

CEDEFOP

INFO

about Vocational Training in the European Union

Letter from the Director

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training turns 25 this year. So this is perhaps a good moment to take stock and reaffirm our principles.

Let me start by pointing out that for us at Cedefop, vocational training is first of all a form of education. The cognitive process, the mechanisms of learning, the fundamental pedagogical principles to be applied are not all that different, whether we are dealing with general education or professional training, initial or continuing training, compulsory schooling or training that has been freely chosen and engaged in.

At Cedefop we believe that the lines drawn between various types of education, principally of course between general education and vocational training, are largely artificial, having more to do with ideological and political considerations than educational ones. Even if we cannot erase these lines from one day to the next, we need to question their *raison d'être* and continued existence in the face of the social and economic upheavals and all the technical and organisational changes which characterise our society.

This is the thinking we have been pursuing since Cedefop was set up. Our aim is to become the centre of reference for the Europe of knowledge. We believe vocational training has an important role to play in opening the mind toward general education because learning goes to learning as money goes to money. Moreover we know how important general education is for the quality of vocational training: in today's world, adaptability in the face of uncertainty, creativity, an open mind, the capacity to learn and the ability to manage interpersonal relations have become universal requirements. We are convinced of the need to break down barriers between types of learning and specific groups of citizens, and are working to bring together general education and vocational training, compulsory schooling and voluntary training, initial and continuing training, training for the employed and unemployed. We also believe that within the "House of Europe" everyone should work together according to their competences and enjoy respect for their different approaches. These are the two ideas which fuel our effort to collaborate as much as possible with other agencies, institutions and services of the European Communities - especially the EURYDICE network for education in Europe, the ETF in Turin, the Foun-

Continued on page 2

AGORA

THESSALONIKI

Word, Thought, Power, Deed

Agora Thessaloniki is three years old. What is its aim? Which themes has it dealt with since it was set up? What is its programme for next year? The answers and information of Cedefop project coordinator **Éric Fries Guggenheim** can be found in the 'Dossier' on pages 17 to 20.

Cedefop:

Reporting on lifelong learning

Lifelong learning (LLL) is a difficult subject to tackle because it touches on all aspects of education and training and indeed the wider sphere of cultural, employment and social policy. As a recent study on the implications of LLL for vocational education and training (VET) in Australia concluded (Kearns* et al., 1999), "we should regard lifelong learning as a master concept to guide the coherent development of all sectors of education and training in the emerging conditions of the 21st century".

LLL has been a theme of Cedefop's work programme since the European Year of Lifelong Learning in 1996. Until now we have examined crucial issues,

Continued on page 2

Europe:

Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory

An "active/interactive" tool for training in safety

Within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, the social partners in the sugar industry have developed a new tool for training in safety. Produced in eleven languages, it can already be found in all sugar factories in the fifteen Member States. Focused on human behaviour, it aims to improve safety in sugar factories appreciably and to reduce industrial accidents to an absolute minimum. Entitled "Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory" it makes use of user-friendly interactive techniques.

Continued on page 3

Italy

Major school reform

The Italian Parliament has approved Law No. 30 of 10 February 2000, "Framework-Law on the Reorganisation of Education Cycles". It sets up a single system of education and training, with compulsory schooling from 6 to 15 years of age and obligatory training up to the age of 18. The system is divided into nursery schooling from 3 to 6 years of age, basic schooling, lasting seven years (from 6 to 12 years of age), and secondary schooling, lasting five years (from 13 to 18 years of age), followed by higher technical education and training, adult education and continuing training.

Continued on page 5

Contents

Europe 1,2,3,4; Belgium 7,9,10,16; Denmark 13; Finland 14; France 7,10; Germany 5,6,7,12,14; Greece 12; Ireland 11; Italy 1,6; Norway 5,6,14; Portugal 6,16; Spain 16; The Netherlands 11,13,14,15; United Kingdom 7,15

Cedefop/Europe

1-4

Page 1 Letter from the Director; Agora Thessaloniki; Cedefop: Reporting on lifelong learning; EU: Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory; I: Major school reform; **Page 2** EU: Lifelong learning: the contribution of Member States' education systems; **Page 3** 1999: A successful year for Cedefop; Cedefop: Innovation in vocational training in the environmental sector; EU: Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory; **Page 4** EU: The European Training Foundation promotes entrepreneurial skills as a vital tool to combat unemployment.

Policy

5-8

Page 5 Employment policy I: Major school reform; D: Vocational Training Report indicates a positive trend; NO: Forthcoming reforms in higher education; **Page 6** NO: Preparations for entrepreneurship and technology related jobs; **Initial training policy** D: Moving from the 'dual' to a 'plural' system; I: Compulsory training extended to the age of 18; **Continuing education and training policy** P: Continuing training for former students; **Page 7** B: Training in cooperation; F: Risks of abuse in the field of vocational training; UK: Towards a new VET structure; D: Alliance initiative to step up continuing vocational training; **Page 8** Selected bibliography; Sources.

Policy/Practice

9-12

Page 9 Training policy B: Introduction of the 'first youth job'; **Page 10** B: The First Job Agreement; B: YOUTH PLAN + launched in the Walloon region; F: Training the least qualified first; **Page 11** IRL: Social partnership programme agreed; IRL: Resolving skill shortages; Impressum; NL: On the right track - training as a means of achieving a higher labour participation rate; **Page 12 Bi- and multilateral co-operation** D/GR: Continuing vocational training advisory bureau for Greek nationals opened in Germany; Conferences - Seminars - Exhibitions; CEDEFOP publications.

Practice

13-16

Page 13 Mobility DK: Evaluation of the VET international exchange programme; NL: International mobility - VET a neglected partner?; **Page 14** NL: Practical training abroad; **New training organisations and programmes** D: Deutsche Bahn and TÜV launch IT offensive; FIN: TONET - an information service on on-the-job learning; **In brief** NO: Free textbooks; NO: New national centre for learning and development; **Page 15 Certification systems - quality of VET** NL: Monitoring the future of approved prior learning (APL); UK: Qualifications: building a vocational ladder; **Page 16 Training of trainers** B: Course on combating poverty to begin in Hasselt early February 2001; **Special target groups** E: First year of operation of the employment workshops; P: Adults conquer the world of knowledge.

Dossier

17-20

Page 17 Agora Thessaloniki - Word Thought, Power, Deed; **Page 19** AGORA VIII; Job rotation - job/training rotation.

Catalogue No: HX-AD-00-002-EN-C

Reporting on lifelong learning

Letter from the Director Continued from page 1

dation in Dublin - in order to help create the fair, successful and humane European society in which we all believe.

On the other hand, we are also convinced that it is absolutely necessary to recognise and respect differences between individuals. We are all alike and yet so different. There is no a priori reason why we should all want to learn the same things at the same time. It is essential that our educational system in the wider sense - including school, of course, but also local cultural and sports associations, neighbourhood centres, evaluation and orientation centres, adult training institutions, personalised teaching workshops and any other organisation involved in life-enlightening work, not excluding companies - should adapt to this diversity by creating the right conditions for true lifelong learning.

For Cedefop it has been 25 years of constant effort in the service of this educational and European ideal. Today we are very close to the orientations announced at the Lisbon and Santa Maria de Feira summits, which place education and training squarely at the centre of European concerns by making lifelong learning a priority of the European Union.

Perhaps no-one is a prophet in his own land, but looking back we do feel we successfully prepared the ground for providing efficient support for the Europe of Knowledge.

Johan van Rens
Thessaloniki
Late June 2000

such as key qualifications, non-formal learning, investment in human resources, etc. Now in 2000, for the first time, a project seeks to look horizontally at these issues, with LLL as the uniting factor. Links must be made between the various parts of education and training to create a new integrated model, including pathways and bridges between education and training routes (general and vocational education, VET and higher education, initial and continuing vocational training, etc), and links between these formal types of learning and non-formal learning taking place at work, at home or during leisure time. Enabling such bridging and transition is necessary to upgrade and renew the skills and competence of the workforce and society as a whole, in a period of constant change. While adequate foundation skills to equip one to learn throughout life are essential, progression and not just protracted initial education and training must be facilitated.

A first analysis will be published in the autumn in an article under the title *Lifelong Learning - how the paradigm has changed in the 1990s* in the background documents to Cedefop's second research report. In order to decide if the paradigm change has occurred, it begins by looking at the definition and how it has evolved. It treats important elements of today's lifelong learning strategies:

- the 'foundation skills' or the necessary platform on which to build one's learning throughout life, i.e. the ability to 'learn for life',
- the transition from school to work and how certain types of initial training facilitate this better than others,
- pathways and bridges between various education and training routes which enable the individual to return to formal learning at any time in the life-span,
- the increasing importance of non-formal learning and how this should be linked to formal systems of accreditation and recognition,
- upgrading the skills of the workforce and maintaining the employability of those at risk,
- increasing access and motivation to learn, especially among disadvantaged groups,
- the role of the various actors - governments and public administration, enterprises, educational establishments, individuals, the use of new technologies and
- new partnerships and networks.

The next objective is to provide a regular reporting system that will monitor developments, strategies, and the implementation of lifelong learning in the member states and at international level, including the latest research findings and European projects. It will be situated in the Electronic Training Village (ETV) (www.trainingvillage.gr) in order to make the results quickly available and to provide researchers, practitioners, policy-makers, and the training community in general, with information on and the possibility of discourse on policies, practices and research in the field of lifelong learning.

Gateway to LLL resources

The starting point for developing the reporting system is to provide a structured access to existing resources and to collate and signpost information on major policy developments and research.

The gateway will consist of the following items:

- overview of current developments - policies, debate and progress - this section on policy developments, agreements, opinions, debates of govern-

- ments, social partners and other actors at national, regional and local level, in addition to an international perspective, will form the core of the system;
- database of experts, institutions and networks working in the field;
- timetable of events, including conferences, seminars, workshops, etc.;
- projects, related to national research and EU programmes, which will also be linked to the European Research Overview, a feature of Cedefop's Research Arena (Cedra);
- documents and studies - a selective dissemination of information (SDI) service, provided through the Cedefop library database, will alert users to the latest publications on LLL at national, EU and international level, as well as selected literature on key themes. The references will include summaries, bibliographical details, and hyperlinks to electronic texts where possible;
- links to other CEDEFOP work and to relevant LLL web sites.

The system will be ready in its test phase in November 2000.

Review of LLL issues

In an attempt to move on from merely relaying information, the second stage of the reporting system will go deeper into specific issues. It will begin by looking at how the concept is developing and being implemented in selected countries. To kick off, studies have been launched on the extent to which vocational education and training policies and actions nurture LLL in four countries, Sweden, Finland, The Netherlands and Italy. We hope these countries give a varied picture:

- Sweden with its traditionally very holistic approach to education and training,
- Finland still benefiting from generous state support for many types of education and training,
- The Netherlands, currently enjoying very low rates of unemployment, placing much of the onus for LLL on the employers and employees and
- Italy characterised by a very decentralised and diverse VET system, currently carrying out reforms to achieve a more integrated system conducive to LLL.

Cedefop fully appreciates that the true range of LLL stretches from the 'cradle to the grave', although its work concentrates mostly on that period of life from the end of lower secondary education, when in most member states VET usually begins, and throughout working life. However, this concentration of Cedefop's work on VET complements nicely the work of Eurydice (The Information Network on Education in Europe), with which Cedefop has been collaborating since the early 1980s. This is the perfect partnership for depicting a holistic picture of education and training, or learning, as it is often referred to in Scandinavia. Currently, both organisations are working closely with the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) to prepare the Memorandum - Lifelong Learning for active citizenship in a Europe of knowledge - which the Commission will launch under the French Presidency.

*Kearns, P. et al (1999). *VET in the learning age: The challenge of lifelong learning for all*, Vol. 1 & 2. Available from: National Centre for Vocational Education Research (NCVER), 252 Kensington Road, Leabrook SA 5068, Australia. Tel. (61-8) 83338400, Fax (61-8) 8331 9211, E-mail: orderit@ncver.edu.au
For more information, contact:
Martina Ni Cheallaigh, Cedefop project coordinator
Tel. (30-31) 490 013; Fax (30-31) 490 117; e-mail: mnch@cedefop.eu.int

Quelle: Cedefop/MNCH

Europe:

Lifelong learning: the contribution of Member States' education systems

Education's specific contribution to the goal of lifelong learning merits special attention. Several studies have shown that the majority of individuals who wish to resume education and training at an adult age have had positive schooling experience. Clearly, education's ability to impart - to a large number of people - a taste for learning and the key skills needed for all later education plays a very important role.

Between October 1999 and March 2000, EURYDICE¹ conducted a survey of the contribution of (formal) education systems to the goal of lifelong learning²: which measures and educational policies have governments of the 15 Member States implemented to ensure that every individual, young or not-so-young, has access to lifelong learning and the basic prerequisites to follow it

successfully? To answer this question, the survey was based on the data collected in each country by the national units of the EURYDICE network working in tandem with relevant ministry departments.

Apart from reviewing how the concept has developed and how it is defined, the survey analysed initiatives taken at all levels of the education system - pre-schooling, compulsory schooling, higher secondary education, higher learning or adult education. The results show that almost all the Member States have used this objective as a means of giving an impetus and goal to the educational reforms they were implementing. The way in which they defined this objective varied, largely depending on the specific traits of each system. However, some trends are common for all educational levels: the wish to improve, extend

and diversify provision, combat failure, introduce new information and communication technologies, develop cooperation within and outside the education system, improve flexibility and enhance transparency.

Are the actions identified by the survey mere system adaptations which will not necessarily lead to the attainment of the objective of lifelong learning in its most ambitious form? Obviously, the survey cannot answer this question. But it does show the need for more research and analysis to promote European cooperation, exchange information, compare experience and thus contribute to the evolution of European education systems.

In order to encourage this exchange of information and further reflection, EURYDICE will continue to regularly

update the results of this first survey. A *Lifelong Learning Area* will be created on the EURYDICE site. An analysis of common trends and different approaches by Member States and national information sheets finalised in March 2000 will be incorporated in the form of a database in order to make updating easier (at present the survey results are available in PDF on the EURYDICE site <http://www.eurydice.org>). The information offered in this database will be completed by an annual report on developments in this field which, like the current survey, covers all 15 Member States of the European Union; the other countries which are part of the EURYDICE network, including the EFTA and EEA countries and those in the pre-accession stage, will be added gradually.

The gateway to be created by CEDEFOP and the *Lifelong Learning*

Area on the EURYDICE site will soon offer all persons involved in education and training access to a large volume of data, analyses and resources, to aid them in their thinking and practice.

1) EURYDICE, the information network for education in Europe, was founded in 1980 and is a part of the SOCRATES programme since 1995. The network is composed of national units set up by the Ministries of Education of 29 countries and a European unit set up by the European Commission (DG Education and Culture). To serve policy makers and persons working in education, EURYDICE prepares and publishes descriptive analyses of education systems, comparative studies on subjects of Community interest and indicators at different levels of education.

2) The survey "*Lifelong learning: the contribution of the education systems of the Member States of the European Union*" is available at present in English, French, Portuguese and German (the German version only in electronic form) and may be obtained free of charge on request from the European unit of EURYDICE.

For more information: Patricia Wastiau, Unité européenne d'Eurydice, Rue d'Arlon 15, B-1050 Bruxelles, Tel. (32-2) 238 30 11, Fax (32-2) 230 65 62, e-mail: info@eurydice.org

1999: A successful year for Cedefop

Adoption of the 'Report on vocational education and training policy in Europe' one of the most significant results

In the course of 1999, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop) stepped up its efforts to position itself as the principal reference centre for information on vocational training issues in Europe. One of the most significant results of last year was the adoption of the 'Report on vocational education and training policy in Europe' which provides a unique overview and analysis of vocational training policy trends at both European and Member State levels.

Cedefop's 1999 Work Programme was again dominated by the three major themes of the medium-term priorities for the years 1997-2000. The Work Programme set priorities in promoting competences and lifelong learning, observing developments in the Member States and support of mobility and exchange in Europe. Activities in these fields are divided into three areas: developing knowledge and expertise, exchange and dialogue and information for the public.

Cedefop moved forward on 12 projects in the field of developing knowledge and expertise. Work focused on, among other things, producing the reference document on 'key qualifications' which incorporates the results of a series of parallel European projects. The publication includes contributions by leading European vocational training experts and the conclusions of a European colloquium on the skills, competences and learning environments of the future. A further project addressed the changing skill requirements of European SMEs and suitable 'keys to success'. The Centre moreover presents six country reports on the identification, assessment and recognition of competences acquired through non-formal learning.

The 1999 Work Programme also included activities on the monitoring of developments in vocational education and training in the Member States as well as descriptions of national vocational education and training systems, with the publication of reports on Sweden, Norway and France. Observing innovations in vocational training concentrated on four key areas - a trend analysis of skill requirements, the environment, new forms of skills recognition and means of integrating the unemployed and lesser skilled - and resulted in four summary reports and recommendations for the improvement of vocational training in these areas. On the financing of vocational education and training Cedefop published the country reports on Denmark, Germany, Finland, France, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and Austria.

In the field of transparency of qualifications - an essential factor to support mobility and exchange in Europe - Cedefop established a European forum to expand European cooperation whose action plan indicates possible steps towards an exchange of information between Member States and at EU level. A further project addressed the question as to how the learning of mobility functions. Last year Cedefop also concluded the first working phase of the two-year project 'Scenarios and strategies for vocational training in Europe' with the participation of six

EU Member States and five applicant countries.

Cedefop also moved ahead with the network for research of trends in occupations and qualifications and published a reference document this subject. The training of trainers network was expanded by two further national networks, Austria and Luxembourg; the ten networks now include approx. 300 specialised institutions in the field of the training of trainers.

The Study Visits programme, which encourages exchanges of experiences and dialogue in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, was used by a total of 658 vocational training experts from 25 countries participating in visits in 21 countries in the course of 1999.

Cedefop organised several 'Agora' seminars (see also 'Dossier', pp. 17-20) on the subjects of non-formally acquired knowledge, reporting on human capital resources and working time and training time at its headquarters in Thessaloniki. As an active partner in policy development, the Centre published the report 'An age of learning - vocational training policy at European level' (cf. Cedefop Info No 1/2000, pp. 1, 2) and also set up a website for the specific support of and facilitation of exchange of information between the social partners. Cedefop supported research activities by continuing its work on the second edition of the research report on VET and initial activities on a Cedefop research forum.

Cedefop published three further issues of the 'European Journal for

Vocational Training' in 1999, whereby the journal no longer covers one specific theme but now addresses a range of different topics in each issue - this is a more general concept designed to provide better information to the public. The Library and Documentation Service now provides the most important substantial contributions on electronic resources available in the Electronic Vocational Training Village. It established an internal online reference centre for Cedefop staff and drew up documentary dossiers on special subjects. The Electronic Media Service continued the redesign of the Cedefop website in 11 languages. The website provides fundamental information on Cedefop work in all official EU languages. With a total of over 100,000 user sessions in 1999, it recorded well above 2 million 'hits'.

The Electronic Vocational Training Village also expanded its services and is now firmly established as a European platform for electronic resources in the field of VET. Further themes were added in the course of 1999, including the 'Social Partners' House' and the 'Research Laboratory'. By the end of the year, the Electronic Vocational Training Village had almost 6,000 registered residents, and a further 3,000 had submitted registration information. Last year the website recorded almost 1.5 m hits, with users downloading more than 14,000 documents.

The Cedefop Annual Report for 1999 can be downloaded in DE, EN and FR from the Electronic Training Village at <http://www.trainingvillage.gr> the printed version is available free of charge from Cedefop on request.

Source: Cedefop/SK

Cedefop: Innovation in vocational training in the environmental sector



Berufliche Bildung und innovative Praktiken im Umweltbereich
Vergleich von zehn EU-Staaten mit Fallbeispielen
Synthesebericht zum Cedefop-Projekt "Beobachtung von Innovationen in der Berufsbildung"
Cedefop panorama 5106
Language: DE
Cat. No: TI-00-045-DE-C
Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Cedefop is supporting the European Commission in analysing and disseminating innovative practices developed within the context of the Leonardo da Vinci programme with the project "Observing innovations in vocational education and training". The first phase of the Cedefop project involved the elaboration of a synthesis report on vocational training in the environmental field. This report, entitled "Vocational training and innovative practices in the environmental sector", has just been published within the Cedefop "Panorama" series in English, German and Spanish.

