

Policy, practice, partnership: getting to work on lifelong learning

Living and working in 21st century Europe is about living and working in the Knowledge Age. Seven years from now, Europe wants to be the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world – and, no less, to become a more cohesive, inclusive society. Creating one world of lifelong learning is a strategic part of this vision that brings together personal development, social integration, community involvement and economic growth. This means that everyone should have the chance to develop their potential to the full throughout life and in a variety of ways.

What matters now is how to make lifelong learning successful in practice, and this was why, in June, Cedefop organised a conference in association with ten European and international institutions and organisations⁽¹⁾. Attracting some 150 participants from 31 countries ranging from Bosnia and Herzegovina to Australia, it became the largest meeting held at Cedefop since its move to Thessaloniki in 1995.

The conference report is to be available for downloading on the European Training Village (ETV) from

September 2003 and a hard copy Cedefop publication will follow in spring 2004. Space here only allows us to provide a taste of some of the main points that were made in the plenaries and the workshops.

"2010 is only six years away ... it's time to change gears"

Mr Otto Dibelius, Principal Advisor at the European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), invited participants to challenge conventional wisdom and underlined the importance of building

bridges between policy and practice. He said that making lifelong learning a reality **for all** will mean far-reaching reforms of current systems and practices, but that public investment alone cannot cover all the costs involved – existing resources will have to be used more efficiently. The priority areas for action should be addressing the needs of the accession countries, reaching out to those who have least access to lifelong learning, removing obstacles such as lack of time and money, and creating a culture of learning. Motivation is therefore the key to raising participation:

learning opportunities of all kinds should be relevant to people's interests and concerns and better attuned to their life circumstances. They should deliver concrete benefits for those who take them up.

Nine in ten European citizens think that lifelong learning is important...

...at least to some extent. This is the first highlight from the new DG EAC-Cedefop Eurobarometer survey on lifelong learning, ⁽²⁾ which was presented at the conference after being formally launched by Commissioner Viviane Redding on 5 May 2003 at the Council meeting of Education Ministers.

In a nutshell, the survey shows that people are motivated to learn for

personal and social reasons in the first instance, even if they recognise that it is important for jobs and careers too. Citizens think that they learn **best** in informal and social contexts, even if they are more likely to picture themselves going on a formal education or training course if they were to do some learning in the future. However, very few think that they should individually pay for any kind of learning, and certainly not all of the cost.

The worrying findings are that too many people do not feel comfortable with using ICT tools (EU average 40%), scientific and technological equipment (55%) or foreign languages (57.5%). And on their own judgement, over two-thirds of European citizens do not currently take

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2/2003

The priorities of the Italian presidency of the Council of the European Union in the field of education and training

In the programme of the Italian presidency, "human capital" plays a fundamental role in the economic and social development of the Member States and the European Union on the path towards a knowledge-based society.

Human capital, viewed as a factor of economic growth, innovation, employability and social cohesion, and policies for improving the use of educational resources will be the focus of a specific ministerial project during the Italian presidency. The main elements of the presidency's proposal are:

- supporting educational and training policies which seek to combine the objectives of social cohesion and competitiveness;
- identifying the gap between available human resources and the need to upskill major groups of the population in order to raise the global competitiveness of the European Union;
- integrating educational, social and employment policies into the formation of human capital;

□ launching a structured and ongoing process of cooperation for the development and upgrading of human capital.

Creating a "knowledge-based Europe" requires strengthening and coordinating educational and training instruments at European level to lay solid foundations for student and trainer mobility. Reinforcing European cooperation in the field of vocational educational and training will also focus on the issue of early school-leaving and youth disaffection. This issue is also to be dealt with at a ministerial meeting and in a Council resolution; attention is to be focussed on the needs, interests and aspirations of students, the main users of the education and training systems.

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Letter of the Director

Cedefop's work during the first semester of this year has been marked by the organisation of a number of major conferences and by quite intensive support of the European Commission in implementing the Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced co-operation in the field of vocational education and training.

As I indicated in Cedefop Info 1/2003, we have concentrated our efforts on establishing virtual communities to support the work of the technical working groups. The success of these is illustrated in that over 1 200 people have registered as members of the virtual communities and, taken together, more than 200 documents have been placed in them. Those on lifelong learning, guidance, a VET European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and quality assurance have been particularly

well used and visited. In addition, a web site containing monthly reports and updates on all Copenhagen relevant work has been established for members of the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), the Copenhagen Co-ordinators Group (CCG) and the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGV). The purpose is to provide a comprehensive information service for them and to promote transparency between the various bodies and groups, on their approach to the issues they are discussing and on the progress made.

At the meeting of Directors General for Vocational Training in March, the Commission presented its plans for advancing implementation of the Copenhagen declaration. In this and in more recent discussions the question of how to support the development of activities in relation to sectoral qualifications and competences was given a high priority. You will find (on page 4) an article on the state of work in this area. This activity is also supported by a virtual community.

Cedefop has carried out an initial analysis of a special Eurobarometer survey (http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4025_en.pdf) (financed by the Commission) on citizens' views on lifelong learning (see page 3). In June we organised a major conference on lifelong learning. We report (on page 1) on this very well attended and successful conference. Shortly before it, we joined with the European Training Foundation (ETF) and the Greek social partner organisations in organising in Athens a conference on the same theme, but with a strong emphasis on the role of the social partners, under the auspices of the Greek presidency (see page 4).

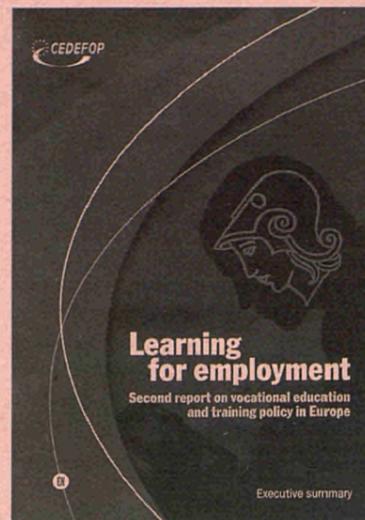
In May a conference on "Early identification of skill needs in the labour market" received extensive publicity and you will find more details of the results in the article below. In June the final seminar on the Development of an e-Learning Observation System (DELLOS) was held in Thessaloniki. At it, with the European Commission, substantial

progress was made towards implementing the eLearning action plan.

Our second report on vocational education and training (VET) policy in Europe, under the title 'Learning for employment', is now in the process of publication. The executive summary is already available, free of charge, in hard copy in EN, FR, DE, IT (publication n° 4027) and will be printed in all eleven official EU languages and made available on the web (http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/4027_en.pdf). The next issue of Cedefop Info will contain an article on the main findings of the report.

Preparing for enlargement is a major challenge and we have already welcomed participants from many of the future member states in many of our activities. Soon they will also be present for the meetings of our Management Board. We also hope to include items from them in the next issue of Cedefop Info.

Johan van Rens
 June 2003



Learning for employment
 Second report on vocational education and training policy in Europe
 Executive summary
 4027
 Language: EN, DE, FR, IT
 Cat. No: TI-53-03-708-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Agora Thessaloniki
Education and training: who are the winners?

Who benefits from education and training? Do education and training automatically lead to higher economic growth and a better standard of living? Is the economic spin-off calculable in euros and cents really the measure of all things? Or does lifelong learning have a greater value on the road to a European knowledge society? These were just some of the questions to which the approx. 70 VET experts from the EU and the acceding countries gave contrasting answers at the May 2003 Agora organised by Cedefop.

Education and training cannot be obtained free of charge – there is always a price to pay. This being so, they obviously have to offer a return on investment. With a few exceptions, this was the opinion expressed by the representatives of the business community among the Agora participants, who maintained that an investment which does not pay off is not worthwhile. In the opinion of this group, forcing firms into training or threatening them with a fine or a training levy – currently the subject of heated debate in Germany – is a completely misguided approach.

On the other side of the fence, their critics, among them many trainers and social scientists, felt it was short-sighted to consider education and training as a mere economic product or commodity. Arguing that education and training always represent an investment in the future of a society, they drew attention to the foreseeable demographic trends throughout Europe and the aging

working population, which called for new approaches and attitudes in the field of initial and continuing vocational training. They emphasised the importance of skilling for all as an instrument to improve individual life opportunities and safeguard social stability in a permanently changing world.

The controversy once again bore witness to the fundamental importance of exchanging views on the future of vocational education and training (VET). Cedefop's Agoras offer a forum for such a debate, providing participants with the opportunity to elucidate their views and seek common ground.

Source: Cedefop/EFG/SK

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 Reading tip:
 Wolf, Allison. *Does Education Matter? Myths about education and economic growth*, London Penguin 2002
 ISBN 0-14-028660-8

Europe/Cedefop
Skills of the future – using findings in policies and practice

Expert meeting in Cedefop a step towards the networking of European initiatives.

The 'Early identification of skill needs in Europe' was the central theme of an expert meeting held in May in Thessaloniki on the occasion of the Greek EU presidency. The meeting was hosted by Cedefop which organised it in collaboration with the German Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) and with the support of the Greek social partners.

For two days some 140 vocational training experts from European countries, including the states about to join the EU, discussed their experiences and the best methods for the identification, forecasting and observation of new skill requirements. The participants also examined the skill needs of various target groups.

In three parallel workshops the experts:

□ looked at different examples of the early identification of skill needs

and their translation into policy initiatives,
 □ considered the early identification of changing skill requirements in selected sectors - for instance tourism, logistics and ICTs - and
 □ examined ways and means of providing cross-occupational and cross-sectoral skills, the so-called 'cross-sectional skills'.

Finally there was a round table in which the participants discussed possibilities of European cooperation in the field of early identification of skill needs on the basis of the German www.frequenz.net network.

The conference, which had been prepared by Cedefop and BMBF a year earlier at a technical meeting in Berlin (1), was another step towards the establishment of a European platform for the exchange, networking and transfer of the results of initiatives for the early identification

of skill needs. This initiative was welcomed by all participants as an important contribution to a more efficient use of the findings in policies and practice.

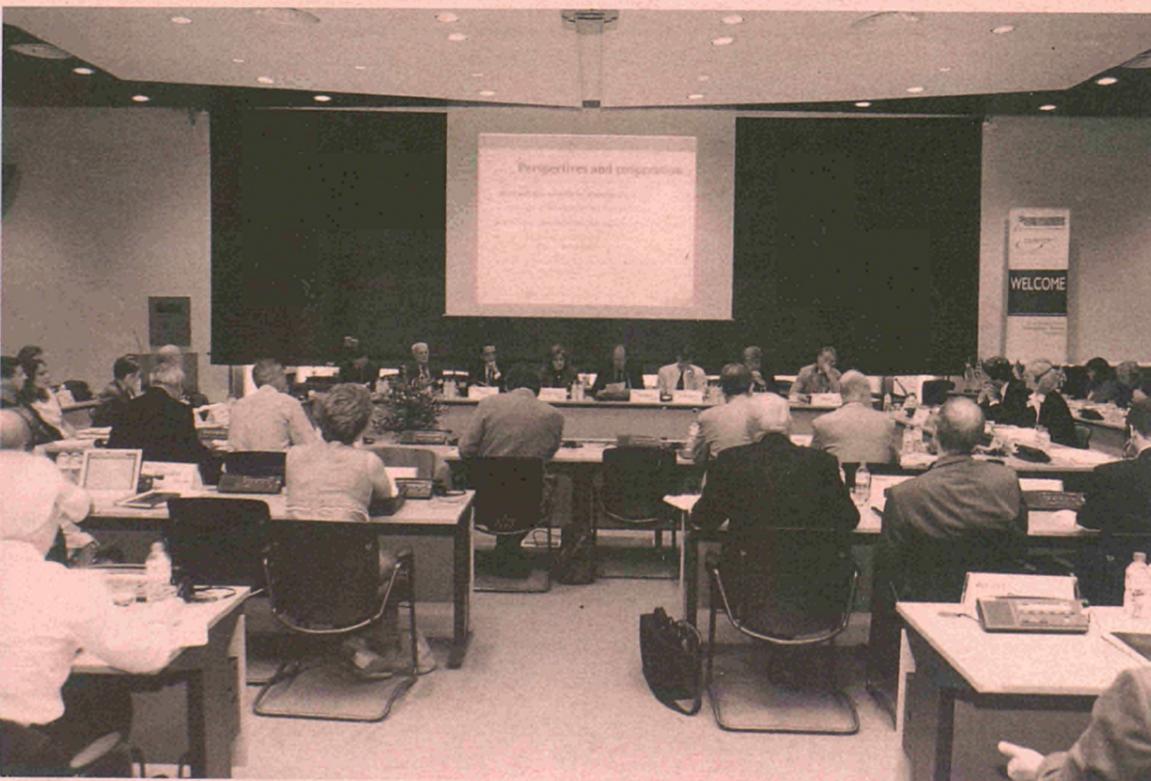
(1) See Cedefop Info 1/2003, p. 1 and 3.

The documentation of the conference in Berlin has been published by Cedefop in English and by BMBF in German:
 S. L. Schmidt, K. Schömann, M. Tessaring, Eds. *Early identification of skill needs in Europe*. Cedefop Reference series, Luxembourg: EUR-OP, 2003, ISBN 92-896-0202-3, Publ.-No 3029, Cat. No. TI-49-02-353-EN-C, price: EUR 25; *ibid.*, Eds. *Früherkennung von Qualifikationsanforderungen in Europa. Qualifikationen erkennen - Berufe gestalten*. H.J. Bullinger, W. Bertelsmann Verlag GmbH & Co. KG, Bielefeld, 2003, ISBN 3-7639-3084-1, Bestell-Nr. 60.01.414., Price: EUR 14,90
 The report on the conference in Thessaloniki is expected to be published at the end of this year, also on the Internet.

See also Austrian article on page 12

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Source: Cedefop/EWS/SK



Again, there is no space...

...for some of our customary items. For information on forthcoming conferences and exhibitions, please see http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/ETVNEWS/Show_today_fevents.asp

The names and addresses of the ReferNet members, who provide the text for many of the articles in Cedefop Info can be found at www.cedefop.eu.int/directory.asp?refernet. For the monthly lists of new acquisitions in Cedefop's Library, please go to http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/HomePages/Front_page_news/nal200306.pdf.

In the electronic version, which can be found at www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publications.asp?section=24, there are the following items for which there was no space in the hard-copy version:

- Facilitating pupil participation in education act - Norway
- Politicians and social partners advocate strong action - Germany
- The new legal framework for education - Spain

Source: Cedefop/JMA

European citizens and lifelong learning: first findings of a Eurobarometer survey

The Eurobarometer survey on lifelong learning (LLL) was developed by Cedefop in cooperation with the Directorate General for Education and Culture (DG EAC) and the European Opinion Research Group on behalf of the Directorate General Press and Communication (DG Press) in the European Commission. It was conducted in early 2003 in the 15 Member States as part of a larger 'standard' Eurobarometer survey, and in Iceland and Norway. It covered country residents with the relevant country nationality and aged 15 years and over.

It entailed 18 277 interviews, 16 567 of which were carried out in the European Union. They were carried out face to face (except in Iceland, where the survey was conducted over the phone), on a representative sample of the population aged 15 and over, in terms of age, gender, region and urbanisation size.

The aim of the questionnaire was to collect a new type of data to complement standardised harmonised data collections and surveys carried out on a regular basis by relevant international organisations. The *fil rouge* of the questionnaire was to collect citizens' opinions, attitudes and experiences about lifelong learning (LLL).

It was built around five modules:

- general opinion about LLL and background information on the respondents;
- past learning experiences;
- learning preferences;
- future intentions, obstacles and incentives;

- policy-relevant issues related to LLL.

The brochure '*Lifelong learning: citizens' views*'⁽¹⁾, available in English, French and German, highlights the first survey results.

The main findings are as follows:

- A small proportion of respondents rejects the importance of LLL. Most tend to support very strongly the social, personal and economic objectives of LLL policy document at European level.
- Only a few respondents do not have a holistic view of LLL and consider it is mainly for young people or for the middle-aged. Nevertheless, a considerable proportion places the compensatory function of LLL (e.g. for those who have not done well at school, for the disadvantaged) at the forefront.
- Traditional basic skills, followed immediately by social skills, are put at the top of the list of skills that

respondents consider 'very useful' both in their personal and working lives. They judge all skills from the list to be even more useful in working than in personal life.

- In spite of large variations between countries, respondents feel less confident about possessing ICT skills, using scientific/technological tools/equipment and foreign languages.
- Informal settings stand out as the most often mentioned recently experienced learning contexts.
- Two-thirds of respondents have not participated in any form of education and training in the past twelve months, and half of these say they were not interested.
- Personal and social motivations are more important than work-related motivation.
- Obstacles to taking up education and training are diverse, but time-related factors are the most prominent.



Lifelong learning: citizens' views
4025
Language: EN, FR, DE
Cat. No: TI-52-03-716-EN-C
Free of charge
on request from Cedefop

whether in private and/or working life.

- Significant differences can already be observed by level of education, occupation, gender and age, but these deserve more sophisticated analysis in order to reveal 'problem groups' which would be interesting to explore further.

More in-depth analysis of these results will be carried out and published by Cedefop. It will be enriched with data from other data collections carried out at European and national levels and from qualitative studies on lifelong learning.

The brochure also includes a short country profile of Greece, the EU Council Presidency country at the time of publication.

⁽¹⁾ Available free of charge in hard copy (publication no 4025, cat. no TI-52-03-716-EN-C, ISBN 92-896-0151-5) from Cedefop in English, French and German and on-line in Cedefop's European Training Village <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/publications.asp?section=3>

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Source: Cedefop/AFM

Policy, practice, partnership: getting to work on lifelong learning

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part in education and training, whereas at least one in ten is demotivated for learning. On these and other topics, there are big differences between countries.

