

# Are vocational qualifications becoming more transparent?

## Letter from the Director

The issues which have been central to our work during the first six months of the year have indeed been those which I touched on in the last issue of Cedefop Info. Cedefop has been very active in supporting the Swedish presidency of the European Union, through contributing to many of the events held during it. This contribution covered themes ranging from lifelong learning through quality in mobility programmes to ICT and Learning.

The report from the Education Council on the concrete future objectives of the education and training systems, which we highlighted in the last edition of Cedefop Info was considered by the European Council. The Commission and other EU level bodies have already commenced initiatives to implement it. Cedefop looks forward to contributing in an appropriate way to this activity. The very existence of the report emphasises the need for education and training to be treated as a continuum. With this in view we have for some years been co-operating increasingly closely with Eurydice, the European network for information in education. A further example of the products of this co-operation is the joint Eurydice/Cedefop report on developments in the field of lifelong learning, which has just been published and is described in more detail on page 2. This is part of the support Eurydice and Cedefop are jointly giving the Commission as part of the consultation process on the memorandum on lifelong learning and in the preparation of a lifelong learning action plan, which it is expected will be submitted to the Education Council at the end of November.

The *eLearning Action plan, Designing tomorrow's education\**, adopted by the Commission at the end of March, contains a number of key measures relating to infrastructure and equipment, training, favourable conditions and priority areas for innovation and development and strengthening co-operation and dialogue. As far as the action plan's implementation is concerned, Cedefop is specifically referred to and we envisage the training of trainers network (TTnet), which we have built up in recent years, playing an important role. In the action plan and indeed in the document on policy objectives, the central role of teachers and trainers and the development of their skills so as they can keep abreast of societal and techno-

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The free movement of labour within the EU is a key principle of EU policy. However, labour force mobility is still relatively limited and a number of strategies have been followed to remove obstacles to mobility. One such obstacle is the difficulty of transferring qualifications from one Member State to another.

The European Forum on Transparency of Vocational Qualifications was established in 1998 as a joint initiative of the European Commission and

CEDEFOP. It was intended that the Forum would provide a meeting place where representatives from the Member States of the EU/EEA, the social partners, the European Commission, the European Training Foundation (ETF) and CEDEFOP would face up in a more comprehensive way than before to the challenge to remove the obstacles to mobility arising from a lack of transparency of vocational qualifications. The aim was to indicate possible practical solutions on the transparency issue to be considered

by policy-making authorities at Community, Member State or social partner level.

The work of the Forum has been based on consensus about the strategic policy issue: transparency was to be pursued as a supporting mechanism to achieve the goal of increased mobility. Discussion at the Forum meetings focussed on the operational approaches, which would enhance transparency of vocational qualifications. The following results have been achieved so far.

## Recommendations on a common format for certificate supplements

In 2000 the European Forum proposed to each Member State to establish a system to issue, together with each official national certificate, a *certificate supplement in the official national language*, which could be translated, on a voluntary basis, into one or more other EU languages. The certificate supplement will be based on a common European format.

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## Eurydice/Cedefop

# Overview of national actions to implement lifelong learning

As a contribution to the consultation process organised by the Commission between January and June 2001 on Lifelong Learning, the Eurydice European Unit and Cedefop have jointly produced an overview\* of action undertaken to promote lifelong education and training in different European countries. The purpose is to describe initiatives which are supporting and promoting lifelong learning, both at European and national level, in accordance with the six key messages underlined by the Memorandum on lifelong learning published by the European Commission in October 2000 (see Cedefop Info 3/2000).

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## Denmark

# The IT-Mirror – an IT-evaluation tool

In the efforts to position Denmark among the leading IT-nations in the world, three Ministries offer all Danish educational institutions the IT-Mirror as a tool to evaluate their IT performance.

Educational institutions are facing many challenges in the transition to the information society: integration of IT in educational programmes, IT investments, e-learning, the implementation of IT-strategies and continuing competence development of teachers. With the IT-Mirror, Danish educational institutions have been given a tool to help them overcome those challenges.

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# Are vocational qualifications becoming more transparent?

## Letter of the Director

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logical change are underlined. As can be seen from the article on page 3, Cedefop has already taken some initiatives in the eLearning area.

Now that many of the candidate countries of Central and Eastern Europe are full participants in the EU's education and training programmes (Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci), we are co-operating more closely with our colleagues in the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin with a view to involving these countries in our own work programme, in as far as financial and human resources permit this. The article on our joint work on VET scenarios on page 3 is an example of this co-operation.

As the interest in VET policy, research and activities in other countries has been growing, we have found it necessary to develop further our links with a wide range of organisations in the Member States on a practical and efficient basis. Accordingly we are now planning to change our documentary information network into one for reference and expertise. Our intention is that its members should take on a continuing reporting role on VET policy and research developments. We are organising a consultation process in order to see how this can best be arranged, for example through a consortia of key organisations in each Member State.

Johan van Rens  
 Director of Cedefop  
 June 2001

\*Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, COM (2001) 172

The certificate supplement aims to propose a standardised format to present the skills and competencies that holders of a certificate have acquired. It is designed to provide information which is additional to the certificate. However, contrary to the certificate, the certificate supplement does not in itself, have a legal status. The certificate supplement will be a general document, which is delivered, and valid, for all persons who have been awarded the kind of certificate to which it refers. It will not therefore be an individual document and does not imply any assessment of value.

### Recommendations on the designation of National Reference Points on Qualifications

The Forum also proposed that each Member State designate one *national reference point* responsible for providing information on national vocational qualifications. The national reference point would be the national partner in a *European network* of reference points.

The reference point should be able to act as a hub and a point of entry into the country for information about its qualifications system. The reference points should be easy to find and achieve a good degree of synergy and coordination with other information centres. They should be connected (electronically and personally) to a network of corresponding points to link to information on other countries' systems. The reference points should have a similar name/designation in all Member States.

### A common European format for curriculae vitae (CV)

The invitation of the Lisbon European Council to develop a "common European format for CV" has been followed up by an expert group connected to the Forum and its results have been discussed. There is a link between the CV issue and more

general policies on transparency of qualifications and mobility.

### Translation and terminology

In order to facilitate transparency, it is essential that Member States ensure the quality of translations of the certificate supplements to one or more European languages. As a first step towards that goal, in early 2001 translations of the agreed format of a certificate supplement have been undertaken by Cedefop. It is now up to the Member States to refine the translation, in order to respond to the national context. In addition, Member States undertake to arrange for awarding bodies to fill in the certificate supplement on the basis of national certificates, so that the problems and/or variations that may arise in this process are duly discussed at Forum level. Once official translations of the certificate supplement format are fully agreed upon, the phase of implementation and testing, extending from 2001 to 2003, will start.

### Policy reactions at Community level

At the policy level, the proposals of the European Forum have been included in the recently approved European Parliament and Council Recommendation on "Mobility of students, persons undergoing training, volunteers and teachers and trainers". The main points listed in the action plan of the Forum (certificate supplement and reference points) have been fully integrated into the text (under measure II.3.b) of the draft Recommendation. The question of a common format for CVs has also been included, under measure 1 d). In addition, the proposals of the Forum have been taken into account in the measures of the Action Plan proposed by the French Presidency under the form of a Council Resolution and approved on 9 November 2000 by the Ministers of Education.

### The experience – a conclusion

The Forum has contributed to obtaining an overview and establishing consistency in the field of transparency of qualifications and to increased co-operation between the Member States, social partners and the Commission in this particular field. The long-term perspective introduced to the work has allowed positions to evolve over time, making it easier to identify realistic ways forward. The Forum has also contributed to the dissemination of results of projects in this field in the Leonardo da Vinci programme and been able to recommend a basis for policy and practical solutions.

However, the **Forum as such cannot ensure but only support the implementation of practical and policy solutions**. While it has demonstrated a strong deliberative capacity, decision making and policy implementation are outside its scope. The challenge for the future is therefore how to protect and strengthen the 'think tank' role while at the same time assuring and strengthening the necessary links to decision-making bodies.

### The implementation of the proposals in 2001 and beyond

There is awareness of the proposals within Member States. Some countries have gone a step further and started preparations for implementing the recommendations. The main objectives at national level for the next year are concrete actions in the field in line with the proposals of the European Forum based on a consensus of the benefits of the measures introduced and agreed upon. There is also a consciousness of the voluntary character of the actions proposed.

Necessary resources and responsibilities for the implementation of these measures should now be decided on and allocated. The piloting

of the certificate supplement should be undertaken, and national reference points be designated.

At European level the Commission and Cedefop will seek support from the relevant bodies (Advisory Committee on Vocational Training, Directors-General for Vocational Training) for the proposed actions and recommendations for implementation, and coordinate the piloting of the certificate supplement format. This will include agreeing to the various national versions of the format, in terms of its translation to all official national languages.

The European Forum will focus on monitoring and evaluating progress on a regular basis as well as identifying needs for improvement and support at national and European level.

### Next phase

The Forum has so far worked according to a very specific agenda (following the principle of a 'step by step' approach). This has left further important elements, outside the debate of the Forum. This applies in particular to the questions of how to increase transparency of skills acquired in non-formal settings, and how to deal with transparency initiatives developed at sectoral level. In the next phase of the work the Forum will devote increased attention to initiatives linked to the validation of non-formal learning.

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Eurydice/Cedefop

## Overview of national actions to implement lifelong learning

The document offers a summary overview of initiatives to promote lifelong education and training which have actually been implemented in various European countries. It provides a general survey not only of action within formal education and training systems but activities associated with non-formal learning situations too. The survey is thus an integral part of the consultation process initiated by the European Commission. Through it, Eurydice and Cedefop hope to stimulate and contribute to the debate and follow-up to the Memorandum which will culminate in a Lifelong Learning Action Plan to be presented to the Council of Education ministers in November and eventually the European Council in Barcelona at the beginning of 2002.

The overview shows that the general level at which studies are completed, together with second – or even third – chance provision and the links between school achievement and the benefits of experience, is now attracting unprecedented attention. The initiatives implemented in the various national systems differ in many respects. Everywhere contradictory trends coexist given the numerous and contrasting expectations placed on education systems. (The survey *Lifelong Learning: the contribution of education systems in the Member States of the European Union*, published by Eurydice in March 2000, gives a complete appreciation of their role, see Cedefop Info 2/2000). Yet certain trends are especially prominent. There is emphasis

on an effective grasp of new basic skills and on the definition of standards to be attained. Yet all players, and not least teachers/trainers and learners themselves, have to be persuaded that everyone can achieve results corresponding to those standards.

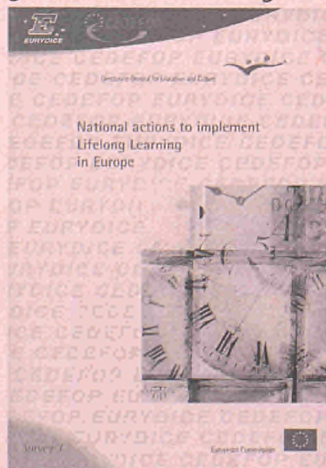
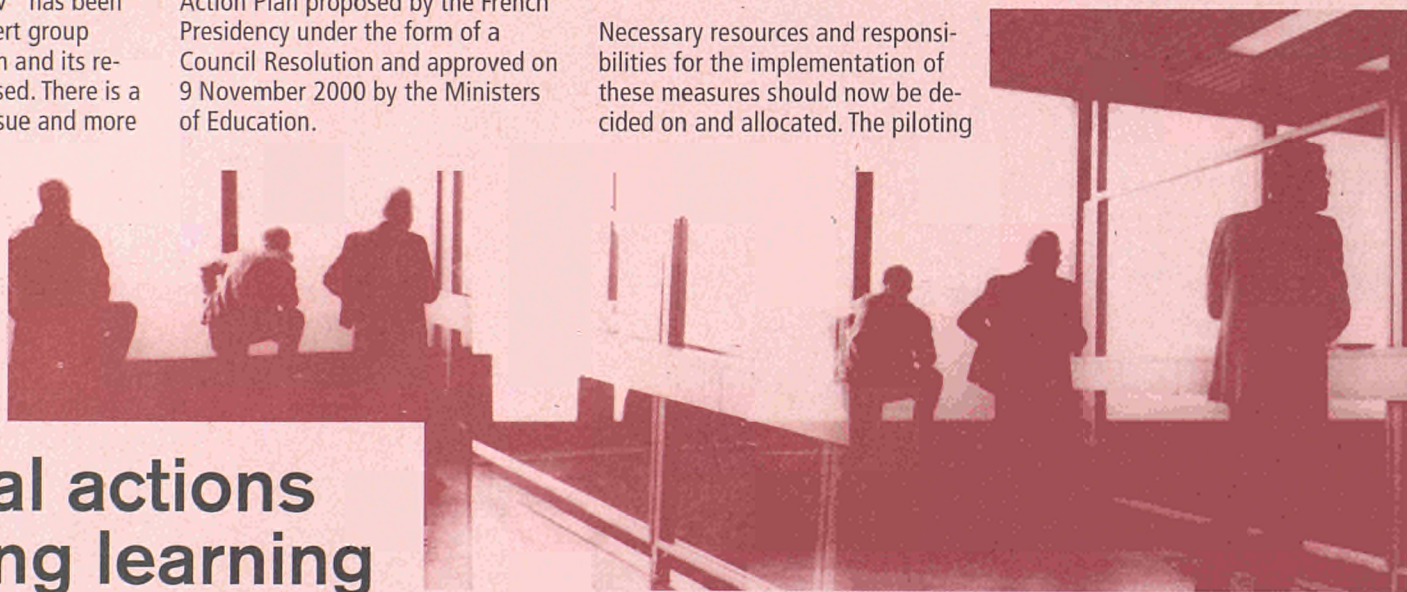
Systems of education and training are being rationalised and reorganised often in the belief that benefits may be derived from greater autonomy for schools and other institutions, and that more comprehensive systems-based approaches, including guidance and counselling services, are necessary. Partnerships and the use of ICT are helping to achieve these fresh aims by providing greater overall consistency, flexibility, a broader range of options and, in certain cases, economies of scale. ICT is not however a panacea for all ills. Rather than increased investment, the emphasis is on rebuilding systems or parts of systems as the means to improving overall effectiveness.

Resources are being re-deployed and in many cases increased, often with aid from the European Social Fund. At the formal level, a number of countries are investing in building up pre-school education and ICT infrastructure, and improving access to ICT-related skills for both pupils and teachers. At the level of continuing training, educational leave and levy schemes are well established in some countries, while a few are experimenting with Individual Learning Accounts (ILAs) - the idea of saving today for tomorrow's learning needs.

Given the tight schedule for the completion of the report, information-gathering could not be fully comprehensive. Not much data about informal contexts is centrally available and accordingly little space is devoted to them even though they are characteristic of a few initiatives. There is however evidence that work-based learning is an increasingly important aspect of the learning process.

\*Eurydice/Cedefop (2001). National actions to implement Lifelong Learning in Europe, Brussels. Available on www.trainingvillage.gr or www.eurydice.org and in hard copy, free of charge, in English and French from Eurydice or Cedefop.

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 Source: Eurydice/Cedefop





# Tracking down VET strategies for 2010

Preliminary findings and conclusions from the joint Cedefop/ETF research project

**In a joint project, Cedefop and the European Training Foundation, Turin, are elaborating scenarios and strategies for VET in 2010 with ten countries from Western, Central and Eastern Europe as partners. The overall evaluation is conducted by the Max Goote Expert Centre of the University of Amsterdam.**

In the first phase of the survey, around 2,500 VET experts from a series of EU Member States (Austria, Belgium/Luxembourg, Germany, Greece and the United Kingdom) and accession states (the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Poland and Slovenia) received identical questionnaires on their assessment of important or likely trends in vocational education and training and possible strategies for the next ten years and asked to grade the trends and strategies according to their importance and/or likelihood. A number of scenarios and strategies were then elaborated by the project team to present the options open to VET policy-makers.

The most significant trends concluded from the evaluation of the

survey clearly show that public-private partnerships and the new economic order are regarded as vital for improving competitiveness, promoting changes in the workplace and increasing flexibility and mobility among the workforce. This necessitates, among other things, flexibility in vocational training courses, individualisation and decentralisation of VET programmes, and political acceptance of the social dimension as a frame of reference for VET policies.

Of the numerous strategies resulting from these trends, four main scenarios were proposed which can be regarded as common to all or at least as transnational. In the business and technology environment the key strategies are tactics for

improving incentives for all players to become involved in vocational education and training, to anticipate the particular needs of specific target groups, regions, sectors and enterprises and to promote the establishment of learning organisations, regions and knowledge management.

In the employment and the labour market environment, it is above all a question of moves towards a 'modern workforce' and modern employment contracts, the establishment of supporting structures and the promotion of special measures for high-risk groups.

The environment comprised by training, skills and acquisition of knowledge requires strategies with a view

to improving the transparency of qualifications structures, to promote workers' personal development, to provide more basic and general knowledge (in addition to technical and occupation-related knowledge), to combat social marginalisation and to pay more attention to older employees and job-seekers. Both enterprises and private individuals must be persuaded to invest more in initial training and especially in continuing (vocational) training.

These preliminary findings are currently being analysed and verified by the project team in a second phase of the project. Cedefop and the ETF hope that the results will support a more broadly-based debate on the future of VET and lifelong learning and help Member States agree on common aims and strategies.

Preliminary copies of a report by Cedefop project coordinator Burkart Sellin, to appear in a forthcoming issue of Cedefop's European journal 'Vocational Training', are available on request in DE and EN from [yno@cedefop.eu.int](mailto:yno@cedefop.eu.int).

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Source: Cedefop/BS+SK



## A digital future for European learning

The first European eLearning Summit, A digital future for European learning, was convened by a group of major IT industries in cooperation with the European Commission. It aimed at promoting public-private partnerships in the European eLearning drive. The venue brought together some 250 invited guests from both the public and private sectors at IBM's International Education Centre at La Hulpe, just outside Brussels for two days of discussion.\*

It was a high-level meeting with contributions by Commissioners Reding and Liikanen. In her keynote address Commissioner Reding stressed the need for partnership, the urgency of the need to act and the tremendous challenge facing trainers and teachers.

The summit was divided into plenary and workshop sessions along the five main conference themes:

- access and connectivity
- transforming the current learning model
- content development
- digital literacy
- ICT skills gap

The participants joined working groups on each of the strands and reported back to the final plenary. Their

findings and conclusions were drafted into a list of 10 recommendations for the Education Council of the European Union on 28 May 2001.

The recommendations are designed "to remove barriers to access and connectivity, support professional development, accelerate eLearning innovation and content development, address the ICT skills shortage, promote digital literacy and lifelong learning, and explore sustainable public private partnerships."