The first section of the report describes the current status of vocational training in the environmental sector in ten Member States. Following a short discourse on the concept and significance of innovation for systems theory and vocational training, cases of innovative vocational

training initiatives in various Member States are presented and evaluated. This is followed by an analysis of environment-related skills requirements for specific target groups and a discussion of the extent to which the presented models of good practice could be transferred to other Member States, in order to help improve the levels of training in this field. The final chapter appraises the types and volume of employment which may be created by occupational activity related to the environment.

The new publication provides specific information and application-oriented recommendations for the implementation of innovative vocational training programmes and practices for the use of decision-makers at European, national and regional levels. It is also intended to provide vocational training researchers working in the environmental

field with up-to-date information and indicators to support related scientific work on environment-related training in the environmental field in Europe and how it can be improved.

For further information:
Roland Loos, Cedefop project co-ordinator
Tel. (30-31) 490 158, Fax (30-31) 490 117,
e-mail: rlo@cedefop.eu.int
Secretary: Yvonne Noutsia,
Tel. (30-31) 490 118, Fax (30-31) 490 117,
e-mail: yvo@cedefop.eu.int

Source: Cedefop/RLO



Europe: Continued from page 1

Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory

An exemplary vocational training tool available in all European sugar factories

| |
|--|
| Community Programme: Leonardo da Vinci |
| Product development: January 1997 - January 2000 |
| Budget: 600,000 EUR |
| Languages: 11 European languages |
| Users: all European sugar factories |
| Produced by: the European sugar profession |

A joint production, from the European sugar profession as a whole

The Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre¹ (CEFS) (European Committee of Sugar Manufacturers) and the European Committee of Food, Catering and Allied Workers' Unions (ECF-IUF)² developed the project together,

with the help of the whole sugar profession, through several cross-linked and complementary working groups:

□ the human resources managers of the largest European sugar companies provided their skills by contributing towards the work of the CEFS Committee on Social Questions.

□ the social partners followed the project step by step, evaluated the results and set out joint recommendations within a joint body called the "Leonardo Steering Group".
□ safety engineers in several countries defined and verified the technical content of the tools within the framework of a "Leonardo Technical Committee".

Behaviour: the leading factor in safety

In addition, five pilot sites agreed to monitor and test the project as it was being developed in Denmark, France, Germany, Italy and the United Kingdom. These factories guided the project as a whole on the basis of two fundamental observations:

□ safety is everybody's business
□ there are practically never any accidents without human error.

The tools are thus intended for all the players involved in the sugar company from the general management to the factory manager and the operators or supervisory staff. They are based on behaviour: when an accident occurs, the analysis almost always highlights one or more behavioural factors without which the accident would not have happened. The operator himself must thus identify the risks connected with the different activities and define the appropriate preventive measures. Constant self-assessment will enable him to adopt a more responsible behaviour, systematically directed towards safety. Continued on page 4

Europe:

The European Training Foundation promotes entrepreneurial skills as a vital tool to combat unemployment

Identifying and disseminating information on trends and examples of best practice in the field of vocational education and training, with a view to finding ways of applying successful approaches to reform in individual country contexts: this encapsulates one of the main functions of the European Training Foundation's annual Advisory Forum, which this year took place on 15-17 June.

The diversity of subjects under discussion at the Advisory Forum this year was clearly evident, with six workshops (up from four last September) covering the following subjects:

- continuing vocational training and its role in transition contexts,
- management training,
- increasing employability by integrating entrepreneurship in education and training,
- the need for financial reform of the vocational training systems in the partner countries,
- training and the labour market,
- regional vocational education and training strategies in a national context.

The discussion focused on three subjects

Continuing training

Continuing training and ensuring quality is a difficult problem within the Foundation's partner countries. In the absence of state resources, the big question is who should pay

when both companies and individuals are struggling to survive. Arjen Deij from the Foundation for example underlined how difficult it was to get employers in Kyrgyzstan interested in investing in human capital. The key was to convince employers of the real benefits for enterprise development that a commitment to continuing training could bring. In the absence of financial resources participants were reminded that human beings learn in all sorts of different ways and not just through formal learning.

The question of passing legislation to promote continued training provided more stimulating debate. Several participants stressed that the state should ensure, through taxation, that groups such as the unemployed receive training. The dangers of this approach however were outlined by Richard Langford, from Ireland, who argued that to obtain progress in training people, systems for encouraging continuing training should not be laid down in law. "Vocational education and training

is not static", he said. "The recourse to legislation lacked an approach providing sufficient incentives for training." A more successful approach he argued required greater coordination between individuals, employers and administrative bodies, along with an insistence on quality training products.

Entrepreneurship

Traditionally vocational education and training curricula have been geared to cater for the needs of big and often well-established companies. These companies still play an important role in the economy of a given country. However, micro-businesses and SMEs are the only sectors where a significant number of new jobs are being created. For some of the Foundation's partner countries, it is clear that the state alone cannot effectively solve the unemployment problem. Sasa Misevska for example from the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia's Ministry of Education stressed that "100,000 new companies were created over the last six years but many closed down after only a short period. Upon examination, one reason for this trend was deemed to be the lack of entrepreneurial education".

Marianna Kovac from the Slovenian Centre for Vocational Education and

Training added that teaching entrepreneurial behaviour is needed to help the active population cope with the uncertainty that is characteristic of today's employment market. Teaching entrepreneurship, she went on, is about a way of thinking. It is not strictly about acquiring specific skills but being able to cope with more pressure and changes brought about by upheavals (such as the privatisation process and the impact of new technology).

Financing vocational education and training

The key areas of broadening financial resources and ensuring cost effectiveness provided an opportunity for EU Member State representatives to give examples of practice within their own countries. One example came from the Finnish representative who spoke of the way some schools in her country are encouraged to sell products that are made as a result of the work of students undertaking courses. In order to avoid a given school losing its original purpose (that of a training provider) the total amount of money made from such activities is not allowed to exceed 15% of a school's total turnover she said. In the debate that followed it was agreed that the *raison d'être* of a school or training centre could be called into question if they ended up

making too much money from such activities. Additionally any profits made in this way could be self-defeating if the school/training centre in question was obliged to pay higher taxes as a result of such profits. However within the context of the very real need of raising money within the Foundation's partner countries such commercial activities should not be dismissed out of hand, as they might be the only way to raise necessary funding.

As for cost effectiveness, it was argued that local actors (schools/regions) should have more control over their budgets and that a sense of responsibility for managing budgets was vital. Over-centralisation of budgeting in the past had led to resources being wasted due to local administrators lacking the motivation to use them effectively. It was equally important not to punish those, who made a concerted effort to maximise the use of their resources. Reducing the budgets of the most efficient was counterproductive and provided no incentive to spend money effectively.

For more information about the European Training Foundation and the Advisory Forum please contact Tristan Macdonald, Information and Publications Department: Tel. (39-011) 630 2305; Fax (39-011) 630 2200; email: info@etf.eu.int or tma@etf.eu.int

Source: ETV, Turin

Active/interactive safety in the sugar factory

Continued from page 3

Intellectual property contract

Presented widely outside the European sugar industry, the product has aroused a great deal of interest on the part of many sectors: iron and steel, chemicals, industrial cleaning, textiles, agri-foodstuffs, etc. It has an original pedagogical approach and it is simple and easy to use. As it is largely built around images, mastery of the language is secondary. The different aspects connected with safety in most jobs are dealt with: electrical work, welding, grinding, handling machines, work at heights, work in confined spaces, carrying heavy loads, etc.

The four main partners have signed an intellectual property contract³ which allows them to grant licences.

An exemplary joint production

It is an exemplary product first of all because it allows an entire profession

- employers' organisations and trade unions - to adopt a common approach to safety in eleven languages, in all European sugar factories.

An assessment of its utilisation will be conducted at the end of 2000. It could then be extended to certain Central and Eastern European Countries.

For more information, please contact:
Dominique LUND
Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre
182, Avenue de Tervuren
B-1150 Brussels, Belgium
Tel. (322) 762 07 60; Fax (322) 771 00 26
Website: <http://www.cefs.org>
E-Mail: dominique.lund@cefs.org

¹ The Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre represents all sugar manufacturers and refiners in fifteen European countries (excluding Luxembourg, which is not a manufacturer, plus Switzerland) and Hungary.

² The European Committee of Food, Catering and Allied Workers' Unions operates in 28 European countries and represents 85 trade unions connected with the agri-foodstuffs industry.

³ The four major partners are the CEFS, the ECF and the two consultants that provided technical and material support for the product.

Source: Comité Européen des Fabricants de Sucre

The "Leonardo Kit":

A series of tools based on behaviour intended for all the players involved in the sugar industry

General Management

"Diskette no. 1": this diskette presents the product and contains a database on the relevant European legislation in the field of health/safety (18 files).

Factory Manager

"Diskette no. 2": this tool is essentially intended for the factory manager. By answering "yes" or "no" to a hundred questions on an interactive table, the level of safety at the industrial site in question can be determined, on the basis of six priority themes: management commitment, organization of work, taking the human factor into account, risks connected with the manufacturing process, cleaning and maintenance work, and subcontracting.

Operators/Supervisory Staff

"CD-ROM": a CD-ROM allows the operator to move through fifteen virtual workshops during the campaign or the off-season. Based on the cartoon strip concept, each workshop shows five or six risk situations which the operator must identify himself and propose one or more preventive measures by clicking on a random "risks" bar and on a "preventive measures" bar. The computer screen is then transformed to show a normal situation.

"Accident analyses": the operator also has access to four accident analyses allowing him to go back from the superficial causes of an accident to its underlying causes by retracing the fault tree. He once more recommends appropriate preventive measures.

There is also a lexicon comprising all the hypertexts used on the screen,

describing the procedures, safety rules and operating methods connected with different types of work (work at heights, work in confined spaces, handling of machines, using a ladder, scaffolding, slings, etc.).

The trainer links up the situations shown on the screens with real situations in the factory. A "Trainers' Guide" provides full instructions on how to use the kit.

Extremely flexible, the product can be used both during the campaign and during the off-season, by seasonal workers and permanent staff alike and for training in groups or self-instruction.

Page 5 Employment policy I: Major school reform; **D:** Vocational Training Report indicates a positive trend; **NO:** Forthcoming reforms in higher education; **Page 6 NO:** Preparations for entrepreneurship and technology related jobs; **Initial training policy D:** Moving from the 'dual' to a 'plural' system; **I:** Compulsory training extended to the age of 18; **Continuing education and training policy P:** Continuing training for former students; **Page 7 B:** Training in cooperation; **F:** Risks of abuse in the field of vocational training; **UK:** Towards a new VET structure; **D:** Alliance initiative to step up continuing vocational training; **Page 8** Selected bibliography; Sources.

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

Employment policy

Italy: Major school reform

Continued from page 1

The reorganisation of school cycles

In passing the law on the reorganisation of school cycles, the Italian parliament completed the main stage of the reform of the education and training system. The new system envisages, first of all, compulsory schooling until the age of fifteen and the requirement to attend training up to the age of eighteen. Nursery school is not compulsory, but the law states that the supply of places will be generalised and all children will have the possibility to attend. Basic school, on the other hand, becomes a single and homogeneous pathway ending with a state examination that is expected to provide some indications to guide students in their next choice. Secondary school lasts five years and is divided into four paths: classics-humanities, science, technical studies and technology, art and musical studies.

During the first two years, it will be possible to switch from one path to another.

Integration of the education and training system

One of the most important aspects of the law is the integration of the school and the training systems. All secondary education establishments will without distinction be called "licei" and will be more autonomous in terms of their own administration and the curricula they adopt. From the second year they will be able to offer additions to the school curriculum in the form of training-vocational pathways. At the end of that year which is the end of compulsory education, i.e. normally at the age of 15, young people will have three options to choose from - to continue school education, to enter vocational training or to take up apprenticeship. Knowledge and

skills acquired during their chosen pathway will be certified as a credit that can be used to pass from one system to another. This permeability between school, training and employment is designed to bring forward the start of working life for young people and to improve their ability to find their way and make their choices of career.

Implementation

The law that has been passed has the form of a framework law. The government must by July 2000 submit to parliament a five-year programme for gradual implementation of the reform. A large number of points, or contents of detail, need to be finalised. The programme must be accompanied by a budget of the financial costs of enacting the law. It will be necessary to make a feasibility study and assess whether the means available are sufficient to achieve the objectives of the programme. As to the actual contents, the government must fix general criteria for re-formulating school curricula. The old curricula of lower secondary schools with its two and

three year cycles will need to be redrafted to take account of the continuous and homogeneous nature of the new school pathway as well as new training needs.

Teachers and educational establishments

The quality of education must be guaranteed. The five-year programme should also include general directives for the retraining of teaching staff and outline the measures necessary to guarantee the right and the obligation to participate in refresher courses. The new system aims to emphasise the expertise of teachers by including refresher courses as part of the process of professional growth. In parallel,

criteria should be fixed for schools to create new staff rolls according to the training pathways they intend to offer. The new school cycles should begin, according to the Minister of Education, from September 2001. However, existing infrastructures are inadequate and unsuitable for the new school-training pathways and the government and parliament still have much work to do to effectively create the new school system according to the objectives set out in the Law of 10 February.

More information from:
 Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione
 Viale di Trastevere 76/A, I-00153 Roma
 URP - Ufficio relazioni con il pubblico
 Tel. (39-06) 58 49 23 77/8/9
 Fax (39-06) 58 49 20 57
 E-mail: redazione@istruzione.it
 Web site: <http://www.istruzione.it/cicli.htm>

Source: ISFOL

Plan of school cycles

| | Nursery school | Basic school | Secondary school | Total |
|-----------|----------------|--------------|------------------|----------|
| Duration: | 3 years | 7 years | 5 years | 15 years |
| Age: | 3-6 years | 6-13 years | 13-18 years | |

Compulsory schooling: 6-15 years; Obligatory training: 15-18 years

Germany Vocational Training Report indicates a positive trend

Broad agreement within BIBB central board

For the first time in many years, the central board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training Affairs (BIBB), the federal government's advisory body on questions relating to vocational training, is largely in agreement in its appraisal of the current vocational training situation in Germany: the quadripartite body, representing employers, trade unions, the Länder and the federal government, issued a joint and unanimous opinion on the federal government's draft Vocational Training Report.

While assessing the trends indicated by the current training situation in Germany as positive, the central board underlines the need for greater efforts to provide industrial training places for as many young people as possible in the future and appeals to firms to increase their training place provision. It proposes

that the next survey in September should differentiate between in-company and non-company training places in order to prevent distortions in the general training place overview. The central board expressly welcomes the extension of the government's emergency programme to cut youth unemployment up to the year 2000, for which a further EUR 1 billion have been earmarked.

The German Trade Union Confederation (DGB) believes that the Vocational Training Report demonstrates that too many employers are neglecting their obligation to deliver training, pointing out that the rise in the number of training places is merely due to the provision of non-company training places in the context of the federal government's emergency programme.

At the adoption of the Vocational Training Report, Federal Minister for

Education and Training Edelgard Bulmahn expressed the federal government's view that the provision of in-company training places remains 'unsatisfactory'. The minister nevertheless gave a positive overall assessment of the situation, pointing out that 631,000 training contracts, some 18,500 more than in the previous year, had been concluded up to September 1999, the end of the last training year, a decisive contribution having been played by the government's emergency programme and the alliance for employment in this context. Bulmahn drew attention to the fact that approx. 35,000 training contracts had been concluded in recent years, in particular in new occupations in the IT and media sectors, and that industry was to create a further 20,000 training places over and above the 40,000 training places already promised by the year 2003.

Source: BMBF/BIBB/DGB/CEDEFOP/ISK

Norway Forthcoming reforms in higher education

A public committee which has considered various aspects of higher education and research in Norway presented their green paper in May 2000. The committee suggests that the universities and colleges should become more independent of the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs.

The green paper proposes the development of closer contact between the institutions and external partners particularly private enterprises. This should be achieved by representation in the boards of each institution and by the institutions increasingly performing services on behalf of external partners.

The committee has also considered entry conditions to higher education in relation to the forthcoming Competence Reform and the recognition of non-formal competencies. It is recommended that applicants without formal education should increasingly be admitted to higher education, in accordance with the increasing recognition of non-formal competencies in society. The report also suggests measures to increase the internationalisation of higher education and training institutions, for example, by harmonising the assessment system with the rest of Europe.

The green paper has been sent out to various parties interested in higher education. When these have given their comments, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs will submit a white paper to the Norwegian parliament, probably in the spring of 2001.

Further information: <http://odin.dep.no/kuf/publ/2000/frihetmedansvar/>

Source: Leonardo NA Norway

Preparations for entrepreneurship and technology related jobs

European trade and industry are dominated by SMEs. Successful industry is often based on ideas emerging from small enterprises. The whole of Europe, not least Norway, needs to increase recruitment to engineering and other technology related education. There is a need to create more enterprises.

The basis for increasing recruitment to technology-based occupations and promoting the necessary innovation in trade and industry is laid down in primary and secondary school. Norway is already taking part in international programmes with the aim of encouraging stu-

dents to establish their own enterprises by emphasising the importance of entrepreneurship.

The municipalities and schools in the three counties of Østfold, Nordland and Hedmark have co-operated in a project financed through the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs called "Time scheduling Entrepreneurship". The project (<http://entreprenorskop.his.no/>) focuses on creating a positive climate for the development of entrepreneurship. This is done through

- the practical teaching offered
- qualifying teachers for entrepreneurship and

□ the development of systems and routines for dissemination of the results.

The aim is to include entrepreneurship as an integral part of the activities of primary, secondary and further education training institutions. "Entrepreneurship is more than just a student enterprise. It challenges the whole education system. Entrepreneurship is about solving problems, seeing possibilities and learning by doing", says Director Edel Haukeland in the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs.

The municipality of Odda, on the west coast, has introduced the sub-

ject "technology" in all classes in primary and lower secondary school as part of co-operation between enterprises and the school authorities. Has a lever anything to do with equations? Which structures give the strongest constructions? The students discover the basics of forces and gears, castors and levers by experimenting and working together. Or they could build a winch or make a stage curtain go up and down. They make models of machinery and through this learn to recognise the processes employed in real life. They will later visit enterprises to see originals at work. This is a way of establishing contact between

schools and enterprises and, for example, 16 year-olds are now building a new crane on the Norzink quay.

An important tool in the training is LegoDacta, teaching material from Lego. The training is considered very motivating. The students profit on many levels, from the development of practical skills to the understanding of physical laws. They get to test the theory and see that it works.

More information:
Solve Borgström, Skolekulturetaten,
PB. 220, N - 5751 Odda
Tel. (47-53) 65 40 00, Fax (47-53) 65 42 01
e-mail: sobor@online.no

Source: Leonardo IIA Norway

Initial training policy

Germany

Moving from the 'dual' to a 'plural' system

Modernisation process changes German vocational training

In the opinion of Helmut Pütz, secretary general of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training Affairs (BIBB), the future of German vocational training lies in a combination of the tried and tested occupational concept and modular structures. Pütz regards a greater degree of modular-based learning as a guarantee for the flexibility required by industry, young people, and technical and organisational processes.

Pütz believes that the dual system of vocational training has long since transformed into a 'plural' system. This process, he points out, is reflected by the development of inter-company training centres and the rising importance of specialised vocational schools as independent places of learning, whereas the old duality of theoretical, school-based and practical industry-based training only remains in the craft trades, with theoretical and practical learning being virtually inseparable in the new IT occupations.

Pütz announced innovations in initial and continuing training and restructuring of examinations as further steps to modernise the 'plural' vocational training system in the years to come. He underlined that the new regulations of recent years had introduced the modular concept in at least the third year of apprenticeship in almost all training occupations, and described these developments as efficient modernisation measures securing the appeal of the German vocational system. Pütz mentioned highly skilled technical service occupations, e.g. IT jobs or media designer for digital and printed media, as priority areas for the reorganisation of occupational profiles.

Source: BIBB/CEDEFOP/SK

Italy

Compulsory training extended to the age of 18

The government has approved the regulation enacting Article 17 of Law No. 144/99 on compulsory attendance at training activities until the age of 18. Once compulsory schooling has been completed (15 years of age), students may choose whether to continue their studies, access the vocational training system or begin apprenticeship involving at least 240 hours of training each year. Schools will be required to record the decision of their students and notify the employment services, who will provide continuing guidance and information.

