

COMMISSION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMUNITIES

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Proposal for a

COUNCIL DECISION

**ESTABLISHING AN ACTION PROGRAMME
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY
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(presented by the Commission)

EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM

INTRODUCTION

1. The Treaty on European Union establishes a general objective of contributing to the development of quality education and training and to the flowering of the cultures of the Member States, based on Articles 126 and 127.
2. As stated in the working paper on guidelines which the Commission adopted on 5 May 1993¹, the essential aim of Community action on education and training must therefore be the fulfilment of European citizens in order to enhance their capacity for initiative and creativity and allow them to take a fully active part in society and the building of Europe. This objective is based on the gradual establishment of an open European area for education and training.
3. It is now widely recognised that the development of human potential is a precondition for attaining the economic, social and quality of life objectives the Community has set. The quality of human resources and the continuous adaptation of manpower skills are a comparative advantage for Europe when it comes to international competition. They are also a key factor in the fight against social exclusion and unemployment. Broadening out access to education and training should contribute to better social cohesion between the Member States and equality of opportunities between

¹ Working paper "Guidelines for Community action in the field of education and training" - COM(93) 183 final.

people. All of which contributes to building up a European culture which is forward and outward looking, to putting flesh on the bones of European identity and citizenship, particularly among young people, and is a powerful factor in rallying citizens around the construction of Europe.

4. Education and training have new roles to play in the process of industrial and socio-economic change which Europe has to contend with. This will mean deep-seated changes in the education and training systems of the Member States. This ever greater pace and scale of change will bring forth the need for individuals and workers to be able to gain access to lifelong education and training to enable them to be part of society and remain competitive within the economy. These systems will therefore have to come up with fresh answers which are more flexible and more diversified to cater for this need.
5. In the light of the experience gained to date, the Community's future policy on vocational training must consolidate and build on the solid achievements of the cooperation programmes in the fields of education and vocational training undertaken in recent years if it is to respond to the new challenges facing it and its Member States:
 - a return to balanced growth and effective action on unemployment presuppose putting together a workforce which is better trained and better educated;
 - it is crucial to improve the capacity to keep abreast of changing job content and qualification requirements, particularly through interfaces and cooperation between the different players concerned;
 - better access to continuing training and proper linkage with broad-based initial training are essential in promoting the updating of workers' skills, sustaining the competitiveness of firms - particularly SMEs - and facilitating the organising of work in ways which provide opportunities for skill enhancement;
 - the links between research and training have grown substantially and are a key factor in competitiveness and effective investment; and the transfer of technological innovation - particularly to SMEs - is of strategic importance;
 - cooperation between the education and business worlds must be enhanced, particularly at university level, in the interests of quality education and training;
 - the European dimension of education and training must be developed in order to give young people particularly, but also all European citizens, a sense of fitting into the political perspective opened up by the European Union, and to facilitate mobility so that they can take advantage of the opportunities opened up to them by the single market.

6. On the basis of Article 127 of the Treaty, the Commission is accordingly putting before the Council a proposal for a decision to establish an action programme to develop the European Community's vocational training policy. The purpose of this programme is to secure the pursual of Community action in the field of vocational training, the general principles of which were laid down by the Decision of 2 April 1963 and which is now implemented, through four action programmes: PETRA, FORCE, EUROTECNET AND COMETT², to enable it to rise to the challenges of the 1990s and to ensure that it develops within the new legal framework established by the Treaty on European Union.

7. This proposal is set in the general context established by the White Paper on Competitiveness, Growth and Employment which has just been examined by the European Council on 10 and 11 December 1993.

The courses of action mapped out in the White Paper, and in particular action to promote employment, must be underpinned by increased cooperation between the Member States to create a real European area for occupational qualifications which will provide a decisive push towards the upgrading and evolution of skills and qualifications and a new dynamic in employment systems. The action taken and the clear objectives of the Community's vocational training policy can have an important catalytic effect and achieve significant leverage at a time when Member States and firms, in a tight budgetary environment, could be tempted to curtail their investment in human resources in favour of shorter-term considerations, which would be at variance with the objectives laid down in the White Paper.

²See the following texts:

- Council Decision 63/266/EEC of 2 April 1963 laying down general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy (Official Journal, English Special Edition, 1963-1964, p.25);
- Council Decision 91/387/EEC of 22 July 1991 amending Decision 87/569/EEC concerning an action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life (PETRA) (OJ L 214 of 2.8.1991, p. 69);
- Council Decision 90/267/EEC of 29 May 1990 establishing an action programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the EC (FORCE) (OJ L 156 of 21.6.1990, p. 1);
- Council Decision 89/657/EEC of 18 December 1989 establishing an action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change in the EC (EUROTECNET) (OJ L 393 of 30.12.1989, p. 29);
- Council Decision 89/27/EEC of 16 December 1988 adopting the second phase of the programme on cooperation between universities and industry regarding training in the field of technology (COMETT II) (OJ L 13 of 17.1.1989, p. 28).