The full text of this document is available on the Electronic Training Village website ([www.trainingvillage.gr](http://www.trainingvillage.gr)) in the eLearning area.

Cedefop provided important input for the Summit. Since January of this year it has contracted a study on the current extent of eLearning in Europe. The findings of the survey, which was concluded at the end of May, will be published by Cedefop.

\*<http://www.ibmweblectureservices.ihost.com/elearningsummit/elearningsummit.html>

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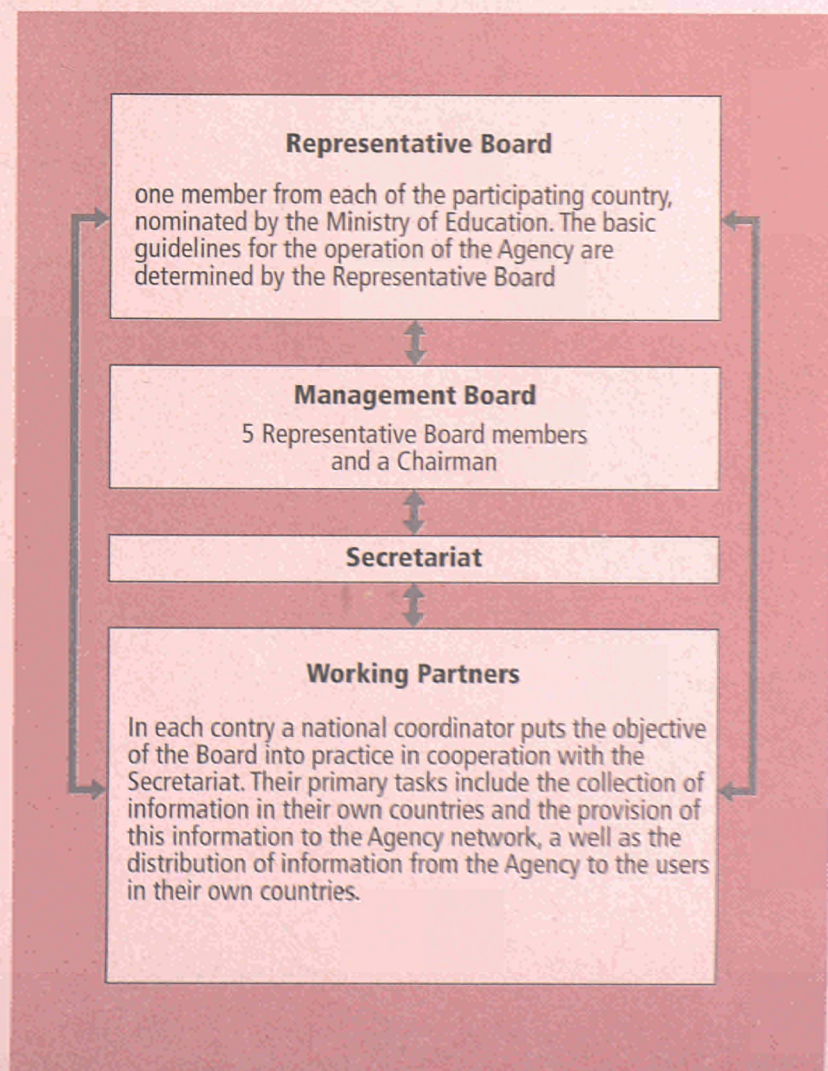
Source: Cedefop/WPH+CMC

## European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education

The European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education was established in November 1996, as an independent, self-governing organisation. It is supported by the Ministries of Education in the 15 participating European Union countries, Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and the European Commission through concrete projects. At present three Baltic States (with an observer status) are also represented.

The European Agency has the following structure:

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## New electronic newsletter with the latest news on VET

Directorate-General goes on-line with 'Education and culture at a glance'

'Education and culture at a glance' is the title of a new bimonthly newsletter published on-line by the European Commission's Directorate-General for Education and Culture from 1 April 2001 with the latest news, programmes and sources of information on VET.

The Directorate-General for Education and Culture is working towards achieving a knowledge-based economy

in Europe by creating a European lifelong learning area in which everyone will have access to education and training opportunities, including e-learning.

The newsletter can be found on the internet at: [http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education\\_culture/publ/news/01/newsletter\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/publ/news/01/newsletter_en.htm).

Source: European Commission Directorate-General for Education and Culture/ Cedefop/SK



The Agency's main objectives are to work towards the improvement of quality in special needs education and the creation of a long-term framework for extended European collaboration in this field.

The Agency is implementing these objectives by:

- establishing an effective system for the collection, processing and distribution of information regarding new and innovative measures;
- promoting European research and development focusing on subjects of high priority for the further development of special needs education;
- working for effective change and innovation in this field by implementing workshops, seminars and conferences;
- identifying ways of supplementing programmes within other European and international frameworks.

The agency uses new technology as a major tool for communications;

and a variety of methods for making information widely available have been developed. These include the Agency web site on the Internet (<http://www.european-agency.org>) and the Agency newsletter, as well as publications and the dissemination of information to other bodies and agencies via the national networks of the Working Partners.

Up to now the Agency's research work has specifically focused upon three priority areas:

- Early Intervention: comprehensive overviews of early intervention services for children with special educational needs, including an examination of the organisation and financing of services and the types of support available in the participating countries.
- Teacher Support: An examination of the concept of teacher support as a key element in the educational process and the meeting of objectives related to achievement of educational quality and implementing equal opportunities in accordance

with the principle of mainstreaming.  
□ Financing of Special Needs Education: An examination of factors, responsible for variation in 'inclusive' practices within and between countries with specific attention being given to the impact of different funding systems on inclusive education and the principle of mainstreaming.

At the same time, the Agency has undertaken a number of projects supported by the European Commission including

- a European investigation of how students – of all school and further and higher education age groups – with special educational needs are participating in and benefiting from the SOCRATES programme.
- a European investigation "Integration in Europe: Provision for Pupils with Special Educational Needs. Trends in 14 European Countries" which focuses upon the current 'state of art' in school integration policies and practices and re-assesses the situation of integration in the Member States compared with the findings as described in the

Commission's document of 1992: The Report of the Commission on the progress with regard to the implementation of the policy of school integration in the Member States.

During the last years the work programme of the Agency has been especially focusing on the following priority areas:

- Classroom Practice: an investigation into inclusive education with specific reference to practical aspects, including analysis of different models for dealing with differences in mainstream classrooms and how to equip mainstream schools to effectively deal with pupils with special educational needs.
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT): an investigation into the use of ICT in the field of special needs education, including the establishment of web data base with overviews of existing country-based information, key information sources, current concerns and what specialists see as being the future of ICT and special needs education.
- Transition: an analysis of existing models at the European level for

transition from school to adult life and employment, including overviews of which strategies seem to provide good results and why, which routes have been used and why, which barriers appear more frequently in the transition process, as well as an examination of the roles and qualifications of teachers and other professionals involved.

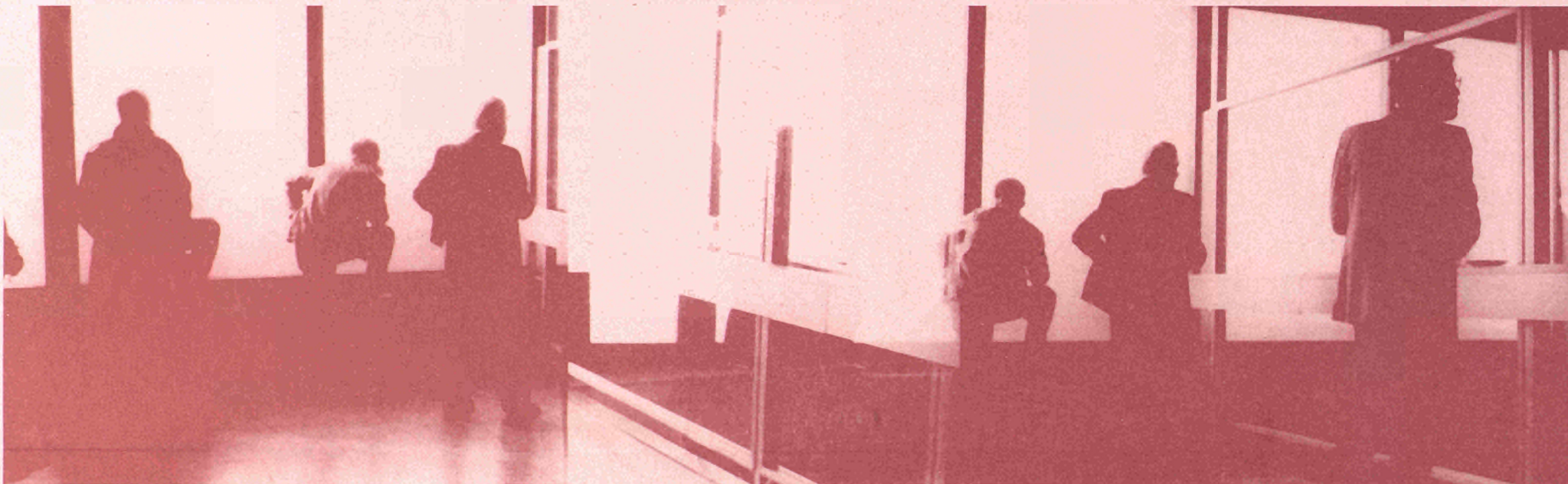
Results from all analyses will be ready at the end of 2001.

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Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education



## Europe Measuring the effectiveness of training

**There is increasing recognition of the value of human resources within any organisation. This consequently leads to employers investing in the workforce through training and development activity. As with any investment, its impact should be evaluated. Evaluation of training and development activity can focus on a number of issues. These include**

- personal development
- increased productivity
- improved quality of the product or service
- reduced staff turnover
- improved customer service
- cost effectiveness

Training providers should evaluate the impact of their training programmes. From the evaluation process they are able to review and, where appropriate, revise:

- the programme content
- the objectives
- the appropriate target audience
- outcomes from the training activity
- future training and development needs
- cost effectiveness

The TREMEA (TRaining Effectiveness MEasurement) project, which in the second phase added the pre-script 'TRANS' to its title, to indicate transporting the original project into a format which is more accessible to the outside world via the Internet, was initiated in 1996 and was scheduled to finish in mid-2001. The project was largely funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme, although each project partner also contributed a considerable amount of their own time and funding.

The project's managing organisation was VIZO, a Belgian (Flemish) public organisation co-ordinating training and support for (future) small and medium-sized enterprise (SME) entrepreneurs. Initial project members included five other partners, namely:

- EPON (also Belgium) supported by the Flemish Ministry's Department of Education;
- European Profiles (Greece), a private advisory group providing training to eastern European countries and other national bodies;
- IOWO (Netherlands), an educational consultancy, service and research institute affiliated to the University of Nijmegen;
- ITEC (Portugal), a non-profit agency primarily offering technical research and training, and;
- PORI-PAKK (Finland), a not-for-profit training agency offering initial and lifelong training to adults across many sectors.

The project was extended in 1999 for a period of 18 months (ending June 2001). In addition, several new partners were added to the original partnership: the company 'Education and Development' (England), the Hungarian Productivity Centre (Hungary), and Infospec Ltd (Cyprus), while the original Portuguese (ITEC)

and second Flemish co-operator (EPON) were replaced by a new Belgian partner, VDAB

The broad geographical distribution of partners plus their varying areas of interest and expertise enabled the creation of an evaluation guide that could be useful to a broad variety of groups or individuals involved in the evaluation or assessment processes. The initial project itself was comprised of five stages, running from 1997 till 2000. Its first phase consisted of creating an inventory of existing internal and external (defined in the handbook) evaluation instruments used at that time by the various partners and their clients. The inventory showed that question-

naires were the primary evaluation instrument used.

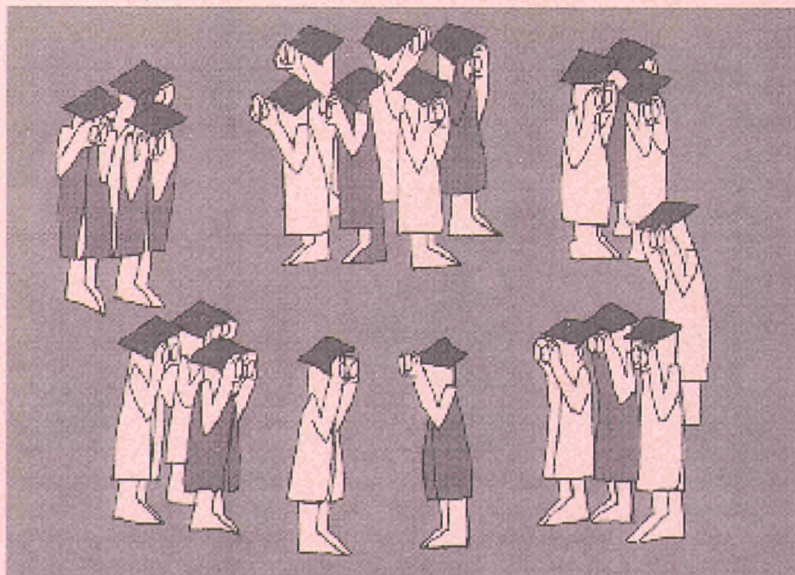
The second phase produced the publication, "Report on the Inventory of Internal and External Effectivity Evaluation Instruments", (1997). The third phase resulted in the production of the handbook itself, which was then used by project partners to develop their own evaluation instruments and procedures (phase 4) and was further tested in actual pilot studies (phase 5) by partners in collaboration with their local networks. A number of case studies were prepared and discussed at an open seminar held in Brussels (November 1999).

Consequently, the main product developed and produced by the project is the TREMEA Handbook: *A Guide for Evaluating Training Programmes\**. The handbook was designed to be a resource to support all training providers, including those providing courses related to lifelong learning, specific vocational training or in-company training provision, and those in a general education or training environment who have the responsibility or task of evaluating the learning experience.

The TREMEA Handbook addresses all these issues through providing examples of evaluation tools and exploring the perspectives of different stakeholders (e.g. training provider, trainee, employer and funding body). It also offers case studies showing how evaluation tools and strategies can be used in practice.

\*) available in a compressed electronic format via the Internet (no charge) <http://www.tremea.gr> or in a complete (with graphics) hardcopy format - only in English at a charge (EUR 10) for postage and printing - from VIZO (Belgium). (Parts of) the handbook have been translated into Czech, Dutch, Hungarian, Finnish and Greek. These translations are also available on the website (no charge).

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Source: as above/Cedefop



*A Guide for Evaluating Training Programmes*



**Page 5 Europe** EU/USA: Partners seek to strengthen transatlantic mobility; EU: Central and Eastern European countries - career path flexibility gaining in popularity; EU/D: Electronic diary of European Year of Languages events; **page 6 Bi- and multilateral co-operation** NL/S/E/UK: The European learning account project; **Mobility** D: Language course finder - acquiring linguistic and cultural competence; NL: You'd be a fool not to go!\* - International mobility in education; **page 7 N:** A national database for mobility - Leonardo da Vinci and Europass; **Training policy** D: A greater willingness to engage in continuing training is essential; **page 8 UK:** New vocational and technical education streams in secondary education; D: Deficits in intercultural skilling; P: Working party on the European memorandum on lifelong learning; B: European Year of Languages 2001: language skills required by a quarter of those with low and middle levels of education in Flanders.

## Europe/Bi- and multilateral co-operation/Mobility/Training policy

### Europe

#### Europe/Northern America Partners seek to strengthen transatlantic mobility

##### Renewal of EC - USA/Canada cooperation programmes

The European Community (EC) renewed its programmes of cooperation in the fields of higher education and vocational education and training with both the USA and Canada in the spring of 2001. The new agreements, based on a decision of the Council of the European Union in May 2000 expressly authorising the Commission to take action in this field, are to be valid for a period of five years.

The principal objective of both cooperation programmes is to promote mutual understanding between the peoples of the EC and the USA/Canada and improve the quality of human resource development, including the acquisition of skills required to meet the challenges of the global, knowledge-based economy. A range of higher education and vocational education and training cooperative activities are to be encouraged to improve in particular the quality of transatlantic student mobility.

A key aspect is greater transparency: this is to be promoted by mutual recognition of periods of study and training and, where appropriate, portability of credits. Exchange of expertise and the promotion and enhancing of partnerships are further objectives of both agreements. The results of the new structures and relationships are to be disseminated on an ongoing and effective basis, the ensuing multiplier effect guaranteeing the long-term sustainability of the projects which are ultimately to function without programme support.

The projects are to be selected on the basis of a competition. The partners to the cooperation programmes in particular wish to support structured exchanges of students, teachers, trainers and administrators and the joint development and dissemination of innovative curricula, including training modules and new methodological approaches, e.g. the use of information and communication technologies in higher education/VET. Other areas of support are short-term intensive programmes, teaching assignments at transatlantic partner institutions and innovative projects designed to promote transatlantic cooperation. Both agreements moreover envisage the award of Fulbright/European Union programme scholarships and complementary activities to promote an exchange of experience.

\* More information can be found at:  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/canada/canada.html> (Canada programme)  
<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/ec-usa/usa.html> (US programme)

Source: EC Official Journal L 71/7 and L 71/15 of 13 March 2001/Cedefop/SK

#### Europe

#### Central and Eastern European countries - career path flexibility gaining in popularity

14 to 19 year olds in the Central and Eastern European Countries (CEECs) are increasingly turning to flexible education pathways that combine vocational education and training with general education. On the other hand, secondary vocational education that only provides a vocational qualification and no possibility for attending post secondary education is in decline suffering from both a drop in enrolment and a rise in the number of dropouts. These are two important conclusions to come out of the third edition of the Phare Key Indicators Report\* that has just been published by the European Training Foundation. The report provides key statistical information on vocational education and training systems within the Phare\*\* countries. For the first time, information on the Western Balkan countries has also been included.

Between 1995 and 1998, in most of the CEECs, participation rates in vocational education and training of young people aged 14-19 years were higher than the EU average (30%) e.g. above 40% in Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia (although below 20% in the Baltic states). With regard to education as a whole however participation rates within the CEECs were lower (averaging 72%) than those in the EU (averaging 80%). In the case of Albania only 25% of young people aged 14-19 participated in education and training in 1998.

Those aged 30 to 39 in the CEECs generally had a higher level of education than those aged 50 to 59. This trend is especially marked within the Western Balkan countries. In Romania, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Bulgaria, the number of people aged 30 to 39 having obtained upper secondary education was generally double the number aged 50 to 59.

Between 1995 and 1998, in Bulgaria, Poland and Romania (and to a certain degree in Slovenia) almost twice as many women as men participated in upper secondary general education. In terms of employment it was notable however that women with a low level of education were much less likely to be in employment than men with the same level of education. In many countries (e.g. Poland) where men and women had the same level of educational attainment, activity rates for men were significantly higher.