Progressive enactment of the decree

The approval of this regulation has effectively sanctioned the integration of the school and the vocational training systems. The provisions will be implemented gradually and progressively and will initially apply to all young people who reach fifteen years of age in the year 2000 and have completed their compulsory schooling. It will then be applied to young people who reach fifteen and sixteen years of age in 2001 and, finally, to young people reaching fifteen, sixteen and seventeen years of age in 2002. As of this year, young people aged between fifteen and seventeen may access guidance and tutoring provided by the employment services. One of the main aims of the reform is to guarantee continuous training and assistance for young people so that they enter the world of work with greater awareness and expertise.

Requirements for schools

Schools must notify the employment services of the choices of pupils subject to the compulsory training provision, indicating whether they decide to continue their studies, to enter the vocational system or take up an apprenticeship contract. They must also communicate the names of those dropping out from

school before 15 March each year. Schools may, within the limits of their jurisdiction and in collaboration with training bodies, offer integrated training paths or additional curricular subjects.

Apprenticeship

As far as apprenticeship is concerned, the decree establishes the frequency of training modules, which should amount to at least 240 hours per year. The objectives, general criteria and contents of the training modules will be fixed in a forthcoming decree to ensure that training pathways are standardised throughout the country.

Transition between systems and training credits

The initial choices made by pupils after completing compulsory schooling are not binding. It will be possible to move from one system to another. For this purpose, the decree states that skills and knowledge acquired in a chosen pathway constitute recognised credits. In the case of reinsertion in school, special boards will be set up to evaluate credits acquired in vocational training or apprenticeship. An agreement between the (central) government and regional/local authorities will establish ways of ensuring that those who leave school enter the vocational training system.

More information from:
Ministero della Pubblica Istruzione
Viale di Trastevere 76/A, I-00153 Roma
URP - Ufficio relazioni con il pubblico
Tel. (39-06) 58 49 23 77/8/9
Fax: (39-06) 58 49 20 57
E-mail: redazione@istruzione.it
Web site: http://www.istruzione.it/cs_obbligo_00.htm

Source: ISFOL

Continuing education and training policy

Portugal

Continuing training for former students

A team of technicians and professors from the University of Minho (UM) has formally set up a 'University Bureau for Continuing Training'. The basic aim of this body is to undertake lifelong learning initiatives for former students who feel the need to update their knowledge in their field of education. The creation of a

higher education resource centre is not a novelty in itself, but it is the first time that a team is coordinating training in a global manner by uniting all the areas of knowledge in the university in one structure.

The team coordinating the work of the Bureau will continue to develop

lifelong learning projects, but in a more formal and systematic manner than in the past.

The creation of a distance learning resource centre is one of the projects envisaged by the Bureau for Continuing Training of the University of Minho. The idea is to produce a

collection of materials for distance learning using multimedia tools (such as CD-ROM or the Internet) with a certain degree of acceptance in training.

This project is fully in keeping with the government programme setting up a virtual university for the Portu-

guese language, as has been done already for other languages in other countries of the world.

Source: CIDES/'Público' newspaper

Belgium

Le VDAB and FOREM organise training in cooperation

Flemish and Walloon Ministers of Employment sign an agreement on traineeships

On 31 March 2000, in Ghent, Renaat Landuyt, Flemish Minister of Employment, and his Walloon counterpart Michel Daerden, signed a cooperation agreement on the exchange of language and technical traineeships. The regional employment offices VDAB and Forem will organise the traineeships; the Prince Philippe Fund will develop a grant system for participants. The Walloon Minister of Employment also visited the local employment office.

The agreement comes into force immediately. From now on, job-seekers in Flanders and Wallonia will be able to take a language or technical traineeship in each other's region. Language traineeships are organised in training centres or companies. Participants may choose between immersion courses or part-time courses. For immersion courses participants will spend 24 hours a day in the host region; for part-time courses they will only spend the day.

For the technical traineeships students will have to acquire vocational skills which will allow them to get a job in the host region or their own region.

VDAB and its Walloon counterpart Forem organise the training and make sure participants acquire a solid knowledge of the languages or the business. The Prince Philip Fund will develop a grant system in collaboration with the King Baudouin Foundation. A special commission will monitor the proper application of the agreement.

Minister Landuyt also intends to conclude an exchange agreement with his Brussels colleague Eric Thomas. This is his response to the Flemish Brabant Governor's call last year to help Brussels jobseekers find work in Flemish Brabant. The Flemish Minister for Employment wants the VDAB to invest more in Brussels jobseekers and that to collaborate more closely with its Brussels and Walloon partners. Employment is the responsibility of the regions and is organised in Brussels by the Brussels Regional Office for Employment. As a result, education and training are the responsibility of the communities and are managed by VDAB for the Flemish in Brussels and by Forem for

the Walloons in Brussels. However, the Flemish minister would like to go beyond this sharing of responsibilities.

The Flemish Minister for Employment also showed his interest in local Flemish employment policy by visiting the Ghent Employment Office. Here, jobseekers can find information on unemployment regulations, training and job vacancies; they can also make use of a guidance and placement service. This year 35 workshops will be set up in 32 Flemish cities and communes.

For more information see: www.vdab.be

Source: Media and Library Management, VDAB/ Icodoc

France

Risks of abuse in the field of vocational training

The latest report (1998-1999) of the Central Fraud Prevention Service (Service Central de Prévention de la Corruption - SCPC)* devotes a chapter to 'the risks of abuse in the field of vocational training'. According to the report, the complexity and stratification of the vocational training 'edifice', and the non-material nature of the services provided facilitate abuses, which have been observed at various levels: trainees, training organisations, agencies collecting funds for vocational training, and enterprises. A trainee may receive 'training as reward', be used to 'feed into a non-existent fund', or

even fall victim to a 'racket'. As it is extremely easy to set up training organisations (a declaration is sufficient) religious sects are able to invest in this field, an abuse already noted in a previous SCPC report.

Collection agencies (especially for alternance training) are alleged to make use of 'arcane company law' to set up 'bogus training organisation' and to use the agency's funds for the 'personal enrichment of the directors'. Certain companies are alleged to have created 'more or less sophisticated systems for embezzling public aid'.

In its conclusion, the report stresses the 'need to implement the recommendations made in the reports of audit bodies. In the vocational training field it is essential to check procedures and make sure the people involved are honest'.

The SCPC, which is mainly a prevention service, analyses practices touching on economic sectors on the basis of concrete evidence. Pierre Méran, who heads the service, explains that the evidence comes from various sources, including victims of abuse, young people and employees. 'We are making our own contribu-

tion to past reports that did not suffice to raise enough concern about the abuses reported to put an end to them.' He therefore calls for the intervention of the Court of Auditors.

Recently a meeting was held with the Department of Women's Rights and Vocational Training and the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity on what action to take on this report. For its part, the National Monitoring Group (Groupe National de Contrôle - GNC), set up within the Directorate-General for Employment and Vocational Training, pointed out that the action by the Court of Auditors, called for by the Evaluation and Control Mission of the National Assembly in July 1999, has now been taken. A 'vocational

training' section has been created, and given the task - along with the General Inspectorate of Social Affairs (Inspection Générale des Affaires Sociales - IGAS) - of auditing the Accredited Joint Collection Agencies (Organismes Paritaires Collecteurs Agréés - OPCA), since their legitimacy is derived from their managing funds earmarked for a public mission. The National Monitoring Group will gradually acquire more personnel at both national and regional level.

Set up in 1993, the SCPC is an interministerial service under the Minister for Justice. 129, rue de l'Université, F-75007 Paris, tel. (33-1) 43 19 81 60, fax (33-1) 43 19 81 72, e-mail: scpc@justice.gouv.fr

Sources:

- INFFO Flash, No 542, 1er-15/05/2000, p. 5
- Service Central de Prévention de la Corruption: report 1998-1999, SCPC, Paris: Direction des Journaux officiels, 2000, 145 p., ISBN 2-11-074778-1

United Kingdom

Towards a new VET structure

The Learning and Skills Bill*, which proposes a new strategic planning and funding structure for post-16 education in England and Wales, has progressed through both Houses of Parliament and was expected to receive Royal Assent in July. The Bill takes into account the wide-ranging consultation on the Learning to Succeed white paper (see Info 3/99). Its key proposal is bringing the administration of work-based and college-based training together under national Learning and Skills Councils - separate ones for England and Wales - with local needs being addressed by a network of Local Learning and Skills Councils which will function as arms of the national bodies. Previously, responsibility for VET was split between the Further Education Funding Councils (separate for England and Wales) and a network of Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs). Post-16 arrangements in Scotland are being reviewed separately.

During parliamentary discussion, opposition politicians voiced concern that the new structures were bureaucratic and overcentralised. Questions were asked about the disposal of the very considerable assets of the TECs and attention was drawn to the fact that since TECs function as private companies there is potential for confusion in deciding what is private and what is public property. Criticism of the omission of higher education from the Bill led the Government to concede that it would issue guidance to the new

Council to ensure that universities were consulted in skills planning.

Consultations continue on the details of funding, and representatives of colleges, schools and private providers have been actively vying for their share of the new Council's annual budget of almost Euros 10 billion. Sixth Form (upper secondary) schools, which under the existing system receive on average a higher level of per capita funding than Further Education colleges, have been assured that their funding levels will be maintained.

Locations for the new bodies have been announced, with the English national Council to be based in Coventry in central England and the local Councils to be based wherever possible in the premises of the soon-to-be-defunct TECs. This has led to accusations, particularly from further education leaders, that the new Councils will be a reinvention of the TECs.

The process to recruit members of the local Councils is under way. A taskforce has been appointed to attract business people who are to

make up 40% of membership, and the Trades Union Congress is running a series of workshops aimed at giving trade unionists interested in applying for membership a better understanding of the issues. Recruitment of key executive personnel has also begun and staffs in the existing bodies are being consulted regarding the new arrangements. In the existing structure about 9,500 people are employed - about 350 in the Further Education Funding Council and the rest in the network of TECs. The new structure is expected to employ about 5,500 people in all and many

of these will transfer from the TECs under employment protection law. The new arrangements are expected to be fully operational from spring 2001.

* The Learning and Skills Bill is available from The Stationery Office, Publications Centre, P.O. Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN. Tel. (44-20) 7873 9090. Fax (44-20) 7873 0011. Price: EUR 16. Full text is also available on <http://www.parliament.the-stationery-office.co.uk/pa/pabills.htm>

Source: IPD

Germany

Alliance initiative to step up continuing vocational training

Social partners present joint concept

Following a meeting of the task force 'Training and Continuing Training' within the context of the alliance for employment, Federal Minister of Education and Training, Edelgard Bulmahn, stressed the importance of lifelong continuing training as the only means of securing individual employment prospects and maintaining the innovative and competitive edge of industry and announced that for the first time trade unions, employers and the federal government had agreed on a joint concept to expand continuing vocational training.

One of the principal objectives of this federal initiative is to increase the transparency of German further training certificates in the international job market; the partners to the alliance are to submit proposals to this effect within a year. The federal government intends to step up the exchange of specialists within the European Union in order to facilitate acquisition of work experience abroad and has called upon firms to make greater use of

the model of job rotation promoted by the job centres, at the same time examining the possible need for improvements in social legislation in this context.

The social partners are to actively encourage firms and workers to make greater use of learning opportunities in the workplace. Self-directed, new media-based learning is also to be developed, as well as methods on the assessment and recognition of competences acquired through self-directed learning.

Quality assurance in continuing training is another important point for the social partners who wish to monitor and revise publicly regulated further training provision on an ongoing basis. Administrative procedures are to be simplified to promote upgrading training.

Source: BMBF/CEDEFOP/SK

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)



Europäische Berufsbildungsforschung und der Beitrag des CEDEFOP

van Rens, Johan; Tessaring, Manfred
In: *Berufsbildung - Kontinuität und Wandel*
Bonn: BIBB, 2000, p. 41-58
ISBN: 3-88555-679-0

Odyseus programme 2000

Commission of the European Communities
Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000
Official Journal of the European Communities C 30, p. 8-12
ISSN: 0378-6986

Work Programme 2000-2002

European Training Foundation, ETF
Turin: ETF, 2000, 56 p.
ISBN: 92-9157-242-X
Downloadable document
[http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/genpubl/download/\\$file/WP2000-02-en.pdf](http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/genpubl/download/$file/WP2000-02-en.pdf)

The European House of Education: education and economy - a new partnership: background paper

European Training Foundation, ETF
Arbeitsstelle für vergleichende Bildungsforschung, AVB
Conference of the Ministers of Education of the EU Member States and the Phare States, Budapest, 24-26 June 1999
Turin: ETF, 2000, 21 p.
ETF, Villa Gualino - Viale Settimio Severo, 65, I-10133 Torino,
Tel. (39-011) 6302222,
Fax (39-011) 6302200,
E-mail: info@etf.eu.int,
URL: <http://www.etf.eu.int>

Downloadable document
[http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/vetdown/\\$file/backgroundpaper-en.doc](http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/vetdown/$file/backgroundpaper-en.doc)

Education across the European Union: statistics and indicators 1999

Statistical Office of the European Communities, Eurostat
Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2000, 255 p.
+ CD-ROM
Theme 3: Population and social conditions
ISBN: 92-827-9797-X
Cat.no: KS-27-00-774-3A-C

The documents mentioned above may be obtained from EU national sales offices - <http://eur-op.eu.int/en/general/s-ad.htm>.

Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2000

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD
Centre for Educational Research and Innovation, CER
Paris: OECD, 2000, 388 p.
ISBN: 92-64-17199-1
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org,
URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publications>

Reviews of national policies for education: Romania

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD
Paris: OECD, 2000, 169 p.
Education and skills
ISBN: 92-64-17635-7
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax (33-1) 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org,
URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publications>

Literacy in the information age: final report of the International Adult Literacy Survey

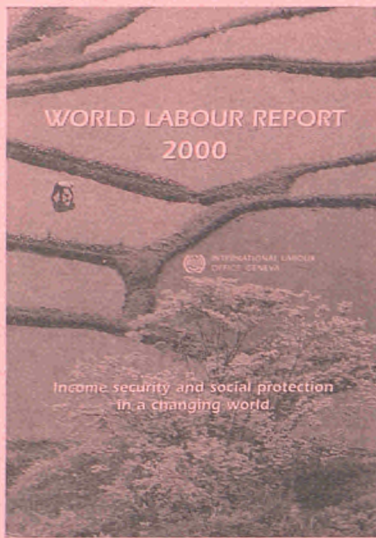
Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD
Human Resources Development Canada
Paris: OECD, 2000, 185 p.
ISBN: 92-64-17654-3
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax (33-1) 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org,
URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publications>

What works in innovation in education: motivating students for lifelong learning

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, OECD
Paris: OECD, 2000, 198 p.
ISBN: 92-64-17193-2
OECD Publications,
2 rue André-Pascal,
F-75775 Paris Cedex 16,
Tel. (33-1) 45248200,
Fax (33-1) 49104276,
E-mail: sales@oecd.org, URL: <http://www.oecd.org/publication>

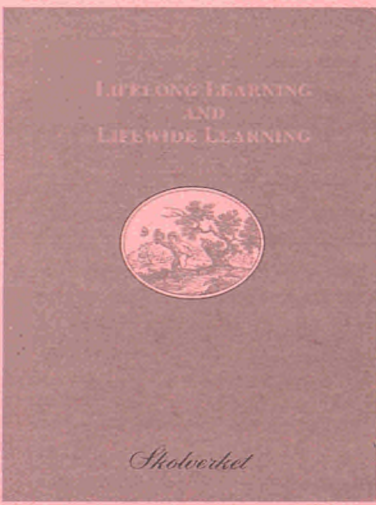
World data on education

Amadio, Massimo
United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation, UNESCO
International Bureau of Education, IBE
Geneva: UNESCO, 2000, 192 p.
ISBN: 92-3-103727-7
International Bureau of Education,
CH-1211 Geneva 20,
URL: <http://www.ibe.unesco.org>
Database on line:
URL: http://www.ibe.unesco.org/Inf_Doc/Nat_reps/wdepfome.htm



World labour report 2000: income security and social protection in a changing world

International Labour Office, ILO
Geneva: ILO, 2000, 321 p.
ISBN 92-2-110831-7
ILO Publications,
CH-1211 Geneva 22, Switzerland,
or from ILO local offices in many countries,
Tel. (41-22) 7997912,
Fax (41-22) 7998577,
E-mail: pubvente@ilo.org,
URL: <http://www.ilo.org>



Lifelong learning and lifewide learning

Skolverket [The National Agency for Education]
Stockholm: Liber distribution, 2000,
46 p.
ISBN: 91-89313-84-4

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.

Members of Cedefop's documentary information network

FOREM – Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'Emploi
CIDOC – Centre intercommunautaire de documentation pour la formation professionnelle
Boulevard Tirou 104
B-6000 CHARLEROI
Tel. (32-71) 20 61 73
Tel. (32-71) 20 61 74 Ms. F. Denis
Fax (32-71) 20 61 98
Ms. Nadine Derwiduée
E-mail: nadine.derwiduée@forem.be
Ms. Fabienne Denis
E-mail: fabienne.denis@forem.be
Web address: <http://www.forem.be>

VDAB – Vlaamse Dienst voor Arbeidsbemiddeling en Beroepsopleiding
ICODOC – Intercommunautair documentatiecentrum voor beroepsopleiding
Keizerlaan 11
B-1000 BRUXELLES
Tel. (32-2) 506 04 58
Tel. (32-2) 506 04 59
Fax (32-2) 506 04 28
Mr. Reinald Van Weydevelde, Documentation
E-mail: rvweydev@vdab.be
Mr. Tomas Quaethoven
E-mail: tq@vdab.be
Web address: <http://www.vdab.be>

DEL – Danmarks Erhvervs- og Uddannelsesudvalget
Laereruddannelse
The National Institute for Educational Training of Vocational Teachers
Rosenørns Allé 31
DK-1970 FREDERIKSBERG C
Tel. (45-35) 24 79 50 Ext. 317 Ms. V. Aarkrog
Tel. (45-35) 24 79 50 Ext. 301 Ms. M. Heins
Fax (45-35) 24 79 40
Fax (45-35) 24 79 40
Ms. Vibe Aarkrog, Research Assistant
E-mail: vibe.aarkrog@delud.dk
Ms. Merete Heins, Librarian
E-mail: merete.heins@delud.dk
Web address: <http://www.delud.dk>

BIBB – Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung
Hermann-Ehlers-Str. 10
D-53113 BONN
Tel. (49-228) 107 21 26 Dr. U. Risse
Tel. (49-228) 107 21 31 Ms. M. Krause
Dr. Ursula Risse
E-mail: risse@bibb.de
Ms. Martina Krause
E-mail: krause@bibb.de
Web address: <http://www.bibb.de>

OEK – Organisation for Vocational Education and Training
1 Ilioupoleos Street
GR-17236 ATHENS
Tel. (30-1) 976 44 64 General
Tel. (30-1) 979 33 47 Ms. H. Barkaba
Fax (30-1) 976 44 64 General
Fax (30-1) 973 15 93 Ms. H. Barkaba
Mr. Loukas Zahilas, Director
E-mail: zalouk@hol.gr
Ms. Hermioni Barkaba, Head of Documentation
Web address: <http://www.forthnet.gr/oeek/>

INEM – Instituto Nacional de Empleo
Ministerio de Trabajo y Seguridad Social
Condesa de Venadito 9
E-28027 MADRID
Tel. (34-91) 585 95 82 General
Tel. (34-91) 585 95 80 M. Luz de las Cuevas Torresano
Fax (34-91) 377 58 81
Fax (34-91) 377 58 87
Mr. Bernardo Díez Rodríguez
Deputy Director General of Technical Services
Ms. Maria Luz de las Cuevas Torresano
Information/Documentation
E-mail: mluz.cuevas@inem.es
Web address: <http://www.inem.es>

Centre INFO – Centre pour le développement de l'information sur la formation permanente
Tour Europe Cedex 07
F-92049 PARIS LA DEFENSE
Tel. (33-1) 41 25 22 22
Fax (33-1) 47 73 74 20
Mr. Patrick Kessel, Director
E-mail: kessel@centre-info.fr
Ms. Danièle Joulieu, Head of Documentation
E-mail: cidoc@centre-info.fr
Mr. Stéphane Héroult, Documentation Department
E-mail: cidoc@centre-info.fr
Web address: <http://www.centre-info.fr>

