

Cedefop takes further steps towards the dynamic knowledge society with its 2002 work programme

'Learning and employment' is the central theme of the new report on vocational training policy / Candidate countries are to have their own web presence in the European Training Village

With its new work programme, Cedefop will continue to promote the development of vocational education and training as it steers a course towards a dynamic knowledge society. The Centre's medium-term priorities 2000/2003 once again provide the guidelines for its result-oriented approach: Cedefop consistently promotes skills and lifelong learning, new forms of learning, employment and competitiveness and the transparency of vocational qualifications throughout Europe.

Furthering research in vocational education and training in Europe plays a special role in this field. The Cedefop Research platform, Cedra, is active in its own research, commissioned research and the sharing of knowledge. This year, Cedefop is to continue to develop the European Research Overview (ERO) as an interactive electronic-based communication instrument for researchers. The Centre is also set to moderate and encourage development networks covering work-process knowledge, work-related learning, key qualifications, network-learning and early recognition of new

skill needs. Work is to continue on the third research report on vocational training, which focuses on the impact of vocational education and training measures at the level of individuals and enterprises and on growth, employment and competitiveness. The European journal *Vocational Training* is a further tool serving to promote research and the series of *Agora Thessaloniki* provide vocational education and training experts with a forum for the discussion of the results of the latest research. Three seminars are planned for this year on the following topics: the image and standing of vocational education and training, how to empower individual learners and learning in enterprises.

Cedefop's ongoing reporting on developments in national vocational education and training systems provides the basis for a concerted European approach to issues of relevance to VET. Cedefop keeps pace with the rapid changes taking place in vocational education and training by constantly updating its information strategy. Detailed information on

sectoral or regional developments is just as much in demand as summaries and comparative information. Alongside three issues of *Cedefop Info*, a whole range of publications is planned in the European Training Village, including updates of the short descriptions of the national systems of Spain, Denmark and Greece to tie in with the EU presidencies; these descriptions will also be published in printed form.

In 2002, Cedefop will lay the foundation for a broad-based, integrated information and analysis platform for reporting on developments in lifelong learning. To take forward this aim, the Centre will bring together information on access to lifelong learning, the role of the social partners, innovative tools and the learning-conducive workplace. Over and above this, a major conference on lifelong learning is

being planned in cooperation with the OECD, and scheduled for June 2003. Cedefop will continue to disseminate the outcomes of European initiatives and programmes, in particular the Leonardo da Vinci programme, and contribute to the development of a database of examples of good practice.

The training of trainers network, TTnet, is to expand throughout the year to associate Germany and Sweden as well as other sectoral partners. A key area of cooperation will be the implementation of the teachers and trainers elements of the European Commission's Communication on lifelong learning and the eLearning action plan. Cedefop is to examine the improvement of teachers' and trainers' competences in cooperation with Eurydice. The implementation of the eLearning action plan also serves the analysis of future job profiles

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Spain

Vocational training: integration is on the agenda

The new Spanish law on Vocational Training and Qualifications (1) follows on from the recent European Union summits with the fundamental objectives of harmonising training and vocational qualifications with a view to free movement of workers and mobility. As vocational training in Spain is not yet up to EU standards, changes are necessary to adapt the system to the requirements of the labour market. The situation was spelled out by European Commissioner for Employment and Social Affairs, Anna Diamantopoulou, in a letter to

Madrid criticising the lack of uniformity of Spanish vocational training. It is striking to note that only 41% of Spanish students are engaged in vocational training, compared with 58% in the EU as a whole.

Moreover, trends in employment call for training provision to keep pace with new information and communication technologies, EU languages, team work and safety in the workplace, as well as the concept of continuing training and lifelong learning.

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Belgium

Springboards for the integration of people with disabilities in the field of higher education

A committee of experts convened by the Flemish Minister for Education has concluded a report on higher education for people with disabilities which recommends the creation of a 'Flemish disability and study platform'.

The role of this platform will be to compile practical solutions with a view to integrating people

living with disabilities into the education system of the Flemish community. A number of educational establishments offer what are often excellent solutions to facilitate access to higher education for people with disabilities whereas others have little or no knowledge of the various possibilities available.

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Work programme 2002

Letter of the Director

Human resource development remains very near the top of the EU agenda. This is indicated by the stream of communications from the European Commission, such as that on mobility and skills (see the article on page 5 in this connection), the decisions at the Education Council on 14 February and the documents prepared for the forth-coming Barcelona European Council meeting. Education and training are also a priority of the Spanish presidency and at national level the Spanish government is piloting a major piece of legislation through parliament (see the article commencing on page 1).

However, what is the reality behind all these declarations? Are education and training systems becoming more effective? In particular are they meeting the needs of the marginalised and poorly skilled sectors of our society? To what extent are new methods of delivering learning opportunities being fully and effectively used? Cedefop's study in relation to eLearning (see article on page 3) revealed a patchwork situation in this regard. Similarly our work on mobility (see article on this page) and the report from the Netherlands (on page 17) underline the need to plan and deliver mobility opportunities in a more integrated and consistent way. If these are a part response on the issue of how people learn, our reference work on key qualifications (see page 3) will be a major contribution to the ongoing discussion about basic skills and the question of what should people learn.

Cedefop has entered 2002, not only with its annual work programme which is summarised on page 1 and 2, but also an action plan to make us more efficient and visible in our efforts to establish and maintain our role as the reference centre for VET in Europe. Implementation of this plan has already commenced. We are now preparing medium-term guidelines for the period from 2003 to 2006. During that period, the Union will have up to 10 new Member States and one of the major challenges for Cedefop will be to develop new working methods which make it possible to integrate these countries effectively in our work. To do this we will continue to familiarise the candidate countries in our work and prepare their transition and integration, provided that additional resources are made available.

I would encourage all those who use our services and products to provide their comments on these, contacting us at info@cedefop.eu.int.

Johan van Rens
Director
28 February 2002

and skill needs, which Cedefop is to pursue in conjunction with partners from the business world. Cedefop is to develop a database for occupational and skill profiles in the ICT sector and participate in the 'ICT Skills Monitoring Group', led by the European Commission – DG Enterprise. As a joint initiative with the German Federal Institute for Vocational Training, BIBB, Cedefop will develop quality criteria for web teaching and learning. A European system for the observation of eLearning is to be developed in the context of a two-year project.

In cooperation with the European Commission, Cedefop will prepare lifelong learning statistics, and will publish a classification of learning activities in liaison with Eurostat. This is scheduled for the autumn. The theme of this year's report on vocational training policy will be learning and employment. Cedefop will also hold two meetings of the European forum on transparency of vocational qualifications during 2002, to focus on the certificate supplement format, national reference points and CV format. The forum is also to observe the outcomes of non-formal learning and to consider European standards in vocational education qualifications.

Mobility as a didactic tool

In October 2001, Cedefop organised the 13th event in the series of the "Agora Thessaloniki"; this time on the theme of "mobility as a didactic tool". The seminar was an attempt to bring together practitioners and researchers as well as representatives from the social partners and the European Commission to discuss and critically examine the issue.

Opening the seminar, Cedefop's deputy director, Mr Stavros Stavrou, outlined how mobility had gradually come to the fore in European as well as national VET-policies over roughly the past decade as a new pedagogical practice. He described how mobility - notably in the shape of placement projects - was used to supplement the provisions of national VET curricula by providing a framework for acquiring international skills (foreign language proficiency and intercultural competence), transversal skills (adaptability as well as entrepreneurial, interpersonal and communicative skills) and specific vocational skills. Integrating transnational placement projects in education and training was also seen as a means to promoting European cohesion and citizenship as well as improving labour market mobility within Europe. He concluded his intervention with the observation that the theme of mobility in VET had not been the subject of much scientific work yet, and that many of the statements made about it seemed to be based on assumptions and hypotheses rather than research-based facts.

Anja Kalchschmid (formerly University of Bayreuth) challenged the hypothesis that participation in a mobility project - or the very fact of spending time in another country - in itself would always carry with it a positive net effect in terms of skills acquisition and attitudinal changes. This was the conclusion she drew from her scientific accompaniment of a three-week mobility project carried out under the Leonardo da Vinci programme. Skills acquisitions and increased intercultural understanding were indeed there, but as a potential rather than a foregone conclusion. To realise this potential, careful attention was needed in the preparation, implementation and de-briefing phases of mobility projects. This opinion was echoed by Mr Manfred Lukas from the Franco-German Youth Office (DFJW/OFAJ), a bilateral body drawn up by the French and German governments in the aftermath of the Second World War to improve relations between the two countries - notably through a programme of youth exchanges. In terms of intercultural understanding, he stated, mobility projects may actually strengthen prejudices rather than dispell them, unless carefully prepared, monitored and evaluated.

The ensuing discussions focused mainly on the "engineering" aspects of mobility, or on how projects might be organised in a way to facilitate optimal outcome in terms of learning. There was a broad consensus that mobility represented a new line of thinking in pedagogy; based on

The European quality forum is also to meet twice this year to report on progress made on quality management and self assessment in vocational education and training institutions, types of examination and certification practices and indicators for a European quality in vocational education and training strategy. In this context, Cedefop is to elaborate a glossary on quality terms and in cooperation with the University of Florence and the European University Institute (EUI), the Centre is to organise the first international conference on the history of vocational education.

As far as 'Exchange and supporting partners' is concerned, the focus for 2002 is to remain on the Community study visits programme. This programme (see also page 4), with 31 participating countries, stimulates exchanges and discussions on vocational training between more than 730 experts. The themes to be addressed include links and interaction between initial and continuing training, the quality of vocational education and training systems and the effects of the social dialogue on the basis of the example of the transport sector. The 13 candidate countries are to be integrated as far as possible into Cedefop's activities, including electronic information networks

and the study visits programme. Specific information resources for the candidate countries are currently being created within the European Training Village.

Dissemination of its products and services is another key area of Cedefop's activities. Sales of hard copy publications increased 51% in 2000 compared to 1999; queries to the library and documentation service rose by 60%. In 2001, over 133 000 files were downloaded from Cedefop websites. A more active marketing strategy is to ensure even greater promotion and dissemination, e.g. by linking Cedefop's participation in conferences, fairs and exhibitions with the promotion of specific new publications. In 2002 the European Training Village (ETV) intends to increase the number of registered users by at least 10% and market Cedefop reference publications by creating specific web pages.

The 2002 work programme is available from Cedefop in both a summary (in all EU official languages) and full length (English, French and German) form. It is also available in these languages on the Cedefop website, www.cedefop.eu.int.

Source: Cedefop/SK

constructivist rather than behaviourist principles and on learning rather than teaching. This necessitated innovative approaches, both for the construction of the "didactic space" as well as for the control of the learning process and the measurement and recognition of the competencies acquired. To facilitate the discussions, several interventions on specific issues had been foreseen. Wolfgang Hellwig from the German Institute for International Pedagogical research (DIPF) provided an input on the role of host companies, based on a study currently being undertaken for Cedefop. Here he stressed the need to develop strategies for encouraging public and private companies to take trainees from abroad on placements, and to set up criteria for quality assurance for the learning process in the company. Peter Wordelmann from the Federal Institute for Vocational Training - BIBB (D) spoke about evaluation methodologies for mobility projects and programmes, indicating that this was an area where more efforts needed to be made. Laurent Eliascewicz from the French public employment services (ANPE) put mobility into the context of lifelong learning, and described the conclusions of a mobility project involving an adult audience. Philippe Perfetti, director of the French organisation SESAM, talked about their work to help training centres integrate mobility into their curricula. Finally, Alexander Kohler from the Austrian Leonardo National Agency gave an account of the efforts to define quality criteria for Austrian Leonardo mobility projects. The discussions were rounded up by Mr Simon Neergaard-Holm from

the Danish Employers' Confederation, and Mr Radim Ryska from the Education Policy Centre of the Charles University in Prague (Czech Republic).

The approximately 30 researchers, practitioners and programme administrators participating in the Agora discussed the subject intensely, and, at times, even passionately. For Cedefop, it constituted an important step in the Centre's effort to promote information exchange and knowledge generation and to build up a proper community of practice for this important area of European VET-policy.

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The different contributions to the Agora 13 are to be published and downloadable on the Website of the Agora Thessaloniki project: <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/agora/themes/agora13.asp> in the European Training Village: <http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/default.asp>

See also:
Søren Kristensen, Developing transnational placements as a didactic tool, *European Journal Vocational Training* no 23/2001, Cedefop, Thessaloniki
<http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/editorial/journal/journalarc.asp> and
Søren Kristensen, "Learning by Leaving — Towards a Pedagogy for Transnational Mobility in the Context of Vocational Education and Training (VET)", *European Journal of Education, research, development and policies*, Number 4, December 2001.

Mobility quality award

In December 2001, the Austrian Minister of Education, Ms Elisabeth Gehrler, gave out quality awards to a number of Austrian mobility projects that had been carried out under the aegis of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The event marked the culmination of a long and sometimes quite difficult process, which so far remains unique in the context of transnational mobility in VET in Europe.

The criteria used for the selection of projects were discussed and defined in a jury, the members of which, besides national experts, included representatives of several National Agencies as well as

a representative of Cedefop. The projects were judged under four different criteria, which comprised results achieved, innovation, quality in implementation and overall impact. Projects were given the quality award for excellence in one or several of the categories mentioned. In many of the speeches at the ceremony, the initiative was praised as a significant one and the importance of further developing and extending it was underlined.

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Source: Søren Kristensen/Cedefop.

Outsiders deserve a chance too

Cedefop presents exemplary approaches to integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market. A synthesis report will be published shortly.

Integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market is among the most important, but also the hardest educational policy challenges. Cedefop has therefore collated some exemplary innovative VET initiatives for the particularly disadvantaged with the two projects 'observation of innovations in vocational training' and 'the

low-skilled' and is investigating their transferability to other regions, countries and the entire European Union.

The synthesis report 'Innovations for integrating low-skilled workers into lifelong learning and the labour market', which is currently in preparation, presents case studies from EU

Member States Spain, Greece, Denmark, Austria and Luxembourg, as well as the EFTA state of Liechtenstein. The innovative approaches and the best-practice models it describes focus primarily on the integration of low-skilled young people. The report will also include the most problematic cases: compulsory-school drop-outs, those with special learning difficulties, and the physically handicapped in isolated, economically under-developed areas. Case studies from rural regions of Spain and

Greek islands deal with this target group.

One of the most important factors in integrating low-skilled workers is their motivation to learn and their willingness to acquire core competences and specialised occupational skills. The synthesis report highlights the Danish production schools, the Job Factory in Austria and the Spanish Prodyouth project as approaches which successfully combine learning motivation and

occupation-related skills. The author would like to help decision-makers implement innovative VET activities and provide researchers with useful tips by supplying updated pertinent information and practical recommendations.

The report will be published shortly first in German and then in English and Spanish in the Cedefop Reference series. For further information contact the Cedefop project coordinator, Roland Loos, tel. (30-310) 490 158, fax (30-310) 490 117, e-mail: rlo@cedefop.eu.int; secretary, Yvonne Noutsia, tel. (30-310) 490 118, e-mail: yno@cedefop.eu.int.

Source: Cedefop/RLO/SK

Key qualifications revisited

A major Cedefop publication⁽¹⁾ on key qualifications is to be published in June. It develops a new interpretation of European debates on key qualifications and their contribution to future-oriented learning in vocational education and training. Debates on key qualifications have been characterised by competing perspectives and the use of different terminology (e.g. 'key skills', 'key competences' and 'key qualifications'). The book draws on the strengths of these different approaches and reflects on current European research. It relates the theme of key qualifications to current challenges in educational policy development, curriculum initiatives and accompanying research. Given that the key qualifications debate was at its most intense in the 1980s and early 1990s, it is worth considering why Cedefop wishes to revisit the theme. This involves an examination of some of the fundamental questions linked to key qualifications.

Why is the theme of 'key qualifications' worth discussing?

Different approaches to key qualifications were proposed to promote flexibility within vocational qualification frameworks and in curriculum development. The main aim of these approaches was to facilitate the renewal of vocational qualifications or to develop the capacity to acquire new qualifications and competences. The need to promote such capacities was acknowledged clearly in the discussion on educational flexibility in the early 1970s. Since then, different ideas have emerged at different stages of debate on educational flexibility.

To a certain extent, key qualifications have been introduced as remedial or catalytic concepts to stimulate flexibility in domain-specific vocational learning or learning within organisational contexts. Much of the innovative potential of key qualifications has been absorbed by newer approaches to the renewal of education and training systems and to training by educational institutions and training organisations. The issue of key qualifications may appear almost obsolete but recent discussion on skill shortages and gaps in information and communication technologies (ICTs), and the need to promote the development of ICT-

related competences, has led to a revival of these debates. Ideas such as 'new basic skills' are raising issues from earlier debates.

What are the main conclusions?

The main thrust of the studies is to develop a new interpretation of concepts like 'key qualifications'. According to the new interpretation they should be treated as relational constructs (and not as separate content areas). They would refer to tensions between the renewal of traditional core qualifications and the emergence of new qualifications (or non-formalised competences). In this context the function of key qualifications is to develop the capacity for renewal and change. This requires learning processes that are based on integrative learning spaces, reflective knowledge processing, conversion of content-related learning into context-oriented learning and the embedding of ICT-related learning into the vocational action contexts.