Overall, during the period 1995 to 1998 the unemployment rate of young people under 24 within the CEECs remained double the number aged 25 and over. The situation was particularly bad in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia (71%) and Bulgaria (36%). Activity rates among young people (under 24 years of age) in the CEECs in 1998 ranged from 33% in Bulgaria to 49% in the Czech Republic and the trend over the last ten years was one a downward.

With the exception of Poland, Lithuania and Albania, the CEECs had proportionally more people with secondary qualifications than the EU. The share of people with low-level qualifications in the CEECs (which varied from 13% in the Czech Republic to 31% in Bulgaria) has also decreased slightly. This share was, on average, lower than in the EU where they numbered nearly 40% of the active population.

\* Phare Key Indicators 2000\* published in January 2001, available free of charge  
\*\* Phare: Programme of Community aid to central and eastern European countries

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Fax (39 0119 630 2200; e-mail: [info@etf.eu.int](mailto:info@etf.eu.int); website: [www.etf.eu.int](http://www.etf.eu.int)  
The European Training Foundation's newsletter ETfacts on-line is now directly accessible in electronic form (<http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/etfactsintro>)

Source: ETF

#### Europe/Germany

#### Electronic diary of European Year of Languages events

##### National agency within the BIBB provides an overview of German activities

'Languages Open Doors' is the slogan of the European Year of Languages, co-organised by the European Union and the Council of Europe. The National Agency within the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has been entrusted by the Federal Ministry for Education, Training and Research with the coordination and implementation of the relevant activities in Germany.

The European Year of Languages 2001 was launched in Germany by a national conference in Berlin (cf. Cedefop Info No 1/2001, p. 4). A specialised conference of the German *Länder* was to be held in Hamburg in June and a final event is planned towards the end of the year.

Since the European Year of Languages is focused on a series of regional and local events aimed at encouraging foreign language learning, the National Agency has published an electronic diary of events on the internet which gives an overview of the over 200 specific events and activities throughout the year. The database is to remain open throughout the European Year of Languages and organisers can input the dates and information on their events themselves. Additional information on activities at regional level is available from contact persons in the various *Länder*.

For a list of addresses and other information see: [www.na-bibb.de/ejs](http://www.na-bibb.de/ejs) and [www.eurolang2001.org](http://www.eurolang2001.org) or contact Andreas Pieper, National Agency within the BIBB, Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10, D-53113 Bonn, e-mail: [ejs@bibb.de](mailto:ejs@bibb.de)  
Source: National Agency within the BIBB /Cedefop/SK



# Bi- and multilateral co-operation

Netherlands, Sweden, Spain (the Basque country), United Kingdom

## The European learning account project

In November 1999, the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) in the United Kingdom set up the European Learning Account Project (ELAP). Its aim is to develop a common understanding of how individual learning accounts might be used as a mechanism to increase participation in, and the financing of, learning.

### Project objectives

The main objectives of the project are:

□ to develop a framework within which different learning account models might be piloted, leading to evaluation against a menu of common criteria

□ to define the roles of different stakeholders and partners e.g. employers, trade unions, training suppliers, individuals, governments

□ to develop a network of partner organisations interested in exploring the role of learning accounts as a mechanism to finance learning

□ to disseminate lessons learnt from the pilot work in order to inform wider policy development.

Four countries are participating in the project – the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden and the Basque region of Spain. Each country is represented by its relevant government department and is developing different learning account models to meet national objectives.

### Sweden

In December 2000, a proposal was put before the Swedish government

to introduce a national individual learning account framework (*IKS – Individuellt Kompetenssparande*). A summary of the system (see also Cedefop Info 1/2001, page 1) can be found on the Swedish government website – [www.regeringen.se](http://www.regeringen.se)

For the past two years Skandia has been offering a competence insurance account to its employees, with 35% of them participating. The account provides the opportunity for individuals to save towards the associated costs of taking up training of their choice. Account holders are supported by a website that provides them with information about their savings and also allows access to information on training opportunities and advice on writing CVs. In addition to Skandia, other companies are now interested in introducing such a model.

Both the Swedish government and Skandia are partners in ELAP.

### The Netherlands

Eight pilot projects are being set up in the Netherlands during 2001. The projects will run for one year and will involve three education and business 'broker' organisations,

three trade unions (food/health/electrical) and two community colleges.

At this stage, the main aim is to draw up a workable operating framework rather than to encourage the take up of learning accounts. The pilot projects will be monitored by an independent agency and an evaluation will be available in May/June 2002.

### The Basque Region of Spain

Learning accounts, using a voucher system to upgrade the IT skills of vocational trainers, were launched in San Sebastian in September 2000. They have been very popular and as a result will be extended to other geographical locations and sectors of the community, such as women returners and sole traders.

Other learning account projects will be developed as part of an overall framework for lifelong learning in the Basque region. Ten lifelong learning projects of 100 000 euro each will be set up and will include piloting learning accounts with a

bank, launching them in Bilbao and encouraging people over the age of 25 years to become involved in learning. In addition, new expertise will be developed through training professional 'mediators for learning' who will be linked to each job centre and provide information, advice and guidance services on training.

### The United Kingdom

The learning account mechanism in the UK is in effect an account with the Government, with individuals registering with a central database system. The national framework for learning accounts was launched in September 2000 and already over 600,000 individuals have opened accounts and had access to a range of courses. The Government provides UK£150 (ca. 240 EUR) towards the cost of training for the first one million account holders and discounts on a wide range of courses.

Key stakeholders such as trade unions and employers are working together to encourage employees to open accounts.

Further information about learning accounts in the UK can be obtained from [www.dfee.gov.uk/ila](http://www.dfee.gov.uk/ila)

**Additional partners:** Interest in ELAP is growing and discussions are taking place currently with a number of other potential partner countries.

**Conferences**  
Learning accounts as a mechanism for financing learning are becoming a widely debated topic. Recently partners have taken part in a number of workshops and conferences, including

December 2000  
OECD, Ottawa, Canada, conference – 'Lifelong Learning as an Affordable Investment'

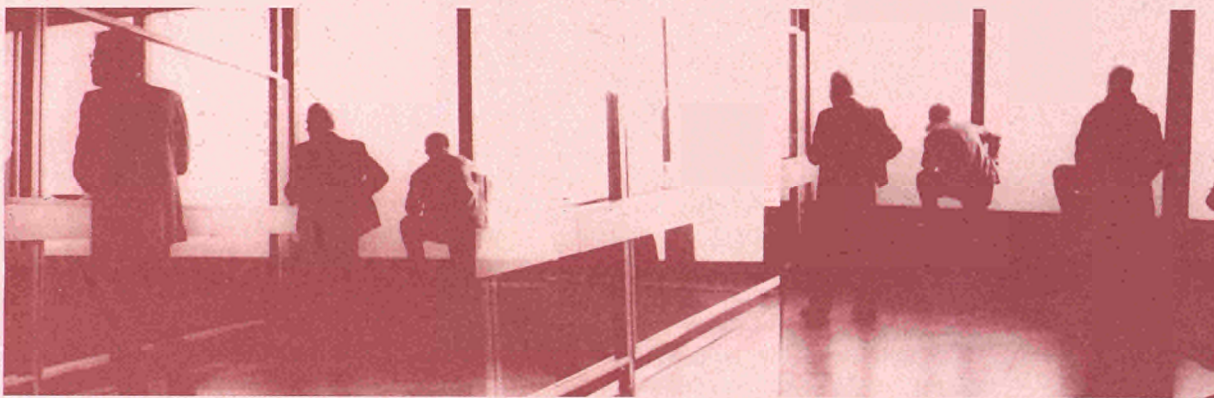
March 2001  
Hans Bockler Stiftung, Dusseldorf, Germany conference – 'Individual Learning Accounts: a tool for financing lifelong learning'

April 2001  
Basque Regional Government, Bilbao, Spain symposium – 'Lifelong and Lifewide Learning'

May 2001  
Swedish social partners' conference – 'Partnership and Growth – the role of social partners in improving innovation, employability and competitiveness'

Further information from:  
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A website is under development.

Source: Cedefop/SER



## Mobility

Germany

### Language course finder - acquiring linguistic and cultural competence

Communication in a foreign language requires more than the knowledge of grammar and spelling. Language travel provides ways to learn about the culture and society of the country where the foreign language is being spoken. Students can apply their new language skills right away and acquire first-hand knowledge of the country's culture.

For all interested in language travel, [www.language-course-finder.com](http://www.language-course-finder.com) provides an online database listing more than **6,200 language schools teaching 72 languages in 85 countries**. Detailed search criteria allow prospective students to find a school matching their individual needs and preferences. The search criteria cover all important aspects of language travel, including location of school (urban, rural, seaside, etc.), type of course (general, business/executive, intensive,

for children, etc.), accommodation, sport and other services (internships, further academic studies, etc.).

With free access, the website is available in 24 languages. Each language school is listed with full address details to enable students to make direct contact. The website also offers detailed background information on related issues such as language tests and certificates in many languages and a broad range of organisations active in the field of language education.

Web address: <http://www.language-course-finder.com>

For further information please contact:  
Where+How Language Course Finder,  
Susanne Thoene  
Am Hofgarten 18, D-53113 Bonn, Germany  
Tel. (49-228) 20 11 90  
Fax (49-228) 21 19 44  
E-mail: [info@language-learning.net](mailto:info@language-learning.net)

Source: as above/Cedefop-JMA

Netherlands

### *You'd be a fool not to go!\** - International mobility in education

The third edition of the BISON Mobility monitor 2000\*\* mobility has been published. Each year the intermediate organisations in 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. For the first time the monitor is now published in English.

### Monitoring of internationalisation

Quantitative information on mobility still forms the basis of the 2000 edition, but a start has now been made towards an internationalisation monitor and in the near future, the monitor will centre around the development of indicators for internationalisation. Other forms of international activities will be included (strategic, policy, internationalising the curriculum) along side qualitative information. This time, there is an analysis on accessibility to internationalisation. Every student has, in theory, access to international education, but it is difficult for schools to put the policy into practice. Moreover, the labour market does not yet give powerful/positive signals to internationalisation.

### Quantitative results

In 1998/1999 almost 30,000 students in primary, secondary vocational and higher education participated in international mobility projects financed by European or national programmes. In the VET-sector the number of students going abroad for study or placement has increased from nearly 3,000 in 1997/1998 to more than 5000 in 1999/2000. Most of the students opt for a short placement abroad.

\* This is the title of a video made by the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency to stimulate international mobility. Available from CINOP in English and Dutch. Price: EUR 15 (excl. porto)

\*\* *BISON Monitor van internationale mobiliteit in het onderwijs*. (BISON Monitor of international mobility in education, published in Dutch and English). Europees Platform, CINOP, Nuffic (commissioned by the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science). Den Haag, November 2000. To order the English edition, please contact CINOP. A report on the 1999 edition of the BISON monitor was published in Cedefop Info 2/2000 page 13.

Further information: Mr. André Herbrink, tel. (31-73) 6800 621, [aherbrink@cinop.nl](mailto:aherbrink@cinop.nl), <http://www.cinop.nl/intnat>

Source: CINOP / Nuffic



# A national database for mobility - Leonardo da Vinci and Europass

Norway is developing a national database for mobility. The database is targeted at the management of the mobility part of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and the Europass\* implementation. Norway entered Europass training as an eligible country from 1 August 2000. Promotion of the European pathways has been going on since then, so that in May the first Europass training documentation was issued.

The database contains all relevant data about every placement under the Leonardo programme, such as information about the sending organisation, the receiving organisation, the level of education, the duration, and so on. The data will correspond to the information required by the EU Commission in relation to the Leonardo programme and the Europass document and requirements. Users will access the database over the Internet, entering data and retrieving reports and statistics in realtime. The database will serve several purposes and its advantages are numerous.

Registering the placement data for each and every person with a Leonardo grant and/or a

Europass enables the national administration to retrieve detailed reports and statistics on virtually every aspect of mobility activities originating in Norway, thus facilitating an extensive and thorough analysis. The comprehensive analyses make it easier to recognise patterns and trends and, therefore, constitute an excellent starting point for implementing new courses of action and monitoring the effects of measures that have been already introduced.

The use of a central database for mobility information management and validation helps ensure a unified processing. The database requires that all mandatory information is

entered in order for the user to continue to ask for validation. This not only ensures that all relevant information is submitted, but also raises the consciousness of the different parties in the process, focussing everybody's attention on the importance of the existence of a comprehensive set of information that can be used for later evaluation and analysis.

The central web site approach means that the data are entered only once, reducing the risk of errors that are known to happen once the same information passes through the hands of several individuals or several systems. The database also applies logical checks to the different fields, which means it will only accept values that are within the predefined range, thus reducing the risk of errors.

The database is protected with user names and passwords, so that every user has access only to their own records. Furthermore, the

database will not contain any personal information of a confidential nature, such as information about personal medical status, that can be traced back to a specific individual. This is an important consideration, especially with a view to the new Norwegian personal information act, effective from 1 January 2001, which regulates the handling of all electronically stored information.

\*) For information on Europass, see Cedefop Info 3/2000, page 3

Source and further information: Leonardo da Vinci, NA, Teknologisk Institut (TI), Rolf Kristiansen Akersveien, 24c, POB 2608 St. Hanshaugen, N-0130 Oslo Tel. (47-22) 86 50 00, Fax (47-22) 20 18 01 E-Mail: krir@teknologisk.no



## Training policy

# A greater willingness to engage in continuing training is essential

**BIBB Central Board's position on the draft 2001 Vocational Training Report / Employers' and workers' spokesmen present their own position papers**

In its position on the draft 2001 Vocational Training Report presented by the Federal Ministry for Education and Training, the Central Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung - BIBB*) notes an overall improvement in the training market situation (see also Cedefop Info No 1/2001, p. 9). Although the quadripartite body (representing the social partners as well as the *Länder* and the federation) agreed on a common position, the employers' and workers' groups both submitted a minority position paper of their own.

The Central Board observes that for the first time in years the number of apprenticeship vacancies now exceeds the number of unplaced applicants and notes a 'positive trend', with a gratifying 2.6 per cent increase in the number of new industrial training contracts to a total of 564,400. It points out that the 4 per cent fall in the number of applicants registered with the job centres has also helped balance supply and demand, whereby the emergency youth programme which has removed a number of the previous applicants from the market is evidently one of the reasons for this decline. On the other hand, many young people have found a training place through the electronic information services of the Federal Employment Agency (*Bundesanstalt für Arbeit - BfA*) and are no longer represented in the job centre applicant statistics. The Central Board expressly welcomes the extension of the special training place programme for eastern Germany up to 2004 as the only way of reducing the 'evident gap' in the training place market in eastern Germany.

The Central Board, noting that the reform process is well under way, with a total of 36 new and 106 re-structured training occupations already created, calls upon all the stakeholders to accompany the introduction of new occupations by targeted and coordinated action and appeals to all the participating players not to miss the opportunity to reach a broad consensus on the further structural development of the dual system of vocational training.

In view of the successful establishment of new occupations, not least

in the IT field, the Central Board expects that industry will be able to fulfil its pledge to create some 60,000 IT training places by 2003, underlining however that the new occupations require a considerably higher input in terms of continuing training effort. Early recognition of made-to-measure and sector-specific skilling requirements is becoming increasingly important. A greater willingness to engage in continuing training, linked with a higher level of financial commitment, is essential. In this context the Central Board calls for, among other things, better continuing training counselling, a user-oriented quality assurance system and equal status for general and vocational education.

The Central Board moreover attaches considerable importance to the development and dissemination of learning and cooperation networks, calling upon the social partners and politicians to tap all talent reserves and focus greater attention on disadvantaged youngsters. New occupations should be created with low levels of requirements in those cases in which there is an evident demand in this respect.

### Employers: Differentiated training occupations

In their own supplementary position paper, the employers underline the decisive contribution of German industry to improving the training place situation. Given the continued strong demand for training places, the employers nevertheless believe that public support programmes must be maintained until sustainable and viable economic structures have been created as a basis for a com-

prehensive supply of industrial training places.

The employers' side calls for the efforts to modernise the VET system to be consistently pursued, pointing out that green cards can only offer a short-term solution to firms facing increasing difficulties in finding applicants to match their skill requirements. They call for differentiated training occupations, especially for labour-intensive, less complex fields of activity, maintaining that training regulations should be limited to minimum requirements, leaving sufficient scope for specific company configurations. The employers strongly regret that industry's proposals for new training occupations with low theoretical requirements consistently meet with union resistance, which they put down to 'ideological bias'.

The employers regard efficient vocational schools as key partners to ensure that the dual system can remain fit for the future. They stress the need for the necessary continuing training of vocational school teachers to be delivered in close collaboration with industry, with learning becoming more flexible and matched to actual needs in terms of time and content. As far as reducing the deficit of vocational school teachers is concerned, the employers propose recruiting students and practitioners from industry as well as promoting lateral entry, whereby the local authorities and the *Länder* should provide increased funding to improve vocational school facilities.

Although the employers recognise the key role of the expansion and

qualitative development of continuing training, they are totally opposed to a continuing training law, pointing out that flexibility of continuing vocational training in the interest of timely adaptation of skills to new requirements throughout all sectors of employment should not be called into question.

### Workers: vocational school development programme

The workers' position is that the 2001 Vocational Training Report, rather than addressing critical issues, 'glosses over the real situation' and makes 'complacent statements'. They expressly welcome the federal government's commitment to the principle of an occupation, which they regard as undeniably superior to a form of training with an activity bias.

The workers draw attention to the fact that in the training year 2000 the number of training contracts concluded was 1.5 per cent down on 1999 and explain the ongoing tight training market situation not least by the reticence of large firms to engage in the training effort. They therefore call for an equalisation of burdens between SMEs, on the one hand, and larger firms, on the other, which would have to be carried out by industry itself, higher state funding of vocational training being out of the question.

To improve the starting opportunities for disadvantaged youngsters, the workers call for a thorough reform of the content and regulations governing the entire process of vocational preparation. Careers' guidance should begin within schools of general education, which should be allocated more personnel and resources for this purpose.

The workers underline that vocational schools must fulfil their statutory mission and cannot be mere 'appendages' of industry. The Con-

federation of German Trade Unions (*Deutscher Gewerkschaftsbund - DGB*) calculates a deficit of 17,000 teachers over the next ten years and calls for a nationwide programme to develop vocational schools in view of the imminent shortage of teachers. The workers moreover advocate that the around EUR 130 million earmarked for new technologies in vocational schools should as a matter of priority be assigned to those vocational schools delivering training in media and IT occupations. Moreover vocational schools should dispense tuition in at least one occupation-related language with a view to promoting foreign language skills. The workers also emphasise the need for both close cooperation between industry and vocational schools and improved coordination between initial and continuing vocational training. They believe that greater scope in decision-making for independent teaching teams would also open up new perspectives for specialised and general phases of learning in vocational schools and industrial training.