FAS – The Training and Employment Authority
P.O. Box 456
27-33 Upper Baggot Street
DUBLIN 4, Ireland
Tel. (353-1) 607 05 36
Fax (353-1) 607 06 34
Ms. Margaret Carey
Head of Library & Technical Information
E-mail: careym@iol.ie
Ms. Jean Wrigley, Librarian
Web address: <http://www.fas.ie>

ISFOL – Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori
Via Morgagni 33
I-00161 ROMA
Tel. (39-06) 44 59 01
Fax (39-06) 44 29 18 71
Mr. Alfredo Tamborini, General Director
Mr. Colombo Conti, Head of Documentation
E-mail: isfol.doc2@iol.it
Mr. Luciano Libertini
E-mail: isfol.doc2@iol.it
Web address: <http://www.isfol.it>

FOPROGEST asbl
23, rue Aldringen
L-2011 LUXEMBOURG
Tel. (352) 220266
Fax (352) 220269
Mr. Jerry Lenert, Director
lenert@men.lu
Ms. Sybille Beaufils
sybille.beaufils@ci.educ.lu
Mr. Raymond Meyers
raymond.meyers@skynet.be

CINOP – Centrum voor Innovatie van Opleidingen
Centre for Innovation of Education and Training
Pettelaarpark 1
Postbus 1585
5200 BP's-HERTOGENBOSCH
The Netherlands
Tel. (31-73) 680 08 00
Tel. (31-73) 680 08 62 Mr. M. Jacobs
Fax (31-73) 612 34 25
Mr. Martin Jacobs
E-mail: mjacobs@cinop.nl
Ms. Astrid Busser
E-mail: abusser@cinop.nl
Web address: <http://www.cinop.nl>

abf-Austria – Arbeitsgemeinschaft Berufsbildungsforschung
Rainergasse 38
A-1050 WIEN
Tel. (43-1) 545 16 71 31
Fax (43-1) 545 16 71 22
Ms. Susanne Klimmer
E-mail: klimmer@ibw.at
Ms. Marlis Milanovich (IBE)
E-mail: milanovich@ibe.co.at
Web address: <http://www.ibw.at>
Web address: <http://www.ibe.co.at>

CIDES – Centro de Informação e Documentação Económica e Social
Ministério do Trabalho e da Solidariedade
Praça de Londres 2-1º Andar
P-1091 LISBOA Codex
Tel. (351-21) 844 12 18 Ms. O. Lopes dos Santos
Tel. (351-21) 843 10 37 Ms. F. Hora
Fax (351-21) 840 61 71
Ms. Odete Lopes dos Santos, Director
E-mail: odete.santos@deppmts.gov.pt
Ms. Fátima Hora, Documentation Department
E-mail: fatima.hora@deppmts.gov.pt
Web address: <http://www.deppmts.gov.pt>

NBE – National Board of Education
Hakaniemenkatu 2
P.O. Box 380
FIN-00531 HELSINKI
Tel. (358-9) 77 47 71 24 Mr. M. Kyrö
Tel. (358-9) 77 47 72 43 Ms. A. Mannila
Fax (358-9) 77 47 78 65
Mr. Matti Kyrö
E-mail: matti.kyro@oph.fi
Ms. Arja Mannila
E-mail: arja.mannila@oph.fi
Web address: <http://www.oph.fi>

SIP – Internationella Programkontoret för utbildningsområdet
The Swedish International Programme Office for Education and Training
Box 22007
S-104 22 STOCKHOLM
Tel. (46-8) 453 72 00 General Switchboard
Tel. (46-8) 453 72 73 Ms. Heléne Säll
Fax (46-8) 453 72 01 General
Fax (46-8) 453 72 02 Ms. H. Säll
Ms. Heléne Säll
E-mail: helene.sall@eupro.se
Ms. Gunilla Spens (NIWL)
E-mail: gunilla.spens@niwl.se
Mr. Rolf Nordanskog
rolf.nordanskog@programkontoret.se
Web address: <http://www.eupro.se>
Web address: <http://www.niwl.se>

CIPD – The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
CIPD House
35 Camp Road
LONDON, SW19 4UX, United Kingdom
Tel. (44-208) 971 90 00 Ms. J. Schramm
Fax (44-208) 263 33 33 General
Fax (44-208) 263 34 00 Library
Ms. Jennifer Schramm
E-mail: jschramm@cipd.co.uk
Ms. Cathy Doyle, Librarian
E-mail: c.doyle@cipd.co.uk
Web address: <http://www.cipd.co.uk/login/splashscreen.asp>

NCU – Leonardo Norge
P.O. Box 2608
St. Hanshaugen
N-0131 OSLO
Tel. (47-22) 86 50 00
Fax (47-22) 20 18 01
Mr. Halfdan Farstad
E-mail: farh@teknologisk.no
Ms. Grethe Kjeldahl
E-mail: kjeg@teknologisk.no
Web address: <http://www.teknologisk.no/leonardo/>

MENNT – samstarfsvettvangur atvinnulífs og skóla
EDUCATE - Iceland
Laugavegi 51
IS-101 REYKJAVIK
Tel. (354) 511 26 60
Fax (354) 511 26 61
Ms. Hrónn Pétursdóttir, General Director
hronn.petursdottir@mennt.is
Adalheidur Jónsdóttir, Project Manager
alla@mennt.is
<http://www.mennt.is>

Page 9 Training policy B: Introduction of the 'first youth job'; **Page 10 B:** The First Job Agreement; **B:** YOUTH PLAN + launched in the Walloon region; **F:** Training the least qualified first; **Page 11 IRL:** Social partnership programme agreed; **IRL:** Resolving skill shortages; **Impressum;** **NL:** On the right track - training as a means of achieving a higher labour participation rate; **Page 12 Bi- and multilateral co-operation D/GR:** Continuing vocational training advisory bureau for Greek nationals opened in Germany; **Conferences – Seminars – Exhibitions; CEDEFOP publications.**

Training policy/Bi- and multilateral co-operation/Conferences – Seminars – Exhibitions/Cedefop publications

Training policy

Belgium

Introduction of the 'first youth job'

Effective 1 April 2000, the 'first youth job' plan replaced existing legislation relating to work placements. This initiative, put forward by the region of Flanders (Flemish Minister of Employment Landuyt) and the federal government (Federal Minister of Employment Onkelinx), explicitly focuses on the underskilled, i.e. those with no upper secondary education certificate. From the entry into force of the plan employers must comply with the (existing) 3% quota. In Flanders, the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (VDAB) is responsible for the supervision of employers and the implementation /interpretation of federal obligations. This means that Flanders will be in a position to dictate its own priorities, not least since the problem of underskilling is less acute in this region than elsewhere in Belgium.

Each firm employing 50+ workers must offer work placements for a number of trainees corresponding to 3% of its headcount. The aim of these placements is to promote youth employment by providing young people with practical training when they come out of school. In return, employers may pay these trainees slightly less than the standard wage. The details of the 'first youth job' plan, which replaces the current system and offers a series of further advantages to employers, are specified in the law of 24 December 1999 on the promotion of employment, which came into effect on 1 April 2000.

The project

The 'first youth job' plan is addressed to young people, above all those without an upper secondary school-leaving certificate, a target group of approx. 30,000 in Flanders (1998 figures). It should be pointed out that Flanders has a much lower percentage of underskilling than Wallonia; as far as the application of the law in Flanders is concerned, this means that basically all young people, regardless of formal qualification level, are eligible for a 'first youth job' contract. The plan is to be integrated

into existing measures, in particular the so-called 'job market entry' and 'landing' schemes in Flanders.

The 'job market entry' schemes seek to place young persons in either a training programme or regular employment in the first six months after leaving school. The 'landing' programmes encourage senior workers to gradually phase out their careers, not by reducing their working hours but by acting as tutors for junior staff (transfer of knowledge and experience).

Target group

Recruitment for the 'first youth job' plan must observe a (legal) order of preference with different waves of intake. The first wave consists of youngsters in the 18-24 age group (above school-leaving age) who have left school less than six months before recruitment or who have concluded, or no longer participate in, a 'job market entry' scheme.

If there is a shortfall in the number of young people in the first category, the 'first youth job' plan is opened up to the second wave of clients - jobseekers aged under 25 - and subsequently to the final wave - jobseekers aged 25 - 30. In a transitional phase up to 30 June 2000, a 'first youth job' contract may be concluded with any jobseeker aged under 25, even if there is no shortfall in the first wave (which will obviously be the case as the academic year does not finish until 30 June).

The question evidently is what constitutes a shortfall. This is a point of dispute on which a consensus has not yet been reached, given the different circumstances in Flanders and Wallonia. A proposal is in the pipeline suggesting that the trigger point for the next wave of intake should be set by the sub-regional committee for employment for each sub-region. This would take account of the circumstances of the region and the profile of the desired candidates. The VDAB of each sub-region could therefore notify employers as to which group(s) are now eligible;

firms could recruit accordingly in fulfilment of their obligation.

Advantage for young people

Young people recruited on the basis of a 'first youth job' contract no longer have to go through the legal 'waiting' period before placement (youngsters holding the upper secondary school-leaving certificate only acquire unemployed status with full benefits after 'waiting' for nine months). For the application of job creation schemes such as the so-called 'recruitment advantage plan' and the 'plus plan', a first job is regarded as a period of unemployment with full benefits or a period of registration as a jobseeker. This advantage is only valid if the young person in question is subsequently integrated into another job creation scheme (following the first job).

Target companies

All firms with a workforce of 50+ have to comply with the provisions of the 'first youth job' plan. The ratio of 3% of the payroll is set as of 30 June of the previous year (1999). This means e.g. that a firm employing 100 workers has to take on a total of three young people under a 'first youth job' contract (as of 1 April 2000). In-service trainees are not included in the head count but taken into consideration in the 3% quota up to the end of their work placement contract. Otherwise all workers linked to the enterprise by a contract of employment are included in the head count, including temporary workers (weighted in terms of full-time employment).

It should be noted that only young people whose contracts have been notified to the competent authority (employment services) in due time may be taken into account in calculating the 3% quota. There is no limit to the number of young people employers may take on under a 'first youth job' contract (as opposed to the legislation on work placements which stipulated a 4% limit).

Enterprises with a workforce of fewer than 50 employees have no

obligation to take on young secondary school-leavers but are free to do so and benefit from the advantages accordingly. The recruitment of a young person to meet an employer's quota may not be linked to (compensated by) the redundancy of another employee.

It is not yet quite clear how this prohibition will work in practice. The situation must be clarified to ensure that the employer's right of dismissal is not infringed. Similarly, it is not authorised to impose a 'first youth job' contract on a young person recruited through normal channels. Apart from the 3% quota for the firm, a global ratio has also been set: 4% of recruitment at national level must be in the context of the 'first youth job' contract. This is clearly a political target; the trigger threshold could be reduced to a workforce of 25 employees, should the results of the measures be considered insufficient.

Possible exemptions

In certain circumstances, firms may be exempted from these obligations. The grounds for exemption, to be fixed by royal decree, will parallel those envisaged in the legislation on work placements. All exemptions granted for young people's work placements (Royal Decree No 230) will in any case remain valid until the end of the measures in question. Exemptions may also be granted to firms in difficulty or in the process of restructuring.

The contract

The 'first youth job' contract takes the form of a written contract between the employer and the employee drawn up at the commencement of employment. Unlike the traineeship contract, it is a fully-fledged contract of employment to which all the provisions of the legislation on work contracts apply. Non-compliance with formal requirements therefore implies the establishment of a normal work contract of an unlimited period, eliminating the advantages of the 'first youth job' plan. The contract is established

for at least half-time service and may be fixed-term or open-ended (minimum 12 months); but is only considered a 'first youth job' contract in the first 12 months of its validity. Contracts linked to a vocational training period of at least 12 months may be valid for up to 24 months.

A contract of employment concluded within a re-hiring programme is not regarded as a 'first youth job' contract.

On the contrary, contracts of commercial or industrial apprenticeship will be counted as 'first youth jobs'. The contract may specify a period of probation. Employers wishing to terminate a 'first youth job' contract must observe the usual deadlines.

At recruitment the young persons must submit a school diploma or certificate attesting participation in a 'job market entry' programme and evidence that they are registered as jobseekers (VDAB). The employer must submit a copy of the 'first youth job' contract to the director-general of employment administration within six days (Federal Ministry for Employment and Labour, Rue Belliard, 51 B-1040 Brussels).

Competent authority

Although the 'first youth job' plan provisions are laid down by a federal law, the National Employment Office (ONEM) does not play a leading role. Corresponding measures are implemented by VDAB in Flanders, the Community and regional agency for employment and vocational training in Wallonia (FOREM) in the Walloon region and the Brussels regional employment department (ORBEM) in the capital. The agencies are to do their utmost to meet the needs of firms and to assist enterprises in complying with the obligations imposed.

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

Source: VDAB Media and Library Administration/ Icodoc

The First Job Agreement

The First Job Agreement (Convention Premier Emploi – CPE) was developed as part of the Youth Plan (or Rosetta Plan¹, cf. Cedefop Info 1/2000) at federal level and in accordance with the European employment guidelines. Having come into effect on 1 April 2000, it repeals the Onem training scheme (or youth training scheme) (Royal Decree 230).

The aim of the agreement is to offer young people who are qualified or unqualified (with no diploma of upper secondary education) either a job, a job and training, or a complementary apprenticeship.

The target group includes all young people who belong to one of three categories:

- young people aged 18 to 24 who have dropped out of courses or vocational reintegration during the past six months;
 - jobseekers under 25;
 - jobseekers under 30.
- The employers involved are:
- private-sector employers (except the non-commercial sector) with 50 employees and over: an obligation to take on permanently 3% of their staff;
 - public-sector employers and private-sector employers in the non-commercial sector: an obligation to take on permanently 1.5% of their staff.

The Vocational Reintegration Directorate of the Ministry of Employment

and Labour grants certain exemptions for enterprises experiencing financial difficulties.

There are three types of agreement:

- an open-ended (or fixed-term) contract of employment for at least half-time work, the 12 first months of which are under a First Employment Agreement;
- a contract of employment covering at least 1/2 time work, accompanied by supplementary training; the contract is for 1 to 2 years, or 3 years if the training covers 36 months;
- either an apprenticeship contract in industry or an SME, or a vocational reintegration agreement of 12 to 24 months, or 3 years if the training lasts for 36 months.

The employer and the young person involved in a First Job Agreement need to provide a number of administrative documents.

In order to encourage young people to take part in the scheme, financial incentives will be offered during the First Job Agreement and after it has expired in the form of lower social security contributions.

A young person's employment under a First Job Agreement is treated as a period of unemployment.

Finally, the project has been the subject of a cooperation agreement with the Regions and has an impact on regional and communal initiatives (such as Plan Jeunes+ launched by FOREM in Wallonia) on placement and training for unqualified young

people – with the vocational reintegration path replacing the Plan d'Accompagnement des Chômeurs (plan on assistance for the unemployed) – and on the role of the Subregional Employment Committees.

¹ The name given by the press, which refers to the heroine of a recent Belgian film by the Dardenne brothers, who desperately looks for a job.

Regulations: *Moniteur belge* (Belgian Official Journal): <http://www.moniteur.be>
 - Law of 24/12/99 on the promotion of employment, Articles 23 to 57 (MB of 27/01/2000)
 - Royal Decrees of 30/03/2000 cf. Chapter VIII – First Job Agreement (MB of 31/03/2000)
 - Model Agreement (MB of 01/04/2000).
 Further information:
 Federal Ministry of Employment and Labour, Vocational Reintegration Directorate, Department of Employment, rue Belliard 51, 1040 Brussels
 Jacqueline BRANDT
 Tel. (32-2) 2334729 - (32-2) 2334679
 E-mail: rosetta@meta.fgov.be
 url: www.rosetta.be

Sources: FOREM CIDOC

Belgium

YOUTH PLAN + launched in the Walloon region

At the beginning of March FOREM officially launched the PLAN JEUNES + (YOUTH PLAN +) which is part of the First Job Agreement.

An outcome of the cooperation agreement between the government of the Walloon Region and the Federal Government concluded in January 2000, the PLAN JEUNES + has the general objective of preventing long-term unemployment and helping young jobseekers who are under 25 and have a lower secondary school certificate at most, to enter the labour market within three months of leaving school.

The ultimate aim is to enable them to sign their first work contract within 6 months.

The social and vocational integration of young people is one of the essential targets of regional policy in the coming years, and it is planned to achieve it through Wallonia's Contract for the Future.

Every year the labour market has to absorb more than 60,000 young people at all levels of education

including some 10,500 low-skilled persons who have difficulty in finding a job.

FOREM has set itself the task of mobilising its resources to prevent young persons from slipping into unemployment and to enable them to enhance their school education by adding a vocational qualification that is indispensable for permanent integration into the labour market. It has also decided to establish partnerships to enlarge its supply of services and to enhance communication with young low-skilled jobseekers and with enterprises which can offer them their first work experience.

The PLAN JEUNES + is divided into several stages:

- During the first meeting between the young person and the FOREM counsellor, the latter identifies the needs of the person concerned and proposes either a contract (First Job Agreement, Vocational Transition Programme, Training/Work Integration Plan³, alternance training⁴), or a work entry agreement which is the first module in the integration process.

□ If the young person chooses the work entry pathway, the counsellor gives information on the different services offered by FOREM such as the free consultation of an Employment Resources Area⁵, participation in active job search modules, the drawing up of a career plan or socio-professional guidance, and finally, enrolment in a course leading to a recognised qualification, either an reskilling course or in-company training.

□ Throughout the work entry pathway the young person is monitored and supported by the same counsellor and the agreement is updated between each module.

□ If a job is offered to the young person, an 'integration officer', who supports and assists the young person during the first weeks of work, is responsible for liaison.

□ If the young person feels the need for vocational guidance, he or she can ask a Vocational Guidance Centre to carry out a skills audit or can obtain information on a range of training option in 'Carrefour-Formation' (a body uniting the leading training establishments in the Walloon Region).

In order to optimise the implementation of this new training and vocational integration scheme, FOREM has considerably relaxed and simplified the conditions for partner participation in PLAN JEUNES +. At present there are some 300 training operators under agreement.

An evaluation report is written by the counsellor at the end of the work entry pathway when the young person has managed to get a work contract or when he/she has completed one or more of the modules envisaged in the vocational integration agreement.

At the level of the enterprises, 'social engineers' (ingénieurs sociaux) are the focus of relations between FOREM and an enterprise. Depending on the latter's needs, 'social engineers' have the task of informing the enterprise of all the possible aids and providing assistance with the administrative procedures needed to obtain them.

Since 6 March of this year a Freephone number accessible from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. - 0800-93947 - has been set up to cater to the needs of young people.

In order to reach the maximum number of young persons, FOREM has launched an immense information campaign using a broad range of media facilities (RTBF and local television stations, radio spots on NRJ and Radio Contact, 'Boomerang' postcards, Operation First Job of the *Le Soir* newspaper).

¹ See other article in: CEDEFOP Info 2/2000: 'First Job Agreement'

² See article in: CEDEFOP Info 3/99: 'Wallonia looks ahead to the year 2004'

³ See article in: CEDEFOP Info 02/99: 'Training the unemployed to meet SME manpower needs'

⁴ See article in CEDEFOP Info 02/99: 'Alternance training stream'

⁵ See other article in: CEDEFOP Info 02/2000: 'Employment Resources Area: A door to enter the labour market'

Additional information: FOREM
Employment Section
 Measures and support for jobseekers:
 Sonia Pennetreau
sonia.pennetreau@forem.be
 Tel. (32-71) 206532

Employment Section
 Employment contract measures:
 Laurent Duquenne
laurent.duquenne@forem.be
 Tel. (32-71) 206468

Training Section
 FOREM and non-FOREM training courses:
 Anne-Violette Michaux
anneviolette.michaux@forem.be
 Tel. (32-71) 206512

Sources: FOREM - CIDOC



France

Training the least qualified first

The report on access to vocational training, requested by Nicole Péry, Secretary of State for Women's Rights and Vocational Training from the Conseil d'Analyse Économique (CAE - Council for Economic Analysis)*, and compiled by the economist André Gauron, senior adviser at the Court of Auditors, was made public in March 2000.