At the conference, speakers all spoke in favour of continuing and extending this kind of work, because there is so little comparative information available in this field. They drew special attention to the survey's confirmation that motivation for, and participation in, lifelong learning are shaped by **interrelated** personal, social and economic factors. They also welcomed the strong support the findings give for developing and valuing non-formal and informal learning.

Nine thematic workshops: the key messages

The conference workshops focussed on policy and practice questions for nine different topics. Their recommendations are summarised below:

Access and social inclusion

- Integration for people with disabilities means implementing mainstreaming measures, providing adequate support services and developing partnerships with the appropriate civil society organisations.
- Good workplace learning means starting where people are, privileging learning by doing, using formative assessment methods, providing

appropriate support and ensuring there are concrete benefits for those who take part.

- Achieving gender and work-life balance means taking a comprehensive, lifewide approach to learning, devising effective combinations of positive levers, providing flexible courses and supporting the acquisition of positive coping strategies for life management as a whole.

New pathways and pedagogies

- Developing a European 'free trade area' for qualifications and competencies means focussing on common principles, shared currencies and simplification of procedures and documentation, together with encouraging institutional change towards greater openness in practice.
- Ensuring wider access to new basic skills means agreeing on a common 'skills map', taking a positive approach to recognising what people **can** do, using adult-friendly and peer-based teaching and learning methods and producing more sensitive assessment tools.
- Using ICT tools well for learning means:

- not forgetting to learn from concrete past experiences of introducing learning technologies,
- finding better ways to make sure, driving-edge innovations flow

through appropriately into real pedagogic practice,

- developing firmer working partnerships between technological and educational specialists,
- reaching agreed technical and quality standards for systems and software and
- supporting open systems development to encourage innovation and access.

Making learning attractive

- 'Universities' in knowledge societies would mean institutions catering to diversity, targeting needs and demands precisely, becoming organisations networked both internally and externally, and finding ways to 'cascade' new information, knowledge and innovative practice throughout the education and training system.
- Engaging individuals in lifelong learning means designing supportive framework conditions for **all** citizens, finding ways to share non-financial resources, encouraging corporate social responsibility and making better use of partnerships and interdependencies between all the stakeholders involved.
- Promoting active citizenship and lifelong learning should be a virtuous, mutually reinforcing circle of action in which information and skills, empowerment and the strengths of diversity work together with improving employability and

workplace skills to enable sustainable, cohesive development for local and regional communities throughout Europe.

"Lifelong learning is no longer a vision"

In his closing remarks, Mr Johan van Rens, Cedefop's Director, said that getting to work on lifelong learning has to take account of the following points:

- Individual and corporate interests and needs are equally important and must be kept in balance.
- Shared responsibility between all actors is essential for making lifelong learning work in practice, as numerous case studies from across Europe confirm.
- The social partners, professional associations and civil society non-governmental organisations (NGOs) must be brought much more actively and systematically into partnerships for lifelong learning actions at all levels.
- Networks of information and support services together with individualised structures of learning opportunities are essential components for raising and sustaining participation.
- There is no doubt that more, better, focussed and sustained in-

vestment in lifelong learning is needed – by all parties and by developing more innovative and effective ways of using financial, institutional, social and personal resources. And this investment must bring visible, concrete rewards for all involved, not least for citizens themselves.

Cedefop will also continue to play its part in getting to work on lifelong learning. As well as the reports that are to follow in the coming months, lifelong learning will have a prominent place in the new knowledge management system (KMS) that Cedefop is now developing and which will be operational in 2004. This will support the opening up of systems, the exchange of information and good practice, and the building up of a European Area of Lifelong Learning.

⁽¹⁾ The European Commission (DG EAC), the European Parliament, the European Economic and Social Committee, the Committee of the Regions, the European Training Foundation, the ASEM-LLL Initiative, the International Labour Organisation, the World Bank and the Council of Europe.

⁽²⁾ *Lifelong Learning: citizens' views* is available free of charge on request from Cedefop (4025 EN, FR, DE) and a pdf version is available to download on the ETV (see also article above).

For more information on the results of this conference, please contact:
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Source: Cedefop/LAC

Development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level

A mapping of initiatives on the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level is currently being undertaken by Cedefop. The aim is to obtain a detailed overview of European-level initiatives concerned with the development of new skills, qualifications and competences standards, curricula, certificates and/or diplomas, assessment criteria etc., in specific sectors.

At recent EU-level meetings, this issue has been much discussed, as development of sectoral qualification is one of the priorities in the Copenhagen declaration (see Cedefop Info 3/2002), which called for increased co-operation in European vocational education and training in general. Specifically, it called for increased support for developments at sectoral level, by reinforcing co-operation and co-ordination especially that involving the social partners. Although a number of European initiatives and programmes have given some support to the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level, there has not been any co-ordinated monitoring of, and support for, these initiatives, nor is there any database containing information on their results. Accordingly, Cedefop's mapping exercise is intended to record and throw light on activities and initiatives taken at European sectoral level. The information collected so far has already drawn the attention of the Commission, social partners and national bodies.

Social dialogue/European Employment Strategy

Issues related to education and training at sectoral level have been raised within the framework of the European social dialogue over a long period of time⁽¹⁾ and several sectors have made agreements on education and training strategies. The sector committees are facilitated by DG Employment. Several initiatives receive funds for projects, which are contributing to actions in pursuance of the European Employment Strategy⁽²⁾.

Leonardo da Vinci programme

The Leonardo da Vinci (LdV) programme has supported many projects on the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level. The sectoral nature of

these, however, is often hidden behind other predetermined themes. In addition, the selection of projects has not been a result of strategic choices.

Technological development and new job profiles are driving the promotion of new qualifications in most of the LdV projects. Skills need to be upgraded in particular for lowly and traditionally skilled workers. Many activities focus on transparency and increasing comparability of qualifications, and thus promote mobility. Several projects aim to develop a methodology for analysing and identifying key competences for new

occupational profiles and then to develop broad curricula or frameworks at European level. Others aim to create models for workplace learning for training that normally takes place at institutions/colleges. Several projects aim to create a training programme recognised at European level. Not all projects aim for a common skills certification system recognised at European level. Some seek only to find mutual qualification standards and occupation profiles within selected countries.

What next?

The interim results of the mapping exercise illustrate the many activities at the sectoral level in promoting European and international qualifications and competences. Actors at this level are directly confronted with the practical challenges associated with internationalisation of trade and technology, and are eager

to seek education and training solutions going beyond the scope of national qualifications.

The initial results of the Cedefop mapping exercise were presented at the March meeting of Directors General for Vocational Training (DGV) in Thessaloniki and at the June meeting of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT) in Brussels. At these meetings and in the June Leonardo da Vinci Committee meeting, the Commission made proposals on how to move forward in this regard. The Commission's proposals were broadly welcomed and there was general agreement by governments and social partners on the direction proposed by the Commission, at the ACVT meeting. Further work is now taking place to reach agreement on precisely what measures should be taken, for example, which, if any, sectors, should be given priority attention. All these

bodies will give the issue further attention at their autumn meetings. Meanwhile, Cedefop will continue its mapping and analyses exercise.

⁽¹⁾ Since the 1970's the European social dialogue has repeatedly raised issues related to education and training at sectoral level.

⁽²⁾ Several projects have been financed by the European Commission (DG Employment) through the European Social Fund (Article 6) and funds allocated to the social sectoral dialogue.

The following documents are available at the virtual community on sector qualifications <http://cedefop.communityzero.com/sq>:

- Social dialogue on sectoral level. Draft - last updated 04.06.03
- Social dialogue; Focus on aims and actions in the projects under Article 6 of the European Social Fund regulations. Concentrating on the areas of identification of qualifications, new skills and training profiles at transnational and sectoral level.
- Leonardo da Vinci project on sectoral level

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Source: Cedefop/BUL

Lifelong development of competences and qualifications: roles and responsibilities

A conference on this subject was organised jointly by the European Training Foundation (ETF) and Cedefop with the Federation of Greek Industries and the Greek General Confederation of Labour. It was held under the auspices of the Greek Presidency of the EU and took place in Athens in May.

The main objective was to raise awareness, and stress the crucial role, of lifelong development of competences and qualifications of the workforce in achieving the Lisbon European Council strategic goals in both EU Member States and candidate countries.

The discussions of the working groups were structured by the priorities indicated by the European social partners in their "Framework of actions for the lifelong development of competences and qualifications" (see Cedefop Info 2/2002). These were:

- mobilizing resources/investing efficiently in competences and qualifications,
- analysis/anticipation of skill and training needs,
- guidance and counselling.

The presentations and discussions in the working groups aimed at providing information and stimulating exchange of experiences among the different countries on progress in developing the competences of their workforce. The groups drew conclusions concerning needs, gaps and weaknesses.

The conference documents, including one containing the conclusions reached, are available from both the ETF and from Cedefop. They can be found on the ETF's website (www.etf.eu.int) clicking first on Enlargement and then Events. The conference stressed the role and responsibilities of all actors in society, but particularly social partners, in promoting lifelong learning. Competence development is a matter of shared responsibility between indi-

viduals, social partners and government, which need to co-operate and to co-ordinate their action to upgrade the skills of the labour force. Firms have a major role in creating an appropriate learning environment at the workplace by making competence development a constituent part of their human resource and business strategies. Public authorities and social partners are well placed both to develop policy frameworks with the aim of stimulating, a higher and more efficient investment in skills and qualifications and to promote a more equitable access to learning opportunities for all.

The widespread use of national tripartite structures for social dialogue in acceding and candidate countries has in practice been of limited success in terms of promoting the concept of responsibility sharing. The experience of the transition process in Central and Eastern Europe demonstrates that in most cases governments have kept the leading role in setting the agenda,

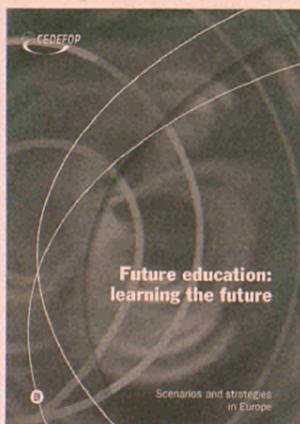
while the possibilities for social partners to influence the policy making process effectively have remained marginal.

The consolidation of a culture of dialogue and responsibility sharing, besides requiring a substantial strengthening of the representative capacities of social partners in most acceding and candidate countries, is in itself a necessary learning process. Increased opportunities for co-operation and sharing of experience and knowledge between social partners within a European framework can assist the building up of such a culture.

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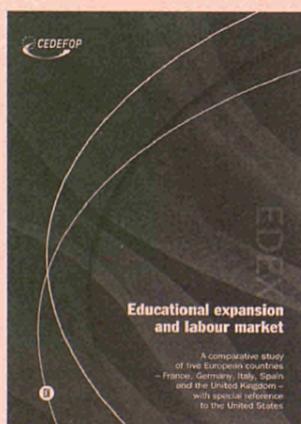
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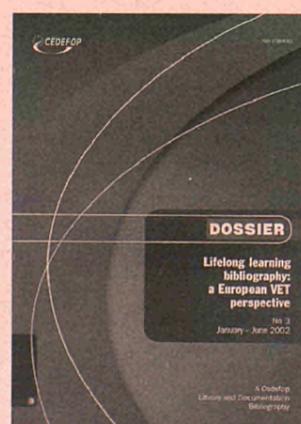
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Lifelong learning bibliography: a European VET perspective

No 3
January - June 2002
A Cedefop Library and Documentation Bibliography
Cedefop Dossier series 6007
Language: EN

Cat. No: TI-51-03-302-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

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European Training Foundation - Learning Matters



In early November, the European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin will convene its largest conference. The purpose is to discuss the results of more than a decade of education and training reform in its partner countries and the role of external assistance in the reform processes. Some 250 participants from international organisations, the EU, and partner countries in eastern Europe, Central Asia, North Africa and the near Middle East have been invited.

The central theme will be *Learning Matters*. The title not only highlights the value of the process of learning to the individual, but also the importance of learning in vocational education and training (VET) policy development. It is a reminder of the benefits international donors can reap from reviewing their past activities and applying the lessons learnt to future policies and projects. The organisers hope that the conference will provide tools for improving future international assistance in the field of VET.

Lessons learnt

For more than a decade now, most countries in central and eastern

Europe and the former Soviet Union have been engaged in a thorough reform of their economies and, indeed, whole societies. In these countries, understanding of the role of VET in social and economic reform and development has deepened considerably during this period. At the same time, the providers of external assistance to VET reform have learnt many lessons too.

One of the themes to be addressed will be the paradox of successful reform: acceptance of radical change is, to a large extent, dependent on how well new policy concepts and institutions are embedded in the specific context, values and tradi-

tions of their environment. It is a lesson learnt at considerable expense. Insular, high profile projects are now increasingly abandoned in favour of broader policy support. The underlying idea is that this is more likely to generate the crucial sense of ownership among the beneficiaries of external assistance.

External assistance

An important part of the conference discussions will be built on the argument that for many, but not all, of the partner countries, the history of VET reform during the 1990s has run virtually parallel to the history of external assistance to their VET reform.

A large number of countries still rely considerably on external assistance to provide the money, materials and knowledge needed to implement reforms. In some of the ETF's partner countries, it was in fact EU support that for the first time drew the attention of policy makers to the crucial role VET plays in labour market development. Thus, more often than not, external assistance has generated a need for further external assistance.

As countries in the western Balkans embark on preparations for possible accession, there is much to be gained from reviewing more than a decade of EU assistance to VET in central and eastern Europe. Also the

surge in international support to labour market development in the countries of north Africa and the Middle East justifies a renewed appraisal of recent experiences in the Future Member States and Central Asia and an effort to translate learnt matter into new support strategies.

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Source: ETF

Europe/The Netherlands Let others learn from your experiences!

Dissemination strategies for project leaders

Within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme, the Dutch National Agency has developed a handbook 'Dissemination strategies' (1) for promoters of pilot projects. It contains information, advice and practical tips on disseminating project results. The European Commission's Directorate General for Education and Culture, has taken the initiative to translate this handbook into English to make the information accessible to a larger public.

Dissemination is about spreading a message (the object of dissemination) to groups of people or organisations (the target group) via one or more channels in order to achieve a specific impact (effect of dissemination). The handbook provides a framework to support project leaders to design a good strategy to achieve this. The framework consists of the following elements:

- ❑ planning dissemination, including timetable and context;
- ❑ object of dissemination, describing the process, results and products of projects;
- ❑ target groups at micro-, meso-, and macro level;
- ❑ dissemination channels at these three levels;
- ❑ effects of dissemination;
- ❑ evaluation of the dissemination strategy.

Dissemination is not something that starts when the project is over and the results have

been achieved. It is necessary to design a dissemination strategy even before the project starts, in order to take all elements into account and so as to ensure the maximum impact of the experiences and results. Complete with diagrams and practical tips for the users, this handbook is a ready-to-use instrument to enhance the impact of European cooperation in transnational projects.

(1) *Dissemination strategies for Leonardo da Vinci pilot projects. Information, theory and practical tips.* REVICE, Feijen, T., Reubsat, T. 2001. National Agency Leonardo da Vinci the Netherlands. (English version 2003. European Commission Directorate General for Education and Culture). ISBN 90-5003-394-6. Price: EUR 10 (excl. porto).

Further information: na@leonardodavinci.nl

Source: NA Leonardo da Vinci, The Netherlands / CINOP

Europe An aging workforce calls for special training strategies

Leonardo da Vinci project 'WorkAge' presents its results after a run of two years.

The aim of the Leonardo da Vinci project 'WorkAge – Training and Work in Europe for Seniors' was to examine the possibilities of integrating the older workers in an enterprise and thus safeguarding valuable resources. The results are now ready for presentation.

In all countries of the EU there is a rise in the average age of the working population in conjunction with a strained labour market situation. Consequently, the re-integration of older persons, especially those unemployed, is very difficult. The presence of older employees in enterprises requires a process of rethinking by enterprises and training providers because these employees need training and continuing training provision especially designed for them. The Rhine-Westphalian Technical University in Aachen has worked for two years on the development of a new strategy in transnational cooperation with project partners from Denmark, Norway, Finland, Sweden and the United Kingdom.

At first, the task was to make an inventory of the tools in use and to compile the experience of practitioners and scientists. From this, the project partners derived possible prototypes for the re-structuring of enterprises which would do justice to the aging of the company staff. On this basis, they constructed models and presented them through a database in

Internet. They also developed pilot tools, e.g. 'Self-evaluation in enterprises', 'E-Learning/Training/ICT', 'Strategy for implementing senior policies' and 'Integrating Methods'. These tools make it possible to re-structure the enterprise in keeping with its specific needs.

The National Agency 'Education for Europe' in the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (NA in BIBB) has provided the scientific support for the 'WorkAge' project. The NA in BIBB has been commissioned by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) to execute this project and is responsible for the implementation of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in Germany. A German-Austrian project and product database can be found under www.leonardodavinci-projekte.org.

The project results are available on Internet and also on CD-ROM. The contact person is Marie-Christine Stemmann, M.A., Project Coordinator, RWTH Aachen/IAW Bergdriesch 27, D-52062 Aachen, Tel. (49-241) 80 99 454, E-mail: t.stemmann@iaw.rwth-aachen.de, Homepage: www.iaw.rwth-aachen.de/projekte/workage/index.html. Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

The priorities of the Italian presidency of the Council of the European Union in the field of education and training

Continued from page 1

In detail, the proposals of the presidency in this respect concentrate on a series of specific objectives:

- facilitating the establishment and activities of local resource centres, which function as a meeting point for the relevant players in the field, thereby improving the efficacy and functioning of stay-in-school initiatives as a frame of reference for educational, cultural and social activities;
- developing and promoting the dissemination of successful training activities, including extracurricular initiatives for the reintegration

of young drop-outs into the educational system;

- fostering transnational pilot projects in the field of the continuing training of teachers;
- raising awareness among families and encouraging their participation;
- supporting the involvement of schools in social volunteering initiatives by means of specific actions.