I WHAT COMMUNITY ACTION HAS ACHIEVED TO DATE

Common political concerns

8. The Commission's intention when it published its memorandum on vocational training in the EC in the 1990s³ was to open the broadest debate possible among all the players involved on the importance and implications of vocational training policies in the Member States individually and at the Community level.
9. The criticisms which emerged from this debate that the approach had been overly based on economic concerns should provide a platform for opening up the perspective and giving greater consideration to societal factors. Arguments and proposals for actions related to competitiveness and economic growth should be linked with those on stemming the rising tide of unemployment and social exclusion. Even with regard to skill and job content, the methodological, relational or social aspects prompt a reassessment of the objectives and the methods of vocational training and their relationship with possible changes in the configurations of work organisation. The interfaces to be established between education and training will play a capital role in this context.
10. The discussions prompted by the memorandum have also brought out the major trends which stand as pointers for defining the objectives of future Community action. These trends do not reflect an identity of factors but rather questions to which the Member States have to face jointly⁴:

a - reiteration of the fundamental importance of basic education and initial training as a precondition for integration into the labour market and for further vocational advancement. The plight of those who have failed at school and the economic and social marginalisation originating in the shortcomings of initial training, along with the need to drastically reduce functional illiteracy, are structural factors and account for a substantial share of public intervention in all the Member States to promote integration.

³ Commission Memorandum on Vocational Training in the European Community in the 1990s - COM(91) 397 final of 12 December 1991

⁴ Summary report on responses to the memorandum on vocational training - TFRH - 1993

b - the need for training facilities to take on board the deep-seated changes which are taking place in skills and qualifications. Member States are hard pressed by the changes needed in their training systems in order to adapt training to the rapid and possibly increasingly radical changes taking place in job content. There will have to be growing emphasis on interpersonal, methodological and social skills and on individual potential for coping with ongoing change, taking charge of one's own development (learning to learn), and facilitating transferability of qualifications, *inter alia* within the European area.

c - increasing the capacity to anticipate. The current economic uncertainty and the variable effects of factors which determine the definition of types of training (e.g. technological innovation) are a source of growing concern for all the players concerned. However, the debate is wide open as to which methods and instruments will really develop the capacity for anticipation which calls for increased cooperation at Community level.

d - the increased role of firms and sandwich training. Strengthening the links between training and industry is a constant and the development of sandwich training is the subject of an agreement by the two sides of industry.

e - customising training supply. The individual-centred approach to problems in terms of analysing requirements, defining learning programmes and syllabuses and selecting the type and method of training which is the most appropriate, seems to be gaining ground and elicits the question as to financial arrangements.

f - the increasing recognition of the regional element. In a context of widely differing organisational patterns of training systems, the local means of matching up supply and demand for training play an increasingly important role.

g - recognition of the role of the social players. It is a sign of the times that there is increasingly widespread recognition of the plurality of responsibilities of the players concerned and the need for them to cooperate more in establishing regulations.

General principles and guidelines

11. The Council Decision of 2 April 1963 laying down general principles for a common vocational training policy pursuant to Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome is a non-binding reference text offering common guidelines towards which the policies and systems of the Member States can converge.

12. The Council decisions at the basis of the current programmes establish, for each field of action common frameworks of objectives or guidelines decided by the Council and taken by the Member States as objectives to be attained to their own policies:

- **for initial training of young people**, the objective is to secure broad-based and recognised qualifications for all young people by enabling them to have one or, if possible, two years of vocational training after compulsory schooling⁵.
- **as regards continuing training**, the objective is to encourage a bigger and more effective investment input into continuing vocational training of employees and a better return, particularly by developing partnerships designed to make public authorities, firms - particularly SMEs - the social partners and individual workers more aware of the benefits deriving from investment in continuing vocational training⁶.
- **as regards training for the transfer of technological innovation**, the objective is to use properly structured cooperation between universities and industry to encourage the transfer of the results of R&D to firms likely to be able to create high added-value jobs with a strong technological content, *inter alia* by greater involvement of higher education in continuing training⁷.

13. Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union sets out five specific objectives for vocational training, reflecting issues of capital importance for the Community, and giving it specific responsibility in this connection to:

- **facilitate adaptation to industrial changes, in particular through vocational training and retrainings;**
- **improve initial and continuing vocational training in order to facilitate vocational integration and reintegration into the labour market;**
- **facilitate access to vocational training and encourage mobility of instructors and trainees and particularly young people;**
- **stimulate cooperation on training between educational or training establishments and firms;**
- **develop exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States.**

⁵ see Decision 91/387/EEC of 22 July 1993, Art. 1 and Decision 87/569/EEC, Art. 2

⁶ See Decision 90/267/EEC of 29 May 1990, Article 5

⁷ See Decision 89/27/EEC of 16 December 1988, Article 3(1)

Significant operational achievements

14. The current action programmes are not all at the same stage of implementation; they were launched at different dates and, more to the point, were allocated different levels of financing. These two factors were duly taken into account by the Commission in a preliminary horizontal assessment of the programmes and the added value they represent⁸. Major achievements can be identified with a view to the new proposal. It builds on them as regards networks which can be mobilised, the results of cooperation partnerships, exchanges, understanding and knowledge of systems and patterns of cooperation between the Commission and the Member States:

– various types of transnational exchange and cooperation networks have been set up in the wake of the stimulus provided by the action programmes. They provide continuity in cooperation and make it possible to capitalise on the results.

– the network of PETRA national coordination units which is responsible for the implementation and operational running of the programme in the Member States has become a back-up tool for transnational cooperation and innovation in the context of initial training and, more generally speaking, the social and vocational integration of young people. Downstream, the network of trans-European training partnerships for young people, or the network of national centres for vocational guidance, provide a preliminary Community linkup which is extremely useful in promoting further cooperation.

– Thanks to the COMETT programme 205 University-Enterprise Training Partnerships (UETP) have been set up. These UETPs are interfaces, as it were, between higher education and industry. Certain UETPs have a regional basis, others a sectoral basis, being specialised in one technological sector in particular. They cooperate closely and provide very useful instruments for identifying the best available skills in Europe in a given context of training requirements for the transfer of technological innovation. Through the UETPs, COMETT has helped to initiate a process which was hitherto virtually non-existent: a European university-enterprise dialogue in the field of education and training, thus permitting the tailoring of training more closely to actual supply and requirements.

– The preparation, fine tuning, organisation and development of transnational pilot projects have now yielded significant results in terms of experience.

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Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee: EC education and training programmes 1986-1992. Results and achievements: an overview. COM(93) 151 final.

- Under PETRA, over 700 projects, 14 000 teachers or trainers and 85 000 young people have taken part in the network's activities since 1988 to develop and try out new and innovative training products.

- The 430 FORCE projects are targeted at the training and qualifications requirements of the firms which make up the majority of the 3 500 partners in these projects. They pursue three lines of action to adapt to industrial change through training: training as a means of preventing unemployment by strengthening and diversifying employee skills, training as a means of developing new configurations of work organisation which are needed for the survival or growth of firms, and training as a means of development, *inter alia* through adaptation to new technologies.

- EUROTECNET has boosted the development of flexible new solutions to the problems of training in order to disseminate them through the project network: conceptual developments on current and future trends as regards the development of technologies (capacity for self-teaching, the "learning organisation" of work, key qualifications/skills), case studies to illustrate these conceptual models, study analyses of training requirements based on an inter-sectoral approach and the development of tools and instruments to disseminate results.

- The 7 000 training courses organised with COMETT II support in the most diverse technology fields should reach a public of over 200 000 people, 140 000 of whom will come from industry. The 3000 training products developed or under development should reach over 500 000 people in Europe. The courses organised under COMETT II have drawn a wider audience than COMETT I, particularly among women. Several projects have illustrated the impact of the use of new training materials, notably multimedia, as compared with the traditional methods.

- The vocational training action programmes are not mobility programmes as such. Exchanges are aimed at strategic populations and provide a back-up or even a part of the training process itself.

- 20 000 young people have benefitted from training placement or a work experience in another Member State in 1992 and 1993 under PETRA. These placements bring a real Community dimension into the training young people receive through the national systems.

- The FORCE programme encourages the mobility of trainers and, more generally speaking, people responsible for human resources and training in firms, and social partners who have responsibilities in the field of continuing vocational training: 400 human resources directors, 430 trainers, 130 staff representatives and 40 members of trade unions were mobile in 1991 and 1992 through exchange programmes designed to pass on innovations rapidly, to establish solid partnerships and to organise continuing training actions.

- The 28 000 placements of students supported under COMETT represent only a small part of actual demand (which is approximately five times higher). These training periods are greatly sought after because they provide young people with an effective introduction to working life and considerably enhance their chances of finding a job. These training periods have also helped to strengthen cooperation between universities and industry. The 1000 exchanges of staff between universities and European firms have also helped to improve technology transfer between the world of academia and that of industry, *inter alia* through the principle of "tacit knowledge", i.e. the knowledge acquired through experience.

- In order to cope with the diversity of initial and continuing training systems and understand how they work, a corpus of comparable data is essential to improve exchanges of information and experience between the Member States.