This reinterpretation of 'key qualifications' is based on a shift from linear to interactive thinking in curriculum development. Linear approaches try to identify 'key qualifications' via skill needs analysis, specifying them first at the level of qualification frameworks. Then, the role of curriculum development and implementation is to find the solutions for delivery. Interactive approaches perceive curriculum processes, the shaping of main frameworks and the investigation of new needs as interactive factors of educational development.

What role can new curriculum development initiatives play?

The book highlights the role of curriculum development in the renewal of vocational education and training. It discusses different opportunities for creating social space for innovation, linking these as instruments of educational planning to innovative practice. However, not all the contributions focus on curriculum development and those that do, may not necessarily discuss specific examples. This is because the book relates key qualifications to cultural changes that provide new prospects for curriculum development and

introduce new concepts within curriculum design. These changes involve inter-institutional relationships and new partnership concepts between educational establishments and labour market organisations. This requires the analysis of new initiatives at the level of system development and within action contexts involving inter-institutional or regional issues, or ones concerning the introduction of ICT.

Where does the material come from?

The book is divided into five parts. The first part is written by Pekka Kämäräinen who is the co-ordinator of Cedefop's key qualifications project. It provides the conceptual background for discussing the theme and develops a new integrative framework for key qualifications. This discussion is related to cultural change within education and training and to conceptual rethinking within curriculum development. The second and third parts address the development of vocational education and training systems, cross-cultural knowledge transfer and modernisation of education and training systems. The fourth and fifth parts discuss new developments within work-related learning, particularly within vocational education and training, and changing perspectives on learning in, and for, organisational contexts.

Most of the contributions derive from European research projects or exchanges based on cross-cultural cooperation, some reflecting the immediate work while others reflect ideas and learning experiences. Some contributions derive from the work of Cedefop projects on ICT-related competences and assessment of non-formal learning. Others develop ideas on how to promote cross-cultural knowledge transfer in different European contexts. The Cedefop key qualifications' project has provided a common platform and an interpretative framework for these contributions.

⁽¹⁾ Transformation of learning in education and training – Key qualifications revisited, a Cedefop reference series publication – Pekka Kämäräinen, Graham Attwell and Alan Brown (Editors). Catalogue no: TI-43-02-284-EN-C

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Source: Cedefop/PK

eLearning – must try harder

Positive steps and negative thoughts paint a mixed picture across Europe

On the surface the performance of eLearning over the last two years looks good. A 70% year-on-year increase in revenues earned by suppliers suggests that we are all taking to eLearning. While that may be true in some countries, in others growth is comparatively slow. Furthermore a large number of teachers and trainers are seriously worried about their ability to make the most of new technologies.

This mixture of good and bad news typifies the information in two surveys on eLearning published in February and presented to professionals in education and training at conferences in Paris and Karlsruhe by Cedefop. Respondents to the survey eLearning and training in Europe⁽¹⁾ indicate that eLearning is now respon-

sible for over 30% of the earnings of private and public sector training suppliers, compared to 18% two years ago. Figures gathered from a range of eLearning suppliers and consumers across the European Union show Finland, France, Germany and Spain adopting the new methods of learning with enthusiasm but in other countries they are not so popular.

The same mixed messages are found in Users' views on eLearning⁽¹⁾ which shows that teachers and trainers are excited by the potential for changes in approach while severely concerned about their own abilities. Over 60% of those who responded to an on-line survey of teachers who might use eLearning believe that it is important to have the ability to moderate and

stimulate learners in a virtual workplace. At the same time only 17% felt they were well equipped, in terms of personal skills, to do so.

Many people involved in the industry paint a very optimistic picture, but the views of those who might benefit from it, and the people who are expected to develop the content, show that confidence often lags a long way behind the general optimism.

Cedefop believes that this sets a challenge for governments, suppliers and consumers if eLearning is to develop in a way that delivers its full potential. More information, consultation and concerted efforts to match supply,

demand and the channels of delivery are essential if the positive effects are to be felt across the EU and across the education and training spectrum.

Cedefop has pioneered the use of electronic media for the exchange of information on vocational training via its ETV (European Training Village) which was the medium used to gather opinion in both surveys. Extracts from them can be found on the ETV at www.trainingvillage.gr.

⁽¹⁾ eLearning and training in Europe and Users' views on eLearning are available to buy, priced 40 Euro each. Order direct from Cedefop info@cedefop.eu.int or from EU sales agents in Member States and other countries.

Source: Cedefop/CMC/WPH/JMA

Meeting point: study visits

In 2002 more than 750 participants will discuss various aspects of VET in EU-Member States, candidate countries and associated countries. Ideally, each study visit group represents a mix of the different VET-players from several countries. Participants have the opportunity to exchange experience and reflect on new ideas for their own countries, and to initiate further collaboration with the host country or others. But there are a number of challenges, such as:

- before the visit, finding a suitable mix of participants who can communicate in the agreed working language;
- during it, reflecting on the input as a group, integrating the different perceptions of the theme and related challenges and drawing conclusions;
- afterwards, enthusiasm, good intentions and ideas for networks and projects may fade away and visit reports may remain shelved,

once the participants get caught up again in their daily chores. Hence, the motto is to prevent one-off experience and to encourage more active social partner participation.

A framework of study visit themes has been decided for the period 2001-2003. Each of these themes is offered by several countries. Seminars are held to reflect on challenges and strategies and to provide ideas or feedback to the national level, Cedefop and other bodies at European level. This year's focus will be on the increasing importance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) and resulting needs (in Budapest in March) and foreign language competence as an asset in VET (during the second half of the year). These themes also tie in with the eLearning initiative, the Commission communi-

cation on lifelong learning and the recommendations of the task force on skills and mobility.

To spread the learning outcome, a new policy to assure more systematic dissemination is presently being discussed. Two working groups have developed initial ideas for a revamped reporting format and new dissemination methods, which will be further discussed later this year. Increased use of ICT will facilitate operational management as well as dissemination and networking. Cedefop experts will accompany visits and seminars to enhance the links to other in-house activities, in particular the lifelong learning project.

Study visits being the only programme of its kind to include the social partners as a major target group, the aim is to better tailor the visits to their needs. The ideas sug-

gested so far by some of their representatives on the Cedefop Management Board will be piloted in the second half of this year.

In view of EU-enlargement, a stable platform for mutual learning between the present member states, the EEA and those preparing for EU-entry will certainly help that process. The study visits programme will cooperate with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and try to respond to the specific needs of the candidate countries. It will also act as one of the gateways to other Cedefop activities. The first steps will be to promote and support social partner participation in study visits and to liaise with Cedefop's Training the Trainers network (<http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/ttnet/index.asp>).

The study visits programme not only provides learning opportunities to

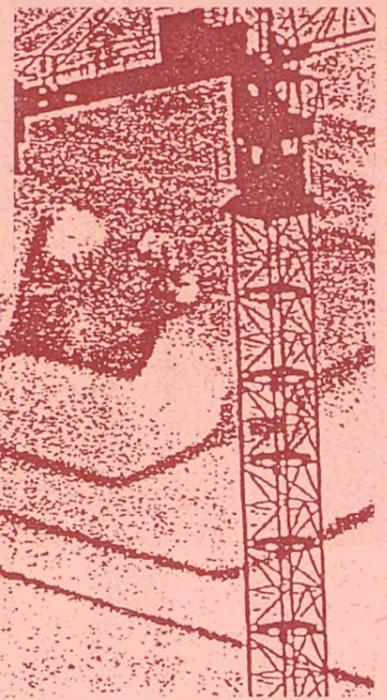
those responsible for VET across Europe. It also constitutes a rich learning experience for the partners jointly managing and developing the programme in – at present – 31 countries and for the Cedefop team in charge.

For more info on

- the study visit themes offered in the second half of the year
- the national contact points
- programmes and dossiers

consult: <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/studyvisits/index.asp>
If you have any questions, contact e-mail: ve@cedefop.eu.int

Source: The study visits team (EWS)/Cedefop



Bi- and multilateral co-operation

Investors in People - a standard for Europe

"The world is advancing, advance with it" Giuseppe Mazzini

The Investors in People quality standard is a business development tool designed to help organisations achieve their aims and objectives through effective management and staff development. Most organisations use the standard as a framework to measure how they can improve. The standard is based on extensive research with employers and is regularly reviewed.

Investors in People is a framework that organisations of all types and sizes use to help them improve performance. In order to achieve the standard, organisations need to show that their investment in people is effective because:

- they are really committed to developing their staff;
- they have clear goals and make sure that everyone understands them;
- their investment in people directly helps them to meet these goals;
- they understand the impact that their investment has on their performance.

Underpinning these four principles are indicators of good practice that describe the outcomes an organisation should be achieving if it is effective in managing and developing its people – it is not based on an assessment of an organisation's processes. Once they are

confident that they are meeting the standard an organisation can choose to be assessed.

Assessors are chosen for their broad business background and generally work as independent consultants. The quality of their work is managed by a quality centre that matches up the size or complexity of an organisation with their experience. The aim of assessment is not to burden the organisation with extra work, but to enable it to present its case for recognition. Assessors will discuss and plan the process with the company to ensure that they gather all the evidence they need. Assessments should also have added value for organisations, as a chance to get valuable feedback from an experienced consultant who can look at what an organisation does with a fresh and objective eye, and report back with some informed insights and advice.

Assessors report to a panel, made up of recognised employers, which makes the final decision as to whether an organisation has achieved Investors in People standards. This ensures that recognition is objective and has external input from other recognised employers, whose primary interest is to ensure that the standard is maintained and interpreted

consistently. Being recognised as an Investor in People is only the beginning; organisations are encouraged to continually review and improve what they are doing.

After ten years of operation in the UK, over 24 000 organisations are recognised as Investors in People. A key strategic goal of Investors in People UK, the company responsible for the standard, has been its international development. In Europe in particular, promotion of the standard has been stimulated by the Lisbon Summit of March 2000, which focused on how to increase EU prosperity by developing a "knowledge economy".

As well as making the standard available to multinational companies, the international strategy looks to develop partners who can deliver the standard, ensuring its quality and reputation is maintained. In the Netherlands, where Investors in People was introduced as part of a national employability agenda, aimed at improving the competitiveness of Dutch industry, the initiative was supported by the Minister of Economic Affairs, Annemarie Jorritsma, who attended the launch of *Investors in People Nederland* in The Hague in September 2000. Since then, *Investors in People Nederland* has set up a complete infrastructure to deliver the standard, and by the end of

2001 there were some 200 advisors, nine certifying institutions and three training institutes.

Elsewhere in Europe, pilot projects are taking place with Dansk Industri and with two French Chambers of Commerce. Discussions are also underway with Inofor in Portugal, the Flemish and Basque governments and with employers and trade unions in Sweden. Pre-accession countries are considering the standard, with particular interest coming from the Slovenian government. Investors in People UK hopes that within the next five years, the standard will be recognised as a European mark of quality.

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The Netherlands and Germany - a common declaration

In September 2001, the Ministers of Education from the Netherlands and Germany signed an agreement on increased cooperation between their countries in the field of education, training and research. The Ministers committed themselves primarily to the promotion of transnational mobility of trainees, students and researchers.

The aim is to stimulate trainees and students to use the existing bilateral and European

programmes in a more intensive way so as to fully explore the possibilities of European mobility on offer. Citizens in the Netherlands and Germany are encouraged to investigate the many possibilities their neighbouring country offers to develop their own personalities and to learn from each other. In the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, the national agencies and the project promoters are asked to exchange information on their projects and to find new partners in the other country.

The common declaration covers primarily the fields of secondary vocational education and higher education. Internationalisation and the strengthening of vocational education are considered a high priority in both countries, especially in order to increase the mobility of employees and to support the development of lifelong learning. The successful bilateral exchange programme (*Bilaterales Austauschprogramm Niederlande-Deutschland - BAND*) for students and teachers in vocational educa-

tion will be prolonged and extended. The ministries have allocated a total amount of EUR 400 000 for the implementation of the programme in 2002.

The document is available in Dutch and German. Further information on the (full text of the) agreement: mmaes@cinop.nl or krause@bibb.de

Source: CINOP/BIBB

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Europe

Skills and mobility

The high-level task force on skills and mobility, issued its final report late last year⁽¹⁾. This task force was established in June following the Stockholm European Council. The report has been used by the Commission in its "Commission's Action Plan for skills and mobility"⁽²⁾ submitted to the European Council at its recent meeting in Barcelona in March.

The task force identified the following challenges:

❑ Europe needs to expand occupational mobility to help both the adaptation to, and also the driving of, economic and social change. This requires relevant and adaptable skills. Major skills gaps still exist in the European Union. Education levels vary while education and training systems do not pay sufficient attention to change, for example the certification of initially acquired competencies, and the validation of skills and experience acquired throughout working life.

❑ Geographic mobility in the Union is too low. Barriers include cultural (in particular linguistic) issues, regulatory frameworks, insufficient or complex systems of recognition of skills and competencies, and the ageing of the labour force. Policies promoting balanced regional development and those promoting geographic and occupational mobility do not interlink.

❑ Presently although the available information on jobs, qualifications and living conditions in Europe is abundant, it is difficult to access and compare and is unreliable. A transparent and integrated labour market information system is crucial. It will help citizens and enterprises, to make the right choices. It will enable governments, social partners and other actors to develop effective and co-ordinated policies.

The task force agreed on the following main recommendations:

❑ By 2006 Member States should guarantee that all citizens have the opportunity to acquire basic skills.

❑ By 2005 all compulsory school leavers should have the opportunity to learn at least two EU languages in addition to their own. Learning English as one of these languages would be an advantage. Member States should provide language tuition at pre-primary and primary level and strengthen it in secondary schools.

❑ Member States should establish a target to raise the percentage of their population with post secondary levels of education.

❑ Member States and social partners should establish targets for participation rates in lifelong learning and in training by enterprises.

❑ Employers should develop clearer definitions of required occupations and skills, and co-operate with training suppliers to this effect.

❑ Member States and social partners should promote better links between education and training and the labour market and between formal and non-formal education and training. The Commission and the Member States should promote the dissemination of best practice at European level, and should introduce a European Lifelong Learning Award for enterprises which introduce competence development strategies.

❑ Member States and the Commission should develop definitions of computer skills, make them transparent and available throughout the EU and back them up with EU-wide standards. Member States should ensure that curriculum development is matched with labour market's requirements.

❑ The Commission should initiate a European framework for the accreditation of non-formal and informal learning. The Commission and

the Member States should implement a new regime for the recognition of qualifications in regulated professions. By 2005, the Commission, the Member States and social partners should launch a new approach to the mutual recognition of qualifications and work experience

❑ Member States, universities and training institutions should promote higher education studies abroad with a view to students fulfilling up to one third of their educational requirements abroad.

❑ The Commission should strengthen international exchange programmes and related financial instruments in order to facilitate educational, training and work experience for young people and adults abroad.

❑ Member States and social partners should work together to provide for greater investment in less favoured regions to develop human capital, ICTs and access to support from the European Social Fund and the other structural funds.

❑ The Commission and the Member States should speed up the modernisation of the regulatory framework governing the transferability of pensions and social security rights. They should also consider the introduction of an EU-wide social security card.

❑ In 2002 the Commission and the Member States should establish a European mobility information site. They should also review and modernise the EURES system, ensure its integration with the employment services of the Member States and enhance its role as a key service provider for the European Labour Market. In this context, the classification of occupations should also be modernised.

❑ The Commission should launch a Europe-wide mobility information campaign on the key dimensions, opportunities and possibilities provided by the Internal Market and the European Labour Markets in 2002. The social partners should initiate specific information campaigns to help update and improve the image of some industrial sectors and aim to bring more skilled women into such sectors.

⁽¹⁾ High level task force on Skills and Mobility, final report, December 2001 (available on http://europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/news/2001/dec/taskforce2001_en.pdf)
⁽²⁾ Communication from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament, the Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, Commission's Action Plan for skills and mobility, COM(2002)72 final, http://europa.eu.int/eur-lex/en/com/cnc/2002/com2002_0072en01.pdf

Source: European Commission/Cedefop

Europe/The Netherlands

Making language skills visible

European language portfolio introduced in Dutch regional training centres.

In September 2001, the first Dutch 'European language portfolios' approved by the Council of Europe were presented to students from six regional training centres (*Regionale opleidingscentra -ROC's*) by the Secretary of State for Education. Within the framework of the European Year of Languages, the language portfolio for secondary vocational education has been developed by the six ROC's, the Association of Regional Training Centres (*BVE-raad*), the Centre for innovation of education and training (*CINOP*) and the Institute for curriculum development, specialised in learning processes (*SLO*).

The first step in the process of the realisation of the portfolio was the acceptance by VET practitioners of the Common European Framework of Reference for language⁽¹⁾. Subsequently, the European Scale of Language Skills (developed by the Council of Europe) was translated into Dutch, in order to make it possible to link the common framework to the Dutch situation. SLO and the National institute

for educational measurement (*Cito-groep*) have linked the Dutch attainment targets and the Dutch exams to the European Scale of Language Skills⁽²⁾. This enables teachers and professionals to reformulate and interpret existing exams in relation to the levels of European language skills, thus contributing to more transparency of acquired skills.