In the field of cooperation, the Italian presidency proposes to reach a political agreement

on the Commission proposal for a directive on the improvement of mechanisms for recognition of professional qualifications with a view to promoting the free movement of workers.

Strengthening cooperation between Member States' universities and those of other countries will also contribute to a knowledge-based Europe by giving impetus to the creation of a European area of higher education. In this connection, the launch of the new Erasmus World Programme is to be promoted to foster cooperation and mobility with regard to third countries. Moreover a ministerial conference will be arranged during the Italian presidency

on the subject of inter-university cooperation in the Mediterranean, to which representatives of UNESCO and the MEDA countries are to be invited.

In the field of EU educational and training programmes, the Italian presidency will promote the adoption of the Decision on the new European e-learning programme and, in agreement with the Commission, to launch a debate on the next generation of the "Socrates" and "Leonardo" programmes.

Further information at: www.istruzione.it or www.ueitalia2003.it/EN/

Source: Isfol/Alessandra Pedone

Internationalisation of vocational training

Contesting public ignorance



Developed with the support of the European Commission and the European Institute of Education and Social Policy, the EFVET is the European organisation for technical and vocational education and training, including continuing training. EFVET's policy is determined by its member colleges. It collaborates with, but is independent of, all government and funding bodies. Its income is derived from membership subscription, grants and sponsorship.

More students in VET than in general education

In several European countries, more than two-thirds of students enrol in the vocational stream rather than in general upper secondary education. In Europe as a whole this is 54 against 46%. On average, 92% of large enterprises in the EU provide continuing vocational training (CVT). 81% of medium-sized and 56% of small enterprises do so (Cedefop, 2003). These data underline the importance of VET institutions for small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs).

Despite these figures, VET gets far less attention from the general public than general education. Data from the Netherlands may illustrate the point.

- Only 1% (!!) of the newspaper coverage of education is about VET.
- About 60% of the Dutch population does not know what a VET institute is.

□ Only one third of the Dutch population can make an accurate guess about the percentage of the workforce that has VET education (60%).

Learning for life in the knowledge society

Educational systems are strongly embedded in the period of industrialisation in the 19th and 20th century and have been highly effective during the past 150 years. The educational level of the population has been raised and educational systems have accommodated an enormous increase in participation.

European countries are now in the process of a fundamental change: from the industrial mode of development to the network mode. Learning in VET is based on a set of values that fits very well the demands of the network mode of development. The overarching concept for new structures of learning is the concept

of lifelong learning (European Commission, 2001).

EFVET: A learning platform

EFVET provides a network to assist VET managers and teachers in EU Member States and candidates countries to exchange, develop and disseminate best practices for further improving learning for the network society through:

- an annual European conference – the next one will be in Cardiff on 22-25 October 2003 (<http://www.efvet.org/conferences/index2003.html>),
- a website: <http://www.efvet.org>,
- a newsletter,
- joint EU projects,
- its central office in Brussels
- cooperation with Cedefop, to improve knowledge services to members and assist in knowledge generation.

EFVET: The voice of practitioners

EFVET - in close cooperation with the European Vocational Training Association (EVTA) – see Cedefop Info 1/2003 - represents the voice of practitioners to the European Commission and participates in working groups and consultations. One example is the report prepared at the request of the Commission as part of the consultation process on the Lifelong Learning Memorandum. This report may be found on http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/llll/life/report/civilosoc/efvet_en.pdf.

It is also a channel for international co-operation, for example:

- as a partner of the World Federation of Associations of Colleges and Polytechnics (<http://www.wfacp.org>)
- through co-operation with China

Structure of EFVET

EFVET is governed by a Steering Committee that consists of one member from a national board in each of the EU countries and an independent President. EFVET is working on setting-up of national boards in the candidate countries.

For further information: Aalst, Hans F. van (2003). *Vocational Education and Training, Public Ignorance of VET, Current size and achievement; Its potential for economic, personal and social development in Europe*. Presentation to Members of the European Parliament. EFVET. <http://www.efvet.org>

Aalst, Hans F. van (2002). *Education in Europe in the 21st Century: Trends and challenges*. Paper for the First International Academic Workshop Educational Systems in East Asia and Western Europe: a Comparative Approach. K.U. Leuven, Shenyang Normal University (SNU), China.

European Commission (2001). Communication from the Commission of 21 November 2001 on making a European area of lifelong learning a reality [COM(2001) 678 final] <http://europa.eu.int/scadplus/leg/en/cha/c11054.htm>

Cedefop (2003). *Key figures on vocational education and training*. Luxembourg: Office for Official Publications of the European Communities, 2003. Publication no 4024, Catalogue no: T1-51-03-011-EN-C, available free of charge from Cedefop

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Source: EFVET/Hans Aalst

NAMAL: Motivations for lifelong learning

The stakes are high: Access to continuing training is much easier for engineers and white-collar workers than for unskilled workers – in particular those working in small-scale enterprises.

The French 'Continuing training 2000' survey⁽¹⁾ shows that the rate of access to continuing training varied from 12% for unskilled workers to 42% for foremen/women and 56% for engineers.

Conclusion: the less skilling a person has received, the less likely he or she is to gain access to continuing training.

One of the reasons for this phenomenon is that the lesser skilled have very often experienced negative school careers and are therefore ill-inclined to confront a new learning experience – unless they are successfully motivated to overcome

their fears and agree to engage in a training process.

Moreover, long-term unemployed and so-called 'marginalised' groups are often very far removed from training processes. Experience shows that an initial 'push' is necessary to motivate these groups to engage in training.

The stakes are high: modern-day firms cannot function without skilled personnel at all levels and in all sectors of activity. It is absolutely necessary for those in employment – like jobseekers – to maintain their 'employability' if they wish to retain their jobs or find employment. Con-

versely, those who are not equipped with 'basic skills' (as was the case of 15% of non-skilled workers in the Danish region of southern Jutland prior to a large-scale training action to upgrade basic skilling) or are incapable of learning, are unfortunately very likely to find themselves rapidly excluded from the job market – if this is not already the case.

Lessons learned from experience on the motivations for learning

What are the motivations for lifelong learning and how can they be stimulated? These are just some of the questions to which the *Nouvelles Approches et Motivations pour Apprendre tout au Long de la vie - NAMAL* (New Approaches and Motivations for Lifelong Learning)

project is seeking answers. Selected by the European Commission in the framework of the Gruntvig 1 programme⁽²⁾, NAMAL brings together training experts from six member states⁽³⁾ who have analysed some 40 cases in which the motivations of lowly skilled or unskilled wage earners and the unemployed have been successfully developed.

These cases helped to highlight the different motivation factors used in European countries which were then matched with the most suitable target group categories (youth, adults, repatriates, etc). This approach also helped to identify the supports which generate motivation and why they do so.

Following testing of the tools in experimental sessions by different

groups of trainers in Denmark, Germany, France and Scotland, the analyses – and the cases – are to be presented on a web site to be opened up in September 2003, as well as in the form of a specific CD-ROM for trainers. A colloquium is to be held in Lille (France) in November as an opportunity to draw conclusions from this first NAMAL project, whose staff hope it will be followed up by NAMAL 2.

⁽¹⁾ The survey 'Continuing training 2000' – (processed by CEREQ: <http://www.cereq.fr>).
⁽²⁾ <http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/socrates/adult/home.html>
⁽³⁾ Denmark, Germany, Greece, Spain, France, United Kingdom (Scotland and England).

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Source: Henri Le Marois - Cabinet E2i - Lille - France

Belgium

Lifelong learning: Walloon enterprises involved in the dynamics of partnership

Walloon enterprises have long been aware of the competitive edge represented in both the local and global marketplace by a high-quality workforce with high levels of qualifications and skills to match their needs. Convinced that education and vocational training are at the heart of the necessary policies to respond to economic and social challenges, Walloon undertakings are actively involved in the dynamics of partnership in the continuing training arena.

One of the key issues is that lifelong learning - a quintessentially European issue if there ever was one - calls for cooperation and partnership between all the stakeholders and involves the shared responsibility of individuals, industry and governments.

There are many examples of this dynamic of partnership to be found within the institutional landscape in Belgium.

The wish to step up the vocational training effort has given rise to a

plethora of actions at regional level in the form of partnerships bringing together the appropriate key players.

The Walloon government and the social partners thereby confirm the importance of investing in vocational training by their active involvement in the promotion of regional incentives to forge ahead with the upskilling of their workforce.

Sectoral funds are mobilised in the framework of the Walloon tools available, by means of framework agreements with the Walloon Region.

The Walloon Region and the French-speaking community are involved in the following two partnerships.

The first of these initiatives seeks to provide general access for students and teachers of the final classes of technical and vocational education to the skills centres set up by the various sectors and the Walloon Office for Employment and Vocational Training (FOREM).

The second seeks to promote alternance training by improving the complementarities of schemes and

concentrating incentives on additional and innovative projects.

Source: Extract from an article by Thierry Devillez in *Dynamisme Wallon*, the monthly journal of the Walloon Union of Enterprises (UWE) - April 2003 Available on the UWE website at: <http://www.uwe.be>: http://www.uwe.be/publications/Dynamisme_Wallon/DW2003/DWAvril03/dwavril03.html#FormationVie

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Education policy

Germany

Training, research, innovation – shaping the future

Training and research policy priorities of the Federal Ministry of Education, Training and Research (2002-2006)

Training and research are a high priority for the federal government. Investment in training and research for the future has been increased by over 25% and a whole series of structural reforms have been initiated since 1998. More steps in the same direction are to follow.

Five central objectives have been set:

1. Promoting talents – creating equal opportunities;
2. Modernising training and research structures – safeguarding quality in the face of international competition;
3. Promoting technologies for new markets – creating jobs for the future;
4. Research on behalf of humankind and the environment – shaping a future world worth living in;
5. Strengthening nuclei of growth – training, research and innovation to ramp up the economy of east Germany.

The measures relating to the first two of these objectives which are directly related to initial and continuing vocational training are examined in the following. The federal government attaches particular importance to vocational training and the promotion of lifelong learning in the measures implemented in connection with the first of these objectives.

Training opportunities for all young people

There is a consensus in Germany that adequate training provision is above all the responsibility of industry. This approach is to find more widespread application in the future. Special programmes and projects are to support the development of industrial training places oriented towards regional skilling requirements.

Publicly financed training place programmes are to be more closely oriented towards regional economic and employment structures as well as to the skills requirements of enterprises. Promoting training networks and encouraging more firms to engage in the training effort are particularly important elements.

Early careers guidance is designed to ease the transition from school to training. A so-called **career choice pass** has been developed with the Länder as a means of documenting any careers guidance which youngsters have received in the course of their schooling; this pass is to be introduced as widely as possible by 2006.

The proportion of approx. 15% of young people and young adults with no formal vocational qualifications is to be halved in accordance with the European guidelines on employment policy by the year 2010. Support structures for disadvantaged groups are to be upgraded within the programme entitled **"Promoting competences – job skilling for target groups in need of special support (BQF)"** (cf. Cedefop Info 3/2002, p. 7 and 2/2002, p. 15).

The **system of training modules** for the linkage and recognition of vocational induction and vocational training programmes offers disadvantaged young people a genuine perspective of training and employment. The aim is to lead these youngsters towards the completion of fully recognised vocational training certificates (cf. Cedefop Info 1/2003, p. 11).

Providing opportunities and incentives for universal lifelong learning

The ministry is to draw up proposals on the "funding of lifelong learning" based on the conclusions of the commission of experts set up in October 2001. This commission is due to put forward financing models by the end of 2003.

The development and application of modular concepts of **continuing vocational training (CVT)** are to be expanded. Initial and continuing training are to be better combined by means of modules imparting additional qualifications at the level of initial vocational training, paving the way for flexible and diverse paths towards higher-level qualifications and the gradual attainment of further training certificates. A modular training system with fluid transitions between individual learning phases will also help to overcome disadvantages. And, last but not least, the ways and means of applying this approach to improve the provision of second-chance qualification programmes, e.g. for migrants, is under examination.

Self-directed and autonomous learning, and learning in an institutional setting, call for decisions on the part of the users which in turn require **transparency of training provision**. The development of **quality assurance management** is therefore being expanded in the CVT field, with the **department responsible for the testing of educational and training programmes** within the authoritative testing centre *Stiftung Warentest* assuming a key role.

The **quality** of CVT provision must meet minimum standards. **Accreditation and certification sys-**

tems are therefore necessary for both providers and products and for the individually acquired skills of learners. The recommendations of the Hartz commission for CVT promoted under the third book of the German Social Welfare Code are to be introduced in the framework of a statutory graduated certification system. As a further step, a nationwide **quality assurance certification system** is to be introduced throughout the overall CVT system by 2006. (cf. Cedefop Info 2/2002, p. 18 and 1/2003 p. 12)

Informally acquired skills are to be evidenced on the basis of appropriate methods so they can be exploited in the labour market and credited in the formal CVT system. The necessary conditions are to be established within the "Learning culture skill development" programme. Similarly, a nationwide concept for a so-called 'continuing training pass' (a procedure evidencing both formally or informally acquired skills) is being developed in conjunction with the Länder.

New media are transforming learning opportunities and learning requirements. The forward-looking **"Tomorrow's learning worlds"** programme has been set up with a view to establishing timely means of strengthening self-directed and autonomous learning.

The implementation of the second objective also involves essential initiatives in the vocational training field. Here the focus is on

Modernising the vocational training system

In Germany, some 66% of youngsters embark on a work-based training programme within the dual system, while approximately 10% com-

mence a fully-fledged vocational training programme in full-time vocational schools or schools within the health sector. Although the vocational training system enjoys a high reputation internationally, the structures of the dual system are under review. It is necessary to establish, in the interest of young people, whether these structures are still commensurate with the requirements of modern training pathways and careers.

For this reason, **vocational training legislation** (the Vocational Training Act, the Law on the Promotion of Vocational Training, and, as appropriate, the Law on the Promotion of Advancement Training) is to be overhauled, with the planned amendments due to enter into force at the beginning of 2004. In the short term, a **two-step examination procedure** (i.e. the possibility for candidates to take parts of the final examinations in advance) is to be tried out and the recognition of vocational school performance towards final examination results is to be made possible. Training capacities in **information technology and engineering occupations** are to be further expanded.

The process of modernising the field of training and continuing training is backed by the **"Early recognition of skill requirements"** initiative. This scrutinises changing skills requirements in the labour market in order to develop timely options for action in initial and continuing training and to develop instruments for the early recognition of, and reaction to, emerging skills requirements.

Further information: http://www.bmbf.de/pub/gesamtpapier_bildung_research_innovation.pdf
Contact: Peter Thiele
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Source: Federal Ministry of Education, Training and Research

Special target groups

France

Combating illiteracy: a key field of action within the national plan to reinforce the fight against marginalisation and exclusion

The implementation of measures proposed by the government in five main fields of action requires an additional budgetary allocation, estimated at EUR 1 billion.

On 25 March 2003, the Secretary of State for the fight against poverty and exclusion, Dominique Versini, unveiled the national plan to step up the fight against marginalisation and exclusion (PNLE). The PNLE is a response to a priority objective, namely "to give marginalised or excluded people effective access to their rights". The government plans to spend an additional EUR 1 billion by 2005 on such measures. Moreover, this plan is to be extended within the future national action plan for integration (PNAI), which was to be presented to the European Union in July.

The PNLE has five priorities. The **first** of these is to inform excluded persons of their rights, simplify administrative procedures and expand the provision of legal aid to margin-

alised groups. A total of EUR 95 million is to be set aside for this purpose. The **second** field of action is to improve access to housing. The **third** is to upgrade support structures, guidance, accommodation and the integration of the homeless by means of a "social urgency" mechanism; a total of EUR 700 million is to be set aside for both the second and third fields of action. The **fourth** priority (EUR 95 million) is to boost regional programmes offering access to prevention and care facilities (PRAPS) and the extension of round-the-clock care services (PASS). Finally, the **fifth** priority, with a budget of EUR 110 million, relates to other needs of marginalised groups. The first measure here sets up regional action plans as a means of combating illiteracy, a problem which affects 5 to 10% of the French

population today. The first step will be to establish an information and guidance system on local training opportunities, which will draw on the literacy resource centres already operating in each region. Increased mobilisation of potential stakeholders (National Agency for Employment – ANPE, local missions, PAIO information and guidance points assisting young school drop-outs, social workers, community public services) feature on the agenda, as well as pedagogical services integrating new educational resources (open and distance learning – ODL, information and communication technologies – ICT). Increased recourse to ICT and ODL will open up training opportunities. This will be accompanied by training of trainers initiatives. A further measure is to structure or draw attention to local training schemes for low-skilled workers (linking up with the training development initiatives – EDDF for SMEs, regional application

of national agreements with the authorised joint collection bodies – OPCA or companies). This programme, which is addressed to adults, will also serve to bolster illiteracy prevention measures among youngsters of school age. Of the 150 000 young people coming out of the education system with no formal qualification, many cases of failure are due to functional illiteracy. Reducing the number of students who are unable to read and write is therefore of the utmost importance.

The (ARAF) support measures for women returning to work, which entered into force on 15 July 2000, provide targeted financial support designed to allow access to employment, training or business creation opportunities for women at risk. Most of this aid is allocated to help them enter training schemes (60.93%) or return to work (37% of beneficiaries). However nationally

not enough people are making use of this aid; only 40% of the allocated budget (financed to the tune of 55% by the French government and 45% by the European Social Fund ESF) is actually being spent. The objective of the PNLE is therefore to use up all available funding. An evaluation of the system and its implementation will identify beneficiaries' characteristics (level of qualifications, training received or type of employment obtained). It will also seek to make the potential target group aware of this aid, match financial assistance with the needs of the beneficiaries, and gauge its impact on their participation in training programmes and return to employment.