- FORCE has compiled synoptic tables on the information available on in-company continuing training. A statistical survey conducted in conjunction with Eurostat is now in progress and will for the first time provide information which is comparable at the Community level on training actions and costs in European firms, and an objective idea of the quantity and quality of training which firms provide for their Employees.

- Three sectoral surveys (the retail trade, the agri-food industry and car repairs) have made it possible to gauge the situation as regards training practices which are significant in those sectors at the European level. A fourth sector (road transport) is currently being launched. All these surveys are a start to European sectoral networks (research institutes, firms, social partners) which involve the players in the twelve Member States.

- The analysis of collective bargaining practice has made it possible to take stock of joint actions, agreements and collective consultation by the two sides of industry on continuing training. The social partners can thus be involved more closely as players in the vocational training of employees throughout the Community.

Linkage with national actions

15. Assessing the linkage with, and impact of, Community action on national action has become a question which is central to this first phase of the programmes. In addition to general considerations to do with subsidiarity, this linkage could be improved by putting greater emphasis on the procedures and structures set up. This trend could be gradual:

- The programme committees and the advisory committee have provided forums for discussing the impact of Community actions and their contribution to the conduct and direction of national policies. In certain programmes a number of Member States have, significantly, taken it upon

themselves to pursue these discussions in national forums, and the conferences organised at the time the memorandum on vocational training was debated have increased the interest of the different players concerned in these aspects.

- The preparation of the national reports on the implementation of the programmes and the development of implementing machinery is the second instrument to have thus emerged. These procedures do raise methodological and logistic problems but they are invaluable in developing reference instruments for assessing underlying changes and trends in the national systems and in attuning Community actions to support them accordingly;

- "The bilateral meetings" organised for planning and selecting projects between the Commission and national representatives (ministries, national technical assistance bureaux, the two sides of industry) also provide an ideal forum for understanding emerging trends and the degree of concordance between transnational projects and national priorities.

II A NEW CONTEXT

The competences established by the Treaty

16. In a context of shared responsibility between the Community and the Member States, Article 127 of the Treaty brings radical changes in relation to the legal situation defined in Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome:
- the text stipulates that the Community is responsible for implementing a vocational training policy which supports and complements the policies of the Member States, while the Community's role hitherto was to establish the general principles for a common vocational training policy;
 - the decision-making system has been changed, for henceforth the Council will decide in this context on the basis of a qualified majority, and no longer by simple majority, after a cooperation procedure with the European Parliament;
 - the text stipulates explicitly that Community action excludes harmonisation of legal and statutory provisions in the Member States and confirms their responsibility for the content of programmes and the organisation of their systems. The diversity of the systems and the responsibility of the Member States for the organisation and content of training are thus recognised as the mainstays of Community policy which must permit increased cooperation and convergence of action freely taken by the different players concerned.
17. The Treaty is based on acknowledgement of the fact that the main role in the financing and implementation of vocational training is a matter for the public authorities in the Member States and the two sides of industry. The Community's role is to provide impetus and innovation. Community action must encourage voluntary convergence and enhance the effects of quality and the capacity for innovation on the systems. The Community can, using a common framework of objectives, provide support for the development of transnational actions to promote the coherent development of training policies in the Community.

The link with other policies

18. The analysis of the challenges of the 1990s which the Commission carried out in its memorandum has illustrated the complexity and complementarity of the factors at work. The vocational training policy must therefore be linked with other levels of Community action when it is implemented.
19. Vocational training must be seen in conjunction with the labour market policy (Article 123), and particularly adaptation to industrial changes - an objective which is common to Articles 123 and 127, cooperation on

education (Article 126), action on the competitiveness of industry (Article 130), research and technological development policy (Article 130h) and freedom of movement (Article 57). It must help to achieve combined action and coherence between measures which depend on the policies concerned, for training must be linked with the objectives of these different contexts if it is to be effective.

20. There is a special need for operational synergy with the Structural Funds, including Community initiatives, and also with the socio-economic chapter of the 4th framework programme for research and technological development.

Complementarity between education and training

21. The new elements to do with vocational training policy and the introduction of a specific article on education (Article 126) for the first time call for an integrated approach to education and training at the Community level, even if the levels of competence and the procedures remain different. The link between these two fields is as important as the definition of the specific measures for each of them; it must make it possible to transcend the previous debates on the border between education and training and to develop the new political concept of "lifelong learning" as a prospect for the Community in conjunction with the construction of a European citizenship.
22. This complementarity of the two contexts must be reinforced and be given tangible expression in the arrangements and actions proposed. Operationally speaking, Community-backed actions must strengthen cross-fertilisation of education and training arrangements through the approaches of the institutions concerned. Coordinated actions could be pursued for this purpose on themes of common interest to both fields, e.g. language training, open and distance learning, career guidance, lifelong learning and the monitoring of occupations and skills.
23. The universities are players in the development of continuing training and main players for the transfer of technological innovations, and for the objective of quality in vocational training and cooperation with the business community. Complementarity must be pursued at other levels in the education systems, whether we are talking about occupational and social integration of young people or the continuing training of adults.
24. As regards vocational guidance, the programme must serve as a vehicle for introducing a European dimension. It will cover all areas of vocational training and permit significant broadening of the Community actions pursued so far in this field. This action is presently based essentially on the PETRA programme which concerns young people and sets an age limit of 27 on participants. The new programme will make it possible to extend this action to all target groups: young people and adults, employees and