Dealing mainly with the problems of access to vocational training for less qualified groups particularly hard-hit by unemployment (they represent two-thirds of the unemployed), the Gauron report is based on a series of findings:

The initial training deficit (in 1995, 38% of 45-54 year olds and 58% of 55-64 year olds had not attained

baccalaureate level), still noticeable in the over-35 age group, produces a discrepancy between the proportion of non-qualified work in total employment (16% in 1996) and the proportion of the active workforce that only has basic schooling. Access of less qualified wage earners to continuing training is still very low (7.5% for unqualified workers, 44.7% for managers).

The report criticises certain public policies to combat unemployment, such as early retirement schemes and aid for finding work without accompanying compulsory training, which have made very little impact on vocational integration (costing a total of FRF 97 billion a year, i.e. about EUR 14.8 billion). Gauron suggests that absolute priority be

given to training less-qualified people and calls for establishing vocational training on a new basis, linking initial training, vocational integration and career development.

At a time when the creation of jobs for the qualified has become one of the principal engines of growth, André Gauron believes that a new relationship should be created between training and employment.

To this end he makes five proposals:

- stronger links between basic training and alternance training: 'to take all children in one age group to a level of initial training equivalent to finishing upper secondary school (*lycée*)' and 'affirmative action for those who are failing school by offering more alternance training';

□ legal recognition of continuing training as part of the employment contract: this means ending the obligation to spend, laid down by the 1971 Law, and replacing it with a real obligation to train.

□ a right to certification of professional competences based on skill audits and access to training leading to a recognised qualification, and on incentives for enterprises to conduct forward planning of employment (special thought needs to be given to small enterprises);

□ absolute priority to be given to people with a low level of training, for which the necessary resources could be found by abolishing early retirement schemes;

□ more efficient and transparent spending on training in order to create and organise a genuine market (calls for tender for the training of jobseekers, building vocational integration requirements into training provisions, emphasising specific teaching methods for persons experiencing difficulties, etc.).

* The CAE is an organisation under the aegis of the prime minister. Its mission is to clarify the government's options in economic matters.

Sources: Formation tout au long de la vie: report by André Gauron, Conseil d'Analyse Économique (CAE), Paris: La Documentation française, 2000, 168 p. (Report of the CAE; 22), ISBN 2-11-004518-3 / INFFO Flash, No 539, 16-31/03/2000

Social partnership programme agreed

The latest in a series of national social partner agreements has recently been negotiated¹. Participants to the agreement include employers, trade unions and government as well as a platform representing a wide range of community organisations. Since its inception in 1987, the social partnership approach represented in the agreements has underpinned the substantial economic progress Ireland has enjoyed.

Based on the framework outlined in the recent National Economic and Social Council report², (see Cedefop Info 1/2000) the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness aims to enhance the country's economic prospects, improve living standards for

all and tackle social inclusion as a matter of urgency. The policy initiatives to achieve the objectives set for the programme are outlined in five operational frameworks:

- living standards and workplace environment
- prosperity and economic inclusion
- social inclusion and equality
- successful adaptation to continuing change
- renewing partnership

Concrete proposals on pay – for the first time a national minimum wage will be introduced - tax reform, conditions of employment, childcare and family friendly policies are proposed.

In the labour market area the programme proposes to establish measures to address skill shortages:

- e-commerce and the information society;
- upskilling of the workforce generally, with particular impact on those on low incomes and those returning to the workforce;
- appropriate training of childcare workers;
- progression pathways and accreditation;
- delivery requirements for apprenticeship training;
- equality and lifelong learning.

A radical package of measures in the lifelong learning area will aim to improve early and adult literacy, as

well as information technology, science and language skills, and support maximum participation in education and training programmes which respond to economic and social needs. The programme looks forward to the publication of a White Paper on Adult Education in 2000 which will provide for the establishment of a National Adult Learning Council. A Lifelong Learning Task Force representative of enterprise and the learning community will be established to report on existing provision and propose further areas for action.

There is a commitment to extending and deepening the partnership process at national and enterprise level

set out in the last programme (see Cedefop Info 2/97). An enhanced National Centre for Partnership and Performance will work with the employers' organisation (IBEC) and the Irish Trade Union Congress (ICTU) in the strengthening of partnership through dissemination, monitoring, research and training.

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

2) Opportunities, challenges and capacities for choice. 1999. (Report no. 105) ISBN 1-898724-02-4. (Available: NES, 1st Floor, Frederick House, South Frederick Street, IRL-Dublin 2, <http://www.nesc.ie>). Price: EUR 19.05 Tel. (353-1) 6369298 Fax (353-1) 671 3589
Source: FAS



Resolving skill shortages

The expectation that the Irish labour market is likely to remain tight over the next decade in relation to both general labour shortage and to skill shortages for particular categories of specialised worker is the focus of a recent labour market/manpower report¹. Following its first report which concentrated on the skill requirements of the Information Technology sector² (see Cedefop Info 3/98), the Expert Group on Skill Needs in its second report examines availability of both general labour and of workers for lower skill occupations. Particular focus is given to the main craft areas of the construction industry and to the demand for graduates in the chemical and biological sciences and in information technology.

The reasons advanced for general labour shortages in the less-skilled areas are the comparatively low rates of pay, a perception of poor working conditions, and a greater range of opportunity for young people, both in terms of employment and further education and training. In order to increase the overall numbers of those at work, a range of initiatives is proposed to encourage greater participation of married women, older persons and social welfare recipients. In addressing overall labour shortages for less

skilled workers, the Expert Group considered, in particular, the needs of the retail sector, the contract cleaning sector and the clothing sector, the focus of recent studies by FAS-Training and Employment Authority.

It recommends measures to increase the attractiveness of the sectors for school-leavers and those returning to work, by offering more clearly defined career paths and flexible working arrangements. Specific training measures to enhance productivity in the areas of design and modular manufacturing and production methods are advanced. The Group recommends that traineeships, with recognised accreditation, which have been introduced by FAS for the clothing sector, should also be extended on a nation-wide basis to those engaged in retailing, while training in hygiene and safety should be provided for those involved in the contract cleaning sector.

The rapid growth in the construction industry in recent years has put severe pressure on employers to find workers to fill available positions. The report estimates that an additional 16,000 skilled craftspersons will be required by 2003. It recommends a number of measures involv-

ing the main actors, FAS-Training and Employment Authority, the education system, the Construction Industry Federation and the trade unions, to achieve this. Specifically it recommends:

- further recruitment abroad;
- an exploration of routes to formal craft qualifications for experienced but unqualified general workers;
- an increase in the numbers of apprentices being sponsored by employers;
- a reduction in the time taken for some apprenticeships; and
- an immediate increase in the availability of off-the-job components of apprenticeship programmes.

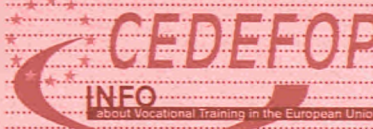
To address shortages in science-related occupations, the report recommends the type of courses and the places required for courses at technician and degree level. It also advocates a campaign to promote science courses and to raise awareness of career opportunities for science graduates among secondary students. In the information technology sector, shortages could be tackled by increasing the numbers on the relevant Accelerated Technician Programmes, ensuring that places in Institutes of Technology are filled.

Companies should, the report recommends, actively encourage their less qualified workers to obtain third-level qualifications at technician or degree level.

The Expert Group recognises that occupations within other sectors are also experiencing shortages and will address these in future reports as well as reporting progress in the areas identified in the first two reports.

1) Responding to Ireland's growing skill needs, second report of the Expert Group on Skill Needs. 2000. (Available free of charge from Forfas, Wilton Park House, Wilton Place, IRL-Dublin 2, <http://www.forfas.ie>). Tel. (353-1) 607 3000. Fax (353-1) 607 3030. Email forfas@forfas.ie
2) Building on Ireland's skill opportunities, first report of the Expert group on Skill Needs. 1998. (Available free of charge from Forfas, Wilton Park House, Wilton Place, IRL-Dublin 2, <http://www.forfas.ie>). Tel. (353-1) 607 3000. Fax (353-1) 607 3030. Email forfas@forfas.ie
Source: FAS

Impressum



Cedefop – European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training.
Europe 123
GR-57001 THESSALONIKI (Pylea)
Postal address:
PO Box 22427
GR-55102 THESSALONIKI
Tel. (30-31) 490 111
Fax (30-31) 490 020
E-mail: info@cedefop.eu.int
Homepage: www.cedefop.eu.int
Interactive website:
www.trainingvillage.gr

Brussels Office
20, Av. d'Auderghem
B-1040 Brussels
Tel. (32-2) 230 19 78
Fax (32-2) 230 58 24
E-mail: info.be@cedefop.eu.int

Cedefop Info is published in DE, EN, FR and contains information on vocational training in Europe, in particular the findings of work carried out by Cedefop and reports from the social partners and the member states. It is provided free of charge upon request.

Articles with a source reference do not necessarily reflect the views of Cedefop.

Unsolicited manuscripts, books and other material will be carefully examined and assessed. Requests for contacts, news of forthcoming conferences and other information would be welcomed. For this, however, Cedefop bears no responsibility.

Reproduction in whole or in part of the contents of this publication is authorized, provided that the source is acknowledged.

Responsible publisher:
Johan van Rens, Director
Stavros Stavrou, Deputy Director
Editors:
Bernd Möhlmann, Cedefop
J. Michael Adams, Cedefop
Eric Fries Guggenheim, Cedefop
with the support of
Simone Kops – Journalist
Coordination:
Bernd Möhlmann, Cedefop
Dagmar Wolny, Cedefop
Responsible for translation:
David Crabbe
Layout/Design:
Rudolf J. Schmitt, Berlin
Technical production with DTP:
Axel Hunstock, Berlin

Editorial deadline: 1.8.2000
Printed in Belgium 2000
Cat. no.: HX-AD-00-002-EN-C

On the right track - training as a means of achieving a higher labour participation rate

In March 2000, the Dutch Minister of Social Affairs and Employment presented an analysis of labour market bottlenecks and problems. By proposing 48 different actions for which both government and social partners should take responsibility, the Minister expects to contribute to the solution of existing problems. Fifteen actions directly refer to training.

The analysis covers two aspects of the labour market: the future demand for, and supply of, competent personnel. Shortages, especially for higher qualified workers, are in evidence in many sectors. Overall demand is high, but it varies over economic sectors. Therefore, solutions must be found in general and

sector specific approaches. Training and employability are the crucial issues. On the supply side, the number of non-active people is too high. People with insufficient qualifications, people who are invalidated out of work, people who choose not to work in order to be able to take care of their families and elderly

people who opt for early retirement need incentives to become active and productive.

In order to reach a higher labour participation rate, social partners and government have to join forces. The social partners should contribute

- by further adapting their human resources policies in order to make better use of elderly workers,
- upgrading qualifications of workers through training,
- preventing dropping-out of the work process

- offering improved labour conditions (money, time and child care provisions) and
- introducing new recruitment methods.

The government should create the right conditions and support employers and employees as much as possible. Related to life long learning and training this implies an amalgam of measures. They are complementary to the agreed employment agenda and include:

- realising tailor made, efficient and flexible training by elaborating

the concept of, and instruments for, accreditation of previously acquired competencies, by promoting the use of ICT for the training of workers and the unemployed and by further development of educational broadcasting;

- special measures for the training of workers and unemployed people, for example by introducing an individual learning account;
- more attention to training for minorities and refugees.

Further information: Ministerial publication: In goede banen. Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment; Directorate for information, library and documentation: <http://www.minszw.nl>

Bi- and multilateral co-operation

Germany/Greece

Continuing vocational training advisory bureau for Greek nationals opened in Germany

Cologne Consul General Nicolas Tsamados is to seek the support of the Greek Ministry of Labour

The first advisory bureau for the training and continuing training of Greek workers in Germany, set up by the Greek Consulate General, Cologne (where it has its premises), in conjunction with the Cologne job centre and the coordination unit Pro Qualifizierung, was opened in Cologne in May.

Pro Qualifizierung, a joint project of the Cologne chambers of trade and crafts, promotes the vocational

skilling of foreign workers in Germany with the support of the Federal Ministry for Employment and Social Affairs. Greeks are the second largest European ethnic group in Germany. 'We specifically addressed Greek nationals at information and other events and ascertained an enormous demand for a counselling service with a low inhibition threshold - many persons in need of advice are reluctant to go to the job centre or the chamber of trade and

industry', explains Wolfgang Fehl, Pro Qualifizierung project leader.

The new advisory bureau is designed to optimise access to information for Greek workers in Germany. Greek nationals may visit Magrit Braun from the Cologne job centre and Christina Alexoglou-Patelkos from Pro Qualifizierung once a month to obtain advice - in either German or Greek - on continuing vocational training, retraining and the recogni-

tion of educational and vocational certificates. Both counsellors assist clients in the choice of a suitable vocational training course and provide information on entrance requirements and the possibilities of financial assistance.

Pro Qualifizierung intends to publicise the new advisory service in a broadly-based information campaign with the support of the Greek Consul General Nicolas Tsamados in the

near future. Tsamados also hopes to gain the support of the Greek Ministry of Labour in Athens as project sponsor so that the bureau can also be publicised in the Greek media as an established vocational advisory service for Greek nationals.

The advisory bureau at the Greek Consulate General Cologne, Universitätsstrasse 45, D-50931 Cologne, is open every third Tuesday in the month from 3 pm - 6 pm, Tel. hotline: (49-221) 6920910.
Source: Pro Qualifizierung/CEDEFOP/SK

CONFERENCES – SEMINARS – EXHIBITIONS

| | | | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|
| Göttingen/D 21 to 24 September 2000 Teaching and Learning within Vocational and Occupational Education and Training International Conference Organiser: Georg August University Göttingen and Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) Contact: Seminar für Wirtschaftspädagogik der Georg-August-Universität Platz der Göttinger Sieben 5 D-37073 Göttingen Tel. (49-551) 39 44 21, (49-551) 39 44 22 Fax (49-551) 39 44 17 E-Mail swp@wipaed.wiso.uni-goettingen.de www.wipaed.wiso.uni-goettingen.de/wipaed/berufsbildungskongress/english | Braunschweig/D 24 to 27 September 2000 Technology Education – Consequences and coming Challenges as engendered by a Global Perspective Organiser: "World Council of Associations for Technology Education" (WOCATE) and the Institute of "Technology Education" (ATP) of the Technical University Braunschweig Contact: Prof. Dr. Walter E. Theuerkauf, Technical University Braunschweig Institut für Fachdidaktik der Naturwissenschaften Abteilung Technikpädagogik (ATP) Technische Universität Braunschweig Pockelsstr. 11 D-38106 Braunschweig Tel. (49-531) 391 2883 Fax (49-531) 391 8229 E-Mail w.theuerkauf@tu-bs.de www.wocate.org/ict | Indianapolis/USA 3 to 5 October 2000 EDTEC 2000 Education Technology Exposition & Conference Indianapolis/USA Contact: Courtney Smith or Paul Wolbert EDTEC 2000 P.O. Box 681179 Orlando, FL 32868-1179 U.S.A. Tel. (1-407) 445-2636 \ 800-377-1310 Fax: (1-407) 445-8740 E-mail: info@emcshows.com | Nice/F 19 and 20 October 2000 Training for entrepreneurship European forum on entrepreneurship training Organiser: European Commission (DG for Enterprise) and the French Ministry of the Economy, Finance and Industry, with the support of ministries in charge of national education and research. Contact and information: http://www.industrie.gouv.fr/cgi-bin/industrie/frame423.pl?bandeau=/pratique/bp_prat.htm&gauche=/pratique/format/colloq/lp_coll.htm&droite=/pratique/format/colloq/sp_coll.htm | Kuala Lumpur/Malaysia 21 to 23 November 2000 International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education (ICTVE) Institut Teknologi Tun Hussein Onn with the cooperation of Technical Education Department, Ministry of Education Contact: ICTVE Secretariat TTHO Locked Bag 101 86400 Batu Pahat Johor Malaysia Tel: (607) 4546000, (607) 4546113 Fax: (607) 4542337 E-mail: votech2000@ittho.utm.my http://www.ittho.utm.my | Berlin/D 29 November to 1 December 2000 Online Educa Berlin 2000 6th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning Contact: Berlin Office: ICEF Berlin Niebuhrstrasse 69A 10629 Berlin Tel. (49-30) 327 61 40 Fax (49-30) 324 98 33 icefberlin@icef.com Internet:www.online-educa.com | Enschede/NL 26 and 27 January 2001 Second Conference on HRD Research and Practice across Europe The University Forum for HRD, EURESFORM and the Academy of HRD Department of Education of the University of Nijmegen Department of Educational Science and Technology of the University of Twente Contact: Prof. Robert-Jan Simons University of Nijmegen P.O.Box 9104 6500 HE Nijmegen Netherlands Tel. (31-24) 3 61 25 14, Fax (31-24) 3 61 59 78 E-mail: r.simons@ped.kun.nl www.b.shuttle.de/wifo/vet/ne01hrd.htm |
|--|--|--|---|--|---|---|

Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning in Greece

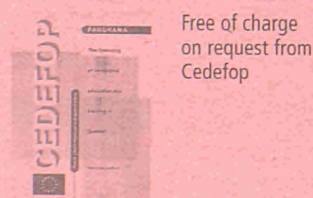
Cedefop panorama 5101
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-28-00-357-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

The financing of vocational education and training in Sweden

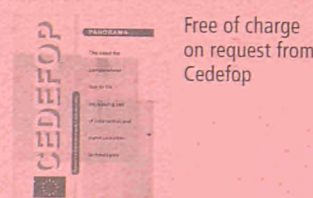
Financing portrait
Cedefop panorama 5103
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-28-00-802-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

The need for competences due to the increasing use of information and communication technologies

Cedefop panorama 5105
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-30-00-479-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Vocational education and training in Norway

Monograph 7004
Languages: DE, EN, FR
Price: EUR 18.50
Cat. No: HX-09-97-842-EN-C



May be obtained from the EU sales offices

Beroepsonderwijs en scholing in Nederland

Monograph 7008
Language: NL
Price: EUR 18.50
Cat. No: HX-22-99-862-NL-C



May be obtained from the EU sales offices

Glossarium Vocational Training CD 54

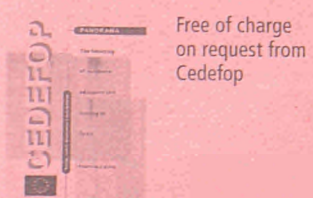
Languages: DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FR, IT, NL, PT
Price: EUR 18.50
Cat. No: HX-17-98-289-9A-Z



May be obtained from the EU sales offices

The financing of vocational education and training in Spain

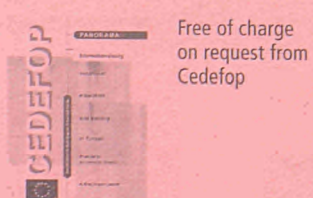
Financing portrait
Cedefop panorama 5102
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-27-00-960-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Internationalising vocational education and training in Europe

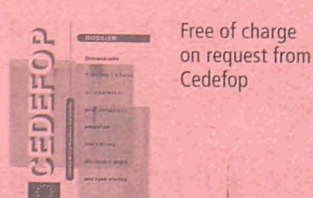
Prelude to an overdue debate
A discussion paper
Cedefop panorama 5104
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-29-00-666-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Demand-side financing – a focus on vouchers in post-compulsory education and training: discussion paper and case studies

Cedefop Dossier 6003
Language: EN
Cat. No: TI-29-00-884-EN-C



Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Vocational education and training in the United Kingdom

Monograph 7005
Language: EN
Price: EUR 18.50
Cat. No: HX-12-98-271-EN-C



May be obtained from the EU sales offices

O sistema de formação profissional em Portugal

Monograph 7009
Languages: PT
Price: EUR 18.50
Cat. No: HX-22-99-846-PT-C



May be obtained from the EU sales offices

CEDEFOP publications

Page 13 Mobility DK: Evaluation of the VET international exchange programme; NL: International mobility - VET a neglected partner?; **Page 14 NL:** Practical training abroad; **New training organisations and programmes** D: Deutsche Bahn and TÜV launch IT offensive; FIN: TONET - an information service on on-the-job learning; **In brief** NO: Free textbooks; NO: New national centre for learning and development; **Page 15 Certification systems – quality of VET** NL: Monitoring the future of approved prior learning (APL); UK: Qualifications: building a vocational ladder; **Page 16 Training of trainers** B: Course on combating poverty to begin in Hasselt early February 2001; **Special target groups** E: First year of operation of the employment workshops; P: Adults conquer the world of knowledge.