Further details on the PNLE can be found on the feature on the home page of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity: <http://www.social.gouv.fr/htm/dossiers/exclu/index2.htm>

Source: INFFO Flash, n° 610, 15-31 March 2003, article by Philippe Grandin
Forwarded by: Stéphane Héroult:
Documentation dept., Centre INFFO

Social partners

Ireland

Sustaining Progress – the sixth social partnership agreement

The sixth in the series of national social partnership agreements, "Sustaining Progress" was concluded in February and will cover the period 2003-2005 (1). The social partnership agreements which are framed primarily on incomes, fiscal, social, economic and competitiveness policies are negotiated between the Government and social partners. The latter group comprises representatives from the trade unions, employers and business, farmers, and the community and voluntary sector.

Sustaining Progress sets out ten "Special Initiatives" to be progressed during its lifetime. These focus on key issues of economic and social policy which have been identified by the parties to the agreement. It also outlines the arrangements for engagement with the social partners on these issues. Among the special initiatives are:

□ **Supporting the long-term unemployed**, those who have been made redundant and those in low-skilled employment. The emphasis here is on the re-integration of the long-term unemployed and disadvantaged groups into the open labour market, with a focus on progression opportunities. The Training and Employment Authority (FÁS) will continue to provide training for low-skilled workers through a number of

programmes such as skills training, community training, bridging foundation and traineeships. It will also continue its broad supports for companies providing training for employees. The Competency Development Programme was launched in May 2003 with a budget of 4.5 million euro, focused on the prioritised needs of people in employment. Priority will be given to expanding access to education and training for those in employment, particularly for those with less than upper secondary education.

□ **Tackling educational disadvantage in the areas of literacy, numeracy and early school leaving.** A workplace basic education/literacy/Information and Communication Technologies programme will, in partnership with

trade unions, be piloted in targeted sectors where there are vulnerable workers.

□ **Including everybody in the Information Society.** The Government and social partners will work to develop coherent strategies to promote participation by those on low-incomes and from disadvantaged groups. One way is the delivery of public services through integrated service centres, which will assist those who are not in a position to avail of direct access to services delivered through the Internet.

As in previous agreements the National Economic and Social Council provided the framework for negotiations. The Council's latest strategy document (2) focuses on making the economy competitive, environmen-

tally sustainable, efficient, and socially acceptable. The emphasis in respect of the latter issue is on ensuring that key aspects of personal and social well-being including education, training and lifelong learning are secured for everybody.

The second section of the report sets out the terms of the new pay agreement, but it also addresses a number of related issues, including workplace partnership and learning, and training for people with disabilities. It contains a wide range of measures aimed at improving skills in the workplace and complements those already mentioned under the "Special Initiatives". An extension of existing partnership initiatives such as Skillnets (see Cedefop Info 1/2000, 1/2002 and 3/2002) and the role of the National Training Fund (Cedefop Info 2/2001) are discussed. The need for validation of workplace learning and for adequate structures for access, transfer and progression through education and training systems are emphasised.

(1) Government of Ireland: *Sustaining progress: social partnership agreement 2003-2005*. ISBN 0-7557-1550-0.
Available: Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 4-5 Harcourt Road, IRL-Dublin 2.
Tel. (353-1) 647 6834; fax (353-1) 475 2760, price EUR 7.
Download address: <http://www.taoiseach.gov.ie/upload/publications/2123.pdf>

(2) National Economic and Social Council: *An investment in quality, services, inclusion and enterprise*. (Report no. 111) ISBN 07557 15586.
Available: Government Publications, Postal Trade Section, 4-5 Harcourt Road, IRL-Dublin 2.
Tel. (353-1) 647 6834, fax (353-1) 475 2760, price EUR 25.
Download address: <http://www.nesc.ie/nesc111.pdf>

Source: FÁS

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Vocational education and training

Germany

Shortage of training places debilitates the dual vocational training system

The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) Board gives its opinion on the Vocational Training Report 2003. The training levy, accreditation of training modules and quality assurance of continuing vocational training continue to be controversial points between employers and employees.

In its opinion on the draft Vocational Training Report 2003 the Board of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (*Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung* - BIBB) notes that there has been a noticeable deterioration of the situation on the apprentice training market. The Board is made up of 4 equal groups consisting of representatives of the employers, the employees, the Federal Government and the Federal States.

The Board observed that the total supply of training places had decreased by 7.6%, while demand had only fallen by 6.2% during the same period. It was particularly concerned about the 6.8% decline in the number of new training contracts concluded in industry and administration. This perceptible reduction of in-company training provision jeopardised the professional chances of young people, the securing of sufficient young skilled workers for future needs and, in the medium term, the dual vocational training system, warned the Board. Special policy measures were required in view of the strong increase (18.6%) of preparatory vocational courses.

The Board specifically welcomed the preparatory vocational training, now anchored in legislation, as 'an important new vocational training pillar', which would, above all, help young persons with poor chances of getting a good start, to acquire good perspectives for their professional future. But, in order to ensure a practice-oriented application of the law, some factors still had to be clarified, e.g. the group of participants and the extent of socio-pedagogical care. The development and certification of qualifying components from recognised training occupations was a 'challenging task' for vocational training research and policy in order to improve the chances for disabled youth to complete vocational training. The Board however did not

support compulsory accreditation of certified training modules, 'in order not to obstruct the transition to dual training.'

The Board called on industry and employers in the public sector to undertake all efforts to maintain and possibly raise the number of training places. The shortage of training places led to a change in the training behaviour of young persons. They tended to move towards university studies and were thus lost for company-based training, a 'wrong course' in the eyes of the Board.

The Board advocated the improvement of continuing training provision, but did not think it was necessary to have a binding regulation for the quality assurance of all continuing training establishments. It felt that the great variety of concepts – e.g. certification, quality seal, quality rings – was a benefit for the overall setting of continuing training.

In their minority vote on the opinion of the BIBB Board - adopted with a majority – the **employers** asserted that they had fulfilled their "Alliance" commitments in 2002 and had 'largely' provided training places for applicants. Industry could not guarantee a training place for every single young person, but would undertake substantial efforts to obtain more training places. They would set up a task force to package their activities. They 'categorically' rejected a training levy, instead they called for better framework conditions. To achieve this, the employers' representatives recommended flexible training occupations with optional modules, especially in the services sector, opening clauses for the training allowance and a multi-year freeze on all increases, plus better time management in vocational schools.

The training place situation was even more 'dramatic', than the way

it was described in the Vocational Training Report 2003, said the representatives of the **employees** in their minority vote. It was a fact that the number of youngsters seeking training places was 60 000 to 70 000 higher, as many young persons who had gone in for vocational preparation courses or non-company training as a temporary solution, tried once again to find a training place in the following year. The share of those who had started university studies instead of company-based training, was only two percent and in 2002 the figure had even dropped by about 1,100 to 14,400 in comparison to the previous year.

The employees called on the Federal Government 'to halt the ceaseless withdrawal of companies from their

responsibility for vocational training.' They asked for clear targets to be set for the number or company training places, and in case this target was not reached they called for compensation on a fair financing basis independent of cyclical trends. Furthermore, the employee representatives also called for a guaranteed accreditation of preparatory training components and the binding introduction of the vocational training passport as proof. The quality assurance of continuing vocational training should be undertaken by certification agencies.

The discussion on the mutual recognition of European vocational training certificates had not brought any advancement for European vocational education and training, on the

contrary, it had had a paralysing effect, said the employee group. As a consequence of this they said that more consideration should be given to the 'considerable differences in quality' in European vocational education and training and at the same time the Europeanisation and internationalisation of qualifications should be encouraged. The employee group expected the European Commission to produce binding and effective instruments so that the social partners could participate effectively in a competitive European vocational education and training policy.

For BIBB press release 09/2003 of 19.3.2003 see <http://www.bibb.de/de/1782.htm>. The BIBB opinion on the Vocational Training Report 2003 (only in DE) can be downloaded from the following address: http://www.bibb.de/dokumente/pdf/bbb_2003.pdf

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Germany

Sustainability – the catchword for the future of vocational training

The first expert meeting drew up an orientation framework and recommended the establishment of a transfer centre.

An expert meeting convened in Osnabrück by the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) examined the subject of 'Vocational education and training for sustainable development'. More than 250 experts drew up an orientation framework which sets out options for action by all persons involved in vocational education and training.

In the run up to the expert meeting, 600 professionals had prepared action perspectives for sustainable career development in 20 subject-oriented conferences, studies, and good-practice research projects dealing with relevant career topics. The quintessence of this needs analysis and exploratory investiga-

tion has been presented in a guide covering the central areas of action:

- general and vocational competences
- future fields of activity and additional qualifications for sustainable development,
- international cooperation,
- the creation of durable structures ensuring sustainability and
- the construction of a communication and dissemination structure.

At present the Federal budget has no funds available for the action programme originally planned. Therefore – one of the outcomes of the conference - BIBB has been requested to set up a transfer centre for projects dealing with sustainable practices and to offer all those interested an Internet portal 'Vocational

education and training for sustainable development' as a platform for communication and exchange. In addition, the conference called on BIBB and BMBF to contribute to the World Conference on Renewable Energies in Bonn in June 2004 by examining the subject of 'Vocational qualification for renewable energies' and setting up a preparatory group for this purpose.

The second nation-wide expert meeting on 'Vocational Education and Training for Sustainable Development' is planned as part of the University Conference on Vocational Education and Training in March 2004 in Darmstadt. The results of the first expert meeting are available in Internet under www.bibb.de/nachhaltigkeit/index.htm.

Source: Press and Information Office of the Federal Government/Cedefop/SK

The Netherlands

Start of platform for vocational education

Uniting powers of individual organisations, sharing knowledge and experiences and stimulating innovations

Vocational education plays an essential role in the knowledge based society and its value should be more recognised, argue the actors involved in the vocational education sector and representatives of industry. In this perspective, a platform for vocational education has been set up on the initiative of the representative councils and branch organisations in the sector⁽¹⁾. In May 2003, this vocational education platform, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, the employers' and employees' organisations and the Labour Foundation (*Stichting van de Arbeid*) signed an agreement to stimulate innovatory measures taken jointly by vocational education institutions and enterprises. Together, government and industry will invest 25 million euro in this development, of which 10 million euro will be financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science.

The platform receives an annual budget of 1.6 million euro from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science to carry out its tasks and is continuously in contact with this Ministry so as to work out innovatory initiatives. The aim of the platform is to set out the strategic framework to reinforce vocational education by cooperation between the various sectors of vocational education (preparatory vocational education, senior secondary vocational education and higher professional education) and representatives of trade and industry.

The platform focuses on:

- creating a higher output,
- reducing the drop-out rate,
- creating a stronger image for vocational education,
- putting the career of the learner at the centre of the whole educational process (i.e. throughout the three vocational education sectors).

This last point runs through the work of the platform like a continuous thread. The learner should be able to realise all his/her personal goals without being hindered by structures, obstacles or systems.

Furthermore, students should be able to switch more easily from one

sector to the other. This means that curricula and training courses should be much better attuned between preparatory vocational education and senior secondary vocational education and between this sector and higher professional education.

Generally speaking, the platform will follow, disseminate and support initiatives that are already undertaken by educational institutions, by expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market and by enterprises offering practical training or social partners.

⁽¹⁾ The following organisations form the board of the platform:

- *Vereniging voor management in het voortgezet onderwijs (VVO)* (Association for management in secondary education) (www.vvo.nl),
- *Vereniging van samenwerkende werkgeversorganisaties in het onderwijs, (VSWO)* (Association of cooperating employers organisations in education),
- *Branche organisatie van alle onderwijsinstellingen voor het middelbaar beroepsonderwijs en volwasseneneducatie (Bve Raad)*, (Branch organisation of the regional training centres for secondary vocational and adult education) (www.bveraad.nl),
- *Vereniging kenniscentra beroepsonderwijs bedrijfsleven (Colo)*, (Association of expertise centres for vocational education, training and the labour market) (www.colo.nl),
- *Vereniging van hogescholen (Hbo-Raad)*, (Association of higher professional education institutions) (www.hbo-raad.nl).

Further information:
www.hetplatformberoepsonderwijs.nl (in Dutch only) and www.mkbnet.nl

Source: Platform vocational education / CINOP

Italy

Expansion of regional actions to promote vocational training and transition to work

In its 2002 annual report, Isfol (Institute for the development of vocational training of workers) examined data from surveys on vocational training with particular reference to supply and demand in the various Italian regions in comparison with the relevant figures from other EU Member States. The overall picture illustrates both the problem of early school leaving as well as under-education, in particular in the southern regions of the country.

The survey conducted by the Ministry of Employment and Isfol on the basis of law 845/78 shows an increase in the training actions implemented by the Italian regions to a total of 34 400 courses in the 2000-2001 training year. Most of the funding for this training effort comes from Community sources which account for 60.9% of the overall spend. EU funding for regional training programmes is particularly extensive in the southern regions (almost 95%), and stands at around 80% in central Italy and 50% in the northern regions. Lombardy, where the lion's share of the funding comes from regional/national sources, stands out as an exception.

Course provision showing the highest increase are programmes designed for employed workers (37.3% of national training provision). First-

and second-level courses, including the so-called IFTS higher-level education and training courses, also show a substantial increase, confirming that following the initial experimental phase, these programmes have consolidated their position within the education system (a total enrolment of some 10 000 in 2000-2001). Moreover the occupational profiles targeted by these courses often present innovative elements, above all in tourism, the social sector and the environment.

A finding which gives rise for some concern is early school leaving at the level of vocational education in a school-based setting. More than one student in four follows an irregular study route, with the risk of dispersion being particularly high in the first two years of upper secondary school. In contrast, the increase in

those gaining qualifications in a vocational school setting can be seen in a more positive light.

In general, therefore, despite the persistently high rates of unemployment in the southern regions, above all among youngsters with low qualifications, it can be stated that Italy is approaching the standards to be found in other industrialised nations. The average duration of school-to-work transition has been reduced for holders of middle and higher-level certificates, while the preference for certificates obtained in a school-based setting has evidently diminished.

Further information from:
ISFOL
Via Morgani, 33
I-00616 Rome
www.isfol.it

Source: Isfol (Alessandra Pedone)



Continuing education and training

United Kingdom

High profile event examines trends in training

The UK training, learning and development community came together in March 2003 at the annual Human Resource Development (HRD) conference organised by the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD). HRD 2003, which took place in London, examined the latest trends in training and development. With a diverse programme, featuring cutting-edge research on issues from developing managers for business success to making e-learning work, more than 50 speakers gave their experience of training and development in today's leading organisations.

The event also saw the launch of the annual CIPD training and development survey⁽¹⁾. The survey, which is now in its fifth year, examines what works, what's new and how much the UK is spending on training and development. This year's results are encouraging for those involved in the field, with 92% of organisations reporting that train-

ing is now more geared to meet the strategic needs of the business and increasing support for training from line managers evident. Training budgets have also remained relatively stable despite the perceived worsening in the economic outlook.

The news is not as positive for the Learning and Skills Councils (LSCs)

(see Cedefop Info 2/2002 page 14) in England, with only 49% of organisations reporting any contact with their local LSC. The survey also shows that employers remain unclear as to the difference between the LSCs and the old Training and Enterprise Councils (TECs) that they replaced, with only 15% of respondents rating LSCs better than TECs.

For the first time, this year's survey also looks back on changing trends in training over the past five years in a separate publication entitled 'Reflections - new developments in training' ⁽¹⁾. This includes thought-provoking pieces by five leading commentators and covers issues such as the changing role of line managers in training, workplace

diversity issues and training in the current economic climate.

More information from
CIPD, CIPD House, 35 Camp Road,
London SW19 4UX
Tel. (44) 208 971 90 00
Fax (44) 208 263 33 33
Web site: <http://www.cipd.co.uk>

⁽¹⁾ 'Training and Development 2003' and 'Reflections - new developments in training' can both be downloaded free of charge from the CIPD web site at www.cipd.co.uk/surveys.

Source: QCA

Policy on adult vocational training programmes agreed

In spring 2003, the Danish government formulated new political aims for adult vocational training. A common concept that integrates adult vocational training and adult continuing training into one system is being elaborated within the framework of Open Education. In June 2003, the Danish Folketing (parliament) agreed on the concept with effect from 1 January 2004.

In Denmark, adult vocational training (AMU) programmes play a key role in the general policy of lifelong learning. The programmes contribute to creating a flexible labour market by giving individuals opportunities to acquire the skills and competencies required by the labour market. Adult vocational training programmes constitute a significant part of education and training in the educational system and form an integral part of the adult further education system, which was established in 2000.

There are more than 2 000 AMU programmes. They meet the needs for vocational continuing training of adult unskilled and skilled workers and technicians within a wide range of sectors and trades. The pro-

grammes mainly target employees in work, but the unemployed also have access.

The programmes provide skills and competencies related to specific job functions, but a large majority of the programmes also provide competencies to advance to higher levels within a sector. Many programmes are recognised by other basic vocational education and training programmes. This implies that adults wishing to graduate as skilled workers can have their period of training shortened.

Objectives of the reform

One of the government's manifold aims is to ensure that this particular educational sector is characterised, to a higher degree, by transparency

and user-friendly flexibility. Another is that professional targeting is strengthened and that local adjustment of the content of the individual training programmes is allowed. In addition, a non-bureaucratic and effective administration of the programmes should be ensured.