The next step was the development and implementation of the European language portfolio in the Netherlands, supported by an introductory videotape for participants and teachers, and a website (www.taalportfolio.nl). The language portfolio, consisting of a passport, a biography and a dossier with all relevant language experiences, opens up several possibilities for students in secondary vocational education:

❑ the proficiency in mother-tongue languages such as Arabic or Turkish can be made explicit;

❑ the same goes for skills and experiences obtained from foreign apprenticeships or jobs;

❑ by means of the language portfolio, continuing language learning routes can be developed;

❑ the recognition of earlier achieved language competences stimulates the growth and motivation of participants in ROC's and of employees in companies.

⁽¹⁾ The Framework is published in English by Cambridge University Press. ISBN Hardback 0521803136 Paperback: 0521005310. It can be downloaded from the Council of Europe website (address see below).

The European Scale of Language Skills is available on the Council of Europe website as well, and can be downloaded in various languages.

⁽²⁾ E.van Hest, J. de Jong, G. Stoks (red.), *Nederlandse taalkwalificaties in Europees verband* (in Dutch only), SLO, Enschede, 2001. More information: (31-53) 4840 285.

Further information: www.taalportfolio.nl, www.bveraad.nl, www.cinop.nl, www.slo.nl (information on the language portfolio on these websites in Dutch only); or the European website: [http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=\\$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/./documents_intro/common_framework.html](http://culture2.coe.int/portfolio/inc.asp?L=E&M=$t/208-1-0-1/main_pages/./documents_intro/common_framework.html)

Source: CINOP/SLO/Bve-raad

The wooden heart of Europe

Forestry, wood and their spin off industries, are central components of the European economic heartbeat. Several hundred thousand companies and 3.67 million people are involved in these cluster sectors. Wood is a renewable energy source and a versatile construction material. Forests act as carbon sinks, forestry and wood industries promote rural employment. The sectors match EU priorities for sustainability in energy, environment and economic development.

EUROFORTECH's story illustrates how EU programmes promote new vocational training and increase economic competitiveness across wide sectoral chains. This European forestry and timber industries network was founded in 1991. It has partners in 14 countries and 10 years experience in PHARE, COMETT, ESPRIT, Leonardo da Vinci and other EC programmes. In 2001, EUROFORTECH launched InnovaWood, under the Fifth Framework, with three other network organisations – Eurologna, Eurifi and Eurowood.

InnovaWood associates come from 24 countries including 14 EU members, five Pre-Accession states (PACs), along with Norway, Switzerland, Croatia, Canada and Australia. InnovaWood's network of networks consists of research and educational institutes with extensive links to large and small-scale industries. It supports EU forestry, wood manufacturing and furniture industries through innovative vocational training, technology transfer and research.

EUROFORTECH and InnovaWood's umbrella confederations are examples of transnational co-operation. Their breadth matches the scale of new technological challenges and complements the European Commission's policy on forest-based industries, research and development, and enlargement. InnovaWood promotes co-operation with Cedefop and seeks to establish research-industry links and accredited training across European forest-based industries.

With EU support, they were involved in creating new vocational training programmes for sawmill and computerised harvester machine operators, upgrading short-term courses and improving work place machinery practices.

They developed vocationally oriented English language training for forestry staff, and upgraded technical and management skills in Central and Eastern European countries (CEECs). Mobility programmes enhanced knowledge transfer among educators, researchers, human resource personnel and private enterprise staff through placements in other EU states. Professional and student engineers and architects were trained in using wood for construction. Research information on transformation processes, and the creation

of multi-language databases on timber industry RTD (research, technology and development) will accelerate information transfer between the many sub sections that constitute the forest and wood based industries cluster.

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Source: Irish Leonardo National Agency/
Avril Burgess, Programme Officer

Competence and mobility through foreign languages and wood

FOLLO.WWW (Foreign Languages for People Working With Wood) is one of the current Leonardo da Vinci projects promoting mobility and practical language skills. Institutions in Austria and Ireland, Italy, Portugal, the Czech Republic and the United Kingdom are developing a virtual walk through the most

important areas of a wood-processing enterprise.

Further information:
www.leonardodalvini.at
or Monika Thum-Kraft and Sabine Archan
ibw - Institut für Bildungsforschung der Wirtschaft
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Source: abf - Austria

European Training Foundation

Business leaders lack awareness of changing conditions

A decade of transition and reform of company structures within the central and eastern European countries has encouraged an attitude of "the stormy days are over". Managers within central and eastern European companies however still need to fully appreciate that the process of change within an increasingly globalised market is complex and ongoing. Their companies need to fully embrace and accept the culture of constant change.

This is the main message of a new report that has been published by the European Training Foundation (ETF) in collaboration with CEEMAN⁽¹⁾. Entitled "Assessing Management Training Needs in Central and Eastern Europe - a Cross Country Survey". The report provides a comparative review of the main issues related to management training needs in five countries, i.e. Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Russia and Slovenia. The results of a second phase of research that covers Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and the Ukraine are due to be published shortly on the ETF's website.

The report is intended for various partners involved or interested in management development and training, including management training providers, the research community and donor institutions.

The report's findings are based upon a series of questionnaires. Three levels of management were given a set of questionnaires to complete concerning management training challenges and needs. 158 companies (77 from manufacturing and 81 from the service sector) took part in the survey. A total of 852 individual managers were surveyed.

One of the report's central messages is that companies in general underestimate the magnitude and nature of the challenges they face. Change in the workplace is much deeper than they envisage. The overall understanding of the role of management and leadership in general and specifically within the context of the changes and challenges each country is facing needs to be improved.

Programmes dealing with globalisation issues, technological progress, economic restructuring, sectoral changes, global financial markets and sociological and psychological changes are essential if these deficiencies are to be overcome, the report states.

There is also a need to focus on what the report calls "soft elements" (such as skills, staff, style and shared values within an internal culture). According to the report, much of management focus over the last five years has been on what the report terms as "hard elements" (e.g. technical skills, business strategy, organisational structure, systems and procedures). Hard elements are important. The question is about getting the balance right.

The report recommends that weak points in training should be especially targeted when education and training programmes for these countries are designed and implemented. The report found weaknesses with regard to managerial leadership and general competencies. The following areas need strengthening:

general management skills; problem solving ability; assessing a given business situation and setting priorities linked to that business situation; dependence on higher hierarchical levels to get things done; computer/foreign language skills.

Furthermore management training should not simply concentrate on functional skills. It also needs to contribute to a genuine broadening of thinking and the development of new attitudes and values, which promote an emphasis on observing environmental changes and finding appropriate responses to them.

⁽¹⁾ CEEMAN is an international network comprising 137 members (including business schools and enterprises) from 41 countries with the aim of enhancing management development in Central and Eastern Europe. More information about the activities of CEEMAN can be found at www.ceeman.org

For more information and a copy of the report please contact the European Training Foundation
Tel. (39-011) 630 2222 Fax (39-011) 011 630 2200, E-mail: info@etf.eu.int.

The report is also available from the ETF website at [http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/vetdown1/\\$file/Cross-Country-survey-\(CEEMAN\).pdf](http://www.etf.eu.int/etfweb.nsf/pages/vetdown1/$file/Cross-Country-survey-(CEEMAN).pdf)

Source: ETF

A new glossary and monograph series from Eurydice

From Professor to Play leader – close on 600 terms for teaching staff in Europe

Every education system uses its own specific terminology to describe the characteristics of its organisation and operation. In trying to understand and make reliable comparisons of how the various education systems in Europe really work, we are often confronted with questions of terminology. The development of precise 'markers' for reference purposes is thus absolutely essential for better mutual understanding and quality co-operation between European countries.

In order to cater for this need, Eurydice has launched a publications series entitled European Glossary on Education. The first volume in the series was concerned with 'examinations, qualifications and titles', and the second with 'educational institutions'.

The third volume has just been published (in English and French, with a German version due to appear in mid-2002). It provides detailed coverage of the terminology used at national level to refer to teaching staff. It includes close on 600 terms that are officially adopted or widespread and specific to a particular national education system.

In the first section of the Glossary, terms are dealt with in alphabetical order. Besides the

explanatory note on the term, the information given for each entry includes a country reference, the most common grammatical forms of the basic term and the level of education concerned. The second section comprises summary tables for the 30 countries covered by this terminological tool.

Readers will thus be able to conveniently locate the definitions of frequently employed terms and gain a better understanding of the position of teachers at all educational levels, as far as their training, recruitment, status, assessment or promotion are concerned.

Monograph series on the evaluation of schools

As part of a study on the evaluation of schools, the Eurydice Network has also produced national reports (monographs) containing detailed information on the methods used to evaluate schools providing compulsory education. These reports constitute an ideal contribution to ongoing debate, particularly within the various European institutions (as exemplified by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and Council of 12 February 2001 on European cooperation in quality evaluation in school education), and seek to clarify and

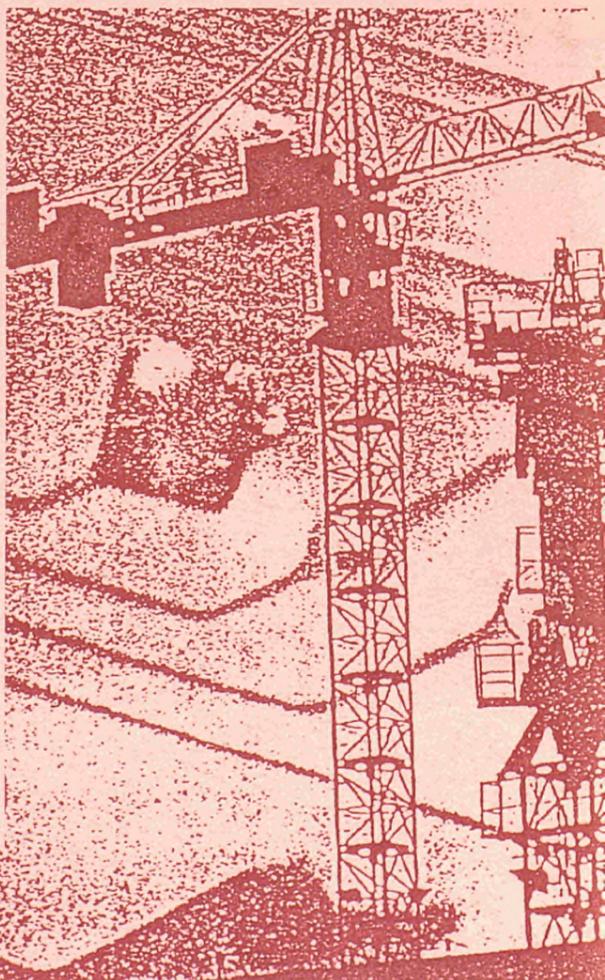
inform this debate by providing fully sound and reliable information.

The general structure of the monographs is the same for each country. It has been devised with a view to overall consistency and the provision of readily comparable data. The body of each monograph describes the main methods of evaluating schools. This detailed description of the current situation is enhanced by a brief review of the historical background to evaluation practice and procedures and detailed information on ongoing discussion and reform in the field.

The monographs are available in English and, in the case of some countries, the appropriate national language. A comparative analysis of the information contained in them will be published in the course of 2002.

Printed paper version of the glossary available on request from Eurydice European Unit, 240 avenue Louise, B- 1050 Brussels, e-mail: info@eurydice.org
Glossaries and monograph series on the evaluation of schools available on the Eurydice website: <http://www.eurydice.org>

Source: Eurydice



Spain Continued from page 1

Vocational training: integration is on the agenda

Alongside the University Act and the Act on the Quality of Education, the preliminary draft text, jointly elaborated by the Ministries of Education, Labour and the Public Administration (and comprising a mere nine pages), is a further pillar of the new educational model. Since the preliminary draft text was presented to and adopted by the cabinet on 14 December 2001, a wide-ranging political and social debate has been under way in Spain. The new law is to amend the General Law on the Education System (LOGSE) and the Law on Participation, Evaluation and Governance of Educational Establishments (LOPEG) and provide legal provisions to cover those areas hitherto governed by the national vocational training programmes.

The objective is to create and regulate the National Vocational Training and Qualifications system, designed to promote and develop vocational training provision by means of vocational qualifications and the evaluation and accreditation of vocational skills. It will also have the role of ensuring that training and qualifications meet European standards. The system is to be managed by central government in cooperation with the autonomous communities. The National Vocational Training and Qualifications system will be assisted in its activities by two bodies: firstly, the General Vocational Training Council, with an advisory and participatory role, representing the

Ministries of Education and Labour, the autonomous communities and the social partners and, secondly, the National Qualifications Institute (INCUAL), as a technical body tasked with drawing up and updating the catalogue of qualifications and conducting vocational training-related studies and research.

The most innovative and undoubtedly one of the most controversial aspects of this law is that the responsible administration – i.e. the State or the autonomous communities – will be charged with appointing the directors of the integrated centres (those offering all vocational training qualifications), the reference centres and the specialised sectoral centres, and not the school council as is currently the case.

Moreover a national network of centres specialised in the different sectors of production is to be set up, integrating all types of vocational training, and targeted towards students (regulated vocational training) and the unemployed (occupational training), as well as employers, trainers and employed workers (continuing training and lifelong learning). This network is to be linked up by collaboration agreements between the State and the autonomous communities.

Careers information and guidance is the only chapter of the new law which refers to the specific role of

the municipalities in this field, despite the fact that a high percentage of vocational training provision under the social guarantee programme, including training workshops and craft centres, is currently delivered at this level.

The law will promote collaboration between firms, public administrations and the integrated centres in implementing work placements, training at the workplace and careers guidance. Trainees will thus benefit from a highly specialised form of training, drawing on the experience of active practitioners.

The trade unions and employers associations have received the preliminary draft with a certain degree of caution. The position of Workers' Commissions (CCOO) (?) is that the basic intention of this law is to integrate the three current systems of vocational training into a coherent system, a further step towards a model of consensus for all bodies and public and private sector agents, and accessible to all individuals, in the current context of confusion. However, as far as CCOO is concerned, the fly in the ointment is that 'all the drafts show a substantial lack of precision and error, implying extraordinary difficulties in their hypothetical implementation, calling for the development of extensive regulations on the basis of the law itself'. The Workers' Commissions demands the participation of

the social partners in the development of the system. The General Workers' Union (UGT) (?), for its part, regrets that this law, which aspires to become the basic legislation governing vocational training and qualifications, fails to explicitly recognise the right to initial and lifelong vocational training, merely enunciating a series of fundamental issues. The union therefore advocates that a specific body with wider participation be set up in training centres to ensure territorial and social partner representation. It is examining the creation of a system of accreditation, on the one hand, and a system of certification, on the other, linked by a recognition procedure between the two. However, it welcomes the intention to bring the training system closer to industry.

The employers define the importance of the accreditation of informal learning and propose close collaboration between universities and industry, and consideration of their proposals for the introduction of programmes of study designed to promote the modernisation and enhance the competitiveness of the regional economy and industry. With this law, the government is seeking to respond to one of the most frequent criticisms from employers that education tends to be remote from workplace reality and to strengthen its ties with the Spanish Confederation of Employers' Organisations (CEOE)(4). At the moment 67 % of

students take six months to find a job.

The Catalan and Basque nationalists regard the preliminary draft as further evidence of central government's 'encroachment on the prerogatives' of the autonomous communities. The members of the Nationalist Bloc of Galicia, who are of the same opinion, are to table an amendment to the entire bill, which they describe as 'centralistic' and 'anti-democratic'. They fear that harmonising vocational training programmes could prevent each autonomous community from drawing up its own proposals as a function of the requirements of its respective system of production.

According to the government, the application of the law, which will take a number of years, will not require additional financial resources, given the current budget of EUR 1103 million for the period 2002-06.

(1) www.mec.es/leyvocationaltraining/index.html
(2) www.ccoo.es/
(3) www.ugt.es/index1.html
(4) www.sispain.org/spanish/economy/ceoe.html

Cedefop has recently published in its Panorama series a brief description of the current Spanish vocational training system (in English, French, German and Spanish) to tie in with the Spanish EU presidency also will be available on the internet at: www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/vetsystems/report.asp

Cedefop has previously published in the same languages a full description of the Spanish system under the title "Vocational Education and Training in Spain" (see page 20).

Source: Cedefop/ Sonia Martin

Initial training policy

Germany

Vocational training: experts still see considerable room for improvement

BIBB survey among 2000 experts to identify R&D deficits

Despite poor results in the PISA study, the German vocational training system still manages to offset the growing weaknesses among school-leavers, eliminate disadvantages and promote talent. Although only 11.6% of young people still have no formal vocational qualifications, there is still considerable room for improvement. This is the conclusion of a survey conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) among 2 000 vocational training experts according to the Delphi method. The survey was essentially designed to identify the steps necessary to enhance the quantity and quality of vocational training in Germany and to prepare the vocational training system for the innovations of tomorrow.