The workers' side wishes to strengthen continuing training by having it more firmly embodied within collective and individual company agreements and calls for industrial continuing training practice to be further developed for the individual sectors according to established qualification standards. Pointing out that the draft 2001 Vocational Training Report again shows considerable deficits in the statistical recording of continuing training, the workers' group calls upon the federal government to finally take steps to ensure that data on 'this important pillar of the education system' is recorded on a regular basis.

Further information: BIBB Press release Nos 9/2001, 15.3.2001 and 54/2001, 25.4.2001

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK



United Kingdom

## New vocational and technical education streams in secondary education

The UK government has announced measures aimed at supporting a more individualised learning path for secondary students. These include proposals that would enable young people to "study vocational and technical education as part of the normal school programme. High standard vocational options will be available to students across the ability range ..." From the age of 14, students will be able to choose predominantly vocational programmes of study. The government stresses that these pathways will remain flexible, so that as young people's interests and talents develop they will be able to move into the areas of study most appropriate to their own individual needs and abilities. Even if the student chooses a mixture of vocational and academic courses, there will be a clear ladder of progression, making it possible for any student to reach degree level if they reach the entrance standards for university.

The proposals are part of the new Green Paper, *Schools: Building on Success\**, which looks at the changes in the education service since the Labour government came to power and indicates its plans for the coming years. Its focus is on developing ways to allow young people to experience individualised experiences of learning that build on their own strengths and interests,

while maintaining high standards and a rounded educational experience for all young people. The government intends to extend best practice radically. It supports a secondary school system in which schools can progress from the current standard comprehensive format which characterises the majority of state schools, and become specialist schools focusing on particular curriculum areas, including vocational courses.

According to the paper

"Progression routes into Foundation, and then Advanced, Modern Apprenticeships in skilled occupations will be routed back into work-related learning and placements for 14-16 year olds - giving confidence to young people to further develop their skills after leaving school. Qualifications towards apprenticeships could be gained while the young person was still at school - accelerating their learning progression."

Under the proposals outlined, schools, colleges and local businesses would cooperate to share resources and expertise. They will work closely together to deliver the individualised learning pathways described, "supported by networks of advisers and mentors including the Connexions Services [the integrated vocational guidance service for young people]" (see Cedefop Info 3/2000, page 8).

\*) Copies of the full paper, the summary version and the response form are available from the DfEE website at <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/buildingonsuccess/>

Source: IPD

Germany

## Deficits in intercultural skilling

SMEs still lag behind in terms of international marketing / Fitness training for the global market by means of a checklist

International professional activity calls for international qualifications, and German SMEs are to a certain extent lagging behind in this respect. In the context of its research project 'Qualification development of internationally operational professionals in SMEs', the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has conducted a survey and subsequently drawn up guidelines to help SMEs assess their starting position and select effective instruments to increase their international business success.

The survey conducted among 30 international players showed that successful companies have a workforce with good language skills whose self-initiative in foreign language learning is supported by individual instruments, e.g. language courses/tours, or individual training programmes. However very few SMEs offer their employees continuing training programmes. Although these firms regard intercultural skills as necessary, not only at management level but also among their staff in general, they do not do enough in terms of training their workforce at this level. Deficits are above all handled by exchanging staff and paying more attention to experience abroad when recruiting new employees.

German SMEs enjoy a considerable international reputation in terms of product competence and specialised knowledge. However their greatest weakness is international marketing and a lacking knowledge of international client behaviour. 'Net skills' - purchasing and sales, marketing and communication on the Internet - are becoming increasingly important. Correct use of different mobility instruments such as a personal conversation, the telephone, fax, e-mail or videoconferencing has to be learned as do Net-based learning and confidence-building in the worldwide communication via the Net with people from different cultures.

The analysis of the results of the survey combined with a checklist helps SMEs as yet inexperienced in the international business world to clarify basic issues on the qualification and motivation of their firm with a view to entering the international business arena.

The publication on strategies to qualify SMEs for the international business world entitled 'Internationalisierung des Mittelstandes. Strategien zur internationalen Qualifizierung in kleinen und mittleren Unternehmen - Mit einer Checkliste zu Qualifikationen für die Internationalisierung' by Ekbert Hering, Waldemar Pförtzsch and Peter Wordelmann is available (in German only) from: W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Postfach 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld, Tel. (49-521) 911 01 11, Fax (49-521) 911 01 19, e-mail: [bestellungen@wbv.de](mailto:bestellungen@wbv.de), price EUR 17.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Portugal

## Working party on the European memorandum on lifelong learning

Whereas lifelong learning is a basic means for promoting a sense of citizenship, social cohesion and employment; whereas the educational and training systems need to offer adequate opportunities for learning to the different target groups at the various stages of their life; whereas all Europeans should have access to training enabling them to adapt to the requirements of a society in constant social and

economic change and thus to participate in the building of the future of Europe; whereas the European Commission drew up a memorandum on lifelong learning with the prime objective of launching a European-wide debate on a strategy for this area for implementation at individual and institutional level and involving as many of its citizens as possible, a working party of representatives of the Ministries of La-

bour, Education, Youth and Sport has been set up in order to organise consultation and debate on the subject of the European memorandum on lifelong learning at national level among all those concerned. The said working party will also be responsible for liaising with the Commission for Monitoring the National Employment Plan.

Source: Joint Order No 245/2001/Diário da República No 65 of 17 March 2001/CIDES

## Belgium European Year of Languages 2001: language skills required by a quarter of those with low and middle levels of education in Flanders

The demand for language skills is not restricted to those with high levels of education but can also be observed among those with low and middle levels of schooling and Flanders clearly shows a skills deficit at this level.

Many job vacancies specifying foreign language skills are ultimately filled by candidates with no or only little knowledge of the language(s) in question - a phenomenon not so much due to the efforts of language-learning schools as perhaps their effectiveness.

There is a strong demand for language skills in the labour market. Sonar, the research group 'From school to work' within the Department of Education, has conducted a survey among 3 000 young people born in 1976 on the subject of the foreign language requirements of their jobs.

One quarter of those with a low level of education (secondary school drop-outs) indicate that they need 'several foreign languages' at work. For those with a middle level of schooling

(young people having completed secondary education, possibly followed by vocational training), this proportion lies between one-third and a half. Finally, (although this group's vocational experience was extremely limited at the time of the survey), two-thirds of young people with a high level of education (higher or university education) observe that they 'require several languages'.

VDAB (the Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service) data confirm this strong demand for language skills: foreign languages are a formal requirement for at least 30 per cent of job vacancies, whereby 18 per cent require two, 9 per cent three and 3 per cent require four or even more foreign languages. However this demand for foreign language skills is not matched by the jobseekers and job vacancies specifying language skills are difficult to fill. For example, 6-7 per cent of vacancies requiring English are filled by candidates with only a mediocre or zero rating in their reading and understanding of and expression in English whereas 12 per cent of these jobs are filled by candidates with no knowledge of written English.

Ten per cent of vacancies requiring knowledge of French are filled by candidates whose understanding and reading of French are 'mediocre or non-existent' and 15-20 per cent of these jobs are filled by candidates whose oral and written expression of French are 'mediocre or non-existent'. As far as German is concerned, 20% of jobs requiring German are filled by candidates who have no understanding of or cannot read the language of Goethe, 27 per cent by candidates who speak no German and 34 per cent by those with no knowledge of the written language.

These language skill deficiencies are not due to the efforts of the language learning system: indeed almost 100 per cent of secondary students have six years of French; 80 per cent have at least four years of English and 40 per cent at least two years of German.

Further information from: [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)

Source: VDAB Gestion Média et Bibliothèque / Icodoc



**Page 9 Initial training policy B:** Pilot project to develop work placements in vocational education in Flanders from September 2002; B: Bachelor's degree after three, and master's after four, years of higher education: Flemish universities adopt the "Anglo-Saxon" 3, 5 and 7-year degree system; **page 10 I:** Agreement between schools and enterprises on in-company training periods; E: Third continuing training agreement signed; F: Occupational integration; **page 11 F:** Panorama of continuing training in France; Sources; **page 12 F:** Negotiations on training: the employers give employees responsibility for their 'vocational development'; NL: The practical importance of collective agreements on education and training; IRL: Social partnership at enterprise level.

# Initial training policy/ Continuing education and training policy



## Initial training policy

Belgium

### Pilot project to develop work placements in vocational education in Flanders from September 2002

**Work placements are to be introduced to the Flemish vocational education system to attract more young people to vocational streams. The Flemish Minister of Education wishes to make it compulsory for young people in part-time vocational education to acquire vocational experience on the other three days of the week. In this context, thirty establishments are to launch a pilot project in September 2002 in which pupils will spend half of their learning time in the workplace.**

The Minister's plan of action for technical and vocational secondary education, presented in December 2000, attaches considerable importance to practical experience in education, both for pupils and teachers. In the Minister's view, it is unacceptable that many pupils leave secondary school without any contact with the 'real' working world. This holds true for both pupils of general secondary education - for which company visits may serve as an introduction to the world of work - and in particular for pupils of technical and vocational secondary education.

The Flemish Minister of Education is examining the possibility of making it compulsory for pupils in these vocational education streams to engage in work placements. The consequence of such a decision would be that pupils having

acquired no vocational experience in the course of their schooling would no longer be eligible for the award of a diploma or access to the relevant occupation. There is no obligation for secondary schools to organise work placements under the present system.

New rules on work experience are to be introduced from the 2001/2002 academic year. Schools are to be authorised to find the best work placements for their pupils in conjunction with industry. As far as part-time vocational education streams are concerned - in which only one half of students have acquired serious work experience in recent years - the Minister intends to make it compulsory for young people to effect a work placement on the three days of the week on which they are not at school. The Minister

also proposes to give work experience an important role in the context of full-time vocational education streams. In the 2002/2003 academic year, a pilot project is to be launched in thirty vocational and special secondary schools in the context of which pupils are to spend half of their weekly hours of education in work placements from the third year of secondary level onwards. Apart from the measures relating to work experience, the plan of action also includes measures designed to improve secondary school pupil guidance. With a view to finally putting an end to the eternal process of selection by failure - in which pupils opt for the more difficult streams and subsequently 'revise their expectations downwards' - the Minister wishes to bring about a change in attitudes.

Technical education plays an essential role in this context. Its rationale is to steer pupils' interests towards technical fields and technology from primary or early secondary school. If this aim is to be achieved, the courses must be taught by the right teachers, not necessarily the class teacher, even in primary education.

Another factor of even greater importance in preventing pupils from dropping out of vocational secondary school education is the experience of success. Modular vocational education is the perfect answer. An experiment was launched by 19 schools in September 2000 in which subjects are taught in the form of modules and a partial certificate is awarded upon conclusion of each module, all these certificates combining to make up the certificate of secondary education. Moreover, pupils opting out before full completion of all the modules nevertheless have a partial certificate which may be of assistance for labour market entry.

This approach also implies integrated learning as opposed to teaching in terms of isolated subjects: teachers exchange experience and teach their students on a thematic basis so that instead of each teacher teaching his/her own subject, they jointly develop a module on e.g. the design of a staircase, covering not only mathematics but also woodwork and general knowledge.

Further information at: [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)  
 Source: VDAB Gestion Média et Bibliothèque / Icodoc

Belgium

### Bachelor's degree after three, and master's after four, years of higher education: Flemish universities adopt the "Anglo-Saxon" 3, 5 and 7-year degree system

**The universities of Flanders have accepted the challenge of the fundamental reform of their degree programmes along the lines recommended by Europe. The kandidaat diploma, awarded after two years of study, is to be replaced by a bachelor's degree after three years in higher education, following which students can go on to a master's programme lasting a minimum of one year. The overall intention is not however to increase the overall length of training programmes.**

Within the context of the Flemish Interuniversity Council, the universities of Flanders have drawn up a plan to implement the Bologna declaration which seeks to harmonise higher education qualifications and teaching structures. The Flemish universities have opted for a '3+1' structure for most streams: i.e. a bachelor's degree after three years, followed by a master's degree after a further year of study, as opposed to the current

system, the *kandidaat* diploma after two years and the *licenciaat* graduate diploma after a total of four years of study.

Although the terms *kandidaat* and *licenciaat* are to disappear, these academic titles will continue to be used by some. The intention is not to increase the overall length of training programmes. Europe recommends that students should acquire job-related experience before going on to take their master's. However the Flemish universities do not agree with this approach and moreover do not intend to restructure their courses to permit access to the labour market on the basis of a bachelor's degree alone.

The Bologna declaration advocates a single European higher education area and therefore the integration of colleges of higher education (*écoles supérieures*) and universities. However, although the universities maintain that the colleges of

higher education can also adopt this system, they also wish to keep their distance.

The position of the universities is that the degrees awarded by the colleges of higher education should be professional bachelor's/professional master's whereas the colleges of higher education advocate a uniform qualification for all institutions of higher education.

The new system, to be gradually introduced within the universities of Flanders, is to be applicable to new first-year students within five years at the earliest. This means that the first bachelor's and master's degrees will be awarded in eight and nine years' time respectively.

Source: VDAB Gestion Média et Bibliothèque / Icodoc  
 Further information from: [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)



# Agreement between schools and enterprises on in-company training periods

The doors of large multinational corporations are now open to technical and vocational school pupils and, to a lesser extent, those in commercial and general upper secondary schools.

Relations between upper secondary level schools and enterprises working in a vast range of sectors are increasing day by day, partly as a result of the agreement recently signed by the Ministry of Education and Confindustria (the Italian Employers' Confederation). The training periods are beneficial to all the parties concerned. On the one hand, they allow students to apply and put into practice in real life their theoretical knowledge as well as to obtain training credits for their final exams. On the other, they allow enterprises to train new suitable recruits for immediate employment after they have obtained

their school-leaving certificate without their needing to undergo long periods of training.

For instance, a multinational car manufacturer (*Toyota*) offers its facilities for technical exercises and opens the doors of its distributors to students for a couple of weeks a year so as to encourage continuous updating on electronic and mechanical car parts. The school arranges with the manufacturer the qualification exams for the third year of secondary school.

A very important company in the electronics sector (*Celestica*) focuses on summer training

periods covering technical subjects as well as the English language. Fourth-year students spend the summer in various departments of the company, always accompanied by a tutor. Work is alternated with periods of theoretical study. In addition to receiving training credits and financial support, the young people have a chance of recruitment after obtaining their school-leaving certificate. In this case, the training periods allow the company to run a form of pre-selection to evaluate individual abilities.

Another company, world leader in communications (*Cisco*), is mainly engaged in providing telematic equipment for schools, training teachers and distance learning. It does not recruit trainees directly but offers them sound

training as systems analysts, an occupational profile much in demand on the Italian labour market.

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Source: ISFOL



## Continuing education and training policy

Spain

### Third continuing training agreement signed

The third national continuing training agreement was signed by the government, the employers organisations (the Spanish Confederation of Employers Organisations, CEOE, and the Spanish Confederation of Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, CEPYME), and the trade union organisations (Workers' Commissions, CC.OO, General Union of Workers, UGT, and the Inter-Union Confederation of Galicia, CIG), on 19 December 2000. The dual agreement comprises both a bipartite and a tripartite agreement on continuing training. The signing of the agreement, which marks an important step forward in the process of social dialogue, follows on from its two predecessors, reaffirming and consolidating the participation of the social partners in the continuing training subsystem established in the 1992 agreement, and at the same time extending the participation of the Administration stipulated in the second agreement, with the inclusion of INEM in the management of the Foundation for Continuing Training (FORCEM).

In the framework of the national vocational training programme, the national continuing training subsystem is based on the third bipartite national continuing training agreement, which lays down the participatory structure of this subsystem, and the tripartite agreement which specifies its management and funding. The agreements maintain the basic principles of the subsystem: the key role of the social partners, nation-wide application, freedom of choice and development of training and central management of funding.

The agreement is for a four year period from 1 January 2001 to 31 December 2004. During this period, the funding earmarked for the agreements is to be increased and a number of changes are to be introduced with a view to improving access of workers and companies to this mode of training:

1. A bigger role for the Administration in the context of the establishment of the Tripartite Foundation for Training in Employment, which replaces FORCEM and comprises the social partners and the Administration. The Tripartite Foundation, which will have a legal personality of its own under the auspices of the Ministry of Employment and Social Affairs, will comprise a board, with equal representation of the ministry and the social partners, and a committee delegated

by the board to conduct the management of the Foundation on its behalf. The committee's remit will include, among other things, elaboration of proposals for the granting of public subsidies paid by INEM. The participation of the Administration in the management of the system is designed to simplify and rationalise administrative procedures, and make them more effective and less complicated for both sides of industry.

In this context, Royal Decree 377/2001 of 6 April amends the INEM organisational chart by establishing a Subdirector-General for Continuing Training, to respond to the requirements and obligations stemming from the third tripartite agreement on continuing training.

2. Inclusion in the training projects of those workers exempt (along with the enterprises for which they are employed) from the vocational training contribution, e.g. self-employed workers, certain categories of civil servants and agricultural workers. These measures are to be funded from the vocational training allocation with a further ESP 5,000m (ca. EUR 30 million) from the INEM budget. The distribution of the vocational training allocation is to be determined by the Government on an annual basis as a function of the levels of employment and unemployment and workers' training needs.

3. Cooperatives and joint-stock companies in which the workers are the majority shareholders may present specific training plans adapted to the needs of the so-called 'social economy'.

4. Match of continuing training aids to the priorities of worker training in accordance with the European Employment Strategy adopted at the Lisbon summit and in the context of the European Social Fund. As pointed out at the summit, the existence of a continuing vocational training system which allows the acquisition of new skills and the continuing re-training of workers is a key aspect in increasing the competitiveness of industry and creating and sustaining full employment.

Source: National Institute of Employment, INEM, <http://www.inem.es>

France

### Occupational integration

#### Proposals for the creation of a youth allowance

The section on youth training of the report of the *Commissariat Général du Plan* (CGP) published at the end of February, entitled '*Youth, the duty of the future*', proposes the introduction of training capital and a linked allowance for each young person. In another recent report, the Council for employment, incomes and social cohesion, CERC, suggests the creation of an educational credit for young people having left the education system with no or inadequate qualifications. And finally at the end of March the Economic and Social Committee, CES, examined an opinion proposing various integration and vocational training measures, including a youth loan and allowance.