Employers will experience an improved supply of continuing training for their employees. The programmes can be tailor-made for the various sectors and to the individual needs of the companies. The length of the programmes will be determined by the content and previous skills of the participants. There will be an increased flexibility as to the form of the programme, for instance workshops, distance learning, and in-house training. It will furthermore be possible for participants to carry out individual training programmes.

More information: Ministry of Education, Omraadet for arbejdsmarkedsuddannelser
Tel. (44-03) 392 5600

Source: Cirius (SEP)

Prize-winning quintet

BIBB awards the Continuing Training Innovation Prize for the third time

For the third time the Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) gave awards this year to five innovative continuing vocational training concepts. Candidates had entered altogether 146 concepts for the Continuing Training Innovation Prize 2003 with a total prize money of EUR 12 500.

The winning candidates who each received EUR 2500 include the Heidelberg Central Technical Committee for Vocational Training in Print and Media. The jury rewarded its modular continuing training concept for the adaptation and upgrading training of skilled workers. Festo AG in Esslingen received a prize for its C-Master programme, a method for the continuing training of specialised and managerial staff

through self-guided acquisition of knowledge. A prize went to the dm-drogerie markt GmbH & Co. KG in Karlsruhe. It impressed the jury with a continuing training system for specialised and executive staff which had the workplace as the learning venue. The fourth prize-winner was the Energy Agency NRW with its headquarters in Wuppertal. With its Internet platform 'Wissensportal Energie' it offers a special learning and service infrastructure for qualification and for know-how transfer in the energy sector. The fifth prize-winner was efiport AG in Frankfurt which has developed an online continuing training course for the application of the life-cycle concept for holistic financial consultancy.

Details of the prize-winning concepts and the contacts may be obtained from BIBB, Friedrich-Ebert-Allee 38, D-53043 Bonn, Internetadresse www.bibb.de.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Employers' association unveils plan to improve the training market

The Flemish Employers' Association (VEV) has devised a plan to improve the functioning of the adult training market in Flanders. The position of the employers' association is that the government should not finance training organisations, but rather, the persons undergoing training or the firms sending their employees on training courses. VEV moreover wants responsibility for the paid educational leave system to be devolved to the regions.

A study was commissioned by the VEV on the strengths and weaknesses of the Flemish training market, the origins of which go back to the Pact of Vilvoorde which set the target of 10% of Flemings aged 25 to 65 engaging in lifelong learning by 2010. Whereas barely 2% of Flemish adults received continuing training a decade ago, this rate had risen to 6.9% by 2000 and stands at

approx. 8% today. So although still below the European average of 8.3%, lifelong learning has the wind in its sails in Flanders.

The study commissioned by VEV confirms that there is no lack of training opportunities in Flanders. Training quality is high and moreover the region looks back on a long tradition of adult training. These

strengths are nevertheless counterbalanced by a number of shortcomings:

- apart from a lack of transparency, the Flemish government spends less on education and training than most other European countries;
- the key tasks of the government in the training market are not clearly defined;

- provision is not sufficiently geared towards clients' needs and
- the role of the sectoral training funds remains obscure.

However in the opinion of VEV, the heart of the problem lies in the excessive flows of subsidies to the training organisations. The employers' association wants the government to grant subsidies to job-seekers rather than to the training organisations. VEV agrees that certain types of training programmes, e.g. integration courses for migrants and programmes for the unemployed, can only be delivered by the

state. VEV also urges that responsibility for the system of paid educational leave, still at federal level, be devolved to the regions. In fact, with this single exception, all other necessary competences to launch initiatives designed to ensure the smooth functioning of the training market have been devolved to the Flemish government.

Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB

Employment policy

Repositioning of the Community and regional agency for employment and vocational training

The modernisation, already under way for a number of years, of the *Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* (FOREM)⁽¹⁾, puts it into a position to fully fulfil its public service mission.

The repositioning of FOREM⁽²⁾ follows the following principles:

- compliance with European law, and in particular competition rules;
- management of activities of a general interest, delivered according to the principles of a public service:
- in continuous operation, to all users under similar conditions, without consideration of the neutral economic effect of an operation or a

specific sector but in the context of a general equilibrium;

- the need to organise the steering and coordination of the new labour market integration system.

The main changes revolve around a number of elements:

- internal reorganisation into three complementary entities:
 - FOREM Conseil, which still provides a series of services to individu-

als and to enterprises, but which coordinates and supports all labour market players in Wallonia;

- FOREM Formation, which – as its name indicates – is the public vocational training provider;
- FOREM Support, combining the support services of FOREM Conseil and FOREM Formation (material, financial, human, resources etc.)

- deployment and widening of partnerships;

- integration of the advisory committee and the sub-regional employment committees within FOREM Conseil;

- commercial placement and selection activities are assumed by a fourth body which is to become a public company under private law.

Reinforcing the public employment service and specifying that its activities are principally in the common interest applies two principles: equal

treatment for all users and universal provision of gratuitous services.

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Cedefop Info. 2/2001 and 3/2001 <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22001/C21J4FR.html> <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo32001/C31J4FR.html>

⁽²⁾ Walloon Government Decree of 13 March 2003 amending the Decree of 6 May 1999 on the *Office wallon de la Formation professionnelle et de l'emploi* (FOREM), available at <http://www.wallex.wallonie.be>

Further information from: Carrefour Formation coordination and support unit Boulevard Tirou 185, B-6000 Charleroi Contact: tony.grzesinski@forem.be

Source: FOREM – Carrefour Formation coordination and support unit

The minimum employment income, the first employment contract tied to a social benefit

On 7 May, François Fillon, Minister for Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity, presented to the cabinet his reform bill (1) on 'decentralising the minimum integration income (RMI) and creating a minimum employment income (RMA)' (2). It is the first time a form of employment contract tied to a social benefit is to be introduced to the French labour code.

The *Revenu minimum d'activité* (RMA) is intended to give a new lease of life to the integration part of the *Revenu minimum d'insertion* (RMI) and reduce the 'idleness trap' encouraged by the low financial motivation to return to work for the least skilled among the RMI recipients: of the 1.5 million persons eligible for the RMI benefit, only one recipient in two has signed an integration contract. Moreover, almost one in four has no vocational experience, one in three has been in receipt of the benefit for over three years and almost one in ten has been drawing the RMI for over ten years.

Article 35 of the bill is therefore to introduce the RMA into the labour code. The new contract will be a six-month employment contract, renewable twice only, offered to persons in receipt of the RMI benefit for at least two years 'with no compulsory effect on the legislative framework', as emphasised by François Fillon. An initial target has been set of 50 000 persons on this new contract by the end of the year. Employers eligible for the RMA may be public or private sector, profit-making or non-profit

organisations, but not the national civil service, the labour market integration agencies of the overseas departments and territories (DOM-TOM), the department-level general councils or private individuals.

To be eligible to contract a worker under a RMA contract, the firm in question must neither have laid off any staff in the course of the previous six months on economic grounds, nor intend to substitute an employee on a permanent contract by a RMA contract. This contract of 20 hours per week will be remunerated at the rate of the national minimum wage (SMIC), i.e. EUR 545 net for a RMI of EUR 362. Single recipients of the RMI returning to work will therefore benefit from the equivalent of a 50% increase in income. The government has emphasised that RMA employees will not have their RMI-related social benefits (housing allowance, tax exemptions, all-round sickness insurance) withdrawn, which in certain cases would demotivate people to return to work.

The Minister underlined that 'possible tutorship schemes, individualised

guidance and training actions are to be determined by the employer and financed through the budget for integration aid of the General Councils'. They will therefore not constitute a precondition for the signing of a contract but must be included in its implementation.

The member associations of the National council for the fight against poverty and exclusion (CNLE) which were not consulted on the elabora-

tion of this bill, on 7 May requested additional time to examine 'a reform drawn up behind the closed doors of the ministries'. The proposed reform, to be introduced to Parliament in the near future, is scheduled to enter into force on 1 January 2004.

(1) The reform bill can be consulted on the website of the Ministry of Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity: <http://www.social.gouv.fr/html/dossiers/rma/sommaire.htm>

(2) The General Councils (elected assemblies at departmental level) will from now on have the sole

authority to decide whether or not an individual receives the RMI benefit. The General Councils will decide on the application of the integration part of the scheme on which continued payment of the benefit depends (Article L 262-20). The departmental and local integration agencies will at the same time lose their decision-making and validation authority over integration contracts. Their composition will from now on be decided by the president of the General Council and their role will be limited to that of advisory body.

Source: Communication, 9 May 2003, Centre INFFO website, section: Actualité: <http://www.centre-inffo.fr>
Forwarded by: Stéphane Héroult, Documentation dept., Centre INFFO

Austria

A barometer for trends in qualifications and skills

With a new online information system the Labour Market Service offers an aid to future professional and career choices.

In spring Austria launched the 'Qualifications Barometer', its first comprehensive online information system on qualifications and skills trends. Commissioned by the Labour Market Service (*Arbeitsmarktservice* - AMS), the system was developed by the Institute for Research on Qualification and Training of the Austrian Economy (ibw) and the 3s Unternehmensberatung GmbH. Data presented are based on an analysis of job vacancies, enterprise surveys and investigative studies.

The AMS Qualifications Barometer is intended for the use of AMS clients and staff members, people with responsibilities in the political and economic fields, journalists, and anyone facing a decision on their professional future. At three levels - 'Occupational categories', 'Occupational fields' and 'Occupations' - the Barometer presents a wide range of information on job market and skill/qualification trends and offers a glossary on more than 1000 qualifications and skills. Links to back-

ground information sources, to some 700 detailed occupational profiles and a list of about 500 sources complete the service offered by the Barometer. As of now it is immediately accessible under www.beruf4u.at or http://www.ams.or.at/b_info/indexqb.htm.

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Source: AMS/ibw/Cedefop/SK

Italy

Labour market reform package

The Italian labour market reform provides for a series of measures designed to promote an active society and a higher quality of work, with better prospects of employment for all, based on more modern rules matching the requirements of both sides of industry. Now that the 'Biagi bill' has gone through parliament, the government is taking rapid and concrete action to flesh out the principles and contents of the reform package.

The adoption of the 'Biagi bill' by parliament (law No 30 of 14 February 2003), authorises the government to enact a series of legislative decrees introducing reforms to the labour market in the course of the next few years.

The objectives of this reform package - inspired by the European Employment Strategy - were already defined by the government in the 'White paper on the labour market in Italy' (October 2001) and successively endorsed by the trade union and employers' organisations in the framework of the "Pact for Italy" (July 2002).

The reform package implies substantial changes for both sides of industry, with the introduction of more modern and more European rules to promote regular employment and in particular to promote the employment of certain target groups, e.g. youth in the south of Italy and women and older workers throughout the country.

Employment contracts

The reform regulates - or re-regulates - a number of employment contracts to promote the integration of persons with special needs (fam-

ily, learning) and to regularise forms of employment within the hidden economy, stabilising precarious employment relationships. The new types of employment contracts include **on-call** and **job-sharing** contracts. On-call contracts allow a firm to call at any moment on the services of a worker, due to production requirements. On-call workers will be entitled to an "availability" bonus on top of their usual remuneration for working hours effected. As its name indicates, **job-sharing** involves the sharing of a job by two workers, who divide the working hours, remuneration, etc. **Staff leasing**, on the other hand, is a new contractual formula allowing firms to hire manpower for an undetermined duration from specialised agencies, whereby the workers do not become the employees of the firm but remain in the employ of the agency. The collaboration contracts will have to be linked to a **project** or a work programme, indicating the duration, implementing modalities, criteria and remuneration details.

Training

The reforms seek to facilitate labour market (re-)integration by introducing forms of contract which also provide for (re-)training activities.

The training activities envisaged in the apprenticeship or linked work and training contracts can be scheduled and organised flexibly in order to overcome the strict separation between external and in-company training. Work experience carried out in a context which does not yet constitute an employment relationship will be assimilated to **apprenticeship**, giving youth an opportunity to enter into contact with the world of work and acquire a skills base.

The reform package includes a whole series of supplementary measures, some of which will be operational in a few months' time, e.g. as far as **staff leasing** contracts are concerned, private agencies, job consultants and universities will be able to act as **intermediaries** between labour supply and demand; **part-time working hours** will be extendible, and new rules will apply to companies in the process of restructuring in the case of the transfer of workers to a different branch of business and to **outsourcing** procedures. Moreover, the **certification** of employment relationships by bilateral bodies, competent public structures and universities, is to be introduced with a view to containing the number of legal disputes.

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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.

Articles do not necessarily reflect the views of Cedefop.

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

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Editorial deadline: 10.7.2003
Printed in Belgium 2003
Cat. no.: TI-AD-03-002-EN-C

This is the last issue of Cedefop Info, which has been produced under existing contractual arrangements.

We would like to thank

Simone Kops, journalist, who edited articles in German and succeeded in summarising complicated Cedefop texts into short and reader-friendly items;
Rudolf J. Schmitt, graphic designer, who has over many years contributed a great deal to giving not only Cedefop Info, but also many other Cedefop publications, a profile and appearance, which has made them recognisable and attracted attention;
Axel Hunstock, responsible for technical desk-top-publication, who has worked with Cedefop on many different projects and, in cooperating with us on Cedefop Info, has been infinitely patient and enormously skilful in organising the varying texts and in making changes and corrections in three languages thus enabling us to produce a high quality publication.

We very much hope that it will be possible to continue to work with each of them in this or another framework.

Michael Adams
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New organisations and programmes

Austria

Vocational schools kindle the spirit of entrepreneurship

50 000 companies are facing a pending generation change at the top. Commercial academies plan to introduce training in 'Entrepreneurship and Management' to broaden the expertise of young managers.

Entrepreneurship can be promoted in a targeted manner. This realisation is reflected not only in Austria's employment policy guidelines. It is also coming to the fore in the Austrian education system and is applied predominantly in the vocational schools – for a very good reason.

In the coming years a generation change will be required in the leadership of some 50 000 enterprises with 400 000 workers, and very often, there is no successor in sight. At the same time, in the recent past, many new businesses failed because of lack of know-how. Thus, there is an urgent need for qualified entrepreneurs while, at the same time, more and more school-leavers and youngsters, who have completed their apprenticeship training, have problems in finding their first job. It has become apparent that there is a

great need for training provision which addresses entrepreneurial skills.

The vocational schools reacted at an early stage. They now offer 'work in practice firms' (*Übungsfirmen*) as a separate subject and enable their pupils to get to know the basics of entrepreneurial management in over 1000 such practice firms. In addition to this, 'Business Start-up and Business Management' is one of the key training subjects in the syllabus. This has been such a great success with pupils, parents and teachers, that the commercial academies are thinking of broadening their training provision by introducing another subject 'Entrepreneurship and Management' which will give training in entrepreneurial skills. The curriculum will include industrial and social insurance law, application for registration of the firm, preparation of a

business plan, selection of the most appropriate legal form and optimisation of the tax burden.

In order to facilitate cooperation between industry and the school, the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture has created 'Enterprise Education' and set up the 'Training cluster' initiative together with the Austrian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. The goal is to provide incentives for business start-ups.

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<http://portal.wko.at/>

Source: BMBWK/Cedefop/SK

Denmark

Unskilled workers trained in record time

It normally takes 2½-4 years to get the journeyman's certificate in initial vocational education and training. However, in May 2003, a pilot project to give accreditation for prior learning was initiated for unskilled warehouse and transport operatives in the medical sector. The project is being carried out with close cooperation between four medical companies.

The warehouse and transport operative training programme normally lasts for three years, of which 50 weeks take place at a vocational college. The remaining 106 weeks take place in a company. Based on the participant's skills and competencies, individual training programmes are set up, lasting between four and 12 months. In the project, college instruction is reduced to six to nine weeks.

Competence clarification plan

At the vocational college, a competence clarification plan is drawn up for each participant. The plan lists the skills and competencies of the individual and thereby ensures that the course content matches his/her needs for training. Focus is put on the skills that the participant lacks in

order to become a skilled worker, and the employers take an active part in the planning of the training programme. Both the individual's interests and the company's needs for skilled labour are thereby taken into consideration.

All participants are over 25 years old and have at least four years of relevant work experience. Accreditation is given for holding a driver's licence and for previous adult vocational training. Leisure time activities also count when the final content and length of the training programme is determined.

If the project is successful, the approx. 400 employees in the four companies will be offered similar training.

More information: Dansk Industri, tel. (45) 3377 3377
 Source: Cirus (SEP)

Luxembourg

IMPALLA: the International Master in social Policy Analysis by Luxembourg, Leuven and Associate institutes

When the Chancellor of the University of Pittsburgh⁽¹⁾, Professor Mark Nordenberg, visited Luxembourg, in July 2000, with the aim of formalising the co-operation between Pittsburgh University and CEPS/INSTEAD⁽²⁾ for research and for advanced academic training and teaching, professor Gaston Schaber, president of CEPS/INSTEAD, presented to the Prime Minister Jean-Claude Juncker and to the Minister of Culture, Higher Education and Research, Mrs. Erna Hennicot-Schoepges, the project to create a CEPS/INSTEAD related University Consortium with a view to developing a "Graduate School for Comparative Public Policy, Analysis and Data", within the legal and institutional framework defined for higher education in Luxembourg.

The school, established in late 2002 now offers:

- a highly flexible and individualised track, leading to a Ph.D. (to be granted according to the rules of the home university of the respective students)
- a central track offering a full year teaching and training programme leading to an advanced MA/MSc: IMPALLA⁽³⁾

- a course offering a series of advanced, intensive teaching and training periods in the frame of high level continued education, possibly with a corresponding certification, e.g. IRISS⁽⁴⁾.