Mobility/New training organisations and programmes/In brief/Certification systems – quality of VET/Training of trainers/Special target groups

Mobility

Denmark

Evaluation of the VET international exchange programme

A new evaluation shows that this is a successful and well-functioning programme with only minor flaws.

The Danish exchange programme is in a European context - unique. It gives young people in initial vocational training the possibility to spend periods of work placement abroad and to have them recognised as an integral part of their training. The programme was initiated in 1992, and since then approximately 1,000 trainees have gone abroad every year.

In 1999, the PIU-Centre, which is responsible for the co-ordination and the development of the programme,

initiated an evaluation. The evaluation was carried out by the Danish Institute for the Educational Training of Vocational Teachers and financed by the Ministry of Education. The evaluation has been based on both quantitative and qualitative data.

The quantitative evaluation revealed that the number of trainees doing a work placement abroad has stagnated during recent years. Furthermore, the vast possibilities for financial support for transnational activities under the programme are not

fully exploited. This indicates that there is a need for a more differentiated and targeted effort to inform the users of the opportunities offered by the programme.

The overall result of the qualitative evaluation was that all user-categories - trainees, employers, Danish VET schools and foreign hosting companies - are more than satisfied with the programme, but that parts of it need to be improved.

One aspect is how to assure the quality of the transnational work placements. The trainees criticise the hosting companies for not always

having sufficient information about the qualifications which the trainees, according to Danish law, have to obtain during the placement. The consequence is that training may be unsatisfactory and of too poor a quality. The trainees moreover stress the need for regular reviews and exchange of experiences during the work placement period.

Furthermore, the information on compulsory school periods at a Danish VET school during the placements needs to be improved. Today, the information is unsatisfactory and information and communication between the Danish VET school and

the hosting company needs to be strengthened.

The evaluation which is in Danish but includes a summary in English, is available on the Internet: www.piu-centret.dk.

For further information please contact:

The PIU-Centre
 Hesseløgade 16
 2100 København Ø
 Tel. (45-39) 27 52 00
 Fax (45-39) 27 52 05
 E-mail: piu@piu-centret.dk

Source: DEL/PIU-Centre

The Netherlands

International mobility - VET a neglected partner?

Dutch students and teachers have many possibilities to go abroad for study or work. European as well as national programmes enable students and teachers to visit other countries. Many of the students use private funding to finance international study or a traineeship. The large variety of programmes requires a structured monitoring system in order to analyse how international mobility is developing.

Monitor of international mobility in education

Each year the intermediate organisations of the three educational sectors (Europees Platform for primary and secondary general education, CINOP for secondary vocational education and adult education and the Netherlands University Foundation for International Cooperation (Nuffic) for higher education) co-

operate to monitor international mobility in education. Quantitative information on the (inter)national mobility programmes form the basis for this overview, which serves as a useful tool for decision makers.

General conclusions

The 1999 survey includes figures covering the last four years, thus offering an opportunity to identify some trends. Annually, almost 30,000 Dutch students take part in an international exchange. More than 50% are students in primary and secondary general education. One third come from higher education, while about 4,000 students in secondary vocational education take part in international mobility. Mobility in primary and general secondary education is rising, while mobility in higher and secondary vocational training is stable. The number of

teachers in secondary vocational education going abroad is decreasing.

Secondary vocational education

In the year 1997/1998 the number of students in secondary vocational education was 411,600. The number of students who went abroad was 2,945 (0.71 %). The ratio for agricultural schools was significantly higher, namely 2.6 %.

The volume of international mobility in secondary vocational education has stabilised in the last two years due to a government change of policy. Until 1998 the emphasis was mainly on stimulating group exchanges, short visits abroad and other exchanges. With the introduction of the national programme *Talents Unlimited* in 1998 (see CEDEFOP Info 1/2000), the emphasis

shifted from promoting and financing a lot of short term visits with many participants, towards promoting the construction of internal organisational structures in order to enable schools to organise international activities more effectively. For this, schools receive an ear-marked budget dependent on the number of enrolled students.

The most popular destinations for students and teachers are Great Britain, Germany, Belgium and Denmark

- ❑ the national programme only supports mobility to neighbouring countries;
- ❑ finance, guidance and organisation of activities in nearby countries is easier to manage;
- ❑ a quarter of the vocational training schools (ROCs) is to be found in the border region with Germany;

❑ of the innovative developments in Great Britain.

All 43 vocational schools participate in the national programme *Talents Unlimited*. Almost 70% of all ROCs (28) participate in Leonardo da Vinci mobility activities. The proportion of students taking part in an international activity is relatively small. There is still a lot of work to do to motivate students and make them aware of the possibilities.

The ambition of the intermediary organisations is to develop the survey into a more general monitor for internationalisation. Next years will not only survey quantitative, but also qualitative, information

Further information:
 CINOP, Mr. André Herbrink,
 telephone (31-73) 6800621;
 Internet: <http://www.cinop.nl/intnat>

Source: CINOP

Practical training abroad

National Body develops procedure for accrediting training firms

ECABO is one of 22 Dutch National Bodies for Vocational Education. According to the Vocational and Adult Education Act, National Bodies have two main responsibilities: first, maintaining the qualification structure and drawing up the attainment targets and, second, recruiting and accrediting training firms for the practical training period. Furthermore, as examination institutes, National Bodies evaluate the examinations set by educational institutions.

ECABO serves the following sectors: secretarial work, business administration, commercial work, logistics, automation, legal work, information services and security. In total, the

ECABO Qualification Structure identifies 32 different vocational qualifications on four levels. More than 70,000 students take part in the courses, provided by the Regional Training Centres.

In the Netherlands, every student in secondary vocational education is required to complete a period of training within a company. This may be a period of several months but could also be four days a week throughout the entire course. This practical training period (*beroepspraktijkvorming*) is an essential component of the course and must therefore be carefully structured. It takes place in officially accredited training firms. To ascertain the quality of training firms and training places, the National Body is responsible for accreditation.

At the beginning of 2000, ECABO published its procedure for the accreditation of training firms abroad.* The procedure is, as far as possible, similar to the procedure used to accredit training firms in the Netherlands. For training firms in regions directly bordering to the Netherlands, the procedure is even exactly the same.

If a firm wants to become accredited as a training firm, ECABO needs information. Preliminary accreditation is granted on the basis of written data, provided by the firm itself. This preliminary accreditation will last for a maximum of two years. In order to start the process of official accreditation, ECABO provides information about the qualification structure, the criteria to become an officially accredited training firm and

the relevant regulation. Then, firms in the border regions are visited by one of ECABO's consultants who assesses whether a firm can offer the right conditions for a practical training period and, if so, for which qualifications and levels. Firms at a greater distance from the Netherlands will not be personally visited. Assessment is done by filling out a questionnaire. If the assessment is positive, the firm is entered into the register of accredited training firms. The register can be consulted at the ECABO internet site.

All documents relevant to the accreditation procedure are available in three foreign languages (English, French and German). A number of documents describing the attainment targets are already, or will shortly, be translated. The procedure

will be further refined by setting up partnerships with comparable organisations abroad and having them handle parts of the procedure.

ECABO is very much aware of the need for future workers to be prepared for an international working environment. In order to prepare students for this and for a practical training period abroad, ECABO has developed two non-compulsory partial qualifications. They consist of geographical knowledge, organisation of labour, international co-operation and business orientation.

Further information:
ECABO, <http://www2.ecabo.nl>
Mrs. Hélène van Oostrom, tel: (31-33) 450 4617;
e-mail: International@ecabo.nl

*) A few other National Bodies also have a procedure for accrediting of training firms abroad. Others are developing such a procedure.

Source: CINOP

New training organisations and programmes

Germany

Deutsche Bahn and TÜV launch IT offensive

In May 2000, Deutsche Bahn (DB - German Rail) and the academies of the Technical Inspection Agency (TÜV) launched a nation-wide initiative to train 2,000 IT and media specialists in response to the shortage of skilled workers in the IT sector in Germany.

The offensive, aimed at creating initial and continuing training opportunities in the IT field for 2,000 people, is a good example of how more

jobs can be created in the new information and communication technologies sector.

The joint initiative is designed to provide swift and uncomplicated skilling opportunities for German industry, particularly firms which are in principle prepared to deliver IT and media-related training but have difficulty providing training without any practical support. Practical training can now be either partially or

completely delivered by DB and TÜV which both draw on many years of experience in collaborative training schemes, in particular with small- and medium-sized enterprises. The skilling initiative is focused on occupations such as computer specialists, IT systems electronic technician and media designer for digital, print, image and sound media.

Social skills, entrepreneurial behaviour and service orientation stand for

modern training concepts. For over four years, DB trainees have been undergoing training in junior firms with their own responsibility for clients and turnover. This model is now to be transferred to IT and media occupations.

In the course of their training, trainees run systems houses, so-called JunITS (junior IT systems houses); this work is largely carried out independently so that trainees learn

software design at an early stage on an action- and project-oriented basis and become familiar with upstream and downstream processes such as sales development, product management and product planning.

Further information:
Ulrich Wiegand, Deutsche Bahn AG, ZPF 1,
Holzmarktstr. 17, D-10880 Berlin,
Tel. (49-30) 297-61 357, Fax (49-30) 297-61 934,
E-mail: ulrich.wiegand@bku.db.de

Source: Deutsche Bahn

Finland

TONET - an information service on on-the-job learning

Finland is entering a new era of vocational education and training through the major change, which applied gradually between the years 1999 and 2001, prolongs all vocational training programmes to up to three years. It also requires a practical training of six months to be included. This practical training should be implemented in a genuine working environment and requires on-the-job learning that implies a change in the character of conventional practical training. On-the-job learning is guided, focused and assessed in accordance with educational objectives laid down in the curriculum. Training instructions are planned and implemented co-operatively by the educational institutions and employers.

On-the-job learning constitutes a considerable change in the learning culture, and its implementation demands time and patience. To be widely accepted, on-the-job learning must offer benefits and motivation for all parties involved. For the

student, on-the-job learning provides an opportunity to work with real problems in a genuine working community. It also consolidates personal and social qualities and thus facilitates a young person's entry into the labour market. For the school, organising on-the-job learning provides an opportunity to develop its activities to meet the needs of the world of work. In companies, students may develop examples of new working methods and approaches and stimulate the personnel in a shared learning process.

To ensure a mechanism to communicate information on on-the-job learning, the National Board of Education is creating an information service entitled TONET. The service will be available on Internet at www.edu.fi/tonet in Finnish and Swedish, with a small part introducing the concept of on-the-job learning in English. The TONET service is a practical, hands-on tool, designed especially for the three major players in on-the-job learning, the work-

place (employers), the students and the schools (education providers).

The service will guide the users through all the information they need about on-the-job learning, its social, industrial and statutory background, links to curricula and study plans, as well as its organisation and implementation at the workplace. To establish on-the-job learning, a contract specifying the tasks of the parties concerned and arrangements for the supervision and assessment of the student's performance is required. A model for a contract will be available in the TONET service, which additionally provides users with information about experiments, pilot projects, research and surveys, bibliographical references, publications and reports on on-the-job learning.

Further information
National Board of Education
Eeva-Kaisa Linna, project manager
Eeva-kaisa.linna@oph.fi
Tel. (358-9) 7747 7134, fax (358-9) 7747 7869
Source: NBE

In brief

Norway

Free textbooks

As from August 2000, the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs will establish a new arrangement for the free loan of textbooks for students in further education, to reduce the students' costs. There are no school fees for further education, but at present the students must pay for their own textbooks and teaching materials.

Source: Leonardo NA Norway

Norway

New national centre for learning and development

A new national centre for learning and development will be established from 1 August 2000. The centre takes over a lot of the development functions which are now taken care of by the Ministry of Education, Research and Church Affairs. It will have a staff of 135 and will have the operational responsibility for quality assurance and development in primary and secondary education. The development of teaching material for students with special needs, the use of ICT and school evaluation and responsibility for public exams will be among its most important tasks.

Source: Leonardo NA Norway

Certification systems – quality of VET

The Netherlands

Monitoring the future of approved prior learning (APL)

In the on-going discussion on life-long learning and employability, the view in The Netherlands is that accreditation of prior or non-formal learning (APL) could make a positive contribution to the functioning of the labour and training markets, particularly for individuals. Implementation has to be consistent with existing structures and the costs involved have to be borne by the parties concerned. Consequently, early in 1999 the Minister of Economic Affairs set up a working party with representatives of the government, employers' organisations and trade unions. Their task was to define an approach and devise a system for using the APL instrument on the labour market.

To this end, various branches or sectors in which the APL formula (or parts thereof) is already in place: the metal industry, services/communication, care, construction, food and food processing, and government, were monitored from September to December 1999. The supply side in the APL (education) framework and the role of IT applications were also examined.

The aim of this monitoring exercise was to identify which building blocks for APL implementation were already in place, which blocks ought to be repositioned and which still had to be created.

General conclusion

In general, APL is still in its infancy. Business and industry are hardly familiar with the concept. As a concept and objective, APL is known in secondary and higher vocational education but the number of specific applications is still limited.

Companies and organisations using APL as a specific tool are doing so in pursuit of the following objectives:

- enhancing the level of competitiveness of their personnel
- motivating personnel to further develop their skills and abilities
- limiting training costs.

In the business world, the use of APL is focused on skills management. This includes developing skill profiles or standards, which employees have to meet. These profiles are often company-specific and only partially overlap with general sectoral standards. As a result, skills assessment on the basis of company-specific standards can only to a limited extent lead to recognition of skills with an effect going beyond company level.

However, within current company-oriented skills assessment systems, there does appear to be a sufficient basis for developing sectoral APL systems. The main challenge will be to have APL formulas applied as valid employability instruments, with the view to creating vertical (within the branch or sector) and horizontal mobility (cross-sectoral).

Recommendations based on monitoring results

The working party believes that it is important that where the APL sys-

tem is already being used it should be strengthened and where it has not yet taken hold, it should be given some sort of stimulus.

To underline this view, the working party concentrates on the following when implementing systems:

1. the *nation-wide effect* of the results of skills assessment. Efforts should be made to distribute information and raise awareness of the value and use of APL procedures, to strengthen current standards and to publicise the cross-sectoral nature of skills. Organising knowledge transfer at national and international level and improving the present system for comparing international diplomas could also fall under this heading.

2. the *accessibility* of the APL assessment system. Making assessment accessible, the separation of evaluation and education and ensuring that the procedure is affordable.

3. the *quality guarantee* of APL evaluation procedures.

Proposals relating to the implementation of a skills standard for assessors, the development of a quality care system for assessment centres and the introduction of an accreditation regulation for assessors, are expected.

Building a knowledge centre

In order to be able to learn from existing practice in non-formal learning, the Dutch government is planning to set up, on a temporary basis, a national knowledge centre. This knowledge centre will not interfere with existing activities but will seek to link up as closely as possible with the already existing knowledge infrastructure.

The aim of the centre is to stimulate the use of a system for *identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning* in the Netherlands. Defining its role will involve

gathering knowledge and good practice, disseminating and explaining it, and encouraging and advising those concerned to set up their own assessment procedure.

This will involve the following tasks:

- *expertise*: the knowledge centre will collect and classify relevant national and international information on current and planned training courses making use of *identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning*
- *information*: the knowledge centre will function as a support to facilitate and support existing and potential processes, to provide information on developments relating to non-formal learning, to promote the exchange of knowledge on, and between, projects and to match theory with good practice
- *networking*: the knowledge centre will bring together potential project partners.
- *advice*: the knowledge centre will prevent duplication of efforts

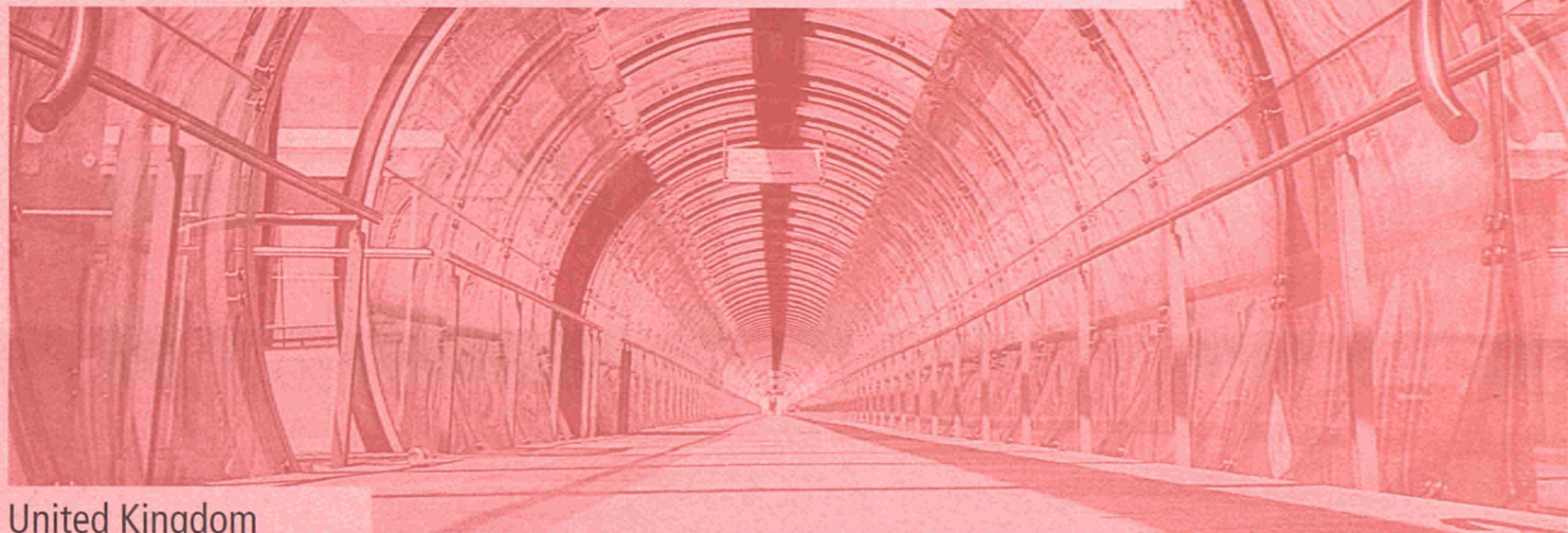
and advise the government on policy measures.

□ *innovation*: the knowledge centre will develop cross-sectoral policy promoting the utilisation of the *identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning* that can be implemented on the labour market.

The centre will be operational as from the beginning of 2001. It represents a major step in the acceptance of the potential of non-formal learning and the means to deal with this potential effectively within the knowledge economy of the Netherlands.

For additional information, please contact: The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs, Mr. Ruud Duvekot
e-mail: r.c.duvekot@minez.nl

Source: CINOP



United Kingdom

Qualifications: building a vocational ladder

A raft of measures aimed at strengthening the structure of vocational education was announced this spring. The impetus for some of the key measures was the publication of the second report* of the government-appointed Skills Task Force whose recommendations included urgent action to clear up confusion about the "jungle of options" and progression routes.

Two-year vocationally-oriented **Foundation Degrees** are to be introduced in autumn 2001. Announcing them, the Department for Education and Employment said the new degrees will meet a gap in the jobs market for higher technician and associate professional level employees, and the Department expects employers to be fully involved in developing the new degrees.

A strong vocational focus is already a key feature of higher education in the UK especially in the "new" universities (former polytechnic colleges which achieved university status in the early 1990's), but in recent years many of the new universities have demonstrated a trend of replacing some of the traditional vocational courses with more academic ones like social sciences. The new foundation degrees are seen as being the pinnacle of an expanded vocational structure.

It is envisaged that they will be delivered mainly in the further education colleges, perhaps organising themselves into consortia, and that they will be accredited by the universities. A working group has been appointed to advise on content, funding, entry requirements, and progression issues. The degrees are expected to be flexible and mainly part-time. They will have a significant element of on-the-job training and should be part of mainstream provision from September 2003.