'The old idea of lifelong learning is becoming a necessity in the contemporary era. We suggest that it should nourish a political project: the obligation to provide education must be shared'. This principle having been established, the CGP report proposes a forward-looking framework centred on the entitlement to a loan, and based on the individual right to lifelong education and training. This would take the form of an initial state-guaranteed training capital for young people over a period of 20 years (longer than the current average duration of education). The report suggests that this training capital be combined with a monthly allowance of FF 1200 – FF 1700 (around EUR 182.94 – EUR 259.16) to enable young people to dispose of financial resources in accordance with their own particular situation from the age of majority. Young people opting to combine further education and work could draw both their wages and the allowance. They would therefore dispose of financial resources, not because they are young people but because they are undergoing training and thus engaged in a collective investment, or because they are

workers and are therefore remunerated for their participation in the production of wealth. This allowance would be funded by a redeployment of family allowances.

On the other hand, the individual right to training guarantees the right to vocational experience for those young people opting not to use their capital in the framework of their initial vocational training.

In the CGP's opinion, the political responsibility for the implementation of this right lies with the State and the social partners. 'Beyond its essential responsibility in the field of basic education, the public education service should become a major player in lifelong learning, from secondary to university level'.

CERC, presided by the former president of the European Commission, Jacques Delors, has for its part published a report entitled '*Access to employment and social protection*'. Its proposals are designed to stem the development of a category of 'poor workers', despite economic growth. The CERC paper proposes addressing this issue by supporting lesser skilled work, improving the status and remuneration of certain categories of employment and providing training for the jobless and those in precarious employment.

Criticising the 'employment premium' recently introduced by the government which only "marginally affects poor workers and ... does not necessarily lead to a return to 'stable employment', CERC proposes the introduction of a supplementary income allowance". Moreover with a view to upskilling of the workforce in precarious employment, the report advocates redeployment of lifelong education resources

Continued on page 11



Continued from page 10 towards those target groups which have so far remained partially unreached by these resources. The CERC report affirms the need to reinforce employment policies targeted at young people in short-term integration contracts. It proposes extending the individual right to training by introducing an educational time and money credit. Designed to cater for those having left the education system with no more than the compulsory school leaving certificate or less than eleven years schooling, 'it would correct the most blatant inequalities and would encourage the potential beneficiaries to take their future careers into their own hands'. This educational credit combined with a substitute income would guarantee the equivalent of one year of training.

Alongside the GCP and the CERC, the CES has also addressed the question of youth integration - a

priority which the public authorities must address. The proposals put forward in the opinion entitled 'The family and economic and social integration of adults aged 18 - 25', examined at its plenary session on 27 and 28 March 2001, gave rise to certain criticism from the various social partners in the discussion. The author/rapporteur Hubert Brin (president of the national union of family associations, UNAF) proposes a series of measures.

- Recognition of the universal right to lifelong learning in the form of a basic education and vocational training credit, to be granted on a life-long basis from childhood onwards, each individual being able to use this credit according to their aspirations and career advancement choices.
- Upgrading of vocational skilling programmes.
- Support to help individuals become financially independent by the

introduction of an interest-free loan and a (non-repayable) training integration grant, payment of which would be subject to the formal commitment of the young person that s/he is engaged 'in a genuine process of training and/or vocational integration'.

Sources: INFFO Flash, No 562, 15-31 March 2001, p. 8, and INFFO Flash, No 563, 1-15 April 2001, p. 4

• The CGP report 'Jeunesse, le devoir d'avenir' is available at: <http://www.plan.gouv.fr> (under 'Actualités', in RTF or PDF format); it is also published in paper form (ISBN 2-11-004834-4) by La Documentation française (<http://www.ladocfrancaise.gouv.fr>)

• The CERC report 'Accès à l'emploi et protection sociale' can be downloaded from the website of the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity: <http://www.travail.gouv.fr/index.asp> (under 'publications et vidéothèque', 'consultation en ligne', 'rapports publics').

• The CES opinion 'Famille et insertion économique et sociale des adultes de 18 à 25 ans' is available from the CES website: <http://www.ces.fr> (under 'Publications', 'Collection avis et rapports', 'base documentaire' in html and ZIP format); it is also published in paper form in the Official Journal (ISBN 2-11-092487-X)

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France

## Panorama of continuing training in France

The initial results of the 2000 survey on continuing training conducted by the Centre for Research on Education, Training and Employment, CEREQ, highlight the diversity of conditions and characteristics of training programmes in this field.

Whereas the focus of most current sources of information on continuing training is the company, the focus of CEREQ study is the individual, i.e. whether or not individuals have engaged in a continuing training programme, the objective being to observe people's attitudes to continuing training, constraints related to training access and the practices of those engaged in continuing training.

The distinguishing feature of the survey is that it includes all types of continuing training courses, regardless of objective (specifically job-related or of a more personal nature, direct or indirect) or specific form (work experience/placement, in-service training, alternance or self-directed training).

The CEREQ study shows that nine million persons - i.e. 28 per cent of the population having left school and aged under 65 - participated in at least one training course in the period January 1999 - February 2000. The majority of the courses (87%) were followed with a vocational objective in mind. Of these nine million training course participants, over three million engaged in several training actions.

The study also highlights a continued lack of equal opportunities in access to training determined by the individual labour market situation, level of qualification, gender and age. The proportion of training course participants varies according to socio-occupational category: over 50% among executives/managers, liberal professions and middle-level public sector occupations, 30% - 50% among heads of enterprise, middle-level private sector occupations, public employees and company administrative staff and 10% - 30% among farmers and agricultural workers, crafts- and tradesmen, commercial employees and skilled/unskilled workers.

A little more than 15 million training programmes were followed in the period January 1999 - February 2000,

75% of which in the form of courses, seminars, lectures or conferences. In-service training accounted for some 20%, and self-directed training 5% of the programmes. Alternance training programmes were fewer in number, the reason being that this form of training is generally followed in the context of initial vocational training, prior to entry into working life. On the other hand, the duration of the training programmes tends to be relatively short, apart from self-directed training courses, which are longer and spread over an extended time frame. The relevant specific features of the training programmes also influence their duration and type.

The participants' expectations of the training programmes are very much linked to their personal situations in terms of employment, initiative and funding. Over one half (58%) of training courses are followed on the initiative of the trainee alone or in agreement with an employer or a public institution. The training costs, even when job-related, are sometimes covered by the individuals themselves. Moreover, job-seekers finance 15% of their training programmes, compared to 4% in the case of employees.

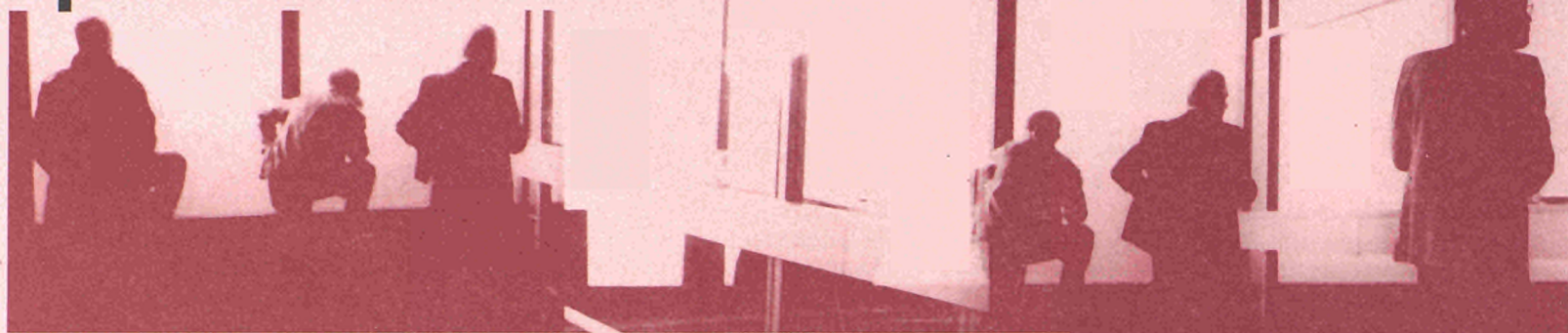
With respect to the link between working time and continuing training time, the study specifies that one quarter of the job-related training courses followed by employees are completely or partially conducted in their free time; these training courses are essentially followed to obtain a certificate or a qualification. The survey also stresses that 9% of the job adaptation courses (apart from in-service training and alternance programmes) are entirely followed in the employees' own spare time.

Sources:  
 - INFFO Flash, No 560, 16-28 February 2001, p. 1-2  
 - CEREQ Bref, No 172, February 2001, pp. 1-4 (ISSN 0758-1858); the survey can also be downloaded from the CEREQ website: <http://www.cereq.fr/cereq/b172.pdf>

• As well as the CEREQ study, see also the results of the survey conducted in March 2000 by the National Institute for Statistics and Economic Research, INSEE.  
 La formation en entreprise continue à se développer / Dominique Goux and Philippe Zamora, Employment division, INSEE  
 INSEE PREMIERE, No 759, February 2001, 4 p. (ISSN 0997-3192)  
 can also be accessed on the INSEE website: [www.insee.fr](http://www.insee.fr) (via 'Rechercher'; PDF format): [http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/docs\\_ffc/IP759.pdf](http://www.insee.fr/fr/ffc/docs_ffc/IP759.pdf)  
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# Collective agreements and social partners



France

## Negotiations on training: the employers give employees responsibility for their 'vocational development'

On 29 March 2001, the French employers (the French business confederation, Medef, the General Confederation of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, CGPME, and the Professional Craft Union, UPA) submitted their 'draft agreement on the adaptation of the vocational training system' to the trade union organisations. The employers have a wide range of ideas as to what the formula 'the individual right of employees to lifelong learning' actually entails, and therefore intend to 'take time to iron out the misunderstandings and conclude essential lines of action'. The employers' proposals are to serve as a basis for the negotiations.\*

The trade union organisations however all agree that the employers' paper cannot be the starting point for a discussion.

The employers reiterate their view that employees must be the 'protagonists of their vocational development', with two op-

tions: 'either to participate in training actions decided by the undertaking in the context of the training plan or to devote the equivalent of one year of their careers to phases of training by utilising their 'training savings account' (compte épargne formation - CEF)'. The CEF referred to by the employers is an initiative to allow all workers to collect time credits to engage in a training programme, decided either on the initiative of the undertaking and the worker in the framework of an agreed development plan, or solely on the initiative of the worker within the context of individual training leave (congé individuel de formation - CIF). In the latter case, the employers propose that workers be supported by the individual training leave management fund, Fongecif, every five years to enable them to construct their own individual career project, the time involved 'being charged to the employee's training savings account, or deducted from his/her free time entitlements'. The employees' unions have reacted strongly to these proposals.

Source: INFFO Flash, No 563, 1 - 15 April 2001, pp. 1&3

\* In the context of the ambitious project of de 'social restructuring' launched by MEDEF, a series of negotiating meetings on vocational training between the social partners have already taken place since December 2000.

Further information:

• News flashes on the Centre INFFO website: <http://www.centre-inffo.fr/act.html>

• On 'social restructuring' ('refondation sociale'): see the MEDEF website: <http://www.medef.fr/refondation/index.html> (cf. the article highlighting eight issues related to joint industrial relations, entitled 'Paritarisme: huit thèmes en discussion', published in the electronic version of Cedefop Info 2/2000: <http://www.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22000/C20J6EN.html>)

• An analysis on the challenges of the restructuring of continuing vocational training entitled 'Les enjeux d'une refonte de la formation professionnelle continue: bilan pour un futur' (February 2001, 38 p., PDF format) has been submitted to the trade union organisations as a working basis. The authors are Yves Lichtenberger, Philippe Méhaut, assisted by Michel Didier, Jacques Freyssinet and Patrick Guilloux. This report can be downloaded from the MEDEF website: [http://www.medef.fr/refondation/refdoc/refdoc-pdf/refdoc-pdf\\_2001/02-26-01\\_formation-rapport.pdf](http://www.medef.fr/refondation/refdoc/refdoc-pdf/refdoc-pdf_2001/02-26-01_formation-rapport.pdf) or the Cereq website: <http://www.cereq.fr/cereq/bilanfp/bilanfp.pdf>

Netherlands

## The practical importance of collective agreements on education and training

The development of the knowledge society underlines the vital role of competences and qualifications to employers, as well as employees and those seeking employment. This role relates respectively to the link for the balance sheet of a company and to the position of the employee on the labour market.

From both perspectives, education and training are more and more seen as essential elements in a labour market survival strategy. Important developments such as decentralisation in the labour market and the educational field, the increasing relevance of employability and competences (instead of 'the function' or 'the profession'), and developments in labour and education affecting not so much a specific sector but a cross-section of several sectors, can be identified. The combination of these requires an integration of (the knowledge of) education and the labour market and of industrial relations.

In the Netherlands, a few decades ago collective agreements between employers and employees concerning education and training had more or less the character of 'charity'. In the last fifteen years, these agreements have become part of a general strategic policy aimed at correcting the failures of the market.

The publication 'How effective are collective agreements on education and training?'\* based on empirical data gives an idea of the importance of collective agreements on education and training in practice. The central themes are the education and training elements in the collective labour agreements and the

involvement of the social partners in the design of the national qualifications for initial training, where key competences have taken a central role.

### Effects and results

Collective agreements provide possibilities for individual education and training development plans, educational leave and function-related training. Their effect on training activities is difficult to measure precisely, but is clearly present, as a catalyst or a push factor. The fiscal support of the government also plays a stimulating role.

The most important result of the empirical research is that the so-

called 'riskgroups' (employees in the SME-sector, low-skilled or flexible employees) still have difficulty in accessing training. Furthermore, the intensification of training is mostly aimed at specific training for the current position in a company and not at generic training for individual development or to stimulate mobility to other sectors.

### Recommendations

The recommendations for enhancing the effects of collective agreements focus on broadening their impact. They suggest

- underlining the importance of collective agreements not only for formal education, but also for other ways of (informal) learning. Strong

learning environments could be the primary criterium in this respect;

- paying attention to the optimal combination for a framework for competences exceeding the direct link with the company and the development of individual competences. The main criterium will be the value of competences on the external labour market;

- finding possibilities in agreements and implementation strategies to break through the barriers of separate sectors;
- creating comparable training incentives for those persons not falling under collective agreements;
- creating links between initial and post-initial qualification procedures by linking the policies of the national

vocational bodies (responsible for the qualification structure) and employers' organisations and trade unions;

- stimulating in collective agreements the possibility of relating national agreements to regional needs.

\* B. Hövels, J. Frietman, L. Rutten, H. van den Tillaart, J. Warmerdam. *Hoe leerzaam zijn collectieve afspraken over scholing en opleiding? (How effective are collective agreements on education and training?)*, in Dutch. Elsevier company-information, Scientific Publications Series. 2000. ISBN 90-7166-758-8. Price: EUR 34.46 and can be ordered at Elsevier Bedrijfsinformatie - Tel. (31-70) 441 5500 - Fax (31-70) 441 5900

This publication was initiated by the Henri Polak Institute, which is the scientific institute of 'de Burcht'. De Burcht was set up as a common initiative of the Dutch Trade Unions (FNV, CNV, MHP). Further information: Prof. Dr. B. Hövels, B.Hovels@its.kun.nl

Source: CINOP/Elsevier

Ireland

## Social partnership at enterprise level

In recent years there has been a growing emphasis on partnership in Ireland, deriving in the main from the influence of a succession of partnership agreements at national level of which the *Programme for Prosperity and Fairness* (see Cedefop Info 2/00) is the most recent. This emphasis at national level has been mirrored by organisations, which themselves have begun to explore and implement partnership-based strategies and techniques aimed at enhancing such factors as competitiveness, productivity, the employee relations climate and the quality of working life. Such initiatives have encompassed strategies in areas as diverse as World Class Manufacturing, new forms of work organisation

and training and development. In addition, there is increasing evidence to suggest that a partnership approach can facilitate and strengthen the development of effective training and lifelong learning strategies.

In response to this emerging trend it was felt by both the employers' body the Irish Business & Employers Confederation (IBEC) and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) that the links between partnership arrangements and the quality and effectiveness of training and lifelong learning needed further structured analysis as well as greater dissemination. To this end the social partners with the assistance of Skillnets - an em-

ployer-led training networks programme - (see Cedefop Info 1/00) designed a comprehensive programme of research in the area. Through this, IBEC and ICTU have tested the concept and effectiveness of a partnership approach to the delivery of training and have produced a series of case studies\* on social partnership arrangements in 10 Irish companies, representing the private and semi-state sectors.

The case studies illustrate:

- how employers and employees/unions, working together, develop new approaches to training design and delivery;
- how partnership processes can positively influence the environment

in organisations for training and development and in particular lifelong learning;

- the extent to which joint approaches have impacted on training practices and processes and indeed training arrangements generally;
- how training and development in partnership skills impact beneficially on other organisational or business processes.

\*IBEC/ICTU: *Partnership in training and lifelong learning, case study pack*. 2001 Available: ICTU, 31-32 Parnell Square, IRL-Dublin 1. Tel: (353-1) 889 77 77 Fax: (353-1) 887 20 12 Publication web address: [http://www.etst.ie/eu\\_ptll.html](http://www.etst.ie/eu_ptll.html) Contacts: Mr Peter Rigney, ICTU, e-mail: [peter.rigney@ictu.ie/](mailto:peter.rigney@ictu.ie/) Mr Liam Doherty, IBEC, e-mail: [liam.doherty@ibec.ie](mailto:liam.doherty@ibec.ie) Source: FAS



**Page 13 Employment policy** A: 'JOBFABRIK': new job opportunities for young under-achievers; B: The Walloon region redefines its position and action in the labour market; **page 14 New training organisations and programmes** A: Training regains popularity; B: New VDAB training course in sound engineering for jobseekers; D: 'JeeNet' project on the imparting of e-commerce skills; S: Two new vocational education programmes at tertiary level?; **page 15 Quality and certification** DK: The IT-Mirror – an IT-evaluation tool; FI: Skills demonstrations to be introduced to ensure the quality of vocational education; N: "Do your duty - demand your rights"; Impressum; **page 16** B: ISO CERTIFICATION 9002 introduced by school in the French-speaking community; **Financing** IRL: New legislation on the financing of training; **Training of trainers** I: Training teachers in new technologies.

# Employment policy/New training organisations and programmes Quality and Certification/Financing Training of trainers



## Employment policy

Austria

### 'JOBFABRIK': new job opportunities for young under-achievers

The JOBFABRIK, a regional initiative from Austria, leads young people with no lower secondary leaving certificate towards a vocational qualification and long-term social integration. Alongside concrete vocational training elements, the initiative also aims at imparting the value of continuing vocational training and lifelong learning in order to secure sustainable labour market integration as far as possible. This initiative was examined within the context of the Cedefop project 'Lower Skilled Workers', an analysis conducted by the Centre to identify innovations and best practices, and evaluated as a model for other EU Member States.