The first step identified by the experts questioned in the survey concerns vocational schools: practice-related initial and continuing training concepts are urgently required for the teaching staff. As far as disadvantaged groups are concerned, the experts stress the need for long-term support concepts, ranging from school-based education through vocational preparation to entry into working life. However the experts disagree on the development of special training occupations for low achievers: whereas this is regarded as a meaningful ap-

proach by employers, it is rejected by the experts on the trade union side. The two groups also differ on the subject of funding on the basis of an apportionment of costs. Offers from researchers to bring the debate back to an objective level by an input of scientific findings have so far been alternately rejected by both sides. The surveyed experts concur that the integration of under-achievers must not be to the detriment of the promotion of talent and that specific skilling opportunities should be developed for particularly talented trainees. The experts also advocate a greater focus on the encouragement of self-responsibility in training objectives, e.g. by teaching and learning concepts promoting a spirit of enterprise.

The results of the survey of experts are published in the BIBB journal 'Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis', No 1/2002, available from Bertelsmann Verlag, Postfach 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld, Tel. (49-521) 911 01-11, Fax (49-521) 911 01 19, E-mail service@wbv.de, price: EUR 7.60.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Italy

The new apprenticeship system takes off

Apprenticeship is about to become the third pole of Italy's training system, particularly in the perspective of a training pathway that alternates school and work. The importance of apprenticeship, which was reformed by Law 196/97, is highlighted both in the recent White Paper on the Labour Market in Italy and in the document on the reform of the school system presented by the Government (see Cedefop Info 3/2000).

This is particularly borne out by the monitoring of experiments(1) that the Institute for the Development of Vocational Training for Workers (*Istituto per lo sviluppo della formazione professionale dei lavoratori - ISFOL*) carried out for the Ministry of Labour. This revealed 430 000 young people participating, with more than 20 000 enterprises and a similar number of enterprise tutors involved. The profile of trainees is also undergoing a considerable change. They are no longer young people in difficulty with poor levels of schooling who work in a craftsman's shop, but, often have a school-leaving certificate and are engaged in intermediate level technical tasks.

For their part, enterprises which used to be unreceptive, are now proving more interested and more than 8 out of 10 consider it advantageous to use apprentices. The main sectors of activity concerned are the more traditional ones, with metalwork and engineering and construction in the lead. However, new fields are opening up, e.g. in professional and commercial offices. Among the young people, there is a growing confidence in apprenticeship.

More than 70% of those taking part were pleased with the experience, particularly the training activities. Apprenticeship has also proved to be a powerful stimulus to learn, with about 50% of the apprentices involved reconsidering the possibility of starting a new training activity, even at school. This is especially significant since many of those choosing this pathway had dropped out of their studies because of serious difficulties or lack of interest.

(1) A synthesis report is downloadable (only in Italian) at *Ricerche e progetti / Sistemi formativi / Formazione per l'apprendistato / Il nuovo apprendistato / Rapporto 2000* on ISFOL's website.

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Source: ISFOL (Claudio Bensi)

Towards a new generation of Modern Apprenticeships

The Modern Apprenticeship (MA) programme has been running in the UK since the late 1980's and in November 2001, 213 000 young people were participating in it. Flexibility and a relatively low level of regulation are key MA characteristics. There are two basic programmes – the full Modern Apprenticeship with an associated level 3 National Vocational Qualifications (NVQ) and the shorter National Traineeship (NT) with a level 2 qualification. They have no fixed duration but, in the case of MAs, usually last between two and three years and for NTs between one-and-a-half and two years. The training involved can be, and often is, entirely work-based while the associated National Vocational Qualifications are based on assessment of competences.

The programmes have been subjected to a series of evaluations in recent years. A Skills Task Force was appointed to report on the nature, extent and pattern of skills-needs and shortages and on what can be done to ease associated problems. Its reports (1), published during 1999 and 2000, included proposals with regard to MAs. The key recommendations were for:

- ❑ a minimum stipulated duration;
- ❑ an apprenticeship diploma, embracing separate certificates for key skills and technical knowledge;
- ❑ an element of compulsory off-the-job training.

A number of government actions followed these recommendations. The programmes were re-branded, with the former Modern Apprenticeships being re-launched as Advanced Modern Apprenticeships and the National Traineeships becoming Foundation Modern Apprenticeship. They are now known collectively as Modern Apprenticeships.

A framework was proposed for a 'vocational ladder of qualifications', to enable 14-year-olds to begin a course of vocational study in a range of subjects from art and design to engineering and business studies, leading to the new Vocational General Certificate of Secondary Education (VGCSE) at the age of 16. Trainees could then progress directly on to Modern Apprenticeships (see Cedefop Info 2/2000).

In summer 2000, the Government launched a consultation on these

proposals with a view to increasing participation and achievement. Following this, it confirmed its commitment to improving the management of MAs, thus enhancing their status, and improving public knowledge of the programmes. This consultation was in the context of the re-organisation of the UK VET structure and the transition to the new national body, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) (see Cedefop Info 1/2001). This body, which replaced two separate bodies for college based and work based training, now has overall responsibility for apprenticeships.

In March 2001, a Modern Apprenticeship Advisory Committee was appointed to advise the Secretary of State and the LSC on a three-year action plan for the development, promotion and delivery of modern apprenticeships. The Committee reported in September 2001 (2). It found that although the current system can and does result in attainment by young people of excellent standards, it is 'marginal to the national life'. The reasons identified for this are that MAs have been:

- ❑ inconsistently delivered;
- ❑ poorly managed;

- ❑ and poorly known about and understood.

The Committee proposed that the LSC establish a framework which would clarify and strengthen the basic relationship between employer and apprentice. Each apprenticeship should be registered by the LSC. At the start of the apprenticeship the employer and apprentice should agree on an individual training plan. Employers could seek the help of registered Apprenticeship Agents whose role would be to advise and assist the parties to the apprenticeship.

In November 2001, three Secretaries of State - Education, Trade and Industry and the Exchequer - made a joint response to the Committee's recommendations. They committed themselves to a target of 25% of young people entering Modern apprenticeships before the age of 22 by 2004 and called on employers to help achieve this. They also confirmed that the Government, working with the LSC, will deliver the key recommendations made by the Committee including:

- ❑ a national framework for apprenticeship;

- ❑ from 2004, an entitlement to a MA place for all 16 and 17 year-olds who achieve five pass-grades at GCSE (General Certificate of Secondary Education). In 2001 88.9% achieved this level of qualification;
- ❑ a EUR 25 million marketing campaign, over three years, beginning in early 2002, to promote apprenticeships and boost take-up;
- ❑ new technical certificates for MAs, which ensure that in-depth technical knowledge is a key component of the Apprenticeship Diploma.

This article applies to the situation in England. Some aspects of the organisation of apprenticeships vary in Wales and Scotland.

(1) The Skills Taskforce published three national reports: Towards a National Skills Agenda, Skills for All, and Tackling the Adult Skills Gap. These are available from DFES Publications, PO Box 5050, Sherwood Park, Annesley, Nottingham NG15 0DJ, UK. Tel. (44-845) 602 22 60. Fax (44-845) 603 33 60.
(2) Modern Apprenticeships: the way to work, available as above or on DFES website: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/ma/consultation>.

Source: CIPD



Conferences/seminars/exhibitions

Vienna/A
20 to 21 June 2002
5th eLearnExpo 2002
Contact:
Julia Gibson
105 Salisbury Road,
London NW6 6RG, UK
Tel. (44-207) 596 5076
Fax (44-207) 900 2663
Info@elearnexpo.com
<http://www.elearnexpo.com/>

Brisbane, Queensland/Australia
9 to 12 July 2002
11th Vocational Education and Training Research conference/workshop
Contact:
Shelley Rundle at NCVER
Tel. (61-8) 8333 8648
Fax (61-8) 8211 9569
shelley@ncver.edu.au
<http://www.ncver.edu.au/news/conf/TRconf/TRconf11.htm>

Samos/GR
17 to 19 July 2002
International Conference on Information Communication Technologies in Education
Research and Training Institute of East Aegean (INEAG) and University College of the Fraser Valley (British Columbia, Canada)
Contact:
Mrs. Nancy Pyri
Administrative Director
Tel. (30) 2730 94537, 94456
Fax (30) 2730 94537, 94456
ineag@otenet.gr
http://www.ineag.gr/Events/ICTEconference_SamJuly2002/indexEn.htm

Winnipeg, Manitoba/Canada
17 to 19 October 2002
Adult Learners Week in Canada
Developing Skills for the New Economy
International Conference on Technical and Vocational Education and Training
Canadian Vocational Association and UNEVOC-Canada
Contact:
Dr. Chris Chinien
Director, UNEVOC-Canada
Faculty of Education,
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, Manitoba R3T 2N2
Canada
Tel. (1-204) 474-8271
Fax (1-204) 474-7696
chinien@ms.umanitoba.ca
<http://www.umanitoba.ca/unevoc/2002conference/>

Potsdam/D
24 to 30 November 2002
Essential Consulting Skills
International Training Camp
Training - Coaching - Consulting
Contact:
Dr. Holger Nauheimer
Training - Coaching - Consulting
Rosenheimer Str. 5
D-10781 Berlin
Tel. (49-30) 219 684 51
Fax (49-30) 219 684 50
info@beraterkompetenz.de
http://www.change-management-toolbook.com/training_2002.html

Berlin/D
27 to 29 November 2002
Online Educa Berlin
8th International Conference on Technology Supported Learning & Training
Contact:
ICWE GmbH - Leibnizstrasse 32
D-10625 Berlin
Tel. (49-30) 327 61 40
Fax (49-30) 324 98 33
info@online-educa.com
<http://www.online-educa.com/>

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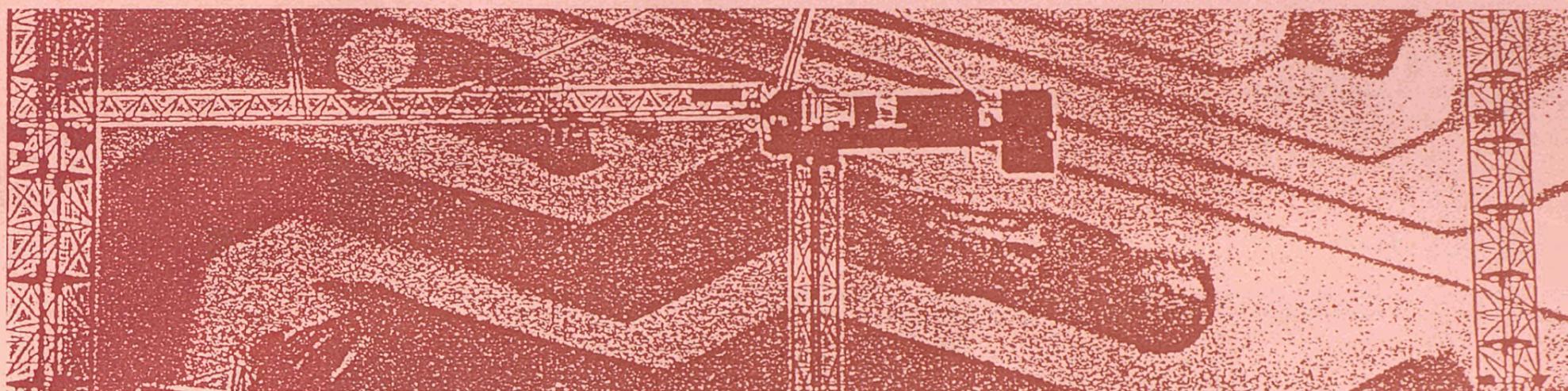
Continuing education and training policy

B: Management training for entrepreneurs in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector; D: Continuing vocational training: two sides to the coin; D: DGB calls for a legal framework for continuing vocational training; E: New legislation for training workshops/craft centres and employment workshops; IRL: Enterprise-led training proves successful; A: eLearning – getting the balance right;

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Employment policy

B: SABINA: Innovative Flemish-Dutch partnership in the building sector: sectoral placement and information network for building contractors; B: Job rotation: additional training opportunities for workers and jobseekers; E: Experimental training and employment programmes; F: Definitive adoption of the Law on Social Modernisation; IRL: FÁS changes direction; Impressum.



Continuing education and training policy

Belgium

Management training for entrepreneurs in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector

Two pilot management training modules for entrepreneurs in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector were launched in the Walloon Region in January 2002. These modules are open to any person intending to develop a project in the field of social economics⁽¹⁾, heads of cooperatives, mutual and friendly societies and non-profit foundations wishing to improve their basic theory, or those already or likely to find themselves in positions of responsibility within an enterprise in the sector.

The modules, designed as management training courses which, although short-term programmes, are nevertheless certified (by the chambers of trade and commerce), are intended to make the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector more professional and promote the creation of enterprises based on the principles of social economics.

The training programme, which has received the support of the Walloon Minister for Employment and Training, Marie Arena, is one of a number of actions designed to promote the creation of enterprises in the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector and is the subject of a cooperation agreement on the development of social economics between the Walloon Region and the federal authorities. Moreover, the Minister regards the cooperative, mutual and non-profit sector as a promising niche for the stimulation of job creation for the lesser skilled who may find more adequate vocational integration and guidance opportunities in this type of enterprise than in a mainstream organisation.

The training programme, delivered thanks to the joint expertise of the Institute for the Lifelong Training of SMEs (IFPME) and the Belgian Federation of Cooperatives, consists of a total of 180 hours, comprising the following modules:

- law - designed to promote a sense of prudence among participants, while at the same time providing them with the legal background required in the business world (40 hours),
- business management (10 hours),
- accounting (64 hours), calculation and control of the cost and sales of goods or services and the principles of a financial plan (20 hours),
- introduction to taxation (12 hours),
- introduction to business creation (10 hours),
- IT (4 hours), and
- the principles of social economics - which seeks to give participants an insight into the conceptual, historic and socio-economic dimensions of social economics and help them learn to approach business creation issues from a social economics perspective (20 hours).

⁽¹⁾The social economics sector in the Walloon Region may be defined as follows:

"The social economics sector covers the economic activities carried out by companies, principally cooperatives, friendly societies and associations whose ethics reflect the following principles:

1. providing a service to its members or the community rather than profit-making;
2. autonomy of management;
3. democratic decision-making processes;
4. priority of personnel and labour over capital in the distribution of income."

(Walloon Council for Social Economics)

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 Tel. (32-071) 27 28 21
 Service number: (32-800) 90 133
 Fax (32-071) 23 81 39
 E-mail: wendy.falque@ifpme.be

Sources: FOREM CIDOC, Alter-hotjob, IFPME

Germany

Continuing vocational training: two sides to the coin

BIBB survey among firms on the impact of structural change and globalisation on their skilling strategies

For the large majority of German firms, it is undisputed that continuing vocational training (CVT) contributes enormously to lifelong learning. Although every other firm has clear-cut company objectives in mind as far as CVT is concerned, those responsible for CVT within industry see the other side of the coin: the concept of lifelong learning implies the multiple burden of work, family and learning, and subjects the workforce to the constant pressure of having to learn something new. Many CVT managers observe an increasing degree of uncertainty among individuals with respect to their vocational development opportunities, as well as increasing financial burdens when lifelong learning is actively pursued.

Such are the results of a survey conducted by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) on behalf of the Federal Ministry of Education and Training. The survey was a follow-up to the second European-wide survey of continuing training in enterprises, CVTS-2, initiated in 1999 among a total of 90 000 firms in 25 countries, including some 10 000 from Germany.

The BIBB surveyed an additional group of 474 firms engaged in CVT on how structural change and globalisation were changing their recruitment and skilling strategies and their contribution to the lifelong learning of the workforce; it also asked respondents to assess

the impact of the growing self-responsibility of CVT participants.

Greater pressure on the cost side and the accelerated pace of innovation were the main aspects raised by surveyed enterprises. The growing skills requirements were in particular due to the increasing pace of innovation. The firms' first reaction is CVT provision, followed by changes in labour organisation; corresponding structural conditions in the field of initial vocational training are also expected.

Detailed information on both the German follow-up survey and the second European continuing training survey are available from Dr Uwe Grünewald at the BIBB.

E-mail: gruenewald@bibb.de
 The brochure 'Betriebliche Weiterbildung' can be obtained from Bertelsmann Verlag, Postfach 100633, D-33506 Bielefeld, Tel. (49-521) 91101-11, Fax (49-521) 911 01 19, E-mail: bestellung@wbv.de, price: EUR 9.20.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

The first European survey of continuing vocational training in enterprises (CVTS 1) was conducted in 1994 within the then 12 Member States. This second survey (CVTS 2), initiated in 1999, included the 15 Member States, Norway and 9 candidate countries (BG, CZ, EE, HU, LV, LIT, PL, ROM, SLO). Two thirds of the costs were covered by the European Commission. The results are published in the Eurostat series 'Statistics in Focus'. The summary of the survey in the candidate countries was published in January 2002.

Katja Nestler and Emmanuel Kailis, First survey of continuing vocational training in enterprises in candidate countries (-CVTS2-), Statistics in focus, Population and social conditions, Theme 3 - 2/2002, Eurostat
 ISSN 1024-4352, Catalogue number: KS-NK-02-002-EN-I, (c) European Communities, 2002
http://europa.eu.int/comm/eurostat/Public/dashop/print-catalogue/EN?catalogue=Eurostat&collection=02-Statistics%20in%20Focus&product=KS-NK-02-002-___N-EN

Trade unions calls for a legal framework for continuing vocational training

Trade unions: Training on the job is not enough / Transparency and clear quality standards are required

In the opinion of the German Trade Unions Confederation (DGB), the reticence of firms to deliver initial and continuing vocational training is partly to blame for the dearth of skilled labour coupled with high unemployment. The 'maze of continuing vocational training provision' is characterised by a lack of transparency for users, an absence of clear quality standards at the level of providers and an insufficiency of quality criteria for full and part-time personnel.