Social policy issues and challenges will be of central importance in an expanding European Union. Constantly new jobs are created in the fields of implementation and evaluation

of social policies. On completion of IMPALLA, a person could work as consultant to national ministries and administrations, to European Institutions, as well as a member of academic institutes, advanced centres, and firms specialising in auditing or in impact assessment.

The programme qualifies the participants for a top level career as a social researcher in the public as

well as in the private sector by training them to perfect their skills and abilities, with three major objectives:

- to offer a solid theoretical foundation in comparative socio-economic policies, at the European level and beyond
- to provide a thorough training in advanced research methodology, both quantitative and qualitative
- to give a well-founded expertise in policy evaluation, while developing the corresponding technical skills

The IMPALLA programme is organised jointly by:

- the Centre d'Études de Populations, de Pauvreté et de Politiques Socio-Économiques - International

Networks for Studies in Technology, Environment, Alternatives, Development (CEPS/INSTEAD) - Grand-Duché of Luxembourg

□ and the Department of Sociology of the University of Leuven, Belgium-K.U. Leuven⁽⁵⁾.

⁽¹⁾ <http://www.pitt.edu/>

⁽²⁾ Centre d'Études de Populations, de Pauvreté et de Politiques Socio-Économiques / International Networks for Studies in Technology, Environment, Alternatives, Development: <http://www.ceps.lu/>

⁽³⁾ <http://www.impalla.ceps.lu/>

⁽⁴⁾ Integrated Research Infrastructure in the Socio-Economic Sciences at CEPS/INSTEAD <http://www.ceps.lu/iriss/iriss.htm>

⁽⁵⁾ <http://www.kuleuven.ac.be/>

Source: Études et Formation s.a. (Cornélius Emmanuel)

Certification systems

Ireland

Structure of new national qualifications framework

The National Qualifications Authority of Ireland (NQAI) (see Cedefop Info 2/1999 and 3/2001) has a range of functions to perform in leading a cultural change in learning.

A key element of this is to focus on the needs of learners themselves. The two principal tasks of the Authority are to:

- establish and maintain a national framework of qualifications,
- promote and facilitate access, transfer and progression for learners.

The aim is that the framework will be the single entity through which all learning achievements in the State may be measured and related to each other. It aims to include all awards made in the State including professional and international ones.

Basic structure of the framework

The framework will be based on levels. Each level will have a specified level indicator. At each level in the framework there will be one, or more, award-types. Each award-type will have its own award-type descriptor. It is the responsibility of the Authority to develop these level indicators and award-type descriptors. For each award-type a wide range of named awards will be developed. This will be the responsibility of awarding bodies.

Levels and level indicators

The framework will consist of 10 levels. The framework levels set out a range of standards of knowledge, skill and competence. Eight sub-strands of knowledge skill and competence have been defined and these have been used to generate level indicators. Level indicators are broad descriptions of learning outcomes at a given level, in terms of the eight sub-strands of knowledge, skill and competence. The Authority has now determined a 10-level grid of level indicators. The grid shows how the outcomes in each of the eight sub-strands progress across the ten levels. The level indicators set out in this grid are intended to enable the Authority to place award-types at appropriate levels in the framework based on the mix of learning outcomes they contain.

The Authority has determined that awards at levels 7 to 10 will be made by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council, the Dublin Institute of Technology and the universities. At level 6, the Advanced Certificate award will be made by the Further Education and Training Awards Council, and the Higher Certificate award will be made by the Higher Education and Training Awards Council and the Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). At levels 3 to 5, awards will be made by the Department of Education and Science (State Examinations

Commission). At level 5 and below, the Further Education and Training Awards Council will make awards.

Award-types

Award-types are central to the framework. An award-type is a class of named awards sharing common features and level. At each level in the framework there will be at least one award-type, each of which will have its own award-type descriptor. For each award-type a wide range of named awards will be developed.

The framework is intended to enable the recognition of all learning achievements. The range of award-types provided will have to facilitate this inclusiveness. Not all combinations of achievement at a given level are of equal importance. Accordingly, the Authority has determined four classes of award-types:

- major
- minor
- special-purpose
- supplemental

Some award-types fulfil a broader range of purposes and these are labelled major award-types. Other, more limited or specialised, recognition needs are met by minor, supplemental and special-purpose award-types.

The Authority has no role in setting the standards of the awards of the Department of Education and Science and the universities. However, it is through the award-types and their descriptors that these awards can be accommodated on an agreed basis in the framework. The framework however sets the overall standards for awards that are made by the two awards Councils and the DIT.

Implementation

Planning is underway in relation to the implementation of the framework. The aim is that the timetable for the implementation will accompany the launch of the framework in Autumn 2003.

For further information on the above and associated policies on access, transfer and progression:
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Web site: www.nqai.ie

Source: NQAI/FAS/Cedefop

Financing of vocational training

The Netherlands

The functioning of training and development funds in continuing training

During the last 20 years, a training paragraph has been included in many collective labour agreements in reaction to the increased need for continuous (re)training of employees. This and other developments culminated in the establishment of sectoral training and development funds. Employers pay a levy (a percentage of the total amount of wages) to the fund, which aims to achieve a balance in each sector in training costs, with small companies paying the same relative amount of the training costs as bigger ones.

In 1997, the Max Goote Institute (MGK) undertook research reviewing the functioning and effectiveness of these training and development funds. Key conclusions⁽¹⁾ were that it was mainly the big companies which used these funds for refunding training costs. Many funds had built up huge capital reserves, but expected to spend more in the coming years. Furthermore, whenever employees were changing jobs to other sectors or branches, the sectoral funds did not contribute to the aim of balancing training costs.

Trends

The current state of affairs is described in the report *Training and Development funds revisited; state of affairs 2002*⁽²⁾. An update of key data on all existing funds is also added to this publication.

The research shows that participation in training has increased substantially, especially among employees of smaller companies. Despite this trend, the training and development funds still have problems in reaching companies with less than 50 employees. Another noticeable trend is the strong increase in training in the building and construction sector, and to a lesser extent in the hotel and catering industry.

Financial status

Almost 40% of all companies were associated with a training and development fund in 2002;

two thirds of them have actually received refunds for training activities. The total capital reserves of all funds is estimated to be 1 billion euro and is still increasing instead of diminishing. 40% of the companies confirm the continuing trend that the funds receive yearly more than that they spend. The annual turnover is 600 million euro, of which the main part (65%) is used for continuing training, apprenticeship and employment projects. A smaller part (35%) is used for a wide variety of activities such as childcare and working facilities and by joint employer and employee organisations.

Recently, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment sharpened control over the training and development funds because of the huge capital reserves and the sometimes diffuse objectives of the funds.

Recognition of eligible training courses

The training and development funds have become more flexible regarding the eligibility and recognition of various types of training courses. Half of all the funds now provide refunding for in-company training courses, mostly in relation to approved company training plans. Furthermore, 25% of all funds also reimburse (parts of) general training courses and 80% of the funds confirm that certain types of supra sectoral training (exceeding the specific sector or branch) are also eligible. This

shows that a broader employability of employees has become a more important objective.

⁽¹⁾ J. M. Waterreus. *Opleidings- en Ontwikkelingsfondsen onderzocht* (Training and Development funds reviewed). Max Goote Kenniscentrum voor Beroepsopleiding en Volwasseneneducatie. 1997. ISBN: 90-75743-15-7

⁽²⁾ J.M. Waterreus. *Opleidings- en Ontwikkelingsfondsen op herhaling. Stand van zaken scholingsfondsen 2002* (Training and Development funds revisited. State of affairs training funds 2002). Max Goote Kenniscentrum voor Beroepsopleiding en Volwasseneneducatie. October 2002. ISBN: 90-75743-49-1. Price: EUR 18.50 (excl. porto).

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http://www.maxgoote.nl

Source: MGK/CINOP

Germany

The training crisis costs the State a fortune

A BIBB study revealed that in the year 2000 alone the public authorities had to invest about EUR 11 billion in vocational education and training.

The training crisis is an expensive proposition for the State. The Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB) has, in its research project '*Public promotion of in-company vocational training in the dual system*' calculated exactly how expensive this has been. The goal of the BIBB project was to throw more light on the complex field of public promotion of vocational training. The outcome: public authorities invested approximately EUR 11 billion in vocational education and training in 2000 alone, without including the expenditure on continuing vocational training.

The amount spent by the Federal Government and the Federal States to support vocational education and training in Germany in 2000 was about EUR 7.8 billion. The lion's share of EUR 6.2 billion was invested in the vocational schools. EUR 1.43 billion was spent on in-

company training, 45 percent of this for additional training places.

In addition to this, the Federal Labour Office also spent considerable amounts on the financing of in-company vocational training. The expenses for individual promotion, e.g. the vocational training of disadvantaged youth and the first job entry of disabled persons rose from EUR 2.6 billion in 1998 to EUR 3.3 billion in 2001.

Other project outcomes have been published by Klaus Berger in the article '*How much does the training crisis cost the State? Volume and structure of public expenditure on training promotion*' in the BIBB journal '*Berufsbildung in Wissenschaft und Praxis* (BWP)', Number 2/2003. The issue may be obtained for a sum of EUR 7.90 from Bertelsmann Verlag, Postfach 10 06 33, D-33506 Bielefeld, Tel. (49-521) 911 01 11, Fax (49-521) 911 01 19, E-Mail service@wbv.de.

Source: BIBB/Cedefop/SK

Training of trainers

United Kingdom

Tomorrow's learning leaders - better qualified, but ageing fast?

Leaders and managers in England's post-compulsory learning organisations are getting older, says new Learning and Skills Development Agency research, published in May. In a major survey within post-16 education and training, more than 40% of leaders and managers in further education (FE) colleges and in adult and community learning were aged 50 years or more and trends over the past five years show an increasingly ageing management workforce at all levels within FE colleges. But the survey also revealed clear trends towards the increased take-up of management qualifications.

The survey, entitled *Tomorrow's learning leaders* (¹), carried out in the summer of 2002, is the largest and most comprehensive research of leadership and management within the English learning and skills sector in recent years. It provides a snapshot view of the characteristics of chief executives and managers in further education (FE) colleges, adult and community learning (ACL) and work-based learning (WBL). Based on the responses of nearly 2000 people from all levels of management in these three areas, the report provides an insight into the attitudes of leaders and managers in post-compulsory learning, what they do, the qualifications they hold and the skills they most need to develop. It reveals continuing inequalities of gender and ethnicity and warns of a possible 'succession crisis' amongst the next generation of leaders and

managers as the current cohort of leaders nears retirement age. The findings also show how attitudes and practices have changed since the previous survey in 1997, which looked at FE colleges only.

Main findings

❑ Four out of five respondents from all three sectors (FE, ACL and WBL) were over 41 years of age and there was a clear trend towards older managers in FE colleges over the past five years. In 1997 24% of managers in FE colleges were aged 50 and over, but by 2002 this had increased to 42% and affected managers at all levels from supervisors to chief executives.

❑ Managers at senior levels remain predominantly white and male. The proportion of female managers in FE colleges remains roughly the same

as it was five years ago. A similar pattern exists for FE college managers from ethnic backgrounds, where only 3% of all respondents were of African, Indian, Pakistani or Chinese descent in both the 1997 and 2002 surveys.

❑ More than one third of all managers now hold recognised management qualifications and there has been significant growth in acquiring management qualifications by managers in FE colleges. But opinions on their value are divided, with supervisory and middle managers placing greater emphasis on their need for management qualifications than senior managers and chief executives'. The most popular management qualification overall is the Diploma in Management Studies (DMS), yet the qualification rated most highly was the Master in Business Administration (MBA).

❑ Professional development is viewed as a higher priority amongst middle and supervisory managers. Within FE colleges, executive and senior managers perceived they had significantly fewer professional development and support needs than lower tier managers.

Three top priorities emerged as important development needs for all managers. These were:

- ❑ dealing with conflict;
- ❑ making effective use of management information systems; and
- ❑ evaluating financial proposals.

The greatest need for professional development was amongst junior and middle management across the learning and skills sector and by ACL managers at all levels. There were also clear preferences by all managers for 'learning through experience', planned project work, one-day seminars, shared practice and mentoring. Lack of time was the greatest obstacle to participating in professional development. But there were significant differences over priorities and preferred learning styles between

managers from different sectors. For instance, 'planning to achieve a vision' was a high priority and 'work secondments' was a preferred learning style within FE colleges, but less popular among WBL and ACL managers.

Chris Hughes, Chief Executive of the Learning and Skills Development Agency, commenting on the survey, said:

"The need to equip the next generation of leaders and managers with the knowledge and skills to tackle the huge challenges faced by the learning and skills sector is urgent. We are sitting on a time bomb, as 60% of leaders will be retiring by 2007, so it is vital that we nurture the managers of the future and equip them to take over".

(¹) *Tomorrow's learning leaders* by Michael Frearson is obtainable free from: Information Services, LSDA, Regent Arcade House, 19-25 Argyll Street, London W1F 7LS. Tel: (44-20) 7297 9144. Email: enquiries@LSDA.org.uk. It can also be downloaded from the website: www.lsdA.org.uk; reference no 1446. (direct download: <http://www.lsdA.org.uk/files/PDF/1446.pdf>)

Source: QCA



Vocational guidance

Finland

An individual approach to adult education and training

An individual approach is becoming the firm pedagogical favourite in adult education and training in Finland. Since 1992, legislation has included provisions on the use of individual learning programmes. Over the last ten years, different measures have been used to develop the process of individualising adult education and training. The aim is to improve the quality and effectiveness of competence-based qualifications through individualisation.

The Individualisation of Adult Education and Training (AiHe) project, was initiated in the year 2000. It involves 56 educational institutions, which are developing new operating methods and tools to individualise adult learning in co-operation with workplaces. About 800 000 euro per year have been granted to the project, which will continue until the end of 2006.

From identification of competence to control of competence

The AiHe project promotes the development of individual learning pro-

grammes in educational institutions and business environments. Working groups of experts are producing models and tools for the purposes of guiding and individualising adult learning. The working groups consist of adult educators, representatives of working life and other experts in guidance, education and training.

An important target of development within the AiHe project is the identification and recognition of adults' competence and the implementation of individualised learning pathways. Educational institutions and experts

from working life are testing and evaluating new models and tools together. In addition, the project organises training and evaluation and cooperation seminars and provides consultancy support for the development of individualisation.

All choices concerning a student or a candidate taking a qualification are made taking their personal resources into account. Measures to improve aptitude and provide tools for further studies are critical to the process of empowering adults to take charge of their studies.

Developing guidance as well as teaching

Educational guidance helps learners to identify different interpretations of reality and analyse their relationship with the present and the future. A counsellor's task is to help learners to construct and pinpoint their own interpretations. Good educational guidance encourages learners to question certainties and to retain their curiosity.

A teacher's own way of evaluating and anticipating the future is always present in the guidance process. Accordingly, in order to support individual students to shape visions of the future and to position themselves for the future, teachers need to be aware of their own assump-

tions and fears. Consequently, discussions on educational guidance also function as a forum for teachers to analyse their own thinking and for their own professional development. Genuine dialogue calls for a readiness to readjust one's own beliefs and interpretations. The AiHe project provides teachers and working life experts with training to consolidate client-focused and guidance-related operating methods.

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Source: NBE

Career mentorship: soon to be a right in Flanders

Following an analysis by a working party and the establishment of a series of pilot projects, the Flemish authorities will soon be ready to develop a right to individual career mentorship. In the autumn, individual training vouchers for employees are to be introduced by the government. Although this right will not be universally applicable immediately, in particular due to budgetary restrictions, a blueprint for its gradual implementation is in the course of elaboration. The preparatory steps illustrate the crucial role of individual career mentorship in the labour market and for firms in general.

In June 2002, the King Baudouin Foundation published the report of a group of experts commissioned by the Flemish Minister for Employment and Tourism. In its conclusions, the report drew attention to the need to ensure equitable organisation of services, i.e. universal accessibility, in particular for groups facing difficulties in gaining access to the labour market, so-called risk groups. As a consequence, every individual should have control of his or her own career. Career mentorship should therefore provide workers or job seekers with a counselling diagnosis which they can, possibly, put together themselves. The diagnosis should lead to a personal development plan. The so-called transitional labour market is emerging. Tools have already been created, e.g. time credit and paid educational leave. Career mentorship also serves as a sounding board to support individual choices.

The shortcoming of the introduction of this career mentorship service is the current dearth of independent career mentors (at most about 50) in Flanders: supply has not kept up with the rapidly increasing demand. In its report, the group of experts minimises the risk of workers leaving their current employment in view of the very positive effect of career mentorship on their vocational development. Career mentorship may even limit the departure of workers seeking promotion, insofar as it will give employers a better insight into the unfulfilled expectations of their employees. The right to career mentorship would also facilitate access to this instrument in the context of organisations unable to deliver it on their own initiative. In Flanders, over one half of wage-earners work in firms with fewer than 100 employees and traditional lifelong occupations are a thing of

the past. Modern-day occupational careers are strewn with a large number of ups and downs and adaptations.

The provision of career mentorship must therefore be diversified. There is room for many players in this market, not only the Flemish em-

ployment and vocational training office (VDAB), but in particular also trade unions and other large-scale organisations.

The employer does not have to pay for the counselling, but the employee does not have to bear the cost alone. The cost of career

mentorship may easily amount to as much as EUR 1000 per head. It would therefore be preferable to introduce a charge payable by individuals in the form of a contribution towards the cost of the service. The introduction of individual training vouchers for employees⁽¹⁾ in the autumn of 2003 therefore comes at an opportune moment. The training vouchers which are also redeemable against career mentorship will thus become veritable career vouchers. At the moment, career mentorship is being tested among lowly skilled workers in the context of pilot projects supported by the Flemish

government and the European Social Fund. The working party in fact proposed a gradual roll-out of the system to enable supply to keep pace with demand and prevent an immediate soaring of the budget so that priority can be given to those labour market groups in the greatest need of support.