job-seekers. It will then be possible to develop career guidance measures to accompany individuals throughout their occupational lives and not only during the first phase, and to help them to choose the most appropriate training channels in the light of labour market requirements and their own occupational progress, and of the emergence of a European training market.

25. By implementing this programme the Community will also help to encourage open and distance learning (ODL), as advocated in the Commission Memorandum of December 1991, the conclusions of the Ministers of Education meeting within the Council in June and December 1992, and the Resolution adopted by the European Parliament in July 1993. This encouragement will focus on the specific advantages distance learning brings in the pursuit of the objectives laid down in the Treaty, with particular emphasis on the flexibility it gives training, its capacity to reach many users - especially those who have problems of access to vocational training -, the enhancement it brings by extending and blending in with traditional methods, the guarantee of quality it offers, and the establishment of training networks enabling citizens to avail themselves of the opportunities it offers in terms of customised training. Which is why all actions may include measures to encourage and promote the use of ODL as a method which is particularly suited to the programme's objective of disseminating its results as widely as possible.
26. The problem of anticipating needs also warrants specific attention and a transversal approach within the programme. Identifying changes in skills and occupations is today a necessity and the single market is the reason why this requirement is a reality not only within each country but at European level as well. Implementation of the programme will accordingly be made easier by work on the evolution of occupations and occupational qualifications in the Community in conjunction with CEDEFOP in order to ensure a better knowledge and better circulation of information on changing occupations. One of the tasks will also be to identify needs, to build up a system of technology monitoring to warn of changes under way in job content and their consequences for training, and to facilitate the transfer of forecasting methods and know-how between the Member States and the different players concerned.

Subsidiarity

27. The subsidiarity issue broached by the memorandum is dealt with firstly in Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union, which rules out the harmonisation of national systems, recognises that the Member States themselves are fully responsible for the organisation and content of training, and gives the Community the responsibility for implementing a vocational training policy which supports and supplements action by the Member States. Implementation of these provisions must provide better linkage between the Community's innovatory and catalytic action and the

national systems, particularly by bringing about a greater degree of linkage between Community actions and the fundamental elements and determining factors of change in the Member States' systems.

28. Moreover, Community action must accordingly be centred on the development of transnational cooperation at all relevant levels in order to bring visible added value to action undertaken by the Member States and by the players involved in the training market. The added value of Community action must be consolidated and strengthened to keep step with the open European area for vocational training and qualifications which will gradually emerge from the completion and operation of the single market. The measures proposed support and supplement actions pursued by and in the Member States and enable them to use the input from transnational operations in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of their systems and arrangements.
29. Future actions must demonstrate a "positive" linkage between the complementary action of the Community and national training policies. Furthermore, at the appropriate levels in the field of training due account must be taken of the links between the public authorities' mechanisms of intervention and the contribution of the two sides of industry.

30. This approach makes it possible to optimise the effectiveness of the actions and policies implemented, including those at Community level. The discussions on the Council Recommendation on access to continuing training⁹ have shown that by taking account of the responsibilities which the two sides of industry can assume and, more broadly speaking, of vocational training action by the social players (firms, training organisations) both at Community and national levels, Community action can achieve a broader, more realistic and more effective impact, improving complementarity and achieving synergy between public action and collective bargaining.

The institutional process

31. The decision-making procedure as regards the instruments to be implemented will be that stipulated in Article 189 C of the Treaty. This gives the European Parliament a bigger say in the adoption of texts under the procedure for cooperation between the Council and European Parliament for proposals based on Article 127.
32. The Economic and Social Committee must be consulted on proposals on vocational training and in most cases it will also be useful to obtain the opinion of the new Committee of the Regions in view of the responsibilities of local authorities in matters concerning vocational training.
33. The Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT), a tripartite statutory committee, could fulfil a dual function of monitoring the coherence of the overall Community policy on vocational training, in view of the broad spectrum of action it entails, and of monitoring subsidiarity, *inter alia* in order to improve the linkage between Community policy and national action. The Commission will therefore regularly inform the ACVT of developments in the programme, particularly regarding:
- (a) general policy guidelines in the field of vocational training
 - (b) general monitoring of the common framework of objectives
 - (c) the general report on vocational training and
 - (d) the general assessment of the programme
34. The creation of a Social Dialogue Committee should make it possible to pursue and extend the very profitable work carried out by the two sides of industry within the education-training group which started up in 1989 and considerably improve the consistency of Community action with the process of agreements between the two sides of industry at European level, in line with their agreement of 31.10.1991.