The DGB consequently presses for a framework law on continuing vocational training (CVT) at federal level which would serve as the keystone for CVT structures, liabilities and monitoring bodies. It also wishes to see clarification of CVT funding and cannot tolerate the increasing shift of the cost burden to the employees' side in its present form. The DGB cites the collective agreement on continuing vocational training negotiated by the metalworkers' union IG-Metall in the *Land* of Baden-

Württemberg as a successful example of how continuing vocational training entitlements for the entire workforce can be prescribed and concrete action taken to tackle the problem of the dearth of skilled labour. It welcomes the approach of giving the workers a say since it is they who are often in the best position to assess their own continuing vocational training requirements.

In the opinion of the DGB, continuing vocational training moreover

requires modern forms and content. Alongside informal learning and training on the job, workers should also be given the space to thoroughly familiarise themselves with new methods or circumstances. The unions do not regard training on the job as the ideal solution. Individual training and skills counselling are regarded as important for the future; those wishing to engage in second chance initial training programmes or acquire continuing vocational training qualifications on a step-by-

step basis should be given the opportunity to do so. However the DGB decisively opposes the break-up of regulated further training programmes into disconnected modules.

Source: DGB/Cedefop/SK

Spain New legislation for training workshops/ craft centres and employment workshops

The training workshop and craft centre programme was set up in 1985 with the objective of the labour market integration of young unemployed persons under 25. It was designed as a linked work and training programme, with learning and job skilling alternating with actual work in activities related to the environment, conservation of urban areas or the artistic, historical or cultural heritage, the improvement of living conditions in urban or rural settings, as well as any other activity of public or social benefit.

In 1998, the new national vocational training programme introduced

among its objectives the creation of a programme of employment workshops. Based on the same philosophy as the training workshops/craft centres programme, the employment workshops cater for unemployed persons over 25 with special labour integration difficulties and those groups identified as a priority by the annual National Employment Action Plans.

In the wake of legislative amendments - fundamentally Law 12 of 9 July 2001 on urgent measures to reform the labour market to create more jobs and improve the quality of employment, the end of the transi-

tional period for the changeover to the euro on 31 December 2001, and the revision of the amounts of subsidies and grants for trainees - it seemed expedient to provide a new legal framework for these programmes. Two amending Orders were accordingly published in the Official State Bulletin (BOE) of 21 November 2001.

According to the Order of 14 November 2001, the training workshops and craft centres will feature an initial training phase relating to the relevant occupation during which trainees are to be eligible for a grant. The chief modification in

this respect is a revision of the amount of these grants, now standing at EUR 6.01 per course day. The second phase of training will be in alternance mode, including work placements. The main modification in this context is that trainees will now only be able to be taken on under the training contract and remuneration conditions stipulated by Law 2001 of 9 July 2001.

These provisions on the contracting of trainees, who are to be paid the corresponding levels of remuneration, are also stipulated by the Order on employment workshops. The contract is to be drawn up at the

commencement of the employment workshop and to remain effective throughout its entire duration.

Finally, the two Orders introduce a compulsory computer literacy module to familiarise trainees with new information and communication technologies. This module of at least 30 hours is to be included in the project training programme, in accordance with the stipulations on learning content and hours issued by the National Institute for Employment.

Source: INEM, Official State Bulletin, No 279, 21 November 2001.
<http://www.inem.es>

Ireland Enterprise-led training proves successful

The achievements of the training networks programme operated by Skillnets (see Cedefop Info 1/2000) have been summarised in an interim report⁽¹⁾ published recently. Skillnets was established initially on a three-year pilot basis to address the problem of low investment in training in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). It comprises an enterprise-led approach to training and development through flexible and effective training delivery methods in those enterprises that previously had difficulty accessing or benefiting from training. The board of Skillnets includes employers' representatives (from the Irish Business Employers' Confederation, the Chambers of Commerce of Ireland, the Small Firms Association and the Construction Industry Federation), employee/trade union representatives from the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and representatives of the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment. Skillnets receives funding under the National Training Fund (see Cedefop Info 2/2001) through the Depart-

ment of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The report sets out to examine and track the achievements of projects approved by Skillnets since 2000. It highlights the wide range of activities and developments and describes how a number of networks have evolved and how they have addressed the barriers to training and development.

The response by employers and employees has been exceptional. Over a period of 18 months 3 802 companies and 10 686 employees have become involved in 58 training networks. 310 work-based programmes have been devised, a significant number of which have received training certification. Skillnets has triggered a committed investment of over EUR 5 million for training and employees' upskilling by participating firms. In addition to pioneering the training networks, Skillnets has funded research aimed at identifying best

practice in Ireland and abroad in industry-led networks.

SMEs, which often lack the expertise, time or money to deliver effective training policies, have benefited most. 47% of the participating companies are small (less than 100 employees) and 43% are micro (less than 10). Skillnets is 'de-mystifying' training for small companies by developing practical tools to analyse and meet training needs, quickly, locally and effectively. For many of these firms their involvement in Skillnets is their first experience of any serious training and, for others, it is their first time to be involved in making real and informed decisions about what training to provide. By forming training networks, they have buying power, which allows them to access the specific training they need at a reduced cost.

The report identifies the predominance of the sectoral approach to the formation of networks as being of significance. 40 of the 58 net-

works are sector-based. They are in a diversity of industries from pharmaceuticals and electronics to restaurants and small retailers. Previously, firms in the same sector would have been reluctant to work together for competitive reasons and for fear of staff being poached by rival firms.

A special feature of the programme has been the practical expression of the partnership concept at company level. There has been a realisation that its effectiveness depends, not just on how well member firms relate to one another, but how well staff at all levels in participating firms are involved in designing and monitoring the training provided. Case studies of active partnership in the work place have been published jointly by IBEC and ICTU (see Cedefop Info 2/2001).

The impetus created by the debate on lifelong learning provides a special opportunity to introduce measures to accredit and validate non-formal learning that has taken place

in the workplace. From the outset, Skillnets has placed importance on supporting training, which is certified. Across the networks, companies are working to establish industry standards, skill and sectoral competencies, and certification and accreditation processes. This has, in some case, involved forging alliances with outside training bodies and academic institutions.

The active involvement of, and promotion by, industry, employers, unions and chambers of commerce has been one of the most important factors of the Training Networks Programme and has been the key to the uptake of training within the 4000 companies involved.

⁽¹⁾ Skillnets 1999-2000: A review of the first two years of the Training Networks Programme, 2001 Available free of charge from: Skillnets Ltd., Wasdale House, Rathfarnham Road, Terenure, IRL-Dublin 6W, Tel. (353-1) 490 1411. Fax (353-1) 490 1543. Email: info@skillnets.com. <http://www.skillnets.com>

Source: FÁS

eLearning – getting the balance right

European cooperative project Adult Education Network (AEN) provided important information: electronic learning only functions with great self-discipline, the right mixture of onsite and distance learning, and an appropriate division of labour in authoring systems

Supportive electronic learning, so-called eLearning, appears to be the key to further qualifications, particularly for people with little free time who have to juggle work and family life. However, this new form of adult learning poses a series of questions, as far as web-supported material development and Internet-supported cooperative learning organisation are concerned, for example. Experience gained through the Socrates/Minerva/Open and Distance Learning (ODL) project AEN is helping in the search for answers. The project terminated in Autumn 2001 after two years. Austria acted as coordinator to the European cooperative project, in which Denmark, Finland, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Sweden and the United Kingdom also participated.

Electronic learning environments and support materials are a great

asset in guiding working students on skills-based educational courses. Many of the individual projects making up the AEN project have demonstrated this. Any support for students in ODL demands an appropriate mixture of onsite and distance teaching phases. In Austria 50 per cent onsite and 50 per cent electronic distance teaching proved to be ideal. None of the AEN project partners set the proportion of distance study phases higher than 60 per cent.

An ODL model always requires a high degree of self-management and self-discipline from students. They must plan their distance learning phases precisely and keep to them just as conscientiously as they do the stipulated onsite times. Electronic learning management systems can help and give the eLearning process a real kick start. An important ele-

ment of this process, according to the results of the AEN project, is training precise written expression by using electronic forms of communication in 'Peer Group Learning'. This allows students to discuss problems with the syllabus in writing and helps to improve their logic and precision of expression.

One important aspect is determining the efficiency of Web-supported learning material. The efficiency of media-supported learning will be investigated under the motto 'E-LEF' – eLearning efficiency factor. Electronic learning environments still have a number of hurdles to overcome in network technology and the use and appropriate application of software products. The AEN has found that authoring systems for compiling web lessons are much more advanced than electronic learning and working environments. A division of labour in which teachers develop the content of lessons while professionals take over structural implementation would seem appropriate. Webmastering, the day-

to-day delivery of the learning system, is an absolute prerequisite for success. If it breaks down often, students will lose interest and turn their backs on the provision.

Experts from Austria, Sweden and Italy have developed an AEN teacher training model consisting of a basic course and advanced modules. The curriculum – which has been published via the AEN communication platform BSCWorkspace – contains around 100 hours, spread over two terms. The courses begin and end with onsite phases, between which web-based lessons and a video conference are planned. The basic material covers the use of operating systems and office applications, and the contents of the European Computer Driving Licence (ECDL). The advanced modules, conceived as online courses culminating in e-teaching project work, target teletutors, course developers and course designers. They also impart technical skills such as content development in the Web and network administration.

Practitioners in educational institutions should utilise international 'distribution channels', as well as the many national channels, to disseminate their experiences with eLearning. The European Distance Education Network (EDEN), www.eden.bme.hu, organises annual and thematic conferences, providing an international forum for all educational institutions desiring to expand and propagate their ODL activities.

In Austria the Ministry of Education has supported the AEN project and presented its results as part of the eFit educational campaign. This allows Austria to plan the comprehensive use of electronic teaching media to train working people in schools and specialised institutes of higher education in accordance with these results.

For further information please contact Dr Christian Dorninger, Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur, Vienna, e-mail christian.dorninger@bmbwk.gv.at or Mag. Wilfried Nagl, Landesschulrat für Oberösterreich, e-mail wilfried.nagl@lso-ooe.gv.at.

Source: BMBWK/Cedefop/SK

Employment policy

Belgium/The Netherlands

SABINA: Innovative Flemish-Dutch partnership in the building sector: sectoral placement and information network for building contractors

It is a well-known fact that the construction sector is currently facing a serious shortage of manpower and that building contractors have to cope with serious problems in filling job vacancies in virtually all areas. In Flanders the number of secondary school-leavers is falling while across the border in the Netherlands the competent authorities have not even managed to find the requisite numbers of young people for alternance training for a number of years now. To make matters worse, given the falling birth rate, this problem will be no less acute in the future. On top of all this, the booming economy has resulted in a marked decline in the number of jobseekers.

The Flemish Building Confederation (VCB), not wishing to be a mere passive observer of these developments, initiated a project to set up a sectoral placement and information network for building contractors, 'Sabina', co-financed by the European Community in the context of the Interreg programme for the central region of the Benelux (the abbreviation 'Interreg' reflecting the cross-border character of the project), and based on a harmonious distribu-

tion between public and private-sector and Flemish and Dutch partners.

Two-phase implementation

In broad outline, two phases of project implementation can be defined.

1) The first phase involved the development of general tools, e.g.

- sets of tests for the actual selection of jobseekers for building occupations;
- a new declaration form to provide a precise description of job vacancies in building firms;
- database systems into which jobseekers and recruiters can input the new data on sectoral selection and a clearer description of job vacancies with a view to more effective selection procedures.

2) The second phase of the project involved adapting these tools to the local level in Campine and Limburg, two regions characterised by a high unemployment rate and a high number of job vacancies in the building sector.

The Flemish Employment and Vocational Training Service, VDAB, has been given the task of selecting the jobseekers while the Campine and Limburg building confederations were responsible for the compilation and upgrading of job vacancies.

Within the context of the Sabina project, resources were earmarked to steer new target groups towards the construction sector. Moreover, a marvellous opportunity arose in the course of the project with the legalisation of the status of a large number of foreign residents and the massive influx of asylum-seekers who were able to be recruited immediately in Flanders once their application was deemed admissible.

Interregional and local monitoring

The Sabina project was monitored by a committee of Dutch and Flemish experts representing all the project partners (VCB, VDAB, the south-east Brabant manpower services, *Arbeidsvoorziening*, and the east Brabant section of the Dutch federation of building

enterprises, NVOB). It met on five occasions. Local experts' committees were also set up in Flanders, in Campine and Limburg respectively, and their meetings attended by directors and recruitment managers from the two relevant local building confederations as well as the management, coordinators of the jobseekers group, the employers' group and the pathway action of the VDAB. In the Netherlands, the manpower services, *Arbeidsvoorziening*, liaised with the personnel managers of the building enterprises affiliated to the NVOB.

Technical and social skills

In both the Netherlands and Flanders, the selection process took account not only of the candidates' technical skills but also a certain number of social skills, e.g. sociability, respect for safety and the environment, tidiness and cleanliness, attention to detail and efficiency – skills which in times of a dearth of workers in the labour market are at least as important to employers as technical skills.

Further information at: <http://www.vdab.be>
Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB/codoc

Belgium

Job rotation: additional training opportunities for workers and jobseekers

The Community and regional agency for employment and vocational training in Wallonia, Forem, introduced a new product in 1999: the job rotation initiative. Based on the principle of jobseekers stepping in for workers away from their jobs on training, the initiative offers firms an ideal opportunity to effectively organise their continuing training programmes while at the same time providing work for jobseekers.

The job rotation initiative offers companies two types of support: on the one hand, assistance in identifying the right training provider for its training requirements linked with logis-

tic support in the set-up of the relevant training programme, thus relieving firms of part of the administrative burden. On the other hand, the job rotation initiative proposes jobseekers to step in for company workers away from their jobs on training. This not only enables the firms in question to keep up an optimal pace of production despite the temporary departure of its workers on training courses but also offers jobseekers an opportunity for practical upskilling in the workplace.

Job rotation is a flexible concept which is applied to various fields. Since 1999, the job rotation initiative has collaborated with the

Point Chaud fast-food and sandwich chain in the implementation of its sales training programmes. Collaboration with Fiat Hitachi has facilitated the training of company personnel as well as the provision of work placements for a number of unemployed industrial truck drivers, some of whom were subsequently taken on by the company. Job rotation has also collaborated with the General Union of Belgian Cleaning and Disinfection companies, UGBN, in the training of cleaners and in the foreign language training of its workers (English, Dutch, Spanish). It has also assisted companies in the Liège area, e.g. BEA (a manufacturer of automatic doors for hospitals and

homes), Belgomédia (magazine publishers), DMO (optical instruments) and TDS Acior (desk manufacturers), in training their staff in English and Spanish with no slow-down in production. Moreover, employers convinced of the skills of their temporary staff have offered a number of the jobseekers steady jobs.

The job rotation initiative thus offers firms the advantage of being able to upskill their workforce without the disadvantage of a slow-down in production. The multi-level character of this initiative also helps to promote the reintegration of jobseekers into the labour market.

Source: FOREM/CIDOC

Experimental training and employment programmes

Since 2000, the National Institute for Employment (INEM) has been responsible for the direct management of part of its budget with the aim of implementing experimental programmes designed to find new alternatives of labour market integration.

The Order of 30 October 2001, which regulates the allocation of subsidies for the implementation of these programmes, envisages various lines of action:

□ Contribution of INEM to the INFO XXI action plan (cf. Cedefop Info 3/2001), by the inclusion of an experimental programme on information and communication technology for trainers. This web learning course, to comprise basic training both in IT and the use of the Internet, is initially to train 3 000 trainers engaged in the field of occupational training (i.e. trainers in the context of the vocational training and employment plan (FIP), training workshops, craft centres and employment workshops).

□ Implementation of a series of courses designed to integrate groups with priority status within the context of the national employment action plan, including those living with disabilities, immigrants, women with job integration problems, unemployed workers at risk of social exclusion and jobless persons in receipt of benefits, unemployment subsidies or the active integration income.

The following initiatives are to be regarded as experimental courses or plans in this context:

□ courses designed to try out labour integration formulas which are either innovative or rarely featured in mainstream employment promotion programmes;

□ courses which encourage a spirit of enterprise within the context of the national employment action plans and which combine training and work practice in a real working environment;

□ pilot occupational training projects corresponding to the certificates of occupational competence, with the aim of verifying the equivalence between the occupational profile and the training route and the suitability of the objectives, content, duration and requirements thereof;

□ projects involving the use of virtual simulators or other IT tools applied in occupational training courses;

□ experimental projects applying self-directed learning at the workplace as part of a company training plan targeted towards job-seekers with a view to their later integration into the firm; and, last but not least,

□ programmes in which all the clients are unemployed participants in the active integration income programme and have signed up for the activity agreement stipulated by this programme.