Young people in Austria with no lower secondary leaving certificate generally only have one alternative: unskilled labour. The JOBFABRIK now offers them a second chance to gain a vocational qualification. The JOBFABRIK scheme, designed in 1996 in the context of People's Aid Austria/employment initiatives and promoted by the Federal Office of Social Affairs for Vienna, Lower Austria and Burgenland, was launched in September 1997 with a small group of youngsters and has been considerably expanded in scope over the last four years.

#### Vocational preparation for young under-achievers

As well as vocational preparation, the JOBFABRIK project is above all focused on social integration, seeking to integrate young people with no lower secondary leaving certificate into the labour market. The target group is comprised of young under-achievers aged 15 - 17 who have failed to pass the compulsory school-leaving certificate or gain access to a vocational training course but who, because of their potential, would benefit far too little from previously designed programmes in this field (e.g. occupational therapies for those with learning difficulties).

As well as leading the young participants towards a vocational qualification, the initiative seeks to impart key skills such as flexibility, reliability and a sense of responsibility, etc., the focus being on subsequent integration into the primary labour market in the form of an apprenticeship or, if this is not possible, the secondary labour market (e.g. a skilling programme).

The innovative aspect of the JOBFABRIK is the consistent project character of the learning process which involves concrete and as far as possible practically-oriented simulation in various working areas designed to impart vocational and social competences.

#### The basic concept of the JOBFABRIK is practice-oriented project work combined with intensive guidance.

Alongside concrete project-based work supported by guided learning, the programme comprises 4-6 hours of theoretical tuition per week which is based on both the practical work of the participants and the general requirements of the relevant training occupation. As well as acquiring a knowledge of key theoretical concepts, participants are introduced to the vocational school and its requirements. Special remedial teaching is also delivered. All these elements lead to a gradual build-up of learning skills designed to facilitate access to future training and continuing training measures.

The JOBFABRIK offers five working areas (catering, renovation, cookery, communication and quick-service catering), each comprising a one to two-year period of work experience linked with remedial teaching, social and psychological guidance, etc. A central and innovative dimension of the project is the fact that the young participants find themselves in a challenging environment, very similar to that of a regular workplace, in which they are provided social and psychological guidance.

JOBFABRIK services are offered via the market. Assignments are accepted from clients in the five working areas and performed by the participants in a real-life working situation. A company coordinator additionally seeks placements for trainees in corresponding firms to give the young people an insight into the world of work and at the same time serving as a springboard into a regular job or a training contract. These supportive placement and active guidance functions are of fundamental importance for optimum, long-term integration of JOBFABRIK participants into the labour market and the relevant occupations. Moreover successfully placed youngsters are followed up in the workplace over a period of approximately half a year to ensure sustainable integration as far as possible.

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Source: Cedefop/RL0

Belgium

### The Walloon region redefines its position and action in the labour market:

#### New MANAGEMENT CONTRACT: FOREM becomes a public employment service

In April, the Walloon Minister of Vocational Training and Employment, Marie Arena, and the FOREM management committee signed the management contract governing the Community and regional agency for employment and vocational training (FOREM) in Wallonia for the period 2001-05.

This management contract envisages a complete overhaul of the role and the mission statements of the public employment and vocational training service based on the following four considerations:

1. elimination of the public monopoly on the placement of jobseekers (ratification of ILO Convention No 181 and Recommendation No 188 on private employment agencies) and the introduction of a mixed system of labour-market management,
2. adaptation of t interim<sup>(\*)</sup> (public service sector) to European competition rules and a better focus of the public employ-

ment service within the context of the global European strategy for employment,

3. redefinition of FOREM's role and mission statement to cater for these new requirements,
4. restructuring within the public employment service of the coordinating mechanisms of the integration system.

#### A new STRUCTURE comprising two spheres:

**1. The public employment and vocational training service** (B-type agency of public interest – joint industrial management) will comprise two units:

- a) **Overall general management/coordination:**
  - coordinating functions (e.g. in the field of information on training programmes), integration and motivation of the multiple operators which receive its support,

Continued on page 14



Continued from page 13

- information, guidance and counselling for individuals and firms on the services offered by all operators,
- integration of 'insertion' pathway coordination (designed as provision comprising different simultaneous or non-simultaneous components),
- analysis of labour-market requirements and proposal of adequate measures,
- implementation of programmes resulting from the employment policies defined or validated by the Walloon government.

#### b) Public training operator (separate management unit)

- vocational preparation activities are no longer carried out with transfer of the relevant resources to activities conducted in partnership with authorised vocational preparation operators,
- management of free services for jobseekers, workers and firms in the field of vocational training centred on programmes providing a qualification,
- secures access of disadvantaged target groups (lesser skilled, long-term unemployed) to skilling programmes implemented by the operator (with a view to equal employment opportunities).

#### 2. Joint services (separate management unit)

- services addressed to the two other units (human resources management, accounting, design and logistics, IT, ...).

Moreover a **public limited company** is to be set up to deliver commercial paying activities in a competitive environment (and therefore continuing the activities of **t interim**)

- match supply and demand in the temporary employment market,
- deliver for payment recruitment and selection services and any other service related to non-gratuitous placement.

These activities are exempt from public subsidies and must therefore be self-sufficient with a distinct approval for each category (temping, placement, recruitment, etc.).

In general terms, FOREM is committed to improving customer satisfaction at the level of individuals, enterprises or operators and the rate of integration of jobseekers using its services. It will also be mindful of administrative simplification and the compliance with the principle of gender equality and equal opportunities in the framework of its public service mission.

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(\*) **t interim: T Service Intérim** was founded in 1980 as the only public temporary employment agency and is to remain so. In the wake of the process of regionalisation, **T Service Intérim**

was divided into three clearly distinct units, each attached to its organisation of reference (VDAB, ORBEM, FOREM)  
In Wallonia, **T Service Intérim** - which now comprises 17 agencies - was granted autonomous financial status within FOREM in 1994.

**T Service Intérim** was renamed **t interim** in January 1998. However this was much more than a mere symbolic change in name, the organisation has adopted a new spirit and a new dynamism with more effective tools.  
At the end of 1999, **t interim** launched the 'guided temporary integration' model and is building pathways to fight against structural marginalisation which may become one of the dominant issues of the third millennium.  
**t interim** received ISO 9001 certification in February 2000.

Further information from: [http://www.forem.be/tinterim/index\\_dyn.html](http://www.forem.be/tinterim/index_dyn.html)

Sources: Alter Echos ... pour décoder l'info sociale (91), pp. 2-8/  
CIDOC/Cedefop/EFG



## New training organisations and programmes

### Austria

## Training regains popularity

'Fit for Future' 2001 focuses on innovative foreign language learning

Young Austrians increasingly regard self-employment and entrepreneurship as attractive career prospects while apprentice training is again becoming more attractive for industry. The apprentice of today is the highly skilled worker of tomorrow. A high level of commitment and comprehensive training open up career opportunities for many young people on the basis of apprentice training. These two developments in the Austrian economic scene were presented to the public at large in the context of the 'Fit for Future' competition, organised by the Institute for Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy, IBW, with the support of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), the Junior Chamber Austria (JW), the federation of young industrialists, *Junge Industrie*, and a number of major firms.

One of the criteria for participation in the competition was a business start-up no earlier than 1995 and an innovative training programme in the framework of initial vocational training. Evaluation of the entries showed that young start-ups deliver training in new occupations, e.g. IT engineer and fitness instructor, assigning their trainees delimited fields of activity with their own responsibility. As well as acquiring job-related expertise, trainees are prepared for the modern working world in special training programmes imparting key skills e.g. teamwork and communication skills.

In conjunction with the European Year of Languages 2001, this year's 'Fit for Future' competition focuses on innovative foreign language learning in Austrian training enterprises.

Further details from Mag. Josef Wallner, Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft, e-mail: wallner@ibw.at.  
Source: Josef Wallner, IBW/Cedefop/SK

### Germany

## 'JeeNet' project on the imparting of e-commerce skills

Pilot project develops didactic concepts for the imparting of new skills in the vocational training of future qualified employees in the commercial sector.

How is e-commerce changing the tasks of those whose job profiles previously involved merely traditional commercial requirements? What new skills are required and how can these skills be imparted in the vocational training of future commercial professionals? These are some of the questions addressed by the pilot project 'Junior Enterprise Network (JeeNet) - skills development in networked junior firms on the basis of e-commerce and entrepreneurial action', which has been jointly launched by the mail-order company Otto Versand and a number of vocational schools in Hamburg. The project, supported by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research and the Federal government-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion, is co-ordinated by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB).

The 'embryo' of the pilot project is the Otto Versand junior firm 'Cultur-e', the centre of a virtual corporate network linking up Hamburg

firms and vocational schools which have also set up virtual junior and school firms. JeeNet offers a platform for the development and testing of didactic concepts and methods facilitating the acquisition of e-commerce and independent entrepreneurial skills by means of self-directed learning. The pilot project participants draw up guidelines on how to start up an e-commerce junior firm, dealing with virtual customer contacts and skilling training coordinators as learning facilitators. There are also plans for the establishment of an online centre to function in parallel with the project, offering all the stakeholders an opportunity to draw on the experience of the project and develop their own solutions.

Further information on the pilot project can be obtained from Konrad Kutt, Tel. (49-228) 107 15 13, e-mail: kutt@bibb.de and Jeanette Rouvel, Tel. (49-40) 64 61 72 16, e-mail: jeanette.rouvel@otto.de.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

### Belgium

## New VDAB training course in sound engineering for jobseekers

The Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service (VDAB) introduced in Brussels a new four-month continuing training course in sound engineering from the end of March 2001. The programme, addressed to jobseekers, included technical and practical courses as well as a four-week work placement. Participants are expected to have a

basic knowledge of electricity and sound engineering but candidates without the necessary admission requirements may, if necessary, follow an initial training course in basic sound engineering. The continuing training course will be free of charge; participants will retain their entitlement to unemployment benefit and their travel expenses will be refunded.

More information at: [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)  
Source: VDAB Gestion Média et Bibliothèque/lcodoc

### Sweden

## Two new vocational education programmes at tertiary level?

In May, the Swedish Parliament (Riksdag) approved the introduction, on a permanent basis, of Advanced Vocational Education (AVE) from January 2002. Since 1996, there has been an AVE pilot project and a special authority outside the university sector has been established for it.

Also in May, another, in this case interim, report proposed the introduction of a new vocational university examination. The final report from this commission will be presented at the end of this year. The commissioner says in the present report that the demand in the labour market for vocational education is very great, and that although AVE is an important form of education, there is also a need for shorter education at university level.

AVE is a new form of post-secondary education in which one third of the time is spent in the application of advanced theoretical knowledge at the workplace. This is not just a traditional traineeship period, but active workplace learning and problem-solving in an overall educational context. The courses are based on close cooperation between enterprises and various course providers. The courses that receive the authorities approval are designed

to correspond to real needs in the employment market. The courses are from 1 to 3 years in length. In the board for every course there must be at least one representative from a university and one from the municipality from which the applicant organisation is coming. AVE has been evaluated\* by a group from the Luleå University of Technology

It is interesting to note that for the present time the universities must take part in the boards of the AVE courses. The question, for the future, is what will happen if there are to be short (not more than two years) vocational university courses leading to a vocational university examination. Will the two systems complement, or compete with, each other?

\*SOU 1999: 119. Björkman, Fredriksson, Garvare, Johansson, Klefsjö, Lindell, Lindgren, Olsson and Svensson. *Utvärderingen av KY* (An evaluation of the AVE) - a summary is available in English.

Source: Swedish Programme Office



## The IT-Mirror – an IT-evaluation tool

Continued from page 1

The IT-Mirror has been developed to evaluate how IT has been integrated at educational institutions in the entire education system - from the level of basic schooling to further and higher education.

The IT-Mirror has a two-fold objective.

On the institutional level, the IT-Mirror works as an Internet based survey which each educational institution can carry out. On the basis of the data submitted by the institution, the IT-Mirror compiles an analysis of the institution's level of IT-integration and a possibility for comparison with other institutions within the same sector. A technical college can compare its IT standards with the national average for other technical colleges (participating in the IT-Mirror). Availability of IT equipment at the institution is only one point of measurement in the survey,

the IT-Mirror also analyses more "soft" data such as management/teacher/student values and attitudes to IT, the integration of IT in teaching and the requirement for competence development for teachers and staff.

On a national level, the IT-mirror is to benchmark the IT-level of the Danish education system in relation to the overall objective of the government, i.e. to make Denmark a leading IT-nation.

The IT-Mirror was launched in April 2001. All educational institutions will receive an invitation to participate in the project. If the institution accepts, it receives a password for accessing the IT-Mirror on the Internet ([www.netskolen.dk](http://www.netskolen.dk)). The IT-mirror consists of a number of questionnaires directed at the various stakeholders in educational institutions. Management, teachers and students will all be able to access the IT-Mirror, fill in a questionnaire and thereby contribute to the overall analysis of the institution's level of IT-integration.

The IT-Mirror is initiated by the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Information Technology and Research, and the National Labour Market Authority in co-operation with PLS Rambøll Consult.

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Source: DEL

## Finland Skills demonstrations to be introduced to ensure the quality of vocational education

**Working life expects qualifications from vocational education to give students versatile and flexible vocational skills. In order to meet this challenge, the culture of learning at work and in educational institutions needs to be strengthened.**

In Finland, upper secondary level initial vocational qualifications were reformed at the turn of the new millennium (see Cedefop Info 2/2000, page 14). The fundamental idea of the reform was to bring education and working life closer together and to ensure the quality of education. From the beginning of this year, all initial vocational qualifications should last three years, should include a minimum of six months of on-the-job training and should provide qualifications for universities and other institutions of higher education.

### Skills demonstrations show competence

A decision has been taken to include demonstrations to prove that the vocational objectives set in the curriculum for initial vocational qualifications have been achieved. These skills demonstrations are final projects implemented in cooperation

with employers. They may, for example, be demonstrations at the workplace, projects implemented during an on-the-job training period or portfolios. Generally speaking, skills demonstrations are arranged in real working-life situations.

Skills demonstrations are arranged at all stages of education. Their purpose is to show the level of vocational skills at the time. They are checkpoints for teachers and especially for students and provide opportunities to review, together with external experts, the progress of studies. Education providers are responsible for arranging skills demonstrations, which are assessed by teachers and representatives of working life. Although the assessments are based on local implementation, attempts are also made to ensure unified elements in the qualification. In Finland, core curricula are national, but each education pro-

vider edits its own curriculum according to the local requirements. The national core curriculum defines, among other things, the contents of different study modules and student assessment criteria. Instructions for implementing skills demonstrations and their place in studies will be included in the core curricula.

### Skills demonstration experiments

Skills demonstrations will be included in initial vocational qualifications at the end of the experimentation phase. The first experiments started at the beginning of 2000 and there are currently over thirty pilot projects underway. Cooperation projects to develop material for skills demonstrations are being implemented. Each education sector produces material for the skills demonstrations within its initial vocational qualifications. Research into implementation of skills demonstrations is

underway. The aim is to experiment with skills demonstrations in all sectors of education before the system is introduced more generally.

The first experiments have been underway for just over a year and initial results are already available. The most positive aspect has definitely been the enthusiasm shown by education providers and working life. There have been far more applicants than it has been possible to accommodate.

Students have a positive attitude towards skills demonstrations and they clearly value on-the-job learning and assessment of learning results in real-life situations. Skills demonstrations have boosted their motivation to study and have introduced an insight into competence development. Experience shows that the participation of representatives of working life in planning and assessing skills demonstrations has increased the reliability of assessment and introduced more practical aspects.

Planning and implementation of guidance and support measures before, during and after skills demonstrations have been included in the experiments with a focus on support provided before skills demonstrations, such as, charting competence needs and determining the initial level of students. Support measures have included things like individual and small-group guidance, drawing up skills demonstrations plans together with students as well as various tutoring activities. After skills demonstrations, students have received thorough feedback on their performance and they also have had an opportunity to give feedback and to reflect on their experiences. Self-assessment has been promoted in various ways. Feedback on a skills demonstration has proved to be a very useful learning situation for many students.

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Source: NBE, Helsinki



## Norway "Do your duty - demand your rights"

The Norwegian Government has recently published a White paper on higher education called "*Gjør din plikt – krev din rett*"\* (Do your duty – demand your rights). The reform is often referred to as the quality reform and relates to students in all sectors.

The government wishes to facilitate student learning and improve student flows, in terms of both the quality of the education and its relevance to the economy. The institutions must provide high quality education and a follow-up service. This entails clearer responsibilities for the individual student as regards the completion and progress of their studies.

Among the proposals are:

- a considerable increase in student grants;
- a more efficient use of the study year;

- restructuring of the degree system;
- a greater autonomy for universities and colleges through organising these as administrative bodies with special authorisations and,
- considering the possibilities for colleges to use the nomination "university".

Another important aspect of the paper is the emphasis on mobility. The Ministry believes that Norwegian educational institutions should be in the front line when it comes to cooperation with European counterparts and student exchange across national borders. As a means of promoting this, increased weight must be given to participation in international exchange programmes and in institution-based exchange agreements. An objective is to create the conditions for an exchange opportunity as part of the study of all higher education students. Institu-

tions of higher education may be required to offer an exchange opportunity to all interested students. The Ministry will evaluate the possibility of a reallocation of resources to strengthen the internationalisation strategies in the universities and higher education institutions.

Can be found on the internet on [www.odin.dep.no/odin/norsk/publ/stemeld](http://www.odin.dep.no/odin/norsk/publ/stemeld) and can also be ordered from Akademika A/S - PO Box 8234 Dep - N.0033 Oslo  
Fax (47-22) 42 05 51 - e-mail: [offpubl@siu.uio.no](mailto:offpubl@siu.uio.no)  
Price: NOK 58 (EUR 7,34)  
The White paper has not yet been translated into English.

For further information:  
Kirke-, Utdannings- og forskningsdepartementet  
Akersgt.44, postboks 8119 DEP.  
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Source: Leonardo da Vinci, NA Norway



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# ISO CERTIFICATION 9002 introduced by school in the French-speaking community

The first school in the French-speaking community - the Free Technical Institute of Ath (Institut Technique Libre - ITL) - was awarded ISO 9002 certification(\*) June 2000 - the result of three years of work:

1. Launch of the project in the wood-work section with the introduction of the customary quality tools (audit, listing of positive and negative points, proposed solutions for the negative points, evaluation of accomplished work).
2. Division of the personnel into ten groups (with a facilitator for each group), followed by an audit (of positive and negative points) conducted by the facilitators in each section. Each group then chose two specific points and was tasked with finding a solution within a given deadline.
3. Decision to follow up the application for ISO certification: adaptation of the quality procedure at the ITL (in partnership with two external

communication and quality consultants) on the basis of translated documents of the ISO standard for training agencies. In parallel, elaboration of the relevant procedures by the facilitators, assisted by two colleagues, over a period of two academic terms.