Modern Apprenticeships (MAs) are to be revamped. These were introduced in 1995 to marry traditional apprenticeships with the new flexible work-based National/Scottish Vocational Qualifications (N/SVQs) which are awarded on the basis of assessment of occupational competence. Take-up of the MAs and post-apprenticeship employment rates were very high leading to the MA scheme being hailed as the most successful of all new training initiatives of recent years. However, DfEE figures**, published last September, showed that only 32% of those who entered Modern Apprenticeships went on to achieve the relevant NVQ level 3 qualification. Commenting on the findings, a DfEE representative noted that the low rate of qualification may point to problems with assessment and certi-

fication rather than poor training and that some apprentices seemed not to understand the full requirements for completing an MA. Other commentators have pointed out that the low rate of qualification may be due to aspects of Level 3 NVQs being inappropriate to apprentices, notably the requirement to demonstrate competence in supervisory skills. The DfEE figures confirmed previous findings of high post-apprenticeship employment rates, with only 7 per cent of those leaving MAs (with or without qualifications) being unemployed six months after leaving the programme.

The Skills Task Force's second report* recommended a requirement for apprentices to study the underpinning knowledge for their area of activity. This recommendation was subsequently supported by a Confederation of British Industry (national employers' organisation) survey of employers*** which found that 61% of employers wanted apprenticeships to include a knowledge and understanding qualification.

In February David Blunkett, Secretary of State for Education and Employment, announced the start of a process of major reform of MAs which will now be known as Advanced Modern Apprenticeships. Key changes are:

- a clear structure with Foundation Modern Apprenticeships (previously National Traineeships) with Level 2 qualification leading to Advanced Modern Apprenticeship at Level 3
- clear accreditation of the underpinning skills and knowledge needed for the workplace
- inclusion of a specified period of off-the-job learning in college or with other training providers, with a suggested minimum of one day a week or equivalent
- specified duration – with three years suggested for Advanced MA – and specified entry requirements.

Financial incentives to employers of apprentices will be linked to completion of the relevant qualifications.

Secondary school/post-secondary vocational qualifications will be strengthened.

The General National Vocational Qualification, the industry-related course deemed to be equivalent to two A-levels (the 'gold standard' academic upper secondary qualification), was introduced seven years ago and almost half a million people now hold the qualification with over 100,000 being awarded each year. However, there has been strong criticism regarding quality of assessment, poor completion rates and lack of credibility among employers. The qualification has been subject to

Continued on page 16

Continued from page 15

many revisions and modifications. Substantial further reforms are to be introduced from September 2000 to fit the qualification more securely into the A-level template. These reforms include streamlined assessment and more challenging test questions of A-level standard. The qualification will now be called a vocational A-level.

At pre-16 level, a new work-related knowledge and skills qualification,

GNVQ Part One, has been generally available in schools and college since September 1999. This was designed to be an optional qualification to be studied alongside GCSE (General Certificate in Secondary Education – the national examination for 16 year-olds).

The structure of academic school qualifications has been strengthened by the introduction of AS (Advanced Supplementary) levels which will be

generally available from September this year. An AS level is deemed to be half the content of an A level but at the same standard, and can be taken by those wishing to broaden their studies or those not ready to tackle a full A level. A new S-level is also to be introduced for students who wish to study and gain qualifications above A-level standard.

The new measures aim to create a ladder of vocational learning from

pre-16 to Foundation Degree level. Talking about the new initiatives recently, David Blunkett said he hoped they would help Britain break out of "its culture of anti-vocationalism".

* *Delivering Skills for All*, second report of the Skills Taskforce. Available free of charge from Prolog, P.O. Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DG. Tel. (44-845) 60 222 60. Fax (44-845) 60 333 60. Internet: www.dfee.gov.uk/skillsforce.

** *Modern Apprenticeships: achievements so far*, in Labour Market Trends, September 1999.

Available from The Stationery Office Publications Centre, P.O. Box 29, Norwich NR3 1GN. Tel. (44-870) 6005522. Fax (44-870) 6005533. Annual overseas subscription EUR 198, single issue EUR 16

*** *Results of CBI Survey of Members on Modern Apprenticeships*. Available free of charge from CBI, Centre Point, 103 New Oxford Street, London WC1A 1DU. Tel. (44-20) 7395 8247. Fax (44-20) 7240 1578. Internet: www.cbi.org.uk.

Source: IPD

Training of trainers

Belgium

Course on combating poverty to begin in Hasselt early February 2001

A three-and-a-half year course for 'experts in combating poverty', currently offered only in Brussels and in Ghent, will also be made available to students in Hasselt. According to Lut Goossens of the non-profit organisation De Link, who coordinates this project, many students have

already pre-registered but students from Limburg would have difficulty attending courses in Schaerbeek every day. 'Rail links to the capital are not good enough to expect people to shuttle back and forth every day. For this reason we thought of offering the course in Hasselt too,

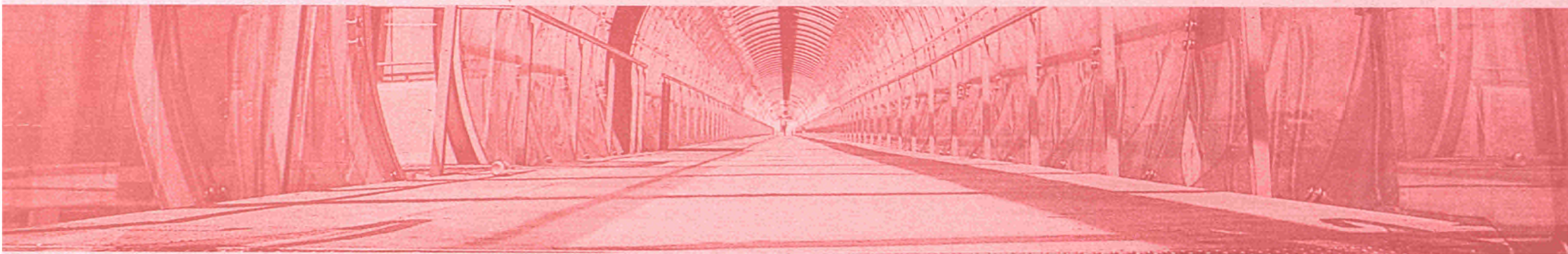
beginning on 1 February 2001. We are able to do this under the auspices of VSPW (Training for social and educational aid, a service aiding the young and disabled people). So far, 170 services inside and outside the social aid sector have told us of their urgent need for one or more

experts. Seventy-five of these services can immediately offer a locale for training. So we can't say there is no work', explains Mrs Goossens.

The non-profit organisation De Link has been approached by a Flemish Liberal Democrat Member of the

Provincial Assembly (VLD), who is responsible for, among other things, social aid. The Council Of Deputies has implied that they would be ready to release a structural subsidy to cover the extra cost of this course.

For more information: www.vdab.be
Source: VDAB media and library/lcodoc



Special target groups

Spain

First year of operation of the employment workshops

Positive result for the first year of operation of the employment workshops. This combined work and training programme was brought into being by Royal Decree in February 1999 under the aegis of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and managed by the National Institute for Employment (INEM) (see Cedefop Info 2/99). Its chief objective is to improve the employment chances of unemployed people over 25 who are encountering particular difficulties with job placement, such as people over 40 or 45 years of age, the long-term unemployed and the handicapped. This is to be achieved by providing for training under a contract of employment with the firm concerned. In its first year the programme had a budget allocation of ESP 10 billion.

The activities under the project accord fully with the spirit of the employment action plans in that they encourage the involvement of women in occupations where they are underrepresented, such as gardener's assistant.

In the course of 1999 232 employment workshops were set up and 4,918 trainees given a contract of employment. Trainees are aged between 25 and 60, although the majority are in the 35 to 39 age group. The education level ranged initially to up to the second or third cycle of compulsory education, although this accounted for only 6% of the total.

The percentage of those with level 1 or 2 vocational training qualifications (initial training) was similarly low. The majority, therefore, hence 67%, were those who had completed their primary schooling or had been awarded a school leaving certificate, followed by those holding a higher baccalaureate. The breakdown by sex was fairly even, the proportion of women being slightly higher at over 56%. This is logical bearing in mind that women as a group are more affected by unemployment than men.

30% of trainees are employed in activities connected with the build-

ing industry. The next-largest group are those in new areas of employment such as community services or jobs related to the environment.

Figures available yield interesting data concerning the breakdown of types of job by sex. Thus over 23% of men are employed in the building sector and only something over 1% in community services, while women's involvement in community services is over 19%, followed by occupations related to the environment and handicrafts. Even so, women have been successfully placed in occupations in which they tend to be under-represented - wit-

ness the approximately 7% involved in building projects and the even higher figure in environmental and gardening projects.

At the end of its first year, during which trainees completed a course in "Learning by working", the programme was found to be a useful in improving employability, particularly of those groups of adults who were experiencing greater difficulty in finding a job.

<http://www.inem.es>
For further information contact: Escuelas Taller
Tel. (91-585) 929 27; (91-585) 92 928
Fax (91-585) 929 24

Source: INEM

Portugal

Adults conquer the world of knowledge

Within Europe area "Portugal is not only the country in the European Union with the lowest level of qualification, but also the country in which the situation is deteriorating faster than in the other European Union Member States".

This disturbing situation led to the creation of *Adult Education and Training Courses*. These courses enable trainees simultaneously to prepare for a Level I or II vocational certificate and obtain the equivalence of cycles 1^o, 2^o et 3^o of basic

schooling. The courses are very informal and flexible; they develop individual study programmes which take account not only of the personal and professional experience of each adult, but also his/her socio-economic background.

This new initiative is divided into 15 areas and the total duration is a maximum of 1,780 hours. It is specifically designed for non-qualified adults and contains several new features: the trainees undergo an initial evaluation of their non-formal

skills - skills they have acquired through their daily work - which can exempt them from attending certain classes; they are however supported by "social intermediaries" throughout. Adults who attend these courses are entitled to scholarships amounting to 50,000 to 63,800 Escudos à 63,800 Escudos (250 EUR to 320 EUR) (this is equivalent to the national minimum salary) per month, to a re-location allowance which can go up to 7,975 Escudos per month; a food grant of 650 Escudos per day; and a housing allowance which can

amount to 50% of the minimum salary.

This new educational scheme is run by the recently established National Agency for Adult Education and Training (ANEFA), which is under the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Solidarity. The beneficiaries are unemployed persons and employed workers with a low level of education who wish to use this opportunity to complete their basic schooling.

Source: CIDES/Journal "News Items"

AGORA

THESSALONIKI

Word, Thought, Power, Deed

Agora Thessaloniki is three years old. What is its aim?
Which themes has it dealt with since it was set up?
What is its programme for next year?

By **Éric Fries Guggenheim**, Cedefop project coordinator
Tel. (30-31) 490 189; Fax (30-31) 490 117; E-mail: efg@cedefop.eu.int

Geschrieben steht: Im Anfang war das Wort!
'Tis written: 'In the beginning was the Word!
Hier stock ich schon! Wer hilft mir weiter fort?
Here now I'm balked! Who'll put me in accord?
Ich kann das Wort so hoch unmöglich schätzen,
It is impossible, the Word so high to prize,
Ich muss es anders übersetzen,
I must translate it otherwise
Wenn ich vom Geiste recht erleuchtet bin.
If I am rightly by the Spirit taught.
Geschrieben steht: Im Anfang war der Sinn.
'Tis written: In the beginning was the Thought!
Bedenke wohl die erste Zeile,
Consider well that line, the first you see,
Dass deine Feder sich nicht übereile!
That your pen may not write too hastily!
Ist es der Sinn, der alles wirkt und schafft?
Is it then Thought that works, creative, hour by hour?
Es sollte stehn: Im Anfang war die Kraft!
Thus should it stand: In the beginning was the Power!
Doch, auch indem ich dieses niederschreibe,
Yet even while I write this word, I falter,
Schon warnt mich was, dass ich dabei nicht bleibe.
For something warns me, this too I shall alter.
Mir hilft der Geist! Auf einmal seh ich Rat
The Spirit's helping me! I see now what I need
Und schreibe getrost: Im Anfang war die Tat!
And write assured: In the beginning was the Deed!

Faust
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Aims of the project

The purpose of the Agora Thessaloniki project, set up in 1997 by Jordi Planas of the Autonomous University of Barcelona, is to allow various actors in initial and continuing vocational training (ICVT) to freely debate subjects of fundamental importance to ICVT without being subject to external constraints.

The project aims to provide an opportunity for researchers, union members, company directors, representatives of employers' associations, representatives of the European Union Member States and associated countries, officials, policy-makers, teachers, training specialists, and others, to discuss their ideas with each other and thus promote thinking on ICVT:

- either by identifying points in common which bring the various actors together;
- or by taking a close look at persisting differences in order to put them in perspective and overcome them.

The heart of an 'Agora' is always the analytical work and results of research carried out by academic researchers. These results are presented to social partners, policy-makers and practitioners as a basis for discussion - in order to feed discussions allowing:

- researchers to put results of their research in perspective, compare them with concrete reality and have them validated, as it were, by practitioners;

- social partners, policy-makers, trainers and developers of training systems to take a step back from their practical tasks and acquire a wider, more global and longer-term view of the problems they face on a daily basis.

The idea on which the Agora Thessaloniki project is based - to create a forum to encourage dialogue between researchers, policy-makers and social partners - corresponds very closely to one of Cedefop's principal objectives, as expressed in its founding regulation, Council Regulation (EEC) No 335/75: to provide an interface between research, policy and practice.

In sum, the project creates bridges and links among all ICVT actors in order to promote initial and continuing vocational training and to favour the most promising innovations for citizens, companies and society as a whole; this it does without attempting to impose one point of view - out of respect for the variety of cultures, local characteristics, and historical differences between the actors, between religions and nations, etc.

Starting point and previous results

Europe's variety and cultural, economic and social diversity is unanimously held to be an asset: we are all alike but all different. Strangely enough, however, most of the time we try - through our common European institutions - to erase these assets, our differences, by employing standardised, reductionist procedures, citing economic constraints and the greater efficiency of standardisation. But by disregarding our greatest treasure in the name of efficiency we only succeed in becoming poorer.

To take advantage of the richness of Europe's cultural, economic and social diversity, we need to pool our differences. In this way we can agree, while respecting these differences, to build a Europe which goes beyond material constraints and is oriented toward individual well-being and 'life enlightenment'. It is of this *society of knowledge* that Cedefop wishes to be the reference centre.

Forums are a means towards achieving this; Agora Thessaloniki is one of these forums. Since it was set up in Cedefop in 1997, it has focused on all aspects of **permanent education**, also known as **lifelong learning**.

Nine Agoras were held between 30 June 1997 and 27-28 June 2000:

Agora I

Raising the level of diplomas and their distribution on the labour market: the lessons of the past and prospects for the future (30 June 1997)

Distribution of diplomas on the labour market to a large extent depends on supply on the part of the training system, not on demand on the part of enterprises, etc.

Agora II

The role of the enterprise in lifelong learning (17-18 November 1997)

Because of constant changes in the production process and work organisation, the role of enterprises in the ICVT system is growing. Therefore the role of enterprises in certification should also grow, particularly in terms of the evaluation and recognition of non-formal learning.

Agora III

Competitiveness, qualification and mobility in Europe: teaching the practices of transnational enterprises (2-3 February 1998)

Traditionally, mobility is rather limited in Europe. Historically it has been more a consequence of economic constraints rather than the expression of free choice. The more people are qualified, the more mobile they become. It may be true that mobility can lead to new learning and the acquisition of new skills and qualifications, but it is not in itself a learning tool.

Agora IV

The low-skilled on the European labour market: perspectives and policy options. Towards a minimum learning platform (29-30 October 1998)

This Agora examined the employment opportunities for Europeans with a low level of formal education, and insisted that we must realise the importance of setting a **minimum learning platform**, in cooperation with the social partners. The goal of Agora IV was to gauge the reactions of representatives of employers and employees, of national governments and of the European Commission toward this new concept, and to solicit comments on its definition and application. The main result of the Agora was that all participants representing those bodies at the meeting were found to support the concept of a minimum training platform; it was generally agreed that training attracts training while the less one is qualified, the less one trains. No objection was raised against the proposal that each EU country should define the content and method of application it considers appropriate.

Agora V

Identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning (15-16 March 1999).

This Agora allowed us to advance the notion of recognising learning. One of its main conclusions is that we need to lift the processes and practices linked to the *identification, assessment and recognition of non-formal learning* out of the usual school-based mould. Only then will these practices be able effectively to stimulate and promote general and vocational training at any age, serving both individuals and society at large. The papers will be published in the second half of 2000.

Agora VI

Reporting on human capital (24-25 June 1999)

Agora VI was the occasion of spirited but fruitful debate, especially between those who favour 'human capital accountancy' and those who prefer 'human resources management'. This Agora did not reach a clear consensus but revealed that the 'human capital accountancy' point of view, which centres its analysis on measuring the return on investment in human capital – an interesting concept in its own right – has given way to more political concepts, concerned with how human capital in enterprises can be accurately described and evaluated in order to maintain and raise quality. The papers of this Agora will be published by the end of 2000.

Agora VII

Working time, training time (7-8 October 1999)

Organised during Cedefop's move to its new headquarters, this Agora occasioned exciting and impassioned debate between researchers, policy-makers and social partners. Here too no consensus was reached but there was surprising convergence of partners' views on the necessity of re-considering the management, organisation and content of work time in the light of lifelong learning. In addition, common viewpoints emerged on the role of various social institutions, family, school, enterprise, etc., in terms of access to knowledge and skills.

Agora VIII

Job rotation (20-21 March 2000)

This Agora allowed participants to focus on the amazing adaptability of the simple and efficient tool which is job rotation, 'rotation between work and training', pioneered in Denmark and now spreading throughout Europe. The Agora concluded that this tool is very interesting, not for managing work and combating unemployment but as an aid to human resource management and a means to create chains of training processes. Job rotation is good for individuals, as it allows some to have access to work, others to gain more training, and for all to further their career; it is good for companies, which in this way can ensure that their staff adapt and retrain; it is good for society at large, as it improves social cohesion by reducing disparities and combating long-term unemployment and social exclusion.

However, it should not be seen as a universal panacea for all work-related problems. Job rotation is an excellent instrument for developing **lifelong learning**, as long as it is not the only means used to this purpose. It should be accompanied by at least:

- the evaluation of non-formal learning;
- social and vocational guidance;
- training plans in bargaining between social partners;
- taking learning into account in developing a career.

It should also be borne in mind that job rotation is better adapted to short- and medium-term rather than long-term training. For long-term training the only possible option continues to be '**individual training leave**'.

Agora IX

Alternative education and training practices (26 and 27 June 2000)

Agora IX cast a critical eye on the paradoxes of the successes achieved by alternative modes of training. Through this success they help filter out more and more young people (and less young people) who have experienced school failure and help create a hard core of those who are left by the wayside. How are we to fight school failure and allow every citizen access to the key skills considered indispensable in our society? Agora IX may not have found a miracle cure but it did stress the need to mobilise all 'intervention partners' (rather than actors), considering that the educational system now obviously goes beyond the school system. Lifelong learning should allow everyone to learn at their own speed. What remains to be done is to create the conditions for this learning and find the means to motivate citizens to pursue it. Various experiments were referred to during this Agora: the 501/301 programme in Berlin, the new qualification experiment during the years 1989-1993 in France, the Nightriders project in Newport and the Second Chance school in Leeds in the UK, the adoption of a school by the Dioguardi firm in Apulia, Italy, etc. What is striking is that every time interest is expressed in men and women, young or less young, every time their desires and needs are taken into account, every time they are offered the necessary means, their motivation soars and the results are excellent.

Agora X

to be held on 19-20 October 2000, will seek to show that lifelong training can only be understood as lifelong social and vocational guidance.



The 2001 programme

In 2001 the main theme of the Agora Thessaloniki programme will continue, as always, to be how to organise **permanent education (lifelong learning)** in Europe.

The 2001 programme will also have two special features:

1. The three Agoras of 2001 will be organised in cooperation with Cedefop colleagues, and in synergy with their projects, so that their results can serve as starting point while becoming better known: 1. The Learning region, with the **Cedra programme** (Barry Nyhan), 2. Training of trainers for the disabled, with the **Tnet programme** (Mara Brugia) in cooperation with the **ARFIE** network (Association de Recherche et de Formation sur l'Insertion en Europe, Association of Research and Training on Integration in Europe), 3. Mobility as a teaching tool, with **the mobility programme** (Søren Kristensen).

2. These three Agoras will also bring up subjects on which there is too much apparent consensus. The prevailing agreement on these three themes actually masks a deep ignorance of the subject behind a façade of unanimity. What the Agoras will aim to do is show the real cleavages between the various actors in ICVT.