These courses will be nationwide and will therefore be open to any unemployed person registered with an employment office, irrespective of the specific place of learning; participants having to travel to attend their course may be eligible for a travel and subsistence allowance subject to the provisions of the vocational training and employment plan. Various grants are also available for programme beneficiaries depending on the training programme in question.

Source: INEM, Official State Bulletin, No 276, 17 November 2001. <http://www.inem.es>

Definitive adoption of the Law on Social Modernisation

The Law on Social Modernisation was definitively adopted by the French Parliament on 19 December 2001. The law, enacted on 17 January 2002, contains a number of important measures related to vocational training and labour legislation.

The law introduces the validation of previous informal learning, defined as the right of 'any individual having carried out a vocational activity in a gainful, non-gainful or voluntary capacity' to apply for 'the validation of this experiential learning to justify all or part of the knowledge or skills required for the award of a diploma or qualification issued on behalf of the State by an establishment of higher education'.

The validation will be decided on by a board 'on the basis of a dossier compiled by the candidate and following an interview or the placement of the candidate in an occupational setting'. 'The board will also decide on the extent of such valida-

tion and, in the case of partial validation, on the nature of the knowledge or skills for which further verification is required'.

The law includes a chapter on the funding of apprenticeship training. It lays down that 'the sums returned to the regional apprenticeship training and continuing vocational training funds ... are as a priority intended for the apprentice training centres (CFA) whose resources fall short of a minimum amount per apprentice'. It goes on to specify that 'annual resources may not exceed a ceiling corresponding to the total number of apprentices multiplied by the cost of their training. ... In those cases in which the annual resources of a CFA

exceed the said ceiling, the surpluses shall be returned to the regional apprentice and continuing vocational training fund'.

The new legislation also contains a number of provisions relating to continuing vocational training.

For example, regional employment and vocational training coordination committees are to be set up with the task of 'promoting concerted action' to ensure 'better coordination of vocational training and employment policies'. These committees will have 'diagnostic, research, monitoring and evaluation functions as far as these policies are concerned'. The law also sets up employment committees at departmental level.

In addition, the law also introduces a compulsory declaration of activity to be made by the training agencies

as from the conclusion of the first training agreement.

As far as labour legislation is concerned, the Law on Social Modernisation reinforces the provisions applicable to economic redundancies. Redundancy benefits are to be doubled to one fifth of the gross annual wage per year of service.

Works councils in firms with over 100 wage-earners must now be informed of any prospective redundancy programme and will have a right of veto with suspending effect as well as the right to request the services of an arbitrator in cases of difficulty.

Firms with 1 000 employees implementing a redundancy programme must now put forward a restructuring plan for their site. Each employee is to be offered leave of up to nine

months to seek alternative employment.

The powers of workers' representatives are reinforced as far as mobbing is concerned. The term is given a more precise definition and introduced into the Labour Code; victims are in particular given recourse to an external arbitrator.

In the case of casual employment, a higher casual employment bonus is now payable at the end of the contract as a deterrent to this form of employment contract.

The Law on Social Modernisation was published in the Official Journal No 15 of 18 January 2002, p. 1008-1052. To consult the electronic version, go to: http://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/citoyen/jorf_nor.ow?numjo=MESX0000077L

For further information, consult the Ministry of Employment and Solidarity website: http://www.travail.gouv.fr/dossiers/modernite_social.html
Source: News release, Centre INFFO website, 20 December 2001: <http://www.centre-info.fr/maq100901/actualite/index.htm>

FÁS changes direction

A fundamental re-appraisal of the role of FÁS, the Irish statutory training and employment authority, has taken place and a strategy document⁽¹⁾ reflecting this change has been published. A greater emphasis for the authority on training for people in employment reflects the significant reductions in unemployment in recent years.

The main proposals for training are:

□ improved initiatives to support employers in investing in training and development,

□ focusing on the needs of low skilled and low paid employees through the provision of portable skills, to help them to progress to higher skilled work,

□ expansion of the traineeship programme, under which FÁS and employers work together to provide training for non-craft occupations (see Cedefop Info 1/98),

□ reviewing apprenticeship programmes and development of career paths by up- and cross-skilling,

□ promoting lifelong learning by extending existing flexible delivery options, such as eLearning, distance learning, open learning and part-time learning.

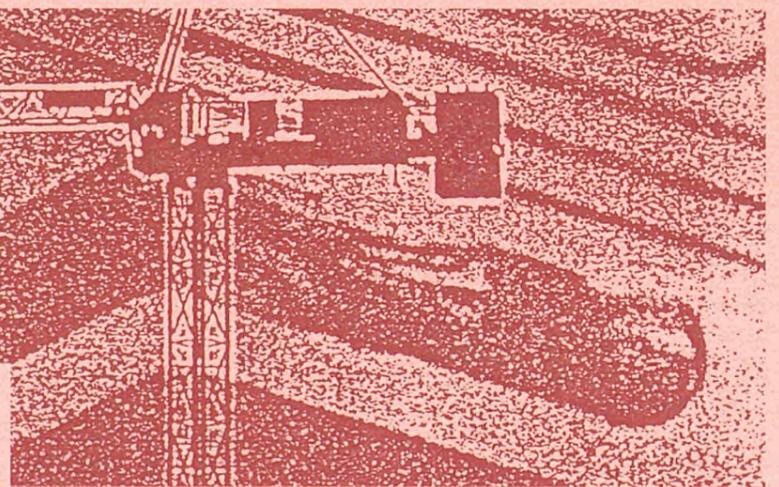
FÁS will, of course, continue to improve services for unemployed people, particularly those who are marginalised, with an approach tailored to individual needs.

The strategy document commits FÁS to increasing quality and standards in all its activities. Openness to alternative delivery systems and the building of working partnerships and alliances with other service providers are envisaged. FÁS has created a new skills and labour market research unit, which will monitor the labour market on a continuous basis and inform Government of areas of potential skill shortage or indeed surplus. The new Unit will report directly to the National Expert Group on Future Skills Needs – a tripartite committee which was set up in 1997 to assist the Government to maintain equilibrium between the supply of, and demand for, skills in the labour market (see Cedefop Info 3/01).

⁽¹⁾ FÁS: Statement of strategy 2002-2005.

Available free of charge from FÁS, 27-33 Upper Baginot Street, IRL-Dublin 4 and can be downloaded at http://fas.ie/pdf_files/FAS_Strategy2002_05.exe
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Source: FÁS



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

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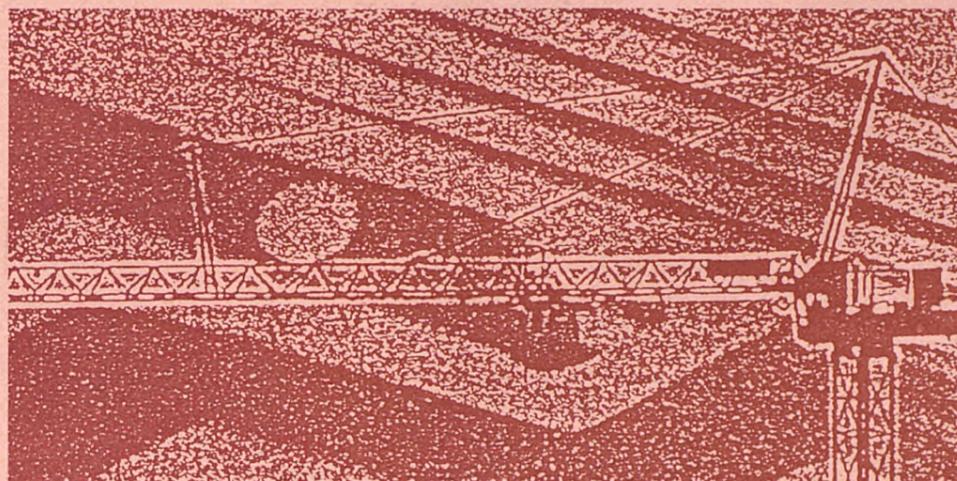
Technical production with DTP:
Axel Hunstock, Berlin

Editorial deadline: 1.3.2002
Printed in Belgium 2002
Cat. no.: TI-AD-02-001-EN-C

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New training organisations and programmes

Denmark

Reform of the social and health care training programmes

After the reforms of the commercial training programmes in 1996 and the technical training programmes in 2001, the turn has come of the social and health care training programmes (SOSU) programmes in 2002. The reform implies substantial changes in structure, content and trainees' opportunities for further education. The reform of the SOSU programmes was adopted by the Danish Parliament in spring 2001.

The objective of the reform is primarily to make the programmes more attractive for young people. In recent years, municipalities and counties (which employ social and health care workers) have had problems recruiting to both the SOSU programmes and to available positions within the sector.

With the reform, a flexible basic course with a duration of 20 to 40

weeks has been established. This course gives access to both the social and health care helper training programme and the educator assistant programme (see box). In this way, students have two career opportunities after completing the basic course instead of just one.

The average duration of the basic course is 20 weeks. However, students can choose to extend this period to a maximum of 40 weeks if they need extra time to acquire the necessary competencies to continue into the main course; or if they want to improve their qualifications for further studies; or if they need extra time to clarify their educational choice e.g. through work-based training periods.

Another important element in the reform is an increased focus on general and personal skills. It is

important that the trainees develop their social and personal skills in order to be able to deal with different kinds of people. In order to obtain this objective, the school-based periods in the main courses have been increased. This also has the objective of upgrading the programmes by establishing a structure comparable to the other Danish VET programmes.

The reform furthermore aims at improving the access to further education. The trainees no longer have to pass an admission examination for studies in one of the medium-term higher education programmes within the social and health care sector. Social and health care helpers can continue on the social and health care assistant programme, and afterwards on further education programmes such as for a nurse, social worker, educator, and physi-

otherapist. Trained educator assistants have access to the educator programme.

The new Act came into force on 1. January 2002, but prior to this a number of pilot and development projects have been initiated at the Danish social and health care schools.

An on-line publication "Fakta om sosu-reformen 2001" is available in Danish: <http://www.uvm.dk/pub/2001/sosufakta/>.

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Facts on the SOSU programmes

The SOSU programmes were introduced in 1991 and comprised the SOSU helper and SOSU assistant programmes (working in hospitals, home care, rest homes, etc.). An additional programme for educator assistant was introduced in 1997 (working in nurseries, kindergartens, youth centres, etc.). The aim of the programmes is to qualify employees broadly for working in the social and health care sector. Furthermore the programmes aim at developing the educational, vocational, social and personal qualifications of the trainees and hereby contribute to more preventive and coherent ways of working in the social and health care sector.

For further information about the programmes see the website of the Danish Ministry of Education: <http://www.uvm.dk/eng/publications/factsheets/fact8.htm>

Source: DEL

Germany

Vocational schools as competence centres?

Symposium on the role of vocational schools in regional training networks / Confederations of German trade and industry warn against a dilution of core tasks

Initial and continuing vocational training are growing ever closer and the vocational training of the future will be increasingly organised in networks. These were just some of the conclusions reached by the symposium organised by the Federal Government-Länder Commission for Educational Planning and Research Promotion (BLK) on 'Competence centres in regional training networks - the role and contribution of vocational schools', attended by some 250 German and international experts representing educational administrations, school practitioners, science, the business community and trade unions.

In the wake of global competition, higher levels of skilling are necessary and vocational school-leavers must be prepared to engage in lifelong learning following on from initial

training. The message from the symposium was that although not fundamentally being called into question, the principle of a person having an occupation is subject to an ever-increasing pace of change. Against this background, enhanced cooperation between the various institutions involved in vocational training is absolutely indispensable, with each individual institution developing its own strengths and enlisting in a regional training network as a competence centre, thereby creating potential synergies as opposed to duplications of effort.

Schleswig-Holstein's Minister for Education and Training, Ute Erdsiek-Rave, told the symposium that she regarded vocational schools as modern service providers and announced her intention to develop the vocational schools

in her *Land* into institutions under public law, responsible for continuing training as well as initial training tasks. A pilot project in this direction has in fact already been launched. Achim Meyer, chair of the BLK working party on initial and continuing vocational training, emphasised the new challenges in terms of organisation, cooperation and human resources if vocational schools are to participate in regional training networks as competence centres. The BLK symposium noted its intention to firstly define these challenges, following which it is to hold a discussion with the experts.

The German Industry and Trade Advisory Board for Vocational Education (KWB) expressed its strong opposition to the idea of expanding the scope of vocational schools to include continu-

ing training. The confederations of German trade and industry affiliated within this body fear that the development of vocational schools into regional competence centres would be to the detriment of the dual system of training system. The KWB warned against 'a dilution of the core tasks of vocational schools' which in its view would be tantamount to partial nationalisation of the continuing training sector. The KWB argues that there is no evidence of public interest in or any advantage to the introduction of state competition in the continuing training market and underlines that such a step would mean 'unfair competition' for private continuing training providers from vocational schools not having to account for all the effective costs in their continuing training course price calculations.

Source: BLK/KWB/Cedefop/SK

Germany

eLearning: self-directed skilling still has its limits

Key projects for a better utilisation and dissemination of information and communication technologies

eLearning promises unlimited opportunities for self-directed skilling in the future. However much still remains to be done before this stage is reached. So far the costs, media quality and the learning effect of eLearning are disproportionate; 'Internet didactics' is still in the teething stages and open, functional communication platforms are still few and far between; the production and utilisation of multimedia require costly high-tech equipment and, last but not least, access to sophisticated learning programmes is only available to those with the necessary purchasing power.

Five key projects sponsored by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research around the theme of the 'utilisation of the globally available knowledge for initial and continuing training and innovation processes' seek to remedy this state of affairs. The projects, coordinated by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB), are designed to move towards a better utilisation and dissemination of information and communication technologies.

The project coordinator presents regular reports on the project work in the journal 'LIMPACT'. No 4/2001 includes an article on the most important requirements for effective eLearning didactics, an evaluation of the learning platforms currently available in the marketplace and a report on the eLearning action plan of the European Union. Individual copies of 'LIMPACT' can be obtained free of charge from BIBB, Hermann-Ehlers-Strasse 10, D-53113 Bonn, Fax (49-228) 107-2954 or by E-mail: pt-iaaw@bibb.de.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Ireland

eBusiness training initiative by Chambers of Commerce

The Chambers of Commerce of Ireland (CCI)(¹) has launched an eBusiness training programme aimed at small and medium-sized companies. CCI had become increasingly aware of the gap in the level of eBusiness training between large indigenous and multi-national companies and SMEs - the backbone of the Irish economy. Representing one of the most extensive programmes aimed at SMEs, it will seek to deliver training to over 4 000 companies throughout the country. This multi-million pound investment by the CCI is matched by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The CCI, along with a private training organisation, have developed this enhanced programme from an eBusiness ADAPT (see Cedefop Info 3/2001, page 15) project called PRISM which trains owner-managers of SMEs in Internet strategy. The initial phase of PRISM concentrated on determining the appropriate structures for the project. The next stage focused on providing the network capable of delivering the eBusiness programme and refining the eBusiness training programmes based on previous participant feedback, developments in the ICT sector and research of current practice in the SME sector. Key project staff members are now in place around the country, working directly with Chambers to build their capacity and to stimulate demand for training. Regional eBusiness development executives will help build eBusiness capacity through training, awareness events and business networks.

The need to ensure that training is relevant and focused at the right audience is a primary concern. At the launch of the training programme, CCI issued the results of its second national

survey, which examined SME attitudes to eBusiness. The main objective of the survey was to determine the level of Internet awareness and attitudes to eBusiness among SMEs on a number of issues. The results of the survey highlight the 'digital divide' between SMEs and larger corporations. The following are some of the key findings:

- Despite the dot.com slow-down, SMEs have reported a 76% increase in online sales and a 130% increase in online inquiries;
- 90% of SMEs have computers but only one third of companies have a defined eBusiness strategy;
- 70% of those interviewed believe that the cost of acquiring specialist eBusiness technical skills is the biggest obstacle facing SMEs;
- Only 1% of companies engages in online learning.

Eight regional business centres, each with an eBusiness executive, have been established nationally at a cost of over EUR 2.5 million.

(¹) Internet address: http://www.chambersireland.ie/hdocs/ebusiness_research_ebiz01.html

Chambers of Commerce of Ireland (CCI) represents 11 000 businesses in all sectors and of all sizes and is a member of the national social partnership.

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Source: FÁS

France

New secondary school model: the *lycée des métiers*

At a press conference on 15 November 2001, Jean-Luc Mélenchon, Minister For Vocational Education, officially launched the *lycée des métiers* initiative. This initiative is designed to create a better synergy between training routes, notably vocational and technological training, to improve the transparency and coherence of academic training and to upgrade the pedagogical and educational quality of educational establishments. 'In the service of lifelong education and training, the *lycée des métiers* will be the essential vector of the sustainable professionalisation of young people and adults'.

Initiated a year and a half ago, the think tank of educational players on the *lycée des métiers* model has produced an orientation memo as well as an implementation guide. The Ministry of Vocational Education is now to consult the trade unions and external partners (notably the representatives of the regions) so that the final project can take account of their input.