Almost sixty procedures were drawn up, describing the activity of the school and the role of each person in the fields of organisation and training as precisely as possible.

The procedures fall into three main categories:

- General organisation and training,
- Workshop logistics and relations with suppliers, technical assistance,
- Support activities (dissemination and management of procedures and ongoing upgrades).

The procedures were submitted to a steering committee and the manage-

ment, and then presented to the director for approval and distributed amongst the entire teaching staff. Following two months of application, each procedure was evaluated internally (does it correspond to the set objective, is the application of rules appropriate for the procedure in question?).

At the end of the academic year, the ITL was awarded ISO 2002 certification by an external agency responsible for the overall audit.

However over and above the question of procedures, the essential objective is ongoing improvement.

This is carried out using a number of tools: corrective and preventive actions, improvement sheets drawn up by the teachers and subsequently monitored by the quality coordinator, cases of non-conformity reviewed by the quality coordinator and the management, collection of

complaints from students and parents, internal audits and, last but not least, an annual survey to determine parental satisfaction.

Despite the internal (part of staff's working hours, photocopies) and external costs (remuneration of external consultants) this type of project incurs, the ITL has benefited from an enhancement of its relations in terms of contacts with firms (placements, cooperation on equipment, the shared interest in 'quality' certification in technical and vocational education).

The essential dimension of certification is the application of a 'quality' approach to all aspects of the organisation of the establishment - above all the educational component - in order to involve all the students and their teachers so that quality and quality management will serve the overall interests of any academic institution.

N.B.:  
(\*) Created by the International Standards Organisation, ISO standard is a universal tool describing how quality management should be applied. It permits a more rational distribution of resources which is not detrimental to jobs. It is an ongoing tool for the further training and upgrading of the responsibility of members of staff. Initially introduced within industry, the 'total quality' concept has since opened up to the private, and subsequently non-commercial sectors. ISO certification is valid for a period of three years and subject to intermediary audits.

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International Standards Organisation  
<http://www.iso.ch/index.html>  
Sources: Alter Echos ... pour décoder l'info sociale (No 85), 11/2000, pp. 7-8, 20-21./CIDOC

## Financing

Ireland

### New legislation on the financing of training

New legislation providing for the financing of training in Ireland has been recently introduced. The National Training Fund Act, 2000 represents a change in the way training of people in, and for, employment is funded. The fund, based on a levy on employers' social insurance contributions, will replace the previous sectorally-based levies - the Apprenticeship Levy and the Levy Grant schemes administered by FAS-Training and Employment Authority. It is estimated that the fund will yield EUR 180 million in 2001.

Ms Mary Harney, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment, stated recently that the "National

Training Fund will provide more flexible, responsive and dynamic structures for the training needs of our economy today." It will finance a range of schemes aimed at raising the skills of those in employment and providing training for those seeking employment. These training initiatives include company-specific and sectoral training programmes, apprenticeships and traineeships, and employment-related training programmes for the unemployed.

A significant feature of the Act is the provision for consultation with employer and employee representatives. The Minister announced the establishment of a National Training

Advisory Committee to facilitate this consultation process and to ensure that national training policy is responsive to the needs of enterprise. Previously sectoral training committees had supplied this function. The Committee will advise of emerging trends and needs in relation to training and will help ensure a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of enterprise training across a broad range of publicly funded bodies.

The Irish Business & Employers Confederation (IBEC) welcomed the National Training Fund. IBEC believes that the National Training Fund has the potential to make a significant difference to enhancing

the skills levels of those at work. Employers are anxious to see that the fund, which is resourced by employers' contributions, will focus on supporting training that is market relevant and enterprise-led. On the other hand, the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) "supports the idea of a dedicated and ring-fenced training fund, with an effective col-

lection mechanism", but "strongly opposes the use of the legislation to abolish the existing tripartite sectoral training committees."

National Training Fund Act, 2000. (Available: Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 4-5 Harcourt Road, IRL-Dublin 2. Tel. (353-1) 647 68 34, Fax (353-1) 671 35 89. Price: EUR 2.54  
Publication web address: <http://www.irlgov.ie/bills28/acts/2000/a4100.pdf>

Source: FAS



## Training of trainers

Italy

### Training teachers in new technologies

Some of the most innovative recent refresher courses for Italian teachers are the training courses in multimedia technologies envisaged under the Ministry of Education's Piano di sviluppo delle tecnologie didattiche - PSTD (Didactic technology development plan).

According to data published by the Ministry in the "Rapporto di monitoraggio 2000 e prospettive", the project has involved 400,000

teachers. For the time being, teacher training is limited to basic knowledge and the most common software packages. In fact, teachers still have difficulty in applying their new skills to teaching and regard ICT (Information and Communications Technology) training mainly as an opportunity for personal cultural retraining.

The report observes that use of the Internet in schools is still very limited and that it is mainly used by teach-

ers for personal purposes. However, the report also notes, in the section on perspectives, that school establishments need to make a major jump forward in terms of developing networks by introducing Internet services and teaching, and by exploiting the opportunities offered by distance learning.

New courses, organised by the Ministry of Education itself, or by its individual Departments, or in cooperation with external bodies are

soon to be launched for this purpose using the funds allocated to the Ministry from the UMTS (new-generation cellular 'phones) auction. They will not only provide teachers with basic know-how, but also provide teachers with two new occupational profiles: 15,000 as reference contacts for the use of technology and multimedia resources in teaching and 6,000 as managers of technology infrastructures in schools.

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The "2000 monitoring report..." (in Italian only) is downloadable from: [http://www.istruzione.it/innovazione\\_scuola/didattica/pstd/default\\_pstd.htm](http://www.istruzione.it/innovazione_scuola/didattica/pstd/default_pstd.htm)

Source: ISFOL



**Page 17 Vocational training statistics** DK: Increased intake and fewer drop-outs in initial vocational training; NL: Substantial growth in secondary vocational education sector; P: National classification of training areas; **page 18** NL: Ripe and unripe - early school leaving: preventative or curative strategy; **Special target groups** B: Belgium keeps lesser-skilled women at home; DK: TAMU – a successful way to activate “maladjusted” youngsters; **page 19** IRL: Mainstreaming services for disabled persons; Conferences – Seminars – Exhibitions; **page 20** info-point Internet @.

# Vocational training statistics Special target groups



## Vocational training statistics

Denmark

### Increased intake and fewer drop-outs in initial vocational training

The latest figures from the Statistics and Information Division in the Danish Ministry of Education show that the number of students in a youth cohort choosing to enrol in an initial vocational training (IVT) programme has increased from 32.5% in 1994 to 37% in 1998.

The main reason for the increased number of students in IVT is a substantial reduction of the “residual” groups. The number of young people continuing in the education system after basic school has overall increased. The figures also reveal an-

other positive development i.e. that the number of students who fail to complete an IVT programme has decreased from 35.5% in 1980 to 23% in 1998.

However, the figures also cover a number of young people who are rather undecided in their educational and vocational choice. Many of them start – and even complete – general upper secondary education (*Gymnasiet*), only to find out that their first educational choice was not the right one. The profile figures show that 14% of a youth cohort

complete both IVT and general upper secondary education. The Danish government hopes to reduce the number of “surfers” in youth education through extended educational and vocational guidance in basic school and offers of bridging activities.

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Source: DEL

Netherlands

### Substantial growth in secondary vocational education sector

The secondary vocational education sector grew substantially in the 2000/2001 academic year. A 3 % rise brings the total number of students in this sector to 423,000. In the work-based route, which combines part-time education with an apprenticeship in a company, the number of students has increased by more than 10,000 to 142,000 students.

Moreover, part-time training courses in the college-based learning route are increasingly popular (a rise of 4,100 to 27,500 students). The national authorities had not expected these developments.

For more information on the Dutch secondary vocational education sector: [www.dutch-vet.nl](http://www.dutch-vet.nl) or the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science: [www.minocw.nl](http://www.minocw.nl)

Source: CINOP

Portugal

### National classification of training areas

**Vocational education and training are playing a growing role in the quality of employment. The lack of comparable data concerning initial and continuing training has proved a hindrance to timely, consistent and effective action by the various bodies with responsibility in this area.**

This situation led Eurostat and Cedefop, basing themselves on a sub-classification of areas of study in the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) to produce a manual containing a set of guidelines for use by the different countries in drawing up their own national classifications. The Portuguese Interministerial Commission on Employment (CIME) has set up a working party, which has translated and adapted this manual to conditions as they exist in Portugal, the

result being the National Classification of Training Areas.

This classification is being utilised in gathering and processing data concerning vocational training, particularly in connection with surveys and studies and determining available training for the purposes of the European Social Fund (ESF).

Sixty-two training areas have been identified and taken into account in the areas of study. These cover two

or more training areas, one for more general programmes and another for programmes not included under another training area. Each training area includes a certain number of training programmes. As soon as a programme is classified under a given training area this classification can be used in compiling training statistics for participation in educational or training programmes or for the type of certificate of qualification awarded upon completion of a given programme.

The major areas of study are: general programmes, education, arts or humanities, social sciences, commerce and law, science, engineering, processing and construction indus-

tries, agriculture, health and social protection, services.

Training areas are defined in terms of content. In order to simplify use of the National Classification of Training Areas it is provided with both an alphabetical and a systematic index.

Source: Ministerial Order No 316/2001/Diário da República No 78 of 2 April/CIDES

The national classification of training areas drawn up by CIME (Interministerial Commission for Employment) may be downloaded in Portuguese from:  
[http://www.ccr-n.pt/actreg/Port2006/downloads/2\\_5\\_classificacao\\_nacional\\_das\\_areas\\_de\\_formacao\\_cimezip](http://www.ccr-n.pt/actreg/Port2006/downloads/2_5_classificacao_nacional_das_areas_de_formacao_cimezip)  
 Website of the Interministerial Commission for Employment (in Portuguese)  
<http://www.cime.mts.gov.pt/apresentacao.html>

More detailed information on the work done by Cedefop and Eurostat using the sub-classification of areas of study of the International Standard Classification for Education (ISCED) will be found at:  
[http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/library/certification/cert\\_main.asp](http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/library/certification/cert_main.asp)



# Ripe and unripe - early school leaving: preventative or curative strategy

The number of early school-leavers seems to have increased in the first half of 2000, according to regional training centres (*Regionaal opleidingcentrum - ROCs*). They leave school to start work or do not finish their training, thus ending up without a diploma.

The prospects of work for these persons in the coming years are poor, due to decreasing economic growth and the demand for higher educated employees. Last year in Lisbon, the European Council agreed to strive for a reduction by half in the number of those dropping out without basic qualification by 2010.

## Push and pull factors in early school leaving

The Dutch Ministry of Economic Affairs has commissioned the SCO-Kohnstamm Institute to research the push and pull factors in early school leaving in secondary vocational education\* The research is entirely based on interviews with (potential) early school-leavers and is focused on a preventative strategy asking for example, which factors influence early school leaving and how can these influences be reduced?

Pull factors are external ones influencing students. Push factors however are more difficult to precise, but can relate to the content and form of the training (theory and practice), the student him/herself, motivation, etc. Pull factors are not mentioned as, alone, being influential. Some 30% of the school-leavers, mostly from the work-based learning route, mention a combination of push and pull factors, while 70 % mention push factors as the main reason to drop out. The most important of these are related to the content and the level of difficulty of

training courses, the quality of (and support during) the practical training in companies, motivation of the student or lack of advice and information on the choice of occupation.

Other important aspects according to (potential) early school-leavers are a better atmosphere in schools, more efficiency in their organisation and a more flexible intake system. Other recommendations, aimed at companies, are that employers should not hire employees, who do not have any diploma and should stimulate employees to follow training courses (or design training routes in cooperation with the school). The government could contribute to this problem by removing obstacles to companies in the construction or financing of these training routes.

## Ripe and unripe

The publication *Ripe and unripe*\*\* focuses on young people without a basic qualification who have started to work. What curative solutions exist to lead these early school-leavers to a diploma? CINOP has, with all the regional training centres, made a national inventory of the current school leaving situation. A conclusion is that schools mainly try to redirect students to the classroom, and that the offer is too 'school-oriented' and not sufficiently 'people-oriented'.

The authors propose experiments starting from the specific situation and potential of the school-leaver. However, to guarantee success, these experiments should have broad support from employers, employees, sectoral organisations, government and schools. Therefore, small-scale experiments, including the following elements, are advised:

- the starting point for learning should be the work situation (tailor-made training),
- paying attention to methods of financing (not only employer, but also employee, see experiments in UK and France),
- monitoring the careers of early school leavers,
- the active use of accreditation of prior learning (APL) policy,
- the use of distance learning and ICT-applications.

\* Voncken, E. et al. *Je bent jong en je weet niet wat je wilt.... Een inventarisatie van push- en pull factoren die leiden tot voortijdig schoolverlaten in de bve-sector.* (You are young, and you don't know what you want.... An inventory of push- and pull factors leading to early school leaving in the VET sector. Publication in Dutch only). SCO-Kohnstamm Instituut. Amsterdam. 2000.

Further to this research, the Dutch Inspectorate commissioned another research, entitled *Voor wie is de school? Jongeren over de invloed van het schoolklimaat op het voortijdig schoolverlaten.* (For whom is the school? The opinion of young people on the influence of the atmosphere in school on early school leaving. In Dutch only. *Inspectie van het Onderwijs* (Inspection of Education). Inspection report nr. 2000-6. Den Haag. 2000.

\*\* Doets, C. and A. Westerhuis. *Rijp en groen. Startkwalificaties voor jonge voortijdig schoolverlaters.* (Ripe and unripe. Basic qualifications for young drop outs). Publication in Dutch only. CINOP Expertisecentrum. 's-Hertogenbosch. 2000.

Further information: CINOP (mmaes@cinop.nl)

Source: CINOP / SCO-Kohnstamm Instituut



## Special target groups

### Belgium

## Belgium keeps lesser-skilled women at home

In all Western countries, the rate of participation of highly skilled women in working life is nearly as high as that of men whereas the lesser-skilled are less emancipated in this respect. This is particularly true of those countries in which the traditional continental social model predominates - with Belgium at the bottom of this group.

This at least is the conclusion of a study conducted by the Centre for Social Policy, (CSB) of the University of Antwerp (Ufsia). The rate of highly skilled women who go out to work in Belgium is similar to that among

men. Whereas in most countries the female participation rate at this level is 10 - 15 per cent lower than the corresponding rate among men, Belgium scores well in this category: only 8 per cent lower than men.

Social policy evidently has less of an impact on the emancipation of highly-skilled women than their lesser-skilled peers. The Scandinavian countries - Sweden, Norway and Denmark, sometimes called the 'social-democratic' model countries, with an abundance of accessible crèches and 'social' measures at the level of the workplace, e.g. parental

leave - show slightly higher but not substantially different figures. 'Liberal' countries, e.g. the USA or the United Kingdom, and European countries with a generally strong system of social security also show very high scores for these women.

However the picture is completely different for lesser skilled women for whom the policy aspect makes all the difference. At this level there is a wide gap between the 'social democratic' and the other countries: in the former group, more than two-thirds of lesser-skilled women go out to work whereas in continental Europe

less than one half of these women are in employment, with Belgium registering one of the lowest rates of activity: less than one third of lesser-skilled women in the workplace (29 per cent); only Italy and Spain show lower rates (22 and 20 per cent respectively).

Conclusion: the participation of lesser skilled women in working life could be greatly improved by large-scale efforts in terms of crèche availability and social work. Without these measures the income gap between highly and lesser skilled women will continue to widen. This

in any case is the conclusion of the Ufsia study. Moreover those with an inadequate level of education tend to marry persons with the same background, a pattern which also holds true for those with high level of education. This means that if lesser skilled women are not encouraged to enter the labour market, low skilled families will remain single-income households and higher skilled families will remain double-income households. This will result in the emergence of a group of high double-income households and a group of low single-income households.

Further information from: [www.vdab.be](http://www.vdab.be)  
Source: VDAB Gestion Média et Bibliothèque / Icodoc

### Denmark

## TAMU - a successful way to activate "maladjusted" youngsters

A recent evaluation report shows that the training schools' labour market training courses (*TAMU - træningsskolens arbejdsmarkedsuddannelse*) is an efficient means to motivate "maladjusted" young people for a job or continued training. One to two years after completion of the scheme, 40% of the participants are in a job and 21% have begun an ordinary training programme.

According to the evaluation report, TAMU is one of very few Danish training schemes which is relevant to "maladjusted" young people. TAMU schools are special schools under the

National Labour Market Authority offering a range of labour market courses targeted at 18 - 25 years old with personal and social adjustment difficulties. The courses are organised according to individual training plans comprising special versions of labour market courses lasting a total of 28 weeks. Training in TAMU is primarily work based and the participants produce a number of marketed goods and services.

The profile of a typical TAMU participant is an unemployed male between 18 and 30 years old. He has not been able to complete a regu-

lar training programme due to social problems, learning disabilities etc. Furthermore, he often has a criminal past or problems with drug or alcohol addictions.

The main criterion behind the TAMU success is the pedagogical principles on which it is based: the participants experience a strict pedagogical regime where they are taught - by doing - that all actions have consequences. TAMU develops the social, work and personal competencies of the participants and thus facilitates their entrance to the labour market or the ordinary education system.

The Danish evaluation report is available in Danish and can be read at the homepage of the National Labour Market Authority: <http://www.ams.dk>. For further information contact PR Consultant Vivian Jordansen (vjo@ams.dk)  
National Labour Market Authority  
Blegdamsvej 56  
P.O. box 2722  
DK-2100 København Ø  
Tel. (45-35) 28 81 00  
Fax (45-35) 36 24 11  
E-mail: [ams@ams.dk](mailto:ams@ams.dk)  
Web-site: <http://www.ams.dk>

Source: DEL



# Mainstreaming services for disabled persons

The re-integration of people with disability into the workforce has become a priority in Ireland and is the focus of additional Government funding for specific labour market measures.

Speaking at the announcement of the funding, Ms Mary Harney, the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment stated "In spite of the improved employment situation in recent years, many people with disabilities experience difficulties in gaining access to, and remaining in, employment. At a time when many employers are finding it difficult to fill vacancies, there needs to be a recognition that people with disabilities can contribute to meeting the current skills shortages in many sectors." The unemployment rate for people with disabilities, currently based only on anecdotal evidence, is disproportionately higher than that for other groups. The true figure will be established in the next national census, planned for this year.