⁽¹⁾ Cf. Cedefop Info No 2/2002 on the training vouchers in Belgian firms. <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22002/C22N1EN.html>

Source: Gestion Média et bibliothèque VDAB

France

Information on training - Centre INFFO's role reinforced



The 2003-2006 multi-annual contract of objectives, signed on 11 March 2003 between the Minister for Social Affairs, Employment and Solidarity and the management of Centre INFFO - Centre for the development of information on continuing training - positions Centre INFFO at the heart of the system providing information on training provision and on the accreditation of previous learning. Centre INFFO's position is reinforced by the participation of the regional councils in its board of directors, as specified in a decree which is to be published in the near future.

Eight strategic objectives have been identified for the four years to come.

Improving information on training provision and procedures for the accreditation of previous learning (APL) is one of the key dimensions of this new contract of objectives. Centre INFFO, along with its partners and with the support of the public authorities, is to put forward a common set of standards for databases on training provision. This is to be standardised and made accessible to practitioners (authorised joint collection bodies - OPCA, companies, the National Union for Employment in Industry and Commerce - UNEDIC, the public employment services, the regions, etc.). The Centre will also help disseminate information on ways of access to certification and APL.

Centre INFFO will also have the task of "facilitating equal access to

information on training". It is to play a key role in the design, implementation and functioning of an Internet portal on vocational training, which will help to network information available at national and regional level.

Centre INFFO is also called upon to participate in the construction of the national directory of vocational qualifications (RNCP). In conjunction with the National Commission for Vocational Certification (CNCP)⁽¹⁾ and specialised institutions such as the Centre for Research on Education, Training and Employment (CEREQ), it is to be responsible for data collection and the technical management of the official data base.

It will also continue the collaboration established in this field with unemployment insurance institutions; this initiative will be pursued at national and regional level.

The professionalisation of, and information for, APL players is one of the objectives assigned to Centre INFFO. The Centre will propose training tools to APL players and trainer networks.

An important aspect in the expansion of the Centre's tasks concerns the progress it is making towards integrating the regional and local dimension into its activities. Its role as a national resource centre in liaison with regional information mechanisms is confirmed. Progress in this direction will be made easier by the participation of the regional councils in Centre INFFO's board of directors. Closer links with the training promotion resource and information centres (*Centres d'animation et de ressources pour l'information sur la formation* - CARIF) will help clarify their expectations as far as the delivery of services is concerned.⁽²⁾

Centre INFFO is also responsible for building on information from and for the European Union, including the pre-accession countries. This includes information on the latest European news, exchange of good practice, promotion of French training practice and provision. Continuing its collaboration with the European institutions⁽³⁾, Centre INFFO will build on the information available on the EU partner countries. A selection of the information produced by the Centre will be made available in English on its website or in hard copy.

International information, already collected, is to be followed up and extended.

⁽¹⁾ See the CNCP website: <http://www.cncp.gouv.fr/>

⁽²⁾ Cooperation agreements have already been signed with the Regional Councils and/or CARIFs of the regions Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur, Champagne-Ardenne and Alsace, and negotiations are under way with other regions.

⁽³⁾ Centre INFFO is the national coordinator of the French consortium for the European Network of Reference and Expertise (ReferNet). Cf. the article "From 'documentary information' to 'reference and expertise': more than a change of name?", in Cedefop Info No 2/2002. <http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/download/Cinfo/Cinfo22002/Ind-en.html>

Source: from INFFO Flash, No 609, 1 to 15 March 2003
Forwarded by: Stéphane Héroult,
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Initial training

Italy

The educational reform bill: the new vocational training route

Law No 53 of 28 March 2003 (authorising the government to define general standards of education and the requirements to be met by vocational education and training provision) was published in the Official Journal No 77, 2 April 2003. The educational reforms restructure educational cycles, introducing a series of innovations to enrolment in nursery (kindergarten) and elementary (primary) schools, and notably the choice between the upper secondary *liceo* or the vocational training route at the end of middle school (lower secondary school).

The most salient reforms are at the level of the second cycle (upper secondary school), with students being able to choose between the five-year *liceo* route and the four-year vocational training stream. Students aged 15+ will also be able to opt for linked work and training, delivered by vocational schools in collaboration with industry, or apprenticeship.

Compulsory schooling/training, and the right to it, is to be extended to a duration of at least 12 years, or in any case until the acquisition of a qualification up to the age of 18.

At the end of first cycle (first-level secondary school), those remaining within the general education system will be able to choose between the following new types of upper sec-

ondary school (*liceo*) specialising in the arts, the classics, human sciences, economics, languages, music, sciences or technology.

The vocational education and training schools will offer the following specialisations:

- agri-environmental,
- textiles and fashion,

- mechanics,
- chemistry and biology,
- graphic design and multimedia,
- electricity/electronics/IT,
- building and territorial planning,
- tourism/hotels,
- commerce/administration,
- social/health sector.

The courses will last four years, following which students wishing to go on to higher education will have to do a university foundation year. It will however be possible for students to change direction, both within the various types of *liceo* and vocational school, and from one system to another.

Alternance training programmes are also envisaged, above all for school drop-outs in the 15 to 18 age-bracket. These linked work and training courses will involve work experience planned and evaluated by schools in collaboration with firms, sectoral associations and chambers of commerce.

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Source: ISFOL/Alessandra Pedone

The European Year of People with Disabilities

The purpose of this dossier

In designating 2003 the Year of People with Disabilities, the European Union has set itself the aim of promoting the sustained social integration of this group of European citizens.

Social integration means social acceptance, recognition and promotion of personal potential in education and training and of equal opportunities in the workplace. This means that social groups should get into contact with each other, get to know each other better and develop and implement common strategies.

Thus, the dossier features examples of initiatives promoting the integration of people with disabilities and practical models from Greece, France and Austria. It also addresses the issue of current strategies and the necessary requirements at statutory level. A key aspect here is the debate on how values and attitudes can be changed, especially as these often represent a higher obstacle than the disabilities themselves.

Two Cedefop events have specifically addressed this issue: Agora XII (July 2001) and the "Beating the odds" workshop, to tie in with the Year of People with Disabilities in February 2003.

Roland Loos and Eleonora Schmid, Cedefop

Cedefop

Beating the Odds



The European Year of People with Disabilities

Assisting society, education and employment to integrate better people with disabilities

"Beating the Odds" was the slogan of an international workshop organised by Cedefop to prepare for one of the nine key themes of the its conference "Policy, Practice and Partnership - Getting to Work on Lifelong Learning" at the beginning of June (see p 1). Cedefop aims at linking education and employment policy, practice and partnership. It is the interaction between these aspects that can bring about a paradigm shift as requested in the pre-conference workshop.⁽¹⁾

What conclusions can be drawn from the discussions and be presented to the different actors in the fields of policy, research and practice?

Collate more statistical data

More information on participation rates of people with disabilities in post-school education, training and employment could give a clearer picture of the present situation and help monitor development over time. In some countries, employees with disabilities are not even registered as having a disability. The ILO intends to open a debate on common statistical standards and indicators to measure the employment rates of people with disabilities throughout Europe.

A common definition of disability to ensure comparability

The proportion of young people identified as disabled varies, between countries, from 3% to 20%⁽²⁾. Such large variations are unlikely to be 'real'. It seems more likely that they are caused by different definitions of disability, not just between, but also sometimes within countries. A report to be published by the European Commission⁽³⁾ on definitions applied in the Member States is expected to contribute to progress on this issue.

Focus on ability rather than disability

Society often stigmatises people with disabilities, especially those with severe disabilities. This leads to double exclusion: firstly through the disability itself and secondly through the barriers created by stigmatis-

sation. The negative attitude of the social environment often forms a greater barrier for the citizen concerned than the disability itself. Sustainable integration of people with disabilities, however, requires fundamental change in the way we look at human potential.

Altering societal paradigms is, therefore, crucial. We should focus on the abilities and competences of people, those with and those without disabilities alike, and encourage them to develop them further. This would, at the same time and in an integrated way, contribute to both vocational and social integration. It would also form the basis for accepting people with disabilities as equal citizens in all spheres of life. Awareness-raising campaigns, funded by authorities at all levels, and in particular at European level, could play a substantial role in this endeavour.

Foster active citizenship to the benefit of both individuals and society

Active citizenship is one of the key aims of the European Commission's lifelong learning policy. This applies to all citizens. Support and motivation for those with disabilities to participate actively in their communities is important. Active participation can mean having a job, but it also means having friends, participating in local community bodies and NGOs and simply being respected as an equal citizen in everyday life. An active social life is a precondition for a satisfying and rewarding life in education, training and employment. Active citizenship can therefore trigger off the motiva-

tion to learn and form a stepping stone to lifelong learning and to integration in the world of paid work.

Ensure access to basic education to achieve social and vocational integration

ICT skills are particularly important in this regard. Enhancing the development of ICT tools adapted to the needs of citizens with disabilities would support their integration into lifelong learning and professional life. Appropriate hardware and software is underdeveloped, partly because companies designing ICT tools are unaware of specific customer needs. People with disabilities need information on the potential of ICT tools so that they can articulate their needs. At policy level, access to ICT should be recognised as a basic human right for excluded groups. The EU should work towards this aim.

Mainstream policies and provide tailor-made programmes

The integration of citizens with disabilities into mainstream VET is essential for their social integration. New approaches and innovative models to acquire traditional and modern basic skills will significantly increase the opportunities for permanent integration into the labour market and lifelong learning. Teaching methods must be geared to people's specific requirements. For some groups, especially for people with severe disabilities, specific tailor-made education programmes may continue to be more appropriate. Such provision must also be accessible in a very practical way.

Gauge effectiveness of anti-discrimination laws and quotas

Both mechanisms aim to foster integration into employment, but neither works perfectly and it is not clear which produces more positive results. Quota systems demand a system of verification. They generally require people to register as having a disability. The advantage is that they legally require organisations to fulfil a social obligation, by employing people with disabilities. This may be more effective than relying on their goodwill.

Organisations and pressure groups point out that quota systems focus on disability as an individual deficit, whereas the real barriers to integration are social, cultural, political and economic. Once these are dismantled, many disabilities may lose their relevance altogether. Furthermore, quota systems may not consider different levels and kinds of disability. Companies can fulfil their obligations by employing people with minor disabilities. Ensuring compliance is, in any case, not always easy and may not be supported by adequate legislation.

Anti-discrimination legislation requires employers to treat all employees and potential employees on an equal basis. This includes making reasonable adjustments in the workplace to accommodate employees with disabilities. This is a powerful signal. The difficulty is that people, who think they have been less favourably treated because of disability, need to bring the case to court themselves. People are often reluctant to do this, particularly if they do not qualify for legal aid and must bear the costs of the case themselves. Organisations and pressure groups generally favour anti-discrimination legislation over quotas, but there is no clear evidence in favour of one or the other system in practice.

Encourage networking and active cooperation

People with disabilities are often isolated from each other as well as from their communities. Powerful civil society groupings and associations working in their interests have only emerged fairly recently. Education and training organisations and other authorities have developed policies and measures in isolation from each other. Employers, social partners and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) have not been closely drawn in either. Nor has sufficient positive use been made of the mass media and advertising industries. These could make a significant contribution to awareness raising and information provision for specified target groups. Hence, supporting more active cooperation and network development amongst all actors is a particularly important strategy to promote the social and vocational integration of people with disabilities.

⁽¹⁾ See Cedefop Info 1/2003, p 4

⁽²⁾ European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education: study on *Transition from school to employment*; For more information consult the Agency website: www.european-agency.org/transit/practices

⁽³⁾ *Definition of Disability in Europe*. Brunel University London on behalf of the European Commission. The report will be published in the second half of 2003 and will then be available on the Website of the European Commission http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/employment_social/disability/index_en.html

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Source: Cedefop/RLO

From helper to service provider

Occupational profiles in social work are gaining importance throughout Europe. ACE Europe is trying to establish itself as the contact for questions relating to qualification.

The Association of Care Educators in Europe (ACE Europe) wishes to ensure an appropriate status within the European vocational training system for training in the social occupations dealing with disadvantaged people. This intention was proclaimed by the organisation at its General Assembly in Bolzano in Italy.

ACE is a European association of school directors dealing with the vocational training of professional care personnel for persons with disabilities. It is the successor of the 'Working Group Europe – occupations for rehabilitation' founded in 1993. Two influential representatives in the field of training from each of

the member countries Belgium, Germany, Italy (South Tirol), Netherlands, Austria, Poland, Romania, Switzerland and the United Kingdom meet regularly for an exchange of information. Their task, in their opinion, is to promote and disseminate innovations in training for the social occupations and to develop activities for the European dimension. This includes cooperation with the European Association for Services for Persons with Disabilities – EASPD

(www.easpd.org), a European network of service providers for persons with disabilities and, since 2000, an annual 'Euoweek' as a common module in 15 partner schools.

At the annual meeting in 2002 a Belgian participant presented a report on plans to use socially disadvantaged persons as teaching 'experts with inside knowledge' in training. Germany's care educators presented the structure of instruction for life fields. Representatives of Switzerland explained how they inform one another in a snowball-structured chat about different aspects of training principles.

In 2003, at its annual meeting under the chairmanship of Gerhart Hofer from Austria, ACE Europe discussed topical subjects relating to work with persons with disabilities, reforms in training and the development of new occupation profiles.

Occupational profiles in social work are becoming increasingly important all over Europe and are also undergoing a radical change: nursing care

is changing into supportive care, the helper is becoming a service provider. In the international field the slogan for policies for persons with disabilities has long been 'Nothing which affects us, should be decided without us'. This means that, in work with persons with disabilities, the professionalisation of the staff has to be put right at the top of the agenda.

In the near future, ACE Europe plans to organise a symposium on learning field orientation and to establish itself in the PEN network as the contact for employers in questions relating to qualification of staff. At the request of Aid for Life in Northern Greece, ACE Europe President Hofer will be advising the Greek agency on the construction of a training system.



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Source: ACE/Cedefop/SK



Athens training centres promote young people with mental disabilities

"Transition from School to Work", a project of the European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education, has identified practice models from 16 European countries which promote the integration of disabled people into vocational training, working life and society. The project has compiled a database, which interested parties can access via the agency's website.

Cedefop Info 3/2002 reported on the Transition to Work project's most significant results. Because Greece's EU presidency fell in the European Year of People with Disabilities, this dossier presents two Greek examples, which encourage the social and professional integration of young people through an effective combination of activities (www.european-agency.org/transit/practices).

Career opportunities for disadvantaged young women

Estia Eidikis Epangelmatikis Agogis (E.S.E.E.P.A., Centre for Special Vocational Training, www.esepa.gr) was established in 1982. It promotes the social and professional integration of mentally disabled girls and young women aged 15 and over with a successful blend of approaches.

Participants gain traditional and new basic qualifications and related job skills in separate stages. The centre focuses particularly on training language skills. A varied instruction programme gradually encourages free and creative use of language in work and leisure activities. Acquisition of social skills is a further emphasis.

Students manufacture products in the centre's workshops. These are then sold in the centre's own shop. This ensures that students acquire both vocational qualifications and practical work experience. After the girls have completed their training, E.S.E.E.P.A. actively supports them in their search for work.

An extensive sports programme is another of E.S.E.E.P.A.'s main activities.

It has been running sports competitions since 1992. Numerous regional organisations participate. All E.S.E.E.P.A. activities are designed to impart lasting social skills.

E.S.E.E.P.A. has been involved in various European initiatives (including two HORIZON projects) and is an active member of three international networks – Union of Organisations for People with Learning Disabilities, Association for research and training on integration in Europe (*Association de Recherche et de Formation sur l'Insertion en Europe* – ARFIE) and Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union (Confédération des Organisations familiales de la Communauté européenne – COFACE).

E.S.E.E.P.A. and other training centres for disabled people are currently developing a nation-wide information campaign to inform school teachers about the specific needs of students with disabilities. The Greek Ministry of Education will finance the project, which is to be launched in September 2003. Its goal is the sustained integration of young disabled people into regular Greek schools.

Networks assist integration

The MARGARITA training centre was founded in 1979. It fosters the social and vocational integration of mentally disabled young people between the ages of 14 and 21.

MARGARITA spotlights practice-based learning even more than E.S.E.E.P.A. Initially, students acquire the basic skills and abilities they need to cope with everyday life.

MARGARITA's primary objective is to equip the youngsters to lead as independent lives as possible. The methods adopted are also intended to contribute to the young people's personal development.

The next stage is vocational training in small groups of five to six in various workshops. The focus is on "learning by doing". Tutors' individually tailored responses to students contribute tremendously to the effectiveness of this approach. The young people can attend workshops and classes in the following subjects:

gardening, laundering, sewing, office work and catering.

Once students have completed one or more of these courses they can work in MARGARITA's work centre. MARGARITA also takes active steps to help its graduates join the labour market. Over the years MARGARITA has built up an extensive network of local companies and public institutions, which is instrumental to the realisation of its goal. Many graduates have found employment via these contacts.

Like E.S.E.E.P.A., MARGARITA has been involved in several European Union projects. These include ESF, HORIZON and the exchange programme of the European Agency for

Development in Special Needs Education.

Further information:
www.european-agency.org/transit/practices

Association for research and training on integration in Europe – ARFIE
http://www.arfie.org

Confederation of Family Organizations in the European Union – COFACE
http://www.coface-eu.org

Centre for Special Vocational Training – E.S.E.E.P.A.
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Source: European Agency for Development in Special Needs Education/Cedefop/RLO

Career planning instead of course hopping

Clearing helps disabled youth with their transition from school to employment

Clearing is the name of a new strategy with which Austria plans to help young persons with disabilities with the development of their professional perspectives. Together with these young persons clearing teams draw up tailor-made concepts for their occupational integration.