The *Académies*, or educational districts, have already submitted a list of 200 schools with a similar structure to that of the *lycée des métiers* model. They are currently engaged in consulting their partners while the identified schools are presenting the project to their governing bodies.

According to the devised model, the *lycée des métiers* is to be a school whose identity is based on a coherent set of occupations. These occupations may be clustered around the same occupational sector (e.g. sales/hotels), a set of related occupations (e.g. clothing/textile industry/art, textiles and fashion) or a set of complementary occupations (e.g. related to the sea or the environment). Within its occupational field, the school's task will be to prepare students for an extended range of nation-wide technological and vocational diplomas and qualifications, ranging from school to higher education. It will cater for clients of different status (in initial training as pupils or apprentices/trainees, and in continuing training) and it is to provide information and guidance. It will participate, as appropriate, in certification in the framework of the validation of informal learning. It will also offer individual guidance for clients at risk.

The *lycée des métiers* process is part of a strategic approach of the educational authorities to better identify and renew the training provision of educational establishments and to offer a greater degree of coherence in the structure of the regional fabric of provision, notably in close liaison with the region (contributing to the elaboration of regional development plans for youth vocational training). The academic authority, the region and the occupational sectors concerned join forces to

initiate, develop and promote the *lycée des métiers* in a way consistent with the 'occupational route'. This commitment and partnership is concluded by the signing of a quality charter.

The *lycée des métiers* is in fact an ongoing quality initiative within the context of the schools' mission statements. With its role of strengthening cooperation between educational establishments, it is a logical follow-up to the concept of educational and training catchment areas. A label is to be awarded to the school for a period of five years, during which it will commit itself to comply with the set specifications and implement the adopted strands of progress. A school will not simply be able to decide to call itself a *lycée des métiers*, but the labelling system is designed to encourage all appropriate schools to acquire this status. Moreover, a label may be awarded to a school for all or part of its training provision. Similarly, a school failing to fulfil

the appropriate specifications in its own right may apply for the award of the label on the basis of a cooperation agreement with one or more local public-sector schools or one or more establishments of higher education.

The *lycée des métiers* therefore aims to forge close links with the world of work and local partners in the context of the mission statement of the public education service and is set to become a major player in local development.

Further information in:
La lettre de l'enseignement professionnel, see the Ministry Of Vocational Education website: <http://www.enseignement-professionnel.gouv.fr> ;
Full details on the *lycée des métiers* can also be found on the same site: http://www.enseignement-professionnel.gouv.fr/dernier_dossier_3.htm ;
The full interview with Jean-Luc Mélenchon is published in INFFO Flash, No 574, 16-30 September 2001, pp. 1 and 3.

Source: Extensive extracts from an article published in La lettre de l'enseignement professionnel, No 16, November 2001

Portugal

New training programme to fill the middle management gap in the field of new technologies

Within the context of the National Action Plan for Employment, the Portuguese Government has set up three courses of technological specialisation (CST) leading to diplomas giving access to higher education. The courses are open to students having completed the 12th year of schooling with a level III vocational qualification, evidencing information and communication technology (ICT) skills.

The University of Aveiro is to provide 500 places for the following courses in the first year of this initiative:

- 1) IT network and systems installation and maintenance;
- 2) multimedia product development;
- 3) information systems technology and programming.

Enrolment in these courses, comprising a total of 1 500 hours, is free of charge; a budget of EUR 4.25 billion has been earmarked, part of which is to be covered by Community funding in the first year. The programme, which includes both a socio-cultural and a science and technology component as well as

practical on-the-job training, is to be recognised as post-secondary non-higher education. Students completing the courses will be awarded a diploma of technological specialisation and a level IV qualification, granting access to the University of Aveiro.

According to the Minister of Labour and Solidarity, the objective of the courses is to deliver training provision to fill the middle management gap in the field of new technologies, a sector that is expanding in Portugal with a considerable demand for manpower. The courses are also designed to break through the traditional barrier between vocational training and higher education. The University of Aveiro courses were established by a joint resolution of the Ministries of Education, Labour and Solidarity and Science and Technology, and are the subject of a cooperation protocol between the Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP), the Association of Portuguese Enterprise and the University of Aveiro.

Source: CIDES

Finland

The competence-based qualifications system – a review

A recently published evaluation of Finland's competence-based qualifications system drew attention to some weaknesses, but was overall positive in its conclusions.

The system of vocational competence-based qualifications was implemented in 1994 and its development has been considerable. In 2000 17 000 adults obtained complete and 10 000 partial, qualifications, while 32 000 people took part in competencies tests. In the autumn of 2000 there were a total of 388 titles in the qualification structure, including 95 in vocational, 174 in further vocational and 119 in specialist vocational, qualifications.

In 1999/2000 the system was evaluated by the National Board of Education. The evaluation⁽¹⁾ focused on the efficacy of the system, on how its core elements had accomplished their tasks, and its results. It also described the development of the ideas behind the system of adult qualifications, its implementation phase and its development since 1994, analysing the activities in 1999 in greater details.

The Ministry of Education is responsible for the qualification structure, the National Board of Education decides on the requirements for qualifications and appoints the Qualification Committees. In the committees sit representatives from employees, employers, teachers and self-employed people. Qualification Committees oversee the arrangement of competence tests and issue certificates. Educational establishments act as organisers of competence tests. The 170 Qualification

Committees have made agreements on competence tests with 422 educational establishments.

The aim of the competence-based qualifications system is to provide adults with the opportunity to demonstrate their skills in tests that are independent of the way in which these skills have been obtained, and to increase the collaboration between the labour market and vocational adult education. The effects of the implementation of the qualification system in the field of vocational training have generally been positive. Considerations of the needs of the labour market have increased, and the involvement of its representatives in the assessment of performance, and in particular in qualification committees, has brought various parties closer together.

In practice, virtually all candidates undergo preparatory training in order to succeed in competence tests. In 1998 and 1999 respectively, some 67 000 and 72 000 people took part in preparatory training for competence-based qualifications. However, just over 23 000 adults took the competence tests in 1999. The fact that almost 50 000 people who took part in preparatory training did not take the competence tests is difficult to comprehend, because the training is intended to prepare them specifically for these tests.

An important objective of the creation of the qualification system was to provide people in work, but without vocational training, with an opportunity to obtain qualifications. However, those who achieved a qualification include a surprisingly

large number of relatively young people or persons who already have some kind of vocational training. Only sectors dominated by women have a greater number of people over the age of 45 with little formal education.

The competence tests were implemented in a variety of ways, but both the students and the representatives of the labour market regarded the skills assessed to be appropriate. In many cases, however, the arrangement for the competence tests, the tasks and the assessment of performance corresponded only partly to the requirements of the qualification in question. The assessment data also indicates that there were some shortcomings in the work of the Qualification Committees.

The development of the competence-based qualifications system required training and information. The National Board of Education arranged training for the members of the qualification committees and for teachers who provide preparatory training and organise competence tests. More than 2 300 people, most of them teachers have been trained as specialists in competence-based qualifications. This training requires approximately 20 weeks of full-time study. Educational establishments, which give preparatory training and arrange or would like to arrange competence tests, can ask the National Board of Education to evaluate their professional standards. In the year 2001, 130 such evaluations were made.

Even though the national evaluation of competence-based qualifications

system concluded that some approaches were poorly defined, it must be remembered that this system is barely out of its infancy, and centralised control has been avoided. Diversity has often been tolerated and all the parties involved at different levels have been trusted to do their best. There have been continuous positive developments and improvements.

⁽¹⁾ Available on: <http://www.edu.fi/julkaisut/> with the name of the publication Näyttötutkintojärjestelmän kokonaisarviointi (it includes an English summary)

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For further information on competence-based qualifications system see material from Agora
Thessaloniki 05 on <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/agora/themes/agora05.asp>

Source: NBE

The Netherlands

New national examination standards

In 2001, the annual inspection of the VET sector concluded that the quality of examinations was not sufficient. In reaction to this criticism, a steering committee has reviewed the examination process and procedures and formulated a proposal⁽¹⁾. At the end of July 2001, this was sent to the Minister of Education and the Lower Chamber of Parliament for approval. A change in the Act on Vocational and Adult Education would be necessary before the new systems could be put into effect. EUR 11.3 million has been allocated for its implementation.

The central point of the proposal is that the educational institutions are to be fully responsible for the examinations of the courses they provide. The way they perform these tasks will be tested externally. For this purpose, an examination quality-centre will be established at national level. In it, educational institutions

and the labour market organisations will co-operate to control the quality of the examinations in secondary vocational education. The quality centre will define national standards for quality to which the educational institutions have to conform in order to obtain a licence. Without a licence, the institutions cannot examine their students themselves, and will have to enlist the services of another licensed institution. The inspectorate will supervise the functioning of the quality centre and check if the institutions have the necessary licence. These propositions should come into force in August 2003 at the latest.

⁽¹⁾ Stuurgroep examineren mbo (Steering committee examinations in secondary vocational education), Advies examineren mbo (Note on examinations in secondary vocational education), Zoetermeer, 2001.
More information from:
Ministry of Education, Culture and Science
(www.minocw.nl)

Source: CINOP



Financing of VET

Finland

Performance-based funding of vocational education

In Finland, both universities and polytechnics use a performance-based funding system, which allows the Ministry of Education to reward these institutions of higher education for good performances. The Ministry is now about to introduce a separate performance-based funding system to cover the vocational education and training sector. Its objective is to complement funding based on the operating costs of upper-secondary vocational education and training with performance-based funding.

In December 2000, the National Board of Education, commissioned by the Ministry of Education, launched a project aimed at producing a performance-based funding system for upper-secondary vocational education and training that would evaluate and reward educa-

tion providers, in particular in relation to the placement of their students in employment or further studies. A further objective was to improve the steering effects of the funding system. The National Board of Education completed its report⁽¹⁾ in the autumn of 2001 and the Ministry of Education approved the proposed plan in November 2001.

There is a relatively high degree of unanimity both within the educational administration and among education providers on the necessity of introducing performance-based funding into upper-secondary vocational education and training. Among the positive aspects of the system are that it:

- rewards successful operations
- encourages improvements in operations

- encourages education providers to reward top performers
- emphasises the importance of upper-secondary vocational education and training and increases its positive publicity, thus enhancing its image.

The performance-based funding model will be introduced gradually starting this year. The evaluation of schools will be based on quantitative indicators structured in four clusters:

- effectiveness, which means indicators on the transition of students from training to working life or continued studies at a higher level
- processes, indicators on drop-outs and number of those who complete the whole study cycle
- teaching staff, how well the teachers are already trained and can receive further training

- the financial situation of the organiser of VET (i.e. the owner of the schools, not the schools themselves). Actual indicator is not yet decided because of the differences of the balancing of the accounts at different groups of organisers (municipalities, consortia of municipalities, private)

The model will be divided into a performance-based funding part and a quality award part, which will account for about 70–90% and 10–30%, respectively, of the funding allocated every year. The criteria for estimating the performance-based funding part will be the placement of students in employment and further studies (effectiveness); the drop-out rate, the rate of completion with qualifications, the utilisation rate of the licence to organise edu-

cation and training by the education provider (processes); formal qualifications and renewal of competence (staff); and the financial stability of the education provider (finances). The targets of evaluation for the quality award will be thematic, including support for the development of working life, development of learning and instruction, prevention of marginalisation, special education and training and internationalism.

⁽¹⁾ Available in Finnish and English on: http://www.minedu.fi/julkaisut/muut_julkaisut_aitheittain.htm

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Source: NBE

New initiatives to increase practical training places

In 2001, the Danish Government granted EUR 5.4 million for projects at vocational schools aiming at procuring new practical training places. This grant is part of an overall strategy to increase the number of practical training places in IVET.

For many years, a major problem in the Danish IVET programmes has been to procure a sufficient number of practical training places. Since the end of the 1980s, many young people have had difficulties finding a training place in a company. The situation improved by 1993, but a lack of training places and a mismatch between demand and supply have been a permanent trait of the training situation.

The basis for the governmental strategy is a report compiled by the Ministry of Education in co-operation with the social partners. The report "Rapport om praktikpladsproblematikken" recommends:

1. To increase the number of practical training places so that by 2004 a minimum of 36 000 training contracts are concluded each year;

2. To reduce the number of dropouts from practical training. The aim is to half the number of dropouts by 2004.

In order to attain the first objective, the Danish Government set aside EUR 5.4 million in 2001 to increase the number of practical training places. Three effort areas were identified:

- to increase the number of practical training places for the "residual group" i.e. trainees who have problems finding a training place due to their age, ethnic origin or educational standard;
- to support the practical placement service of the vocational schools;
- to increase the number of combination contracts, i.e., a contract where several companies co-operate on providing a training place.

In 2001, approximately 100 projects were initiated at vocational schools. The schools have been very creative in their efforts to increase the number of practical training places. In Northern Jutland, the commercial colleges have formed a network co-operating on producing common information material and visiting companies in

the area. Another initiative within this network has been to establish "job cafés" where the trainees can learn how to write an application and how to "sell" themselves. The next step is to expand the network to the technical colleges in the area.

Many of the schools have chosen to employ extra consultants in their practical placement service. This service is – among other things - responsible for contacting the companies and assessing whether a company meets the requirements to a practical training place. Among the new initiatives has been the establishment of networks with the local Public Employment Services (AF). As AF visits many companies during a year, they can be an important mediator between the schools and the companies.

A special effort area has been to find practical training places for trainees who belong to an ethnic minority. According to a ministerial analysis ("Indvandrere og efterkommere i uddannelsessystemet"), trainees from ethnic minorities have more difficulties finding a practical training place than Danish trainees. In

Eastern Jutland, a consultant has been hired to concentrate on procuring practical training places for the ethnic minorities. The reactions from the companies have been positive, and several trainees have already found a practical training place.

These and other initiatives will continue until the end of 2003. The results of these initiatives are still not appreciable in the overall number of practical training places. It takes time to convince the companies to take in trainees, but the hope is that the number of practical training places will increase in 2002 - as a consequence of the many new initiatives.

The reports mentioned in this article are both available on-line: "Rapport om praktikpladsproblematikken": <http://www.uvm.dk/erhverv/publikationer/rapport.pdf>. "Indvandrere og efterkommere i uddannelsessystemet": <http://www.uvm.dk/pub/2001/indvandrer/>

For further information please contact: The Danish Ministry of Education, Frederiksholms Kanal 21, DK-1220 Copenhagen K Tel. (45-33) 92 50 00, Fax (45-33) 92 55 47 E-mail: uvm@uvm.dk

Source: DEL

Special target groups

Belgium

Learning project launched by Limburg regional training centre

Het Treffen is the name of a new project launched by the Limburg regional training centre, Arktos, in September 2001. *Het Treffen's* mission statement is to deliver recognised training in accordance with the requirements of part-time compulsory education for the target group of youngsters aged 15–18. The project is essentially addressed to young people who are not enrolled in any other educational stream or who have dropped out of school, having failed to attend classes or for any other reason. The main focus of the project is on acquisition of a positive self-image. *Het Treffen* is a small centre in Beringen in the province of Limburg, geared towards long-term projects. Customised, quality guidance is provided for all its young clients. The work is based on group tasks with the focus on personal and social skills.

In practical terms, the project involves one day of training and one day focused on decoration and renovation techniques every week. In the decoration workshop, the youngsters acquire the necessary technical skills and improve their self-confidence and their attitude to work. Training is geared towards the young people's environment and centres of interest. Apart from these two days, the centre helps the young people to find effective ways of filling in the other three days of the week, e.g. in employment or a similar alternative.

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

Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB/lcodoc

Germany

Talent promotion programme gives a boost to 'Careers with an apprenticeship'

Grants for 14 000 particularly talented career-starters Talented young people meriting support are not only to be found in academic secondary schools and higher education, but also in the world of work. For over ten years now, the federal government's Talent Promotion in Vocational Training programme has been awarding grants to promote the upskilling of particularly talented career-starters; this year alone, EUR 14.6 m has been earmarked for the promotion of young specialised workers.

14 000 young people having completed a recognised course of dual training or a training programme in one of the 16 specialised occupations in the health sector are currently in receipt of a three-year grant as financial support for their participation in further in-service courses leading to supplementary qualifications or foreign language skills. To qualify for a grant under this programme – up to EUR 4 600 – candidates must have gained at least an overall assessment of 'good' in their final vocational examination. Alternatively, eligibility may also be based on particular success in a supraregional vocational competition or a substantiated nomination of candidates by their company or vocational school.

With its slogan 'Career with an apprenticeship', the Talent Promotion in Vocational Training programme seeks to enhance the appeal of vocational education and training and to stress that VET is on a par with general education and thus help to guarantee the levels of performance and skilling of the up and coming generation. The grant ratio is approximately one per cent of the total number of those completing recognised vocational training in a given year, which roughly corresponds to the ratio of talent promotion in the field of higher education.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Austria

'LEB!' helps disadvantaged youngsters start up their careers

New job integration project smooths the transition to apprentice training

'LEB!' is a new job integration project implemented by the Association for the vocational integration of people living with disabilities (VIB) in the federal state of Vienna. Funded by the European Social Fund and the nationwide employment offensive for the disabled, *Behindertemilliarde*, its mission is to smooth the transition to vocational schooling and the job market for young people at a social and emotional disadvantage.