Agora XI

The learning region – can institutions active in the field of training play a innovative role at regional level? [spring 2001 Agora]

The region, the locality, is too often considered a hotbed of conservatism, folklore and patronage. We would like to question this image. On the one hand we wish to show the leading role of regions in promoting social, educational and professional innovations, since the region retains its human dimension and its contact with the daily problems citizens face. On the other hand, we wish to point out the need to keep a counterweight to local power, whether at national or international level: this is necessary to guarantee a certain balance between the resources and efforts of regions with varying natural and human resources so that cohesion is maintained and local temptations and compromises are avoided. This Agora will be prepared in collaboration with Barry Nyhan.

Agora XII

Vocational training for the disabled and training of trainers for the disabled [Summer 2001 Agora]

The disabled are victims of a social ostracism that is not always malicious but certainly always condescending. We hope to show that the disabled are simply another image of ourselves; that training for them, as for others who are not considered disabled, is the means to develop oneself, to achieve autonomy and become socially integrated. We shall stress the importance of training and the role of trainers in opening up the world of the disabled and we will perhaps conclude that training trainers for the disabled is not that different from training any other kind of trainer. This Agora will be prepared in cooperation with Mara Brugia and the ARFIE network, promoted by the APEMH foundation of Bettange, in Luxembourg.

In all cases, the goal of Agora Thessaloniki, whatever the theme discussed – is that through our exchanges (**Word**), we reach an understanding on tools and practices that make sense (**Thought**), so that we can mobilise individual and collective forces (**Power**) which will enable us to achieve the creation of a society (**Deed**) which is fair, equitable, efficient, environmentally friendly and, above all, which respects men and women – in other words, that society which the European project strives toward.

Agora XIII

Mobility as a training tool [autumn 2001 Agora]

Mobility is considered to have a training role. It is usually seen as a source of cultural enrichment, a positive accumulation of experience and a means to acquire competences, especially linguistic skills. Here too the Agora will question these preconceived ideas and will try to show under what conditions, at what price and based on what kinds of institutions mobility can have a training effect. This Agora will be prepared with Søren Kristensen.

These three Agoras will be asking basic questions about training such as residence, cultural roots, integration into a local community, intellectual and physical mobility, the various types of aptitudes one needs to train in, the way of institutionalising the educational act. They will be the occasion for synergy between the work conducted by Cedefop project coordinators whose scientific support will be decisive in 2001.

Of course the Agora programme will not end in 2001; we are already looking at the topics we shall be dealing with in the next few years. The Cedefop Management Board will, as always, decide on the final programme:

- parity of esteem for vocational training;
- the prospects for ICVT;
- competences, qualifications, diplomas based on which concept and why?
- small and micro-enterprises and ICVT;
- integration through the economic factor or vocational training through integration?
- promoting ICVT within collective bargaining;
- distance training; etc.

Agora VIII on the subject of job rotation took place on 20 and 21 March 2000 at its usual venue, Thessaloniki. The eighth Agora was attended by 6 experts from Cedefop, 35 external experts (with the following nationality distribution: Austria: 1, Germany: 5, Denmark: 4, Spain: 2, Finland: 2, France: 5, Greece: 5, Luxembourg: 2, Netherlands: 1, Portugal: 2 and Sweden: 5), a strong delegation of trade unionists, workers representatives - 14 in all - 10 practitioners, i.e. vocational training experts working in the field of job rotation development, 5 heads of enterprise and representatives of employers' organisations, 2 ministerial representatives, 2 delegates representing universities, 1 consultant and a trainee acting as a substitute in a job rotation scheme. The minutes of the interesting and lively proceedings were drawn up by a consultant, André Kirchberger, former head of division of DG XII at the European Commission, now DG for education and cultural affairs.

1. THE HISTORY
Unlike the other Agoras which have tended to focus on a general theme (e.g. Agora XII on working time/training time), Agora VIII addressed a specific approach implemented in the field of work and training, i.e. job rotation. This approach, originating in Denmark gradually spread to other Member States, especially thanks to EU financial support of the European Union from the structural initiative "Adapt", and developed into a network to exchange experience and practice. The basic philosophy behind job rotation is a very simple one: to ensure that a worker who leaves the workplace to undergo training is replaced by an unemployed person trained to this effect.

2. There was a risk that the debate during Agora VIII would be limited to this question alone, with presentations and discussions merely defending, illustrating or criticising this approach without really addressing the core issue, i.e. the role of training in the integration and the reintegration of unemployed workers.

3. This however was far from the case. Although a substantial number of the presentations did indeed focus on describing examples of job rotation in various Member States (Austria, Spain, Germany, France, Denmark, Greece, Finland, etc.), the very lively discussions were by no means confined to aspects of methodology or even a critical analysis of these experiences - far from it.

4. An introductory remark first of all - illustrated by the preliminary statement by **Mr Patrick Guilloux** (University Institute of Technology of Vannes, University of Southern Brittany): the origins of the underlying principles of job rotation date back to the late 1930s when this model was envisaged by a number of administrative and regulatory texts in France. But it was not until the 1980s, and first of all in Denmark, that job rotation drew the attention of employment and training policy-makers. In more fundamental terms: what better way to confront the

perpetuation of unemployment than by ensuring that, whenever necessary, and providing the relevant preliminary training has been assured, jobless workers can provisionally stand in for their colleagues on training leave? Two very important aspects must be added to this simple idea: (i) the preliminary training of the substitute is to be delivered in collaboration with the worker departing on training leave (and who therefore plays the role of "tutor"), and (ii) the substitute may also end up with a job in the same firm.

5. The figures announced by various participants speak for themselves: in the period 1996 - 1999, almost 100,000 unemployed workers participated in job rotation schemes with the involvement of an impressive number of firms: a total of some 1.850 enterprises, of which just over 100,000 from the private and 800 from the public sector. In the EU as a whole, the results are also highly significant: over 3 100 enterprises, with the participation of more than 90,000 workers, whereby approx. 20,000 unemployed persons thus found substitute employment - although it should be emphasised that so far this approach has only been fully developed in Denmark.

6. However it is not the intention of the author to quote all the figures presented in the various documents submitted to and subsequently discussed and analysed by the Agora, but rather to identify the key issues which remain open and require further reflection.

7. As underlined by one of the participants, **Mr Jean-Claude Quentin** (CGT-FO, trade union, France), it is no coincidence that the job rotation model has developed particularly in Denmark. On the contrary: a law of 1989 instituted the "right to training" (one year every five years) for each worker. Moreover the contribution of employers and workers to the unemployment benefits and training are part of a whole, administered not by centrally but by decentralised bodies - regional employment committees - representing both the regional authorities and social partners. The consensual approach so typical of Danish industrial relations, along with the concern to implement a "active job market policy" paved the way for the development of the job rotation model in the interests of all stakeholders - the firms, the workers (who in fact enhance their competitiveness and upgrade their skills and, last but not least, job-seekers (easier reintegration into the workplace).

8. The examples of a small German firm in the printing sector (including new technologies transforming this sector) and a Danish enterprise specialised in medical equipment, presented by **Ms Monika Kammeier** (head of SKS-die Druckvorstufe GmbH, Germany) and **Ms Ghita Vejlebo** (AOF Greve, Projekt-OG Udviklingsafdeling, Denmark) respectively, served to measure not only the potential offered by job rotation - in particular flexibility - but also the factors that block its

application. Although many substitute workers are ultimately taken on full-time, it is not always easy to motivate workers to leave the workplace to undergo training and to help train their substitute - their latent fear being that the latter may take over their job. This is particularly true of job rotation for semi- or unskilled workers who do not see training as a necessity.

9. As emphasised by a number of other participants (**Ms Tuija Leminen**, Finnish Ministry of Employment), **Mr Hubertus Schick**, University of Bremen, Germany), the downside of the flexibility afforded by job rotation is that it calls for tight planning of skills requirements, i.e. forward planning of in-company skills and human resources. It also requires a positive attitude towards the benefits of continuing training within the firm - which cannot always be taken for granted.

10. A LACK OF COHERENCE
Moreover, the many different measures public authorities implement to combat unemployment and promote integration and reintegration into the labour market very frequently lack coherence and are generally not conducive to the development of new experimental models. This is particularly true of countries where employment promotion measures cannot coincide with training measures for the target group concerned. Job rotation inevitably straddles these fields - employment and training - leading in some cases to serious administrative and regulatory problems, in particular related to the duration of training (and therefore the substitution phase).

11. Furthermore, why should a firm opt for job rotation in preference to other strategies (temping) when one of its workers has to go on training leave? This question, raised several times by one of the participants (**Mr Juan Maria Menendez Valdez**, Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations) must be answered by differentiating between the level of the employment in question, the duration of the relevant training programme (and therefore of the substitution phase) and the costs incurred (whereby job rotation models applied in several EU Member States benefit in one way or another from subsidies "reducing" the objective costs for employers. Moreover, there is no certainty that the relevant employment departments will always have a pool of unemployed persons with the appropriate experience and skills match who are willing to substitute for a worker on training leave. The answer must be found on a case-by-case basis, even if the data presented to the Agora by the members of the gradually developing European job rotation network show that firms, if approached in the right way, are not generally hostile to this approach.

12. As pointed out by a number of speakers, job rotation is not merely a question, as it were, of two people swapping "situations" (the worker leaving on a training course, replaced by the job-seeker), but needs to be accompanied by a guidance

process, from preparation to conclusion (with the return of the worker from training leave). This guidance process must also steer the job rotation scheme (**Mr Louis Spaninks**, CINOP, Centre for innovation in training, Netherlands) to ensure that substitutes have a positive attitude towards their new workplace, all the more so if they are not taken on by the firm at end of their placement and return to unemployment, or (as is more frequently the case) are transferred to another substitute position in the same or different firm.

13. THE COSTS
At this stage of the Agora proceedings all participants had expressed their agreement with, even enthusiasm for, this approach. We should however mention the doubts expressed, especially by the Swedish participants (**Mr Martin Hedenmo**, Workers' Union LO) and **Mr Bo Edlund**, Association of Swedish Mechanical Construction Industries) who from their respective points of view - as a trade unionist and an entrepreneur - believe it would be difficult to apply job rotation on a large scale and that it may even lead to a loss of productivity for the enterprise.

14. THE STATUS OF THE SUBSTITUTE
These difficulties should not be ignored, but may be alleviated (**Mr Reiner Siebert**, BFZ Essen, representing the EU Job Rotation Network, North-Rhine Westphalia, Germany) if clients for job rotation are properly targeted and a balance is struck between maintaining the competitiveness and developing employment. It is also necessary to better specify the status of the substitutes (especially on the nature of their employment relationship - e.g. are they job-seekers undergoing training and therefore in receipt of the corresponding benefit or company wage-earners undergoing alternance training with a limited or unlimited work contract?) and to ensure that the training in question teaches the worker new skills - i.e. to avoid that the training undergone by the substitute is perceived as training "on the cheap". Finally, (again **Mr Reiner Sieber**, echoed by many participants), job rotation can only really function properly if training needs are previously identified by the firms in question.

15. At this point in the discussion, another fundamental question relating to job rotation was raised by **Mr Jean-Claude Quentin** (CGT-FO, trade union, France): in view of demographic trends, firms will be in need of wage-earners aged 45+ in the near future. It is therefore very important for mechanisms to be set up at an early stage to prevent this group from being ousted from the job market and the subsequent loss of skills. In the same vein, it is also necessary to redefine the concept of "working time" by differentiating between "actual production time", on the one hand, and "training time", on the other, all the more so in cases in which training must assume a certain distance from the narrow requirements of production tasks.

16. On this specific point, **Ms Lizzi Feiler** (ÖSB-Unternehmensberatung

Gesellschaft mbH, Austrian correspondent of the EU Job Rotation Network with some experience in the implementation and supervision of various job rotation projects), stressed that it is important to keep in mind the actual objective of the job rotation scheme - or to be more precise its training dimension. In her view, it is natural for the cost of the training to be covered by the firm in cases of training programmes (and therefore job rotation schemes directly linked to specific tasks, e.g. operating a new machine). Conversely, if the training is delivered to offer access to a job in the interests of both the firm and the employee, public authorities should make a contribution. Finally, it is natural that the costs of a general training scheme be borne by the individual concerned (with or without the support of the public authorities).

17. THE DILEMMA
At this point in the debate, **Mr Jean-Michel Martin** (CFDT, trade union, France), among others, emphasised a dilemma underlying job rotation schemes: is job rotation to be regarded as a response to an employment problem or a training/skills acquisition problem? The stakes are not necessarily the same, especially if the aim is to better match training supply and demand. Moreover, as indicated above, job rotation can only really develop properly if guidance structures are set up to follow employees' paths (notably substitute workers failing to find a regular job in the host enterprise, who move from one substitute post to another).

18. For this reason, as pointed out by **Ms Kristina Ossvik** (National Bureau of the Swedish job market/ European Social Fund Bureau, Sweden), job rotation or any other alternative approach to training/integration must start out from an in-depth analysis of the skills and training needs of the firm. This is a much more difficult exercise in an SME than in a larger firm with its own human resources development structures.

19. Over and above these general considerations, two "technical" questions were raised regarding the efficiency of job rotation. First, the size of the firm: is job rotation more effective in SMEs or in larger firms? And secondly, how effective is job rotation in helping workers acquire skills?

20. The participants' answers to the first question did not clearly come down on either side of the fence. To a certain extent (according to **Ms Emmanouela Stefani** (Technopolis, Greek representative of the EU Job Rotation Network), the smaller the firm, the shorter the training/substitution phase should be. This is particularly true of SMEs with high value-added (e.g. SME software designers), in which continuing training is indispensable in the wake of technological developments and job rotation may offer a solution (provided that it takes the form of short phases and the substitutes are appropriately qualified). It is indeed more difficult for an SME

to spare a skilled worker (**Ms Kiriaki Liodaki**, SMI Chamber Thessaloniki), especially in the case of tight production flow methods. This is even more true since SMEs, as underlined by **Mr Hubertus Schick** (University of Bremen, Germany) are more interested in having insiders with relevant job experience as substitutes than unemployed persons. On the other hand (**Mme Lizzi Feiler**, ÖSB, Austria), it is easier for larger firms to focus on target groups.

21.

A substantial part of the debate addressed the importance of guidance structures and, more specifically, of "facilitators" who may play an essential role in motivating both firms and workers to opt for the job rotation system (**Mr Jørgen Mørk**, Workers' Association of General Adult Education Centres, AOF Greve, Denmark). Facilitators must be in a position to avoid the "traps" of bureaucracy, to create a spirit of cohesion within the enterprise and organise both internal and external mobility; they should therefore come from outside the enterprise.

22.

It is also true that innovative approaches such as job rotation presuppose an adequate institutional and administrative climate. Otherwise, as pointed out by **Mr Petros Linardos-Rulmond** (Labour Institute of the Greek workers union GSEE), the enterprise, confronted with new requirements in terms of production and work organisation, may resort to short-term retraining of workers already on the job, even in favourable conditions (illustrated by the example of a refinery).

23.

In other words, as pointed out by various participants (notably **Mr Jean-Michel Martin**, CFDT, trade union, France), job rotation must be positioned within the overall context of access to training to the benefit of: workers - continuing training is necessary for their adaptability to employment in a changing environment, firms - training is a means of enhancing their competitiveness, for job-seekers - substitute placements (albeit accompanied by pre-training and tutoring) is a privileged means of access to employment.

24.

This however does not imply (**Mr Bo Edlund**, Association of Swedish Mechanical Construction Industries) that job rotation is the *only* approach. A number of speakers emphasised the need to combine different formulae linking training and employment. Job rotation is a "tool", a "method", (**Mr Jens Kruhoffer**, Director of the EU Job Rotation Network secretariat, Denmark), the implementation of which implies the active participation of all stakeholders in a **European network** (this being one of the advantages of the current approach) shored up by European co-funding from Adapt.

25.

What future therefore lies ahead for job rotation? The experience of North-Rhine Westphalia, presented by **Mr Reiner Siebert** (BFZ Essen - Job Rotation NRW), helped the participants assess both the potential and the difficulties of this approach,

as well as what could be termed as the minimal conditions for its success. The challenge of job rotation is that it can only be a significant success if a number of preconditions are met: first, the initial and continuing training system must be designed in such a way as to meet the needs of both the workers, firms and the marketplace; secondly, its planning and implementation must be flexible, modular and multi-functional, but at the same time practice-oriented and project-based; thirdly, the development of the job market integration and reintegration system must be quality-oriented, without however neglecting the motivation of the stakeholders, and include a strong guidance and orientation component; and, last but not least, it must follow an interdisciplinary approach, combining employment and social affairs, education and training, industry and the economy.

26.

It must be clear that job rotation can only be one option from an entire "tool box" of training policy measures oriented towards employment. It is indispensable to maintain a certain degree of flexibility in its implementation, accompanied by a structured exchange of experience and good practice in the form e.g. of a European network based on solid partnerships.

27.

Job rotation in itself evidently comes up against a certain number of external obstacles, mostly of a legal and administrative nature. As already emphasised above, in many countries the measures applied by the public authorities to promote employment, training and the economy are often designed and implemented in such a way that they are mutually exclusive, in contrast to approaches such as job rotation, which straddle one or more of these policy areas.

28.

As pointed out by **Mr Jean-Michel M. Martin** (CFDT, France), the term "job rotation" must be given meaning: it must be emphasised (i) that this approach offers access to training for a certain number of workers who would otherwise be excluded from training programmes; (ii) that job rotation applies mechanisms of solidarity (notably vis-à-vis job seekers) and (iii) that small and medium-sized enterprises can derive great benefit from job rotation, provided that a flexible approach is applied. It is equally clear that job rotation cannot be improvised: the implementation of this approach presupposes a project involving both two individuals (the worker leaving for training and the substitute) and other partners - e.g. the enterprise or the guidance and monitoring structure. Indeed, this partnership is one of the very conditions of success of job rotation. As already mentioned the role of "facilitators" and tutors is fundamental. Finally, for a trade union organisation, it is equally clear that job rotation must be the subject of negotiation so that the scheme is adapted to the specific characteristics of the enterprise and allows trade unions to lobby in favour of adequate amendments to the appropriate labour legislation (insofar as job rotation - as underlined above all by **Mr André Kirchberger**, (consultant, formerly head of division, DG XII European Commission) does not really suit so-called "atypical" workers (part-time workers,

temps, workers with a limited working contract, etc.).

29.

This is the spirit in which job rotation and its future should be perceived - as a model linked to a chain reaction mechanism to combat unemployment. The occupational mobility of workers must be given functional support and therefore include the reintegration of job-seekers, combined with the acquisition of skills. This is all the more necessary against the background of expected demographic trends and ensuing shortages of skilled manpower. However this chain reaction needs "fuel" (**Mr**

Jean-Claude Quentin, CGT-FO, France), i.e. the generalisation of practices granting workers regular access to continuing training. This "right" to training may assume various forms: it may be individual for all workers or exercised within the context of inner-company negotiation in the interest of both the firm (especially SMEs or groups of firms) and the workers (to enhance their employability). "Brokerage" instruments are indispensable for this.

30.

Echoing the comments made by **Mr Louis Spaninks** (CINOP, Centre for

Training Innovation, Netherlands), the Agora participants agreed that the main objective of job rotation is to allow workers to improve their skills and is therefore a component of lifelong learning. Along with other strategies (**Mr Didier Gélibert**, ANFA, National Association of the Automotive Training, France), such as the restructuring and reduction of working time, more creative use of individual training leave and measures to promote the occupational mobility of workers, job rotation may represent (and in fact already represents) a positive response to the development of an active employment policy.

AGORA

Publications

CEDEFOP panorama

AGORA - I
Raising the level of diplomas and their distribution on the labour market: the lessons of the past and prospects for the future
Thessaloniki, 30 June 1997
Seminar

AGORA - I
Raising the level of diplomas and their distribution on the labour market: the lessons of the past and prospects for the future
Thessaloniki 30 June 1997
Cedefop panorama 5076
Languages: DE, EN, ES, FR
Cat. No: HX-14-98-776-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

CEDEFOP panorama

AGORA - II
'The role of the company in lifelong learning'
Thessaloniki, 17 and 18 November 1997
Seminar

AGORA - II
"The Role of the Company in Lifelong Learning"
Thessaloniki, 17 and 18 November 1997
Seminar
Cedefop panorama 5086
Languages: DE, EN, ES, FR
Cat. No: HX-18-98-881-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

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

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: HX-26-99-279-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

