's lifelong learning event, Lernfest 2000. The climax of the third nation-wide action days on lifelong learning will be the central event on 8 September at EXPO 2000 in Hannover.

This year's Lernfest coincides with World Literacy Day and the UNESCO Global Dialogue on effective structures of lifelong learning, "Building Learning Societies". The Lernfest provides an opportunity for all adult education institutions in Germany to present their programmes and services to the public and win over an increasing number of people for lifelong learning.

A public debate on knowledge, learning and sustainable development, titled "Focus Earth", is to be

held on 6 September. This is to be followed by a discussion on the development of information societies in various cultures, "Voice of the World", on 7 September. On 8 September, the Lernfest shall present itself as a platform for the future in the framework of the UN week on continuing training.

Further information on Lernfest 2000 from Adolf Grimme Institut, Eduard-Weitsch-Weg 25, D-45768 Marl, Tel. (49-2365) 91 89 44, Fax (49-2365) 91 89 89, Internet: www.lernfest.de.

Source: BMBF/Adolf Grimme Institut/Cedefop/SK

CONFERENCES – SEMINARS – EXHIBITIONS

Aalborg/DK

7 to 8 May 2000
Europartenariat Denmark 2000
an international event for
small and medium-sized
enterprises from 80 countries
Contact:
Niels Jernes Vej 10
DK-9220 Aalborg Øst
Tel. (45-96) 35 44 88
Fax (45-96) 35 45 89
E-mail: info@ep2000.dk
www.ep2000.dk

Vancouver/Canada

24 to 27 May 2000
The World Education Market –
International Business of
Education
Contact:
Reed Midem Organisation
BP 572
11 rue du Colonel Pierre Avia
F-75726 Paris Cedex 15
Tel. (33-1) 41 90 49 61
Fax (33-1) 41 90 49 60
Véronique Damien
E-mail:
veronique.damien@reedmidem.com
<http://www.wemex.com>

Thessaloniki/GR

25 to 27 May 2000
Conference on
Internationalising Vocational
Education and Training in
Europe
Organiser: ACIU, The Danish
Center for International Train-
ing Programmes, and
Cedefop
Contact:
Conference secretariat
ACIU
Hesseløgade 16
DK-2100 Copenhagen
Tel. (45-327) 19 22
Fax (45-327) 22 17
E-mail: aciu@aciu.dk
<http://www.internationalisation.org>

Hongkong/China

21 to 24 June 2000
1st Conference on research in
Distance and Adult Learning in
Asia (CRIDALA)
Contact:
Olugbemiro Jegede
CRIDALA 2000
Centre for Research in
Distance & Adult Learning
The Open University of Hong
Kong
30 Good Shepherd Street
Homantin, Kowloon
Hong Kong
Fax (852) 27 15 90 42
E-mail: cridala@ouhk.edu.hk
<http://www.ouhk.edu.hk/cridal/cridala>

Cape Town/South Africa

25 to 28 June 2000
A strategy for the new
millennium
The 3rd Conference of the
International Association of
Community and Further
Education Colleges (IAC)
Contact:
European representative:
Mr Justin Togher, Principal
City of Bath College
Avon Street
Bath BA1 1UP
United Kingdom
Tel. (44-1225) 32 88 33
Fax (44-1225) 32 88 81
E-mail:
togherjc@citybathcoll.ac.uk

Berlin/D

30 August to 1 September 2000
BERLIN 2000 International
Conference for Vocational
Guidance
"Guidance for Education,
Career, and Employment –
New Challenges"
Organiser: International
Association for Educational
and Vocational Guidance and
Bundesanstalt für Arbeit
Contact: Conference
secretariat AIOSP Berlin 2000
Kongressorganisation
c/o Haus am Koellnischen Park
Am Koellnischen Park 6-7
D-10179 Berlin
Tel. (49-30) 23 80 68 38
Fax (49-30) 23 80 68 36
E-mail:
AIOSPBerlin2000@hakp.de
<http://www.hakp.de>
AIOSPBerlin2000

Selected bibliography

Some recent publications in the field of VET, especially at European level, have been selected below by Cedefop's Library and Documentation Service, Anne Waniart, E-mail: anw@cedefop.eu.int

Survey into the socio-economic background of ERASMUS students: Report from the Commission
Commission of the European Communities
Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000
Documents COM (2000) 4 final, 82 p.
ISSN: 0254-1475, en
Availability: EUR-OP,
2 rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg,
or from its national sales offices
E-mail: info.info@opoce.cec.be
URL: <http://www.eur-op.eu.int>
Cat. no.: KT-CO-00-014-EN-C

The document mentioned above may be obtained from EU national sales offices, <http://eur-op.eu.int/en/general/s-ad.htm>, or the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities (EUR-OP):
2, rue Mercier, L-2985 Luxembourg
info.info@opoce.cec.be
Tel. (352) 292 91, Fax (352) 495 19