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Council Recommendation on access to continuing training. 93/404/CEE of 30 June 1993.

III

PRESENTATION OF THE PROPOSAL

35. On the basis of experience in implementing the existing Community vocational training programmes (COMETT, PETRA, FORCE, EUROTECNET) and of other actions and pilot projects in the same area, the main aim of the programme is to ensure the implementation of a vocational training policy which will support and supplement the action of the Member States, and to foster cooperation between Member States so that an open European area for vocational training and qualifications can be gradually achieved. To this end, the programme will aim to:
- contribute to the improvement of the effectiveness and quality of systems;
 - promote quality in methods and products;
 - support innovation in vocational training;
 - use vocational training as a vehicle for promoting and disseminating technological innovation;
 - develop the European dimension throughout all levels of training;
 - encourage the intellectual mobility of knowledge, in particular through distance learning.
36. The draft proposal for a Council Decision respects the principle of subsidiarity and includes two complementary parts:
- a common framework of objectives to promote the coherent development of vocational training in the Community.
 - a set of Community measures to support and supplement action taken by and in the Member States.
37. The common framework of objectives is designed to promote greater cooperation between the Member States so that a Community vocational training policy can gradually be introduced and so that coherent development of vocational training in the Community can be ensured. The Member States will, on their own initiative, refer to this common framework of objectives in implementing their vocational training policies. The guidelines of the COMETT, PETRA, FORCE and EUROTECNET programmes are incorporated into the common framework of objectives set out in the proposal.
38. With regard to the Community measures, the Commission's proposal is intended to simplify the multiplicity of current actions, to ensure better transparency and better targeting of Community action, and to improve its impact.

The programme concerns all the players in the field of vocational training, be it public authorities, private training bodies, firms or social partners. Its aim is to enable these players, whether in terms of policy orientation, definition of needs or design of measures, to improve their methods and practice on the basis of the results of transnational cooperation.

Three strands of action, each with its specific objectives, are foreseen for the implementation of the programme's general objectives, leading to the gradual emergence of an open area for training and qualifications in the Community:

Strand 1: measures to sustain the quality of Member States' systems, arrangements and policies;

Strand 2: measures to support innovative capacity in actions on the training market;

Strand 3: network and accompanying measures - promotion of the European dimension.

39. The first strand is intended to provide Community support for projects which have a direct impact on national vocational training systems and arrangements. If the quality of the services dispensed by these systems is to be improved, there must be greater efficiency of investment and public expenditure committed. Experience of the previous programmes, and in particular PETRA for initial training systems, has shown that transnational cooperation can help national systems to evolve towards greater efficiency. In the context of a tight squeeze on national public budgets, the economies of scale and the transfer of innovation made possible through Community action have an increasingly important role to play.

On themes such as qualifications or vocational guidance, which should be regarded as central to this first strand, the transnational cooperation developed by the programme makes it possible to introduce a real European dimension which is essential from the point of view of free movement and the mobility of individuals for the purposes of training and employment.

40. The second strand caters for the providers of training activities or products on the market. All categories of players are concerned: training bodies, firms, social partners, universities:

Projects will aim on the one hand to promote and develop innovation in vocational training activities so as to increase their effectiveness and, on the other hand, to promote and facilitate the transfer of technological innovations.

41. The third strand is aimed at developing the European dimension in vocational training by means of Community support for the rationalisation and coordination of the national bodies and operational structures which underpin the construction of transnational pilot projects and placements in another Member State; this will make it possible to improve and extend the European network for the promotion of transnational cooperation, ensure that the programme is transparent and increase its induced effects by enhancing the dissemination of products and the results of pilot projects to other operators, in particular through the activities of the European network.

This third strand also incorporates the aspects of language audit and transnational language projects for firms and socio-economic circles, corresponding to the old Action III of the LINGUA Programme.

42. Special attention will go to balancing resources and disseminating results between the two strands of the programme. It would indeed be particularly counter-productive for there to be a rigid barrier between strands I and II or for a marked imbalance to emerge in the number of projects backed and therefore of practitioner interest. Whatever the organisation of national systems, there is reason to believe that dynamism and innovation depend on complementarity between the two pillars, i.e. public systems and the market. Community action must therefore endeavour to encourage this overall dynamism and lower the barriers which have emerged on occasion and restricted the scope of transnational cooperation.