Up to now, in Austrian policy for persons with disabilities, the predominant feature is isolated and separate offers for vocational qualification or practical work experience. The young persons have to judge for

themselves which offer is best for them. If they take several wrong decisions, they soon turn into course hoppers with all the negative social and psychological consequences.

The clearing teams do not wish this to happen in future. That is why, in the second-last or last year of school, they get together with the disabled pupil, his/her parents and teachers. All the participants jointly prepare a package of activities for successful integration into professional life. An inclination and apti-

tude profile is followed by an analysis of strengths and weaknesses which shows whether and where the young person needs remedial schooling. Concrete career perspectives are derived from these results and laid down by the clearing team in an individual career and development plan.

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Source: BMSG/BMBWK/Cedefop/SK

How companies integrate people with disabilities quickly into working life

Integrating people with disabilities into company life requires sensitisation of both sides of industry and is often a question of training.

To mark the occasion of the European Year of People with Disabilities, the Fund for the occupational integration of people living with disabilities - AGEFIPH⁽¹⁾ intends to demonstrate once again by means of first-hand accounts of companies with the relevant experience that employing people with disabilities 'is not only possible, but above all effective'. In France, of the total number of 800 000 persons recognised as disabled, 600 000 are in employment and 200 000 (26%) are jobseekers.

In the context of a press conference, AGEFIPH recalled that one quarter of enterprises with a headcount of 20+ fail to have a single disabled person on their payroll. 'Every other firm states that it is not very familiar with the integration mechanisms for people with disabilities. Moreover, all the partners of the enterprise play an important role in the successful occupational integration of persons living with disabilities and maintaining them in their jobs', underlined Rémi Jouan, AGEFIPH president. The first-hand accounts of enterprises stress the need to sensitise the entire workforce to the recruitment of disabled employees.

The firm **Sin and Stes**⁽²⁾, specialised in industrial cleaning operations, has set up a training programme designed to sensitise management to this question. Around 300 managers have already participated in this programme with the result that the recruiters of construction site workers have taken on disabled operatives. This approach follows on from the creation of the post of integration facilitator for people with disabilities. 'Our firm signed an agreement with AGEFIPH in 2001 which includes recruitment plans drawn up with the responsible employment officer. We also made the commitment to guide another company in the cleaning industry towards this type of agreement', remarks François Moulinier, HR director at Sin and Stes. At the moment, the number of disabled persons hired by the company is estimated at 80, if not 100 per year.

For its part, the company **Fapagau**⁽³⁾, specialised in perfume packaging, only employs the hard of hearing. 'We have targeted one specific disability', explains Anne-Sophie Roland, personnel director of Fapagau. 'Our aim was to achieve

the integration of one group before starting with another. As occupational integration is not our speciality, we use the services of an association, the regional union of the associations of parents with children with hearing deficiencies (URAPEDA), which proposes suitable candidates for our jobs'. The firm has developed specific training programmes which take the technical nature of the jobs into account. A common sign language has been devised and technical adaptations have been made to the machinery. 'In the case of malfunction, sound alarms have been replaced by vibrating beeps so that the hard of hearing can react in real time', is just one example cited by Anne-Sophie Roland. This integration commenced in 1999 and was accelerated in 2001. 'Of course', the personnel director concedes, 'it is simpler to pay a contribution to AGEFIPH than to take on persons recognised as disabled workers, but their presence in the firm has re-motivated our teams and brought them closer together. The return on investment is therefore very positive'.

The visually impaired entrepreneur Jérôme Adam, who set up his own business in 2000, rejects the idea of a model 'because there are specific aspects everywhere. I very much believe in communication, in show-

ing success stories or enthusiastic examples as opposed to the old clichés, to help people find their niche'. His enterprise **Visual Friendly** which develops 'Label Vue', a software designed to facilitate universal Internet access for both disabled and able-bodied users, has 11 employees, two of whom are disabled. Its chief executive and another member of staff are both visually impaired. 'We hope to recruit more staff. What I look for first and foremost are people who can do the job. Whether or not a person is disabled is secondary to their skills'. In this vein, a number of heads of enterprise recognise that training is one of the keys to the recruitment of people with disabilities. The more skills a person has to offer, the quicker their occupational integration is likely to be. 'Schooling is still the best means of promoting the occupational integration of the disabled', concludes Jérôme Adam.

When asked why the public administration recruits fewer people with disabilities than the private sector, Claudie Buisson, AGEFIPH director general, recalls that the obligation of a 6% quota of disabled workers also applies to state administrations, local authorities and hospital administrations, as well as their public establishments. 'However', she adds, 'the latter do not pay any contribu-

tion to AGEFIPH if they fail to respect the quota'. The disability quota among civil servants seems to be around 4%.

On the other hand, 102 000 people with disabilities underwent skills evaluation, guidance or training financed by AGEFIPH in 2002. This figure includes the 54 000 beneficiaries of personalised guidance in the framework of the 'new start' initiative, implemented by the *CapEmploi* network. More specifically, 22 250 persons participated in skill-building or pre-skilling training, 2 250 underwent on-the-job vocational training, and 2 300 new apprenticeship and alternance contracts were signed.

(1) AGEFIPH is responsible for the management of the fund for the occupational integration of people with disabilities. Set up on the basis of the law of 10 July 1987, its mission statement is to promote the vocational training, access to and retention of employment of people with disabilities on the basis of the contributions from industry. Further information on AGEFIPH and its publications at: <http://www.agefiph.asso.fr/>

(2) Established in 1991 as a result of the merger between an industrial cleaning operator and a specialised technical maintenance company, Sin and Stes has a total headcount of 9 000; an average of 200 of its workforce are disabled.

(3) Established in 1986 in the department of Aisne, the company Fapagau belongs to the Oréal group. Of its 350 permanent employees, around 10 are disabled; it also recruits occasional additional disabled temporary staff.

Source: INFFO Flash, No 611, 1-15 April 2003, article by Philippe Grandin
Forwarded by: Stéphane Héroult,
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Agora Thessaloniki

A plea in favour of positive discrimination

On 5 and 6 July 2001 Cedefop organised its twelfth Agora Thessaloniki conference on the theme *Training for people with mental disabilities and their trainers. Permitting the mentally disabled a genuine and appropriate exercise of their rights.*⁽¹⁾ The Centre's Agora conferences are designed as a forum for reflection. They aim to bring together the very divergent views which may be held by the various social players on difficult, but fundamental, social issues in the field of initial and continuing vocational training and social integration. In this Cedefop Info dossier, we decided to reproduce the essence of the introductory note which provided the starting point for the lively debates at this Agora in 2002, in which 40 persons participated very actively (see below).

Although the Agora explicitly addressed the vocational training of a sub-group of people with disabilities, the mentally disabled, the debates touched on issues ranging far beyond this specific sub-group. In addition although this Agora was held just over two years ago, it seems far from irrelevant in the current context. On the contrary, despite the efforts of everyone involved, we must unfortunately conclude that the objectives set two years ago are still far from achieved.

If we look at the principles generally proclaimed in developed western societies, the French Revolution motto of "**Liberty, equality, fraternity**" would seem - at least pro forma - to have its echo in all the countries of the European Union and in many of the OECD member states. The reality, however, is somewhat different since the three principles are not self-fulfilling.

Freedom of enterprise and the freedom to lead one's private and working life as one pleases have a corollary, namely, flexible work organisation. At the end of the 18th century and during the 19th century French workers learnt this to their cost: they were forbidden to form themselves into unions by the Le Chapelier law of 1791 abolishing such organisations in the name of

working freedom. In fact, flexible working is only really an advantage when it can be freely chosen and when it allows people the mobility they desire. From this point of view we are never so free in our movements as when strength is on our side. All too often freedom in reality is reduced to mobility for the strongest and wealthiest. Freedom without equality becomes merely the ability of the strongest and most secure to arrogate to themselves the best-remunerated and most status-enhancing social roles at the expense of those who are less well off, weaker, less skilled or simply not so aggressive.

Liberty, therefore, cannot be conceived without **equality**. However, equality is itself all too often understood as the need to treat everyone the same, and to afford them the same theoretical opportunities for advancement, developing their potential and building their future under the best possible conditions. In essence this means regarding everyone as exactly alike, with no grounds for allowing anyone an "unfair advantage". Now while we are undoubtedly all similar in many ways, we are also very different and cannot be considered exactly the same. Those people who share a common destiny in a certain geographical or cultural environment,

be it district, commune, region or country, do not start out under equal conditions. They are not all equipped with the same initial resources in terms of wealth, cultural baggage, physical strength or intellectual agility. A formal equality of treatment of different people that gives all of them the same opportunities in fact only has the effect of preserving and even enhancing the basic differences. Equality, therefore, should be understood not as a static, formal principle, taking starting conditions as a given; instead, it should be conceived as a dynamic principle, encouraging development and progress towards an ideal situation and involving the levelling off of starting conditions.

Hence the vital importance of the third principle - that of **fraternity** - whose basic concept is an active solidarity between members of a social grouping, enabling us to advance beyond the static vision of equality and liberty alone:

- How much of our freedom of action, enterprise etc. are we willing to forgo or restrict in the interests of a more level playing field?
- How far are we prepared to use positive discrimination in the name of fraternity with a view to restoring a genuine, and not just a formal,

balance between people who can be very different.

This is the subject - which at first glance might appear somewhat idealistic and philosophical and which some might even find naive - which was developed at this Agora on training for disabled persons and their trainers.

What in fact is meant when we talk of people with disabilities, (*personnes handicapées, Menschen mit Behinderungen, discapacitados...*)?

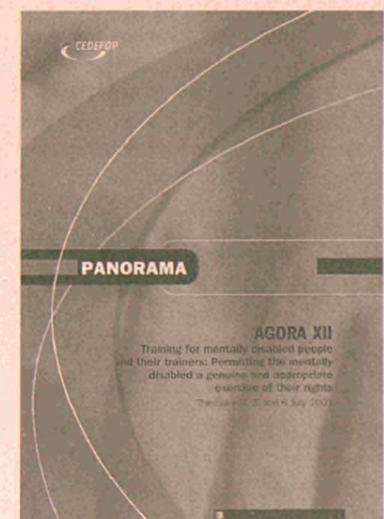
As we see it, a person with a disability or disabilities is someone who, in the never-ending obstacle race of our search for a better life, gets off to a slower start than most other competitors, or carries a heavier load.

Making the school system open to all, compulsory and free of charge, legislating against discrimination in the recruitment of employees, and reserving certain parking spaces, bus seats or even jobs for a given segment of the population does not of itself abolish discrimination and ensure social integration.

All of us are disabled in one way or another, yet not all disabilities are equal in their effect. For some they render the race so much more diffi-

cult that even starting is impossible without outside assistance. This is true of physically disabled people such as paraplegics, quadriplegics

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AGORA XII
Training for mentally disabled people and their trainers: Permitting the mentally disabled a genuine and appropriate exercise of their rights Thessaloniki, 5 and 6 July 2001
Cedefop panorama series 5136
Languages: DE, EL, EN, ES, FR
Cat. No: TI-47-02-438-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop

Creativity is a key skill

"Creativity is the force which drives human beings to shape and cope with their lives." (C. G. Jung).

Every person has creative abilities. Learning from the creativity of our fellow human beings living with disabilities was the purpose of the Cedefop exhibition "Learning for Living".

Every person has creative abilities which need to be recognised and developed. The art therapy approach to creative learning opens up tremendous opportunities, helping people with disabilities develop an independent personality and improving their prospects of social and labour market integration.

mainstream and commercialised works of art exhibited in galleries and museums, but may even surpass the established works in terms of their spontaneity and quality of expression. Some of the paintings are reminiscent of Chagall, while at

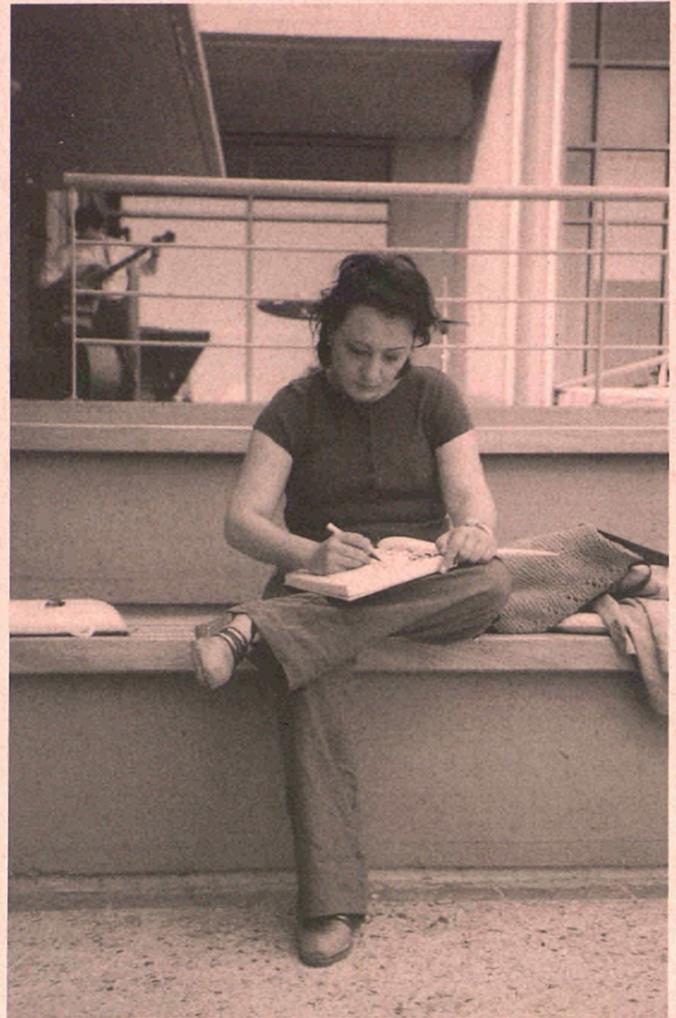
the same time retaining their own singular original and creativity.

Creativity is the key to the full development of human gifts and abilities. It is one of the key skills without which a dynamic knowledge society cannot develop. It provides the basis for a fulfilled and harmonious life, in both private and occupational spheres. For each and every one of us.

Source: Cedefop/NW/RLO

The "Learning for Living" exhibition was opened in the Cedefop gallery to tie in with the Cedefop conference on lifelong learning; "Policy, Practice & Partnership: getting to work on Lifelong Learning", on 2 June 2003. The exhibition features the works of (young) people with disabilities in the care of the Hellenic Society for Disabled Children, the St. Pantelimon Institute of Social Welfare and the Spastic Society of Northern Greece. Dimitra Laiou and Theodore Tsandarmas, who were present at the opening of the exhibition, executed their paintings within the Cultural Communications Unit Workshops of the Psychiatric Hospital of Thessaloniki. Cedefop Director Johan van Rens and Vasiliki Venizelou, President of the Hellenic Society for Disabled Children, invited all the participants to learn from the creativity of fellow humans living with disabilities.

The exhibited works are the result of art therapy, which in some cases produces works of *art brut*. Such works are not just on a par with



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those suffering from a myopathic condition, the deaf or visually impaired, the mentally disabled (Down's syndrome, autism) and those with more than one disability. But while a disability is an objective impediment to one person's movements, another's learning process, concentration, emotional relationships, inter-personal contacts etc., it never entirely prevents action. Every form of disability allows some scope

for the independence of decision and action proper to a human being.

A person with disabilities has strengths and weaknesses, like any other individual. It is high time we stopped seeing only the weaknesses and started looking at the strengths, skills and potential. In our view a disabled person has every right to a place in our society, not only out of ethical considerations that lead us to

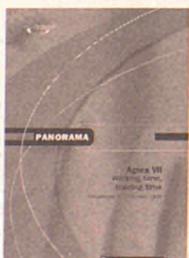
do what we can to integrate any fellow-being - regardless of physical and mental abilities - into what he hope will be a fairer and more inclusive, but for economic and social reasons as well. Though we live in a world in which advances in electronics and technology in general relieve us of many burdensome tasks requiring physical strength, physical shortcomings are all too often used as a pretext for refusing to employ or

train a disabled person. In the post-modern society in which we willy-nilly find ourselves, the limits encountered time and again by this much-revered technology mean that there are still, and will no doubt long be, tasks involving little intellectual content but not amenable to automation, leaving room for the economically useful employment of mentally disabled people. It is therefore **because we need them at**

least as much as they need us that we should do everything possible to provide them with guidance and training.

1) The proceedings of the Agora XII, published in the Panorama series in EN, FR, DE, EL and ES, can be downloaded from the Agora website: http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/download/panorama/5136_en.pdf. Alternatively, the hard copy version may be ordered free of charge at the following Internet address: http://www2.trainingvillage.gr/etv/publication/orderform/form.asp?pub_id=298 or by email from: efg@cedefop.eu.int

Source: Cedefop (Eric Fries Guggenheim)



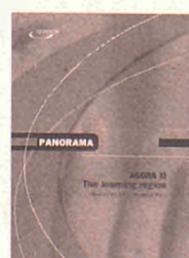
Agora VII
Working time, training time
Thessaloniki, 7 - 8 October 1999
Cedefop Panorama series 5138
Languages: DA, DE, EL, EN, ES, FR
Cat. No: TI-49-620-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop



Agora IX
Alternative education
and training processes
Thessaloniki, 26 - 27 June 2000
Cedefop Panorama series 5137
Languages: DE, EN
Cat. No: TI-47-02-688-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop



AGORA XI
The learning region
Thessaloniki, 15 to 16 March 2001
Cedefop Panorama series 5140
Languages: EN, FR, PT
Cat. No: TI-49-03-894-EN-C

Free of charge on request from Cedefop