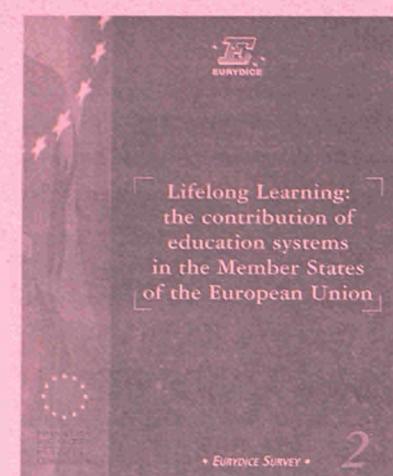
Patricia Vendramin
Gérard Valenduc

L'avenir du travail dans la société de l'information

Enjeux individuels et collectifs

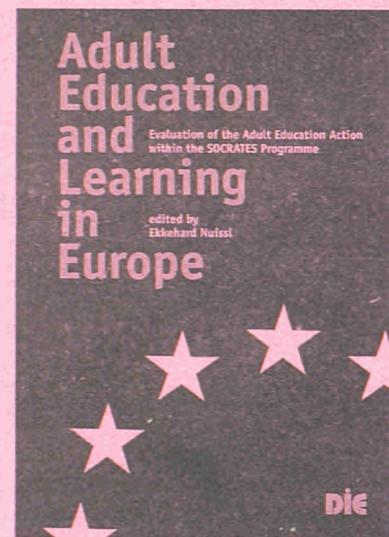


L'avenir du travail dans la société de l'information: enjeux individuels et collectifs
Vendramin, Patricia;
Valenduc, Gérard
Fondation Travail-Université, FTU.
Unité de recherche Travail et Technologies
Formation Education Culture, FEC
Namur: Fondation Travail Université,
1999, 120 p.
ISBN: 2-930062-15-0
Availability: FTU, rue de l'Arsenal 5,
B-5000 NAMUR
Tel. (32-81) 72 51 22
Fax (32-81) 72 51 28
E-mail: vendramin@compuserve.com
URL: <http://www.ftu.be/>



Lifelong learning: the contribution of education systems in the Member States of the European Union
Information Network on Education in Europe, EURYDICE
Brussels: Eurydice, 2000, 163 p.
ISBN: 2-87-116-294-8
Availability:
EURYDICE European Unit,
15 rue d'Arlon, B-1050 Brussels
Tel. (32 2) 238 30 11
Fax (32 2) 230 65 62
E-mail: info@eurydice.org,
URL: <http://www.eurydice.org>
EN FR

Downloadable document
URL: http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/LLL/EN/ENQUETE_2_EN.pdf



Adult education and learning in Europe: Evaluation of the Adult Education Action within the SOCRATES Programme
Final report of the project MOPED – Monitoring of Projects Evaluation as Dialogue
Nuissl, Ekkehard (ed.)
Frankfurt: DIE, 1999, 114 p.
ISBN: 3-933222-24-9

Presidency programme: Portugal 2000: Europe and the challenges of the learning society
Ministério da Educação, ME
Lisbon: ME, 2000, 44 p.
ISBN: 972-8597-04-5
Availability: Ministério da Educação,
Av. 5 de Outubro, nº 107,
P-1050 Lisboa
Tel. (351-21) 793 16 03
Fax (351-21) 796 41 19
E-mail: cirep@min-edu.pt
URL: <http://www.min-edu.pt>
PT EN FR

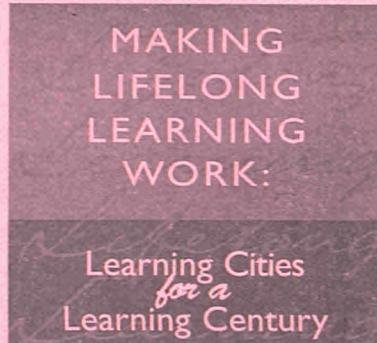
Internet-based teaching and learning (IN-TELE) 98: proceedings of IN-TELE 98
Conference report
Marquet, Pascal (eds.)
Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1999,
570 p.
Internet Communication, 2
ISBN: 3-631-35557-2
DE EN FR

International hearing for the Portuguese Presidency of the European Union: action line employment, economic reforms and social cohesion, for a Europe of innovation and knowledge: Lisbon, Centro Cultural de Belém 3-4 December 1999
RODRIGUES M J
Gabinete do Primeiro Ministro, GPM
Lisbon: GPM, 2000, 126 p.
Availability:

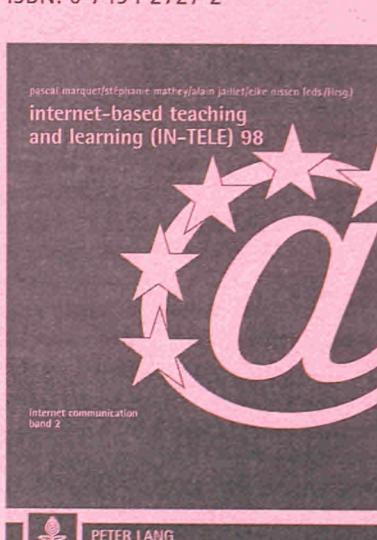
GPM, Rua da Imprensa à Estrela 4,
P-1200-888 Lisboa
Tel. (351-21) 392 35 34
Fax (351-21) 396 50 98

Managing vocational training systems: a handbook for senior administrators

GASSKOV V
International Labour Office, ILO
Geneva: ILO, 2000, 278 p.
ISBN: 92-2-110867-8
Availability: ILO Publications,
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland
or from ILO local offices in many
countries
Tel. (41-22) 799 79 12
Fax (41-22) 799 85 77
E-mail: pubvente@ilo.org
URL: <http://www.ilo.org>



Making Lifelong Learning work: learning cities for a learning century
Longworth, Norman
London: Kogan Page, 1999, 227 p.
ISBN: 0-7494-2727-2



Internet-based teaching and learning (IN-TELE) 98: proceedings of IN-TELE 98
Conference report
Marquet, Pascal (eds.)
Frankfurt: Peter Lang Verlag, 1999,
570 p.
Internet Communication, 2
ISBN: 3-631-35557-2
DE EN FR

Sources

The following organisations are members of Cedefop's documentary information network, furnished contributions for this issue of Cedefop INFO and can provide information about Cedefop and its activities.

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Mr. Loukas Zahilas, Director

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