43. The measures to be supported under the vocational training programme deal essentially with the preparation of training activities, the development of innovative methods and products and the dissemination of results. The programme only marginally aims to support the implementation of training activities as such. As a result, expenditure eligible for Community support mainly relates to the cost of design and preparation of measures and not the cost of providing training (payment of trainers or beneficiaries, training expenses). This aspect increases the complementarity between the action programme and financing from the Structural Funds, including the Community Initiatives which are mainly centred on costs linked to the implementation of training activities logically following the preparation and design stages.

44. The Community's additional specific actions on vocational training will be all the more effective insofar as increased transparency, easier access and greater dissemination of results can be secured between the different vocational training systems, organisations and practitioners in the Member States and action taken by the Community. It is up to the Member States within the proper exercise of their responsibilities to ensure that this linkage is achieved by taking the necessary rationalisation and coordination measures in the light of the experience of the national promotional bodies and operational structures already set up within the framework of

Community vocational training programmes. At operational level and on the ground, it will also be necessary to ensure active complementarity between the structures of the network and operators covered by the programme and those responsible for the implementation of the Structural Funds.

45. The European vocational training network made up of the national bodies, the operational support structures for projects and operators themselves is a key element of the added value of Community action. By going beyond support for innovative but isolated operations, the dynamic resulting from the networking of activities and partnerships should be a leading criterion for Community support, taking due account of the responsibility of Member States for the organisation and coordination of operational structures and authorities. The impact of the transnational nature of operations is reinforced by the fact that innovative action and partnerships are integrated in a European network which provides fruitful opportunities for dissemination, visibility and impact.
46. The Commission will be assisted for the implementation of this vocational training programme by a programme committee comprising two representatives chosen by each Member State and six representatives each from two sides of industry as observers. This committee is an advisory committee and will assist the Commission as regards:
- (i) priorities for Community action and the resulting annual work programme;
 - (ii) the financial assistance to be provided by the Community for the different measures (amount, duration and beneficiaries);
 - (iii) the breakdown between the different actions;
 - (iv) the arrangements for selection, assessment methods and arrangements for dissemination and transfer of results.
47. In partnership with the Member States, the Commission will support operational complementarity between action under the programme and the Structural Funds, including the Community initiatives in the field of human resources in areas such as dissemination of relevant comparative information, dissemination of methodologies, instruments, products and experience, conduct of transnational training actions, etc. The Commission will also support operational synergy with the fourth framework programme for research and technological development particularly in order to promote the transfer of technological innovation and to enhance the capacity of training and qualification systems to take on board the results of R&D, particularly with a view to :
- promoting comparative research on vocational training systems and arrangements;
 - encouraging the transfer of technological innovation through high-quality vocational training;

- enhancing the capacity of training and qualification systems to respond to research findings;
- developing innovation in open and distance learning and training approaches.

48. In order to further the social dialogue between the social partners at the Community level, the Commission will establish in partnership with them appropriate operational links with the programme in order to enable them to make better use in their dialogue of the outcome of the different measures.
49. An overall information drive on the actions and results of the programme will be carried out in partnership between the Commission and the Member States in order to meet the need for greater transparency and impact of Community action. To this end also, the Member States will at the halfway stage and at the close of the programme forward a report on the activities undertaken under the programme. The social partners, in accordance with national practice, will be fully associated in the activities of monitoring, preparation of reports and assessment of the programme. The Commission will on this basis submit to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the Economic and Social Committee an interim report by 31 December 1997 and a final report by 30 June 2000.
50. In accordance with the agreement on the European Economic area (and its additional protocol, and in particular Protocol 31) concluded between the European Communities and their Member States and the countries of EFTA, Community initiatives, activities, cooperation and programmes in the field of vocational training will be open from 1 January 1995 to participation by EFTA countries which accede to the EEA.
51. The Commission will reinforce its cooperation with the OECD, the Council of Europe, the ILO and UNESCO, in particular within the framework of the development of the exchange of information and experience on issues common to the Member States' training systems.
52. To assist it in the implementation of the programme, the Commission will secure the support of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training under the conditions laid down in the Regulation¹⁰ establishing that Centre, and that of the European Training Foundation¹¹ so as gradually to develop appropriate cooperation with the countries of central and eastern Europe.