Generally services for people with disability have been mainstreamed since June 2000 and most are now being delivered by the public bodies that provide the services for everybody else. Ministerial responsibility for labour market services for people with disabilities has moved from the Department of Health and Children to the Department of Enterprise, Trade and

Employment. The vocational training functions of the disbanded National Rehabilitation Board have been assumed by FAS-Training and Employment Authority.

Vocational training is one of the primary routes for re-integrating people with disability into the workforce and it is recognised they should have access to the widest possible vocational training provision, specialised and/or mainstreamed. FAS has adapted to its new role of providing labour market services to people with disabilities with the implementation of a training and development strategy on issues of disability, improved access to all its premises and the establishment of a Disability Support Unit. In addition to facilitating access to existing FAS programmes and services, the following employment support schemes are also provided:

□ Supported Employment Programme - an open labour market initiative that seeks to facilitate the integration of people with disabilities, who traditionally have had difficulty getting

into paid employment, by providing on-going support on the job

□ Employment Support Scheme - offers financial support to employers, to encourage them to employ people with disabilities whose productivity levels in a job are between 50% and 80% of the norm. The person is paid the normal rate for the job and a grant is paid to the employer to cover the shortfall in productivity.

A grant for disability training for employers and a grant to re-train workers who become disabled while in employment have been recent initiatives. The fund announced by the Minister will provide EUR 6.85 million to increase training allowances, to the Supported Employment and Employment Support Schemes and for testing new approaches to employment and training of people with disabilities.

Contact: Ms Shira Mehlman, FAS, Disability Policy and Development Unit, 27-33 Upper Baggot Street, IRL-Dublin 4. Tel: 353-1 6077449. E-mail: shira.mehlman@fas.ie

Source: FAS

## CONFERENCES – SEMINARS – EXHIBITIONS

### Cape Town/ South Africa

4 to 6 October 2001

Technology Education - Optimal Use of Resources

Contact:

PATT Technology Conference Secretariat, Cape Technikon, P.O. Box 652, 8000 Cape Town, South Africa.

Tel. (27-21) 460 36 57

Fax (27-21) 460 37 01

<http://www.ctech.ac.za/conf/>

### Paris/F

17 to 19 October 2001

Panorama du dispositif de la formation professionnelle continue:

acteurs, financements, mesures

Centre INFFO - Tour Europe, Paris-La Défense, France

Contact:

Centre INFFO - Tour Europe, 33, place des Corolles, F-92049 Paris-La Défense, France

Tel. (33-1) 41 25 22 22

Fax (33-1) 47 73 74 20

E-mail: [cinffo1@centre-inffo.fr](mailto:cinffo1@centre-inffo.fr)

[www.centre-inffo.fr](http://www.centre-inffo.fr)

### Paris/F

8 November 2001

Les contributions des entreprises au financement de la formation professionnelle continue: utilisation

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Paris-La Défense, France

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### Paris/F

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[www.centre-inffo.fr](http://www.centre-inffo.fr)

### Seoul/Republic of Korea

21 November to 23 November 2001

National Strategy for Developing Human Resources through Technical and Vocational Education and Training

The 2001 Krivet International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Korean Research Institute Vocational Education & Training (KRIVET)

Institut coréen de recherche sur l'enseignement technique et la formation professionnelle (KRIVET)

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15-1, Cheongdam-2 dong,

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[www.krivet.re.kr](http://www.krivet.re.kr)

### Paris/F

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F-92049 Paris-La Défense, France

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### Brussels/B

27. bis 29. November 2001

Employment week 2001

The New European Labour Market -

Acting Locally planned with the

cooperation of the Employment and

Social Affairs DG of the European

Commission and under the patronage

of the President of the European

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Haleon House,

4 Red Lion St.,

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UK - Surrey, TW9 1RW

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Fax (44 20) 8332 0874

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Web: [www.employmentweek.com](http://www.employmentweek.com)

### Berlin/D

28 November to 30 November 2001

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7th International Conference on

Technology Supported Learning and

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Contact:

Astrid Jaeger, ICEF GmbH,

Niebuhrstr. 69 A, D-10629 Berlin,

Tel. (49-30) 32 76 140

Fax (49-30) 32 49 833

E-mail: [online-educa@icef.com](mailto:online-educa@icef.com)

<http://www.online-educa.com>

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The editorial team of Cedefop Info constantly receive numerous press releases, reports and contributions from vocational training experts and specialised agencies of all kinds with a view to their publication. We are delighted with this response and the great interest shown in Cedefop INFO. However, owing to the limited scope of the paper-based version of Cedefop Info, we have no alternative but to make a selection and are therefore unable to publish all the contributions. Selected texts and information, such as listed below, which do not appear in the printed issue are therefore made available to our readers via the Internet.

## Belgium

### Flemish school of aviation to be opened in Ostend

The Katholieke Hogeschool Brugge Oostende (KHBO) is to open a school of aviation at its Ostend site; this at least has been decided by the KHBO and the deputy (federal) Prime Minister, who also holds the federal budget portfolio.

## Denmark

### CIRIUS – Concentrating the efforts to internationalise Danish education

On 1 July 2000, CIRIUS, the Centre for Information and Consultancy about International Education and Co-operation Activities, was established. The Centre is to be a key actor in the Danish efforts to internationalise education at all levels.

## France

### The many challenges of training reform

'The introduction of genuine lifelong learning is a major challenge for our society; the supposition is that it is embraced by all economic and social players'. As guest speaker at the national colloquium on lifelong learning, organised by the National Union of Independent Trade Unions, UNSA, on 28 March 2001, Nicole Péry, State Secretary for Women's Rights and Vocational Training, thanked UNSA for addressing this issue and its support for the validation of non-formal learning, one of the elements in the draft Law on social modernisation before the French parliament and adopted in its first reading by the National Assembly on 9 - 11 January 2001.

## Belgium

### Belgium to compete in 36th WORLD SKILLS 2001

After Montreal in 1999 and Lisbon in 2000 (cf. Cedefop Info 1/2000), the prestigious World Skills Competition is to be hosted by Seoul in September 2001.

## Germany

### 'Lead projects' foster cooperation between different places of learning

**From the virtual university to Web-based training of trainers**  
Five 'lead projects' sponsored by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training Affairs (BIBB) seek to enhance cooperation between different places of learning with the aid of modern information and communication technologies. The projects on the key theme of 'use of the knowledge available worldwide for initial and continuing training and innovation processes' have been earmarked EUR 71.6 m in funding by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research.

## Germany

### Environmental skilling elements in initial and continuing vocational training

#### Inauguration of Competence Centre for Sustainable Construction with a database for interactive teaching and learning

The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) regards the new premises of the Competence Centre for Sustainable Construction in Cottbus as an important contribution to vocational training policy within the context of Agenda 21, which calls for a culture of environmental responsibility and sustainability.

## Germany

### 'Girls' Day' event to attract more young women to the jobs of the future

#### German premiere focuses on the IT sector

'Today's generation of young women has received the best education and training ever. We cannot afford to leave this potential for the jobs and sectors of the future untapped': this was the essential message from Federal Minister of Education and Training Edelgard Bulmahn on the occasion of 'Girls' Day', a first-time event organised by the Confederation of German Trade Unions (DGB) and Initiative D21 under the Minister's patronage and designed to promote young women's interest in the jobs of the future and to encourage them to opt for atypical occupations.

## Germany

### Hermann Schmidt Prize for project in support of disadvantaged young people

#### Pilot project 'Step-by-step training in industrial metalworking occupations' leads disadvantaged young people to formal qualifications

The Offenburg association for the vocational advancement of young people, Jugendberufshilfe Ortenau, has been awarded the Hermann Schmidt Prize 2000 for outstanding achievements in the field of the vocational advancement of disadvantaged groups by the Association for Innovative Vocational Training, presided by Professor Helmut Pütz, Secretary-General of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB).

## Spain

### Labour market reform

The government has adopted Royal Decree Law 5/2001 of 2 March, comprising a series of urgent measures of labour market reform, designed to promote employment growth and enhance its quality.

## Portugal

### Regulation governing the young people's 'use of leisure' programme

Whereas a healthy use of leisure time undoubtedly assists young people's training and development and thus constitutes one of the most effective means of avoiding behaviour putting them at risk; whereas the 'use of leisure' programme seeks to encourage young people's direct contact with nature and improve their knowledge of their environment, particularly in historical, cultural and social terms;

## Portugal

### Operational programme for the economy Specific regulations governing assistance equipping towards people with skills and qualifications to meet new challenges

This regulation sets out the legal provisions governing the grant of assistance for vocational training under the 'Assistance in equipping human resources with skills and qualifications to meet new challenges' measure of the Operational Programme for the Economy (OPE), which supplements Community and national regulations applicable to the European Social Fund.

## Italy

### Thirteen occupational profiles for 'net economy' enterprises Enterprises belonging to the so-called 'net economy' are looking for technical experts with skills relating to the new Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs).

According to a survey carried out by FEDERCOMIN, a trade association belonging to Confindustria (Italian Employers' Federation) and grouping ICT enterprises, there are around 100,000 vacancies for people with ICT skills. In Europe, the figure is over one and a half million.

## Italy

### Quality model for the analysis of skill requirements in enterprises Recording training needs is one of the most important contributions that social partners have made to national employment and training policies in recent years.

Almost all the countries of the European Union possess structures set up jointly by social partners in order to adapt vocational qualifications and anticipate training needs as a result of the changes brought about by the introduction of new technologies in the production systems and work organisation.

<http://www.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22001/Ind-en.html> @





# AGORA

## THESSALONIKI

Word, Thought, Power, Deed

### The Agora corner: Agora XI - The learning region

**Cedefop's Agora XI was organised in close cooperation with Barry Nyhan who is responsible with others for the CEDRA (Cedefop Research Arena) project. It took place at Cedefop headquarters in Thessaloniki on 15 and 16 March 2001.**

This Agora was chiefly concerned with social cohesion and integration within a group, i.e. a generalised involvement in active citizenship. The two main paths to economic and social integration in a developed society are education and training, and employment. The relationship between training and employment is a daunting one. The strategy opted for by the European Union at the Extraordinary Summit on Employment held in Luxembourg on 20 and 21 November 1997 involves a four-pronged approach: a spirit of enterprise, the capacity for work which is still referred to as employability, adaptability and equality of opportunity. Vocational education and training has a long-term influence on each of these and hence indirectly on employment. Nonetheless the determining factor remains the economic and social structures into which individuals need to become integrated. Vocational training can prepare people for taking on new jobs, but equally important is the willingness to take them on and to make jobs available to them.

This is where, as Agora XI showed, the learning region concept opens the way to achieving a balance between economic and social development policy that makes it possible to maintain or where necessary restore social cohesion.

#### What, briefly, does this concept involve?

It teaches us that it is the people concerned who are actually on the spot in a rural area, urban neighbourhood, town or region that are best placed and - even more important - most willing to make the necessary effort, to solve their problems.

The European Union has told us that we must render people employable by means of initial and continuing vocational training and by education generally. The learning region adds: 'Let us give these people work; we will make them trainable and train them'.

The learning region concept starts out from the principle that regional and local authorities, firms - and paradoxically small and very small firms especially - are capable of making a particular effort to offer paid work to those who would certainly not have found employment elsewhere. This is because the people concerned are close, because potential employers and employees are bound together by a series of family, cultural, religious and sporting ties or quite simply because they are neighbours and it is hard to refuse to give one's neighbour a helping hand.

Local solidarity of this kind only has to be called upon to make itself felt, regardless of social class or ideological, political or religious differences. However, it obviously cannot go on developing ad infinitum and cannot have a lasting effect unless the effort made is a general one and unless, in the competitive framework of a market economy for which we in the European Community have opted, the conditions permitting effective cooperation between local agents have been established. Competitive cooperation has to be organised as a form of network incorporating firms producing goods and services, bodies providing training and encouraging innovation, centres of research generating such innovation, banks financing it and local authorities which, by exercising a certain moral authority, stimulate communication between them.

The case studies presented at Agora XI, such as the *Aliende* association in the Alentejo region of Portugal, the *Union Régionale des Structures d'Insertion par l'Économie d'Alsace* in France, the *J100-Regiones* project in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy and many others, particularly in the Balkan countries, are not isolated examples. Embryonic learning regions can be found more or less everywhere in Europe and only have to be

identified and given initial support before being launched as independent epicentres of development capable of solving local problems of unemployment and shortcomings in social provision and infrastructure at minimum cost and with lasting effect.

However, the Agora discussions have shown that the trickiest task is that of fixing the roles to be played by those at different levels of responsibility - local, regional and European.

If local people and organisations are genuinely capable of working towards trainability and of achieving social cohesion combined with economic profitability, they have difficulties starting the process up and getting it under way. Prominent local people and those in positions of authority do not always possess the necessary charisma, know-how, energy, time or means to create the kind of network described, locate sources of funds and put a learning region on the map.

This is where national and European authorities can and must play their part. It is at national level that general frameworks can be defined, setting a course to be followed, providing financial and tax incentives and making human resources available. It is at national level, too, that a watch should be kept to ensure that equal treatment is accorded to the various learning regions so that no part of the country lags behind and any tendency to nepotism or collusion is avoided.

It is at European level, on the other hand, that the various experiments being undertaken can be collated and analysed in order to disseminate good practice and create the framework for competitive cooperation, for example by establishing a certain number of common barriers against social dumping practices from outside. It is also at European level that efforts can be directed towards ensuring equality of treatment, not between one region and another but between countries, as the ESF endeavours to do.

This leaves us with the fact that it is good will at local level and joint efforts to address problems directly or indirectly affecting all those in the various local structures that will generate innovative solutions of benefit to all, whose effects do not remain locally confined but have repercussions in terms of the national economy at large and hence also that of Europe.

The ubiquitous presence of a national authority that leaves no room for manoeuvre at local level, impeding efforts to develop local potential and independence and thus often unintentionally curbing initiative and rendering it sterile, will stifle the learning region before birth.

On the other hand, a national authority conspicuous by its absence, one that is distant and indifferent, will fail to help the learning region get on its feet or support its efforts to construct local development networks. In order to structure and assert themselves effectively vis-à-vis government authorities and outside firms, these networks will need the underpinning and legitimacy that stems from benevolent public authority support.

This is the whole problem of an education system torn between the comfort of state control which while protectionist induces sterility and inhibits any real independence in the long run, and the difficulties of a free learning process that is risky and often painful for both master and pupil but is ultimately a guarantee of autonomy and future development.

Source: Éric Fries Guggenheim,  
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 tel: (30-310) 490 189  
 fax: (30-310) 490 117

#### Further information on the learning region:

Barry Nyhan, Graham Attwell and Ludger Deitner (eds.):  
 Towards the Learning Region. Education and regional Innovation in the European Union and the United States, Cedefop, Luxembourg, Cedefop - Reference document, December 1999

A number of papers concerned with the learning region presented at Agora XI can be downloaded from the Agora Thessaloniki website of Cedefop's Electronic Training Village:  
<http://www.trainingvillage.gr/>

For additional brief information on the Agora project and Agora meetings to date please refer to Cedefop Info Nos 2/2000 and 1/2001:

<http://www.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22000/C20TIEN.html>

<http://www.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo12001/C11A5EN.html>



# Selected bibliography

Some recent publications in the field of vocational education and training have been selected below by Cedefop's Library and Documentation Service (Anne Waniart – E-mail: anw@cedefop.eu.int).

## EUROPEAN ORGANISATIONS



You are free to browse or download on-line publications. Alternatively, you can obtain hard copies of these publications by contacting the local sales agent for the Office for Official Publications of the European Communities. <http://eur-op.eu.int/general/en/s-ad.htm>

### The eLearning action plan: designing tomorrow's education/ Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament

Documents COM (2001)172 final Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001, 19 p. ISSN 0254-1475 en Available in: de, en, fr

## Directorate-General for Education and Culture



**European associations in the field of education/European Commission, Directorate-General for Education and Culture** Brussels: European Commission, 2001, 104 p.

Availability: European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Rue de la Loi 200/ Wetstraat 200, B-1049 Bruxelles/ Brussel, Tel. (32-2) 299111 URL: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/associations/repertoire.pdf>

### The Bologna declaration: an explanation

Brussels: European Commission, 2001, 10 p. Availability: European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Rue de la Loi 200/ Wetstraat 200, B-1049 Bruxelles/ Brussel, Tel. (32-2) 2991111 URL: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/erasmus/bologna.pdf>

### Where to be trained in Europe: training projects for professionals of the audiovisual industry in Europe supported by the MEDIA programme

Brussels: European Commission, 2001, 59 p. Availability: European Commission – Directorate-General for Education and Culture, Rue de la Loi 200/ Wetstraat 200, B-1049 Bruxelles/ Brussel, Tel. (32-2) 2991111 URL: <http://europa.eu.int/comm/avpolicy/media/results/training00.pdf>

## ETF



**Review of progress in vocational education and training reform of the candidate countries for accession to the European Union in the light of developments in European policy on vocational training**

European Training Foundation - ETF Turin: ETF, 2000, 17 p. ISBN 92-9157-244-9

### Work Programme 2001-2003

European Training Foundation – ETF Turin: ETF, 2001, 56 p. ISBN 92-9157-243-8 Available in: en, es, it and ru URL: [http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/genpubdown/\\$file/work-prog-01-03-en.pdf](http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/genpubdown/$file/work-prog-01-03-en.pdf)

## Eurydice

[www.eurydice.org](http://www.eurydice.org)



### Foreign language teaching in schools in Europe

Information Network on Education in Europe - EURYDICE Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2001, 372 p. Eurydice studies 2-87116-311-1-en URL: <http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/Flt/En/FrameSet.htm>

## Eurostat



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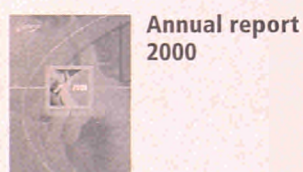


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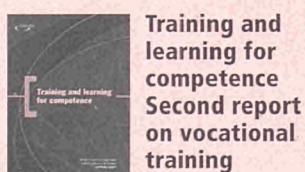
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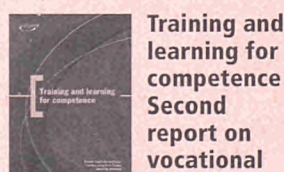
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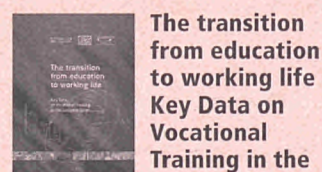
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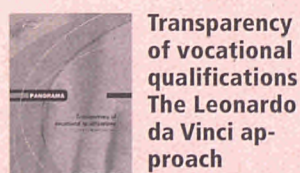
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