Lower secondary school-leavers with the remark 'the student was taught according to the curriculum of the general special school' in even only one school subject in their school-leaving certificates have very little chance of success in the labour market. So far this group has received very little in the way of statutory assistance. The LEB! project has now stepped into this gap. It begins by delivering individual guidance for young people in the final year of compulsory schooling. This guidance continues into their first year of apprenticeship. Along with the teaching staff, it is above all a question of establishing contacts and building relationships, work with parents being an essential aspect.

An intelligence test and an aggression questionnaire provide an insight into the youngsters' individual strengths and an indication of the possible approaches for optimal support. The test results are used to draw up 'functional development profiles'. The next step is to find the client an apprenticeship or a place in a vocational preparation project, e.g. a vocational orientation course. In parallel, extramural guidance and pastoral care are assured in collaboration with the cultural and sports association of the vocational schools of Vienna.

Integration into vocational school begins the following year in cooperation with the relevant vocational school teaching staff. Young people attending vocational school who have already found a training place are assisted in retaining their training place by means of individual coaching while those who have not found or have lost a training place are offered careers guidance, application coaching and assistance in looking for a training place.

Following this phase which is now under way, the intake of a further 30 young people in the forthcoming academic year has already been planned. However the guidance requirements of youngsters completing compulsory schooling go much further. So far the project is confined to the federal state of Vienna but it could conceivably be transferred to other parts of Austria following successful completion.

Further information can be obtained from the following e-mail address: projekt.leb@gmx.at or from the project leader Mag. Heide Manhartberger, Infozentrum für Behindertenintegration am Pädagogischen Institut des Bundes (PIB), A-1010 Vienna, Ginzackerstrasse 18, E-mail: ifb@pib-wien.ac.at

Source: LEB Project/Cedefop/SK

Belgium Continued from page 1

Springboards for the integration of people with disabilities in the field of higher education

The committee of experts, headed by scientists from KUL (Katholieke Universiteit Leuven) and VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel), examined the situation of people living with disabilities in higher education and proposed the introduction of a number of policy measures. In this context, the term 'people living with disabilities' refers not only to wheelchair users and the hearing-impaired, but also dyslexics, for whom extended terms of study are proposed. The committee of experts recommends against the creation of tailor-made training programmes for people with disabilities, stressing the importance of integrating students with disabilities into mainstream education as far as possible. The first stage is to ensure the integration of people with disabilities into

the teaching staff, the involvement of coordinators to cater for the needs and requirements of students living with disabilities and the provision of subsidies for the results of models of good practice.

Apart from the latter, the role of the State should essentially be one of encouragement. Installing equipment to cater for people living with disabilities within the premises of or nearby existing establishments is virtually pointless. Finally, a further study is under preparation on the real cost of measures for the integration of people living with disabilities in educational establishments.

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

Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB/lcodoc

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Vocational guidance

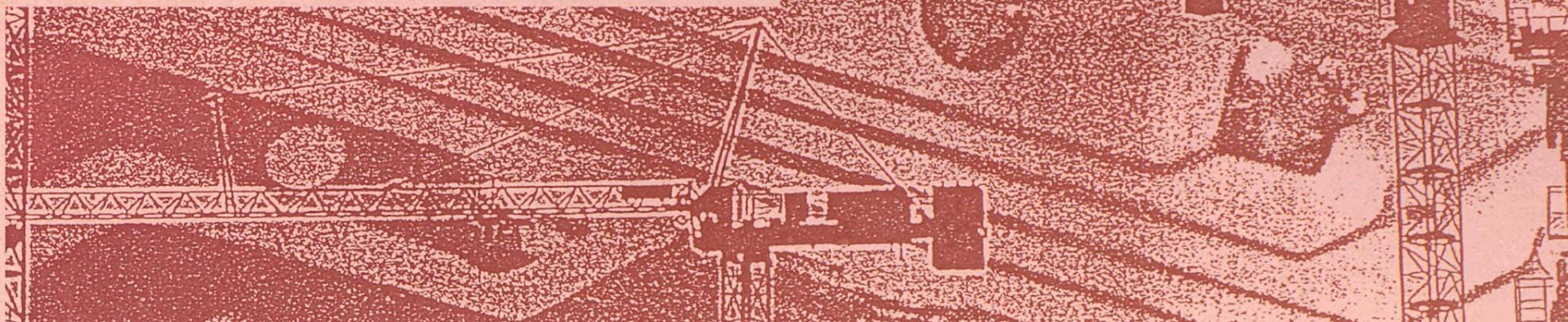
ICE: www.mennt.is - learning opportunities database; NL: New structures for the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance; P: Europe opens up its frontiers in the field of training in traditional arts and crafts; Sources;

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Cedefop-publications; Selected bibliography.



Vocational guidance

Iceland

www.mennt.is - learning opportunities database

On 1 March 2002, Educate-Iceland launched its learning opportunities database. The database, the first of its kind in Iceland, contains extensive information on all learning opportunities in Iceland at secondary level and above, as well as lifelong learning opportunities offered by a wide range of providers. In a country as scarcely populated as Iceland such free access to information is very important. This is not least the case in vocational education and training, where courses are offered in different types of schools, at different places and even through distance learning. The database is freely accessible to the public on the World Wide Web. The database is both in Icelandic and English and each institute can submit its information in either or both languages. It is easily translatable and supports all character-sets.

When Educate-Iceland was formed in 1998, top priority was given to the development of a web based information service on learning opportunities. After extensive research and planning the Icelandic software company,

Njherji, was contracted to construct the database, website and software.

It was decided that a decentralised approach would be adopted for feeding the database. The educational institutions themselves are entirely responsible for entering and maintaining information on their learning opportunities. To ensure the integrity of the system a number of automatic editorial features are included in the system and the processes involved in entering and maintaining the information have been made as simple as possible. Educate-Iceland is currently exploring the possibility of establishing connections with operators of similar services to be able to offer information on learning opportunities abroad available to Icelanders. Data can also be shared between the learning opportunities database and other resources, such as digital libraries.

Education providers choose from two methods of entering data into the database. Larger institutions operating their own databases use

software allowing simple transfer of data from the providers directly to the central database over the Internet. Smaller institutions enter their data directly using web-based forms. For these institutions the Learning Opportunities Database also functions as a valuable tool for managing information on their services and products.

The public has free access to the database on the website www.mennt.is. The primary goal in the design was to keep things simple and straightforward. The users choose from three different search engines depending on the educational level they are interested in. They search for either secondary or tertiary level or other courses not classifiable by education levels. Each of the three search forms differ to reflect the differences in offers. The users can easily locate learning opportunities suitable to their needs and narrow down possibilities by specifying further criteria, for example geographical location or whether the course is offered through distance learning. Since all the data is stored in a centralised location and in a

uniform format, users are able to easily compare similar courses offered by different providers. The result being that users are able to make more informed choices better reflecting their exact needs or wishes. Finally, to complete the process, users are able to register and pay for courses online.

The Icelandic learning opportunities Database was designed in a modular fashion to allow for easy expansion and integration of new services. The database itself is best thought of as a hub for a variety of services making use of available data. The first such extension, currently in the planning phase aims to construct an electronic counsellor to help users determine what learning opportunities best suit their needs and desires. Other possibilities to be explored in the future include linking the learning opportunities database to employment services and bookshops.

Source: Educate-Iceland/Tryggvi Thayer, Project manager tryggvi@mennt.is - <http://www.mennt.net>

Netherlands

New structures for the National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance

The main focus of the work of the Dutch National Resource Centre for Vocational Guidance (NRCVG) in the coming years will be to make guidance counsellors aware of the international dimension of training or study and to integrate the European dimension in guidance policy. Until 2001, the emphasis mainly lay on collecting, producing and disseminating information about education and training opportunities in the Netherlands. Although this will still be an important task of the NRCVGs, the international dimension of the work of guidance counsellors needs to be underlined so as to prepare students for international career paths.

In the Netherlands, in the VET sector, three main organisations are involved in the promotion and stimulation of transnational mobility and international training. CINOP (the centre of expertise for innovation and quality improvement in the field of learning and training) acts as the National Agency for the Leonardo da Vinci programme, LDC is the centre of ex-

pertise in the field of career guidance while Colo (the association of national vocational education bodies) specialises in the evaluation of international credentials and the comparability of qualifications. These three organisations have joined forces in order to make the NRCVG more effective in reaching the overall goal of stimulating European awareness through guidance counselling. From the beginning of their studies or apprenticeships, students must be fully aware of international possibilities. Too often they are still discovering these only in their last year. Guidance counsellors should, together with the international coordinators of the VET institutions, play a key role in changing this situation.

As vocational guidance and international student mobility activities are closely linked, the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science asked the three organisations to carry out research among other European NRCVG's and Leonardo da Vinci National Agencies (NAs).

The question was how other countries structured the implementation of these programmes and what would be the ideal structure of cooperation for the Netherlands. The conclusion was that the optimal situation would be to place the NRCVG close to the NA, because the activities of the latter (to stimulate awareness, provide information, disseminate good practices and organise study visits) are supplementary to the work of the NRCVG.

The academic year 2001/02 is the first of the new cooperation structure. During it, the ground is being laid for the years to come and activities are being tuned to this goal, with the work of the NRCVG focusing on three activities:

- collecting, producing and disseminating information about education and training opportunities in the Netherlands. The Estia-website (<http://www.estia.educ.goteborg.se>) is one of the dissemination instruments,
- analysing the work of other national actors who are involved in internationalisation and guidance counselling,
- monitoring and evaluating the international dimension of VET school guidance counsellors' work and giving advice on integrating the European dimension in guidance policy.

For more information: hsormani@cinop.nl

Source: Colo/LDC/CINOP

Opening frontiers in the field of training in traditional arts and crafts

Although some one hundred traditional crafts and trades have survived the course of time, the lack of regulation in this sector makes it difficult to determine the exact number of artisanal enterprises remaining in Portugal. The SMART project was developed in the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme with the apprentices and

practitioners of these crafts and trades in mind. As from March 2002, the public can visit a website providing information on training opportunities throughout Europe, administrative details, course admission requirements and possible sources of financial assistance. The site, initially limited to the profiling of nine occupations related to

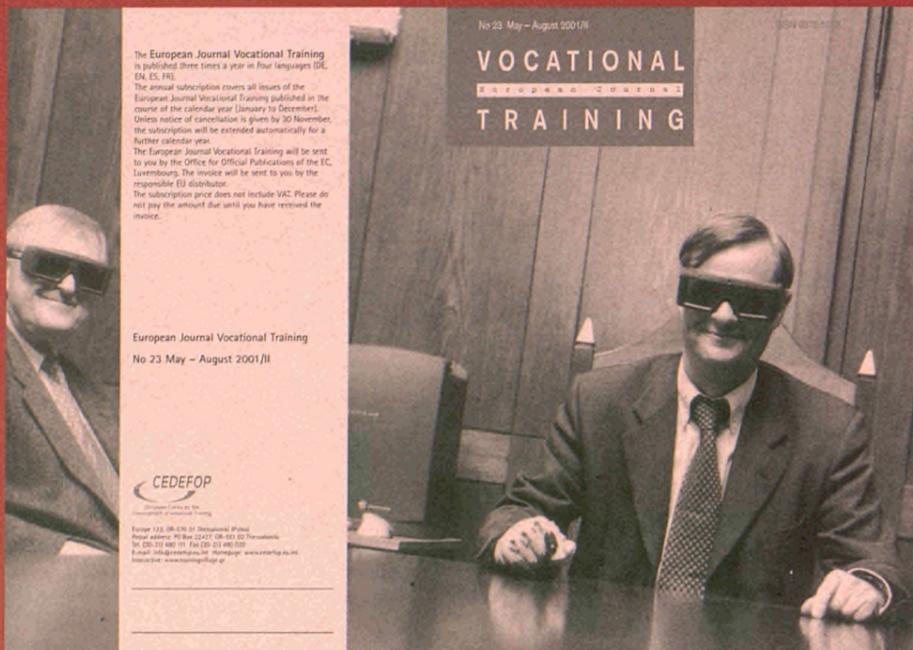
glass-working, pottery and existing resources in Portugal, France and Italy, is subsequently to be expanded to cover all areas of craft training in the rest of Europe. This information system on mobility in Europe for those engaged in vocational training in traditional crafts and trades will not only open up the frontiers between European

countries, but also provide crafts people an opportunity to upgrade their product quality and innovate their means of production. Alongside organisations from France, Italy and other EU Member States, two Portuguese institutions are members of this consortium – the training centre for the craft sector, CEARTE, and the programme for the

promotion of trades and micro-craft enterprises, both based in Coimbra.

Further information from:
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Source: CIDES



The European Journal "Vocational Training" is published in DE, EN, ES and FR by Cedefop. (ISSN 0378-5068)
Single copy EUR 7
Annual subscription EUR 15 (3 issues)

A Portuguese version is also published by, and is available directly from
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The editorial team of Cedefop Info receive numerous press releases, reports and contributions from vocational training experts and specialised agencies 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 those listed below, which do not appear in the printed issue are therefore made available to our readers via the Internet.

Belgium

New teacher training centres to combine the strengths of universities and colleges of higher education in Flanders

The teacher training centres, with which the Flemish Minister for Education wishes to launch this initiative, must match existing competences in this field. The focus of the universities is essentially on theory, whereas colleges of higher education are more geared towards practical training. This synergy is to generate a higher quality of training for teachers in general.

Higher education is going through a process of change from a number of points of view. The creation of collaborative links between colleges of higher education and universities has only just begun. Attempts are under way at European level to harmonise higher education and introduce the bachelor's/master's qualifications. Flanders is taking over the funding of colleges of higher education and the universities. A policy evaluation of teacher training has just been concluded.

Belgium

New structure for higher education in Flanders: the academic year is to be abolished in the long term

The Flemish Minister for Education has announced the gradual abolition of the academic year in Flemish higher education. Passing or repeating a university year will soon be a thing of the past. The Minister is in favour of a more flexible form of higher education.

From the academic year 2002/03 onwards, universities and colleges of further education may award bachelor's and master's degrees. The Flemish Minister for Education wishes to reserve the master's title for university doctorates.

Belgium

New field worker training programme in the context of part-time education in Flanders (Antwerp)

European funding for the creation of a new training programme

From next year onwards, young people engaged in part-time education in Antwerp will be able to enrol in a training programme for field workers (*moniteurs*). The project, developed in Antwerp and to be transferred throughout the European Union, is designed to provide young people with quality training so that they in turn will be in a position to help other youngsters at risk organise their leisure time more effectively.

Italy

A new trade union to help train "field" experts

Federagronomi a federation of agronomists has recently been set up in Italy. It is a trade union association uniting professional agronomists and forestry experts as well as those in facilities offering services to agriculture and forestry. One of its main objectives is to become a point of reference for the training of specialists and their introduction into the world of work.

Netherlands

Learning without boundaries

Aspirations for national policy in an international perspective.

To meet the ambitions formulated in Lisbon (March 2000), Dutch national policy is more and more tied to international policy. It is no coincidence that the recent study on education and research in 2010, initiated by the government, bears the title 'Learning without boundaries' (*Grenzeloos leren*). It identifies trends, obstacles and aspirations. However the result of this analysis (unlike that of most policy documents) is not the identification of a single preferred approach. Instead, it lists alternative policy options for possible consideration during the formation of the next coalition government. In order to present clear choices, the list is deliberately composed out of the most extreme options. The ultimate aim would be to arrive at compromises between these, wherever possible reconciling the best features of the various alternatives.

United Kingdom

The role of employers in training and education policies and practice

Employer support for training and development is increasingly important, but with budgets getting tighter, how willing are employers to support training and learning, particularly for younger or low skilled workers? And how does employer behaviour interact with government policy? Recent surveys in the UK aimed to investigate whether recent economic or policy changes influenced access to workplace training and learning for young people and low-skilled employees.

Portugal

Training on the increase

The Institute for Innovation in Training, INOFOR, has submitted a positive progress report for its activities in the course of 2001. The Institute was involved in a series of projects, notably the '20th prospective sectoral study', reinforcement of the network of knowledge resource centres and the 'Paths towards innovation' project.

The 20th prospective sectoral study was developed by the project unit 'Skill trends and diagnosis of training needs'. In cooperation with other institutions, INOFOR defined the foreseeable trends in around 200 occupational profiles, the principal objective of the study being to deliver data for the definition of training programmes providing skilling programmes commensurate with these profiles.



Cedefop-publications



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Andra rapporten om yrkesutbildningsforsk-

ning i Europa: sammanfattning
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the 21st century Career Space
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Perfil do sistema de financiamento

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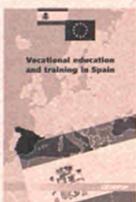
El sistema de formación profesional en España
Breve descripción

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eLearning and training in Europe
A survey into the use of eLearning in training and professional devel-

opment in the European Union
Reference document 3021
Languages: DE, EN, FR
Price: EUR 40
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Cedefop online surveys

Reference document 3022
Languages: DE, EN, FR
Price: EUR 40
Cat. No: TI-41-01-939-EN-C

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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 online EU 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.
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Cat.No. NC-38-01-520-EN-C
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