¹⁰ Council Regulation (EEC) N° 337/75 of 10 February 1975 establishing a European centre for the development of vocational training (OJ N° L39, 13 February 1975)

¹¹ Council Regulation (EEC) N° 1360/90 of 7 May 1990 establishing a European Training Foundation (OJ N° L131, 23 May 1990)

Conclusions

53. **Community action in the field of vocational training through programmes due to end at the close of 1994 has already borne fruit in terms of partnerships, pilot projects, exchange of experience and networking. These encouraging results have illustrated the worthwhile nature and added value of broader and more systematic cooperation. The rationalisation advocated by the Commission in its proposal in terms of both objectives and actions should significantly increase the impact and understanding of Community action in this field and its complementarity with other Community action. This approach is all the more important as vocational training must play a greater part in giving a fillip to European competitiveness and in reversing the rising tide of unemployment. The boost to the quality of systems and to the capacity for innovation which Community action will provide must be the driving force in a context dominated by severe budgetary constraints in the Member States.**

LINKS BETWEEN CURRENT PETRA, FORCE, IRIS, EUROTECNET AND COMETT AND

THE THREE STRANDS OF THE NEW VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMME

	PETRA	FORCE	IRIS	EUROTECNET	COMETT
STRAND I					
* Design projects	Joint modules		Projects	Projects	
* Multiplier effect projects					
* Placements for young people undergoing initial training	Placements				
* Placements for young workers	Placements				
* Exchanges for decision-makers	Study visits	Study visits	Study visits	Study visits	
* Surveys, analyses, exchange of comparable data	Studies-Research Strands IVT Reports	Stat. Survey Cont. Training (CVTS) CVT Reports			
Strand II					
* "Innovation" design projects		Pilot projects			Pilot projects
* "Transfer of innovation" design projects					Pilot projects
* Multiplier effect projects		Pilot projects			Continuing training course
* Placements in firms for young people undergoing initial training					Placements
* Placements in firms for young university graduates					Placements
* Exchanges for decision-makers		Exchanges			
* Surveys, analyses, exchange of comparable data		Sect. surveys Ana. contract. policy	Studies	Applied research	
STRAND III					
* National network	NCU	NCU	NADU	NADU	Info. Centre
* Regional or sectoral network					Regional or sectoral UETPs

Proposal for a
COUNCIL DECISION

**ESTABLISHING AN ACTION PROGRAMME
FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF A EUROPEAN COMMUNITY
VOCATIONAL TRAINING POLICY
LEONARDO DA VINCI**

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty establishing the European Community, and in particular Article 127 thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the Commission¹,

In cooperation with the European Parliament²,

Having regard to the opinion of the Economic and Social Committee³,

1. Whereas the Treaty gives the Community the responsibility of implementing a vocational training policy which supports and supplements the action of the Member States;
2. Whereas this policy needs to be implemented while fully respecting the responsibility of the Member States for the content and organisation of vocational training, and excludes any harmonisation of the laws and regulations of the Member States;
3. Whereas the Council, in its Decision 63/266/EEC, adopted the general principles for implementing a common vocational training policy, and application of those general principles is the responsibility of the Member States and the competent institutions of the Community⁴;

¹ OJ

² OJ

³ OJ

⁴ OJ, English Special Edition 1963-1964, p. 25.

4. Whereas the Council, by Decisions 86/365/EEC⁵ and 89/27/EEC⁶, adopted the two phases of the COMETT programme designed to strengthen cooperation between universities and industry regarding training in the field of technology;
5. Whereas the Council, by its Decision 89/657/EEC⁷, adopted the EUROTECNET action programme to promote innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change in the European Community;
6. Whereas the Council, by its Decision 90/267/EEC⁸, adopted the FORCE action programme for the development of continuing vocational training in the European Community;
7. Whereas the Council, by its Decision 87/569/EEC⁹ amended by its Decision 91/387/EEC¹⁰, adopted and then amended the PETRA action programme for the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life;
8. Whereas, according to the evaluation reports covering the Community action programmes COMETT, EUROTECNET, FORCE and PETRA, as reviewed in the Report from the Commission to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee¹¹, Community cooperation on vocational training injects real added value into the actions conducted in and by Member States;
9. Whereas the Commission in its recommendation 87/567/EEC¹² on vocational training for women encouraged Member States to strengthen measures to promote the equality of opportunities, and in the Third Medium Term Action Programme (1991-1994) on equal opportunities for men and women¹³ the Commission undertook to pursue exchanges of experience and know-how through the IRIS network and develop this network to better identify the training needs of women, promote innovative training and develop a European methodology on the subject;
10. Whereas the Council, in its resolution of 11 June 1993¹⁴, noted the need to improve the quality of vocational training in the Member States in order to encourage continuing opportunities for individuals to develop their knowledge and skills and thus contribute to increased economic and social cohesion as well as to the competitiveness of the European economy;

⁵ OJ No L 222 of 8.8.1986, p. 17.

⁶ OJ No L 13 of 17.1.1989, p. 28.

⁷ OJ No L 393 of 30.12.1989, p. 29.

⁸ OJ No L 156 of 21.6.1990, p. 1.

⁹ OJ N° L346 of 10.12.1987, p. 31.

¹⁰ OJ No L 214 of 2.8.1991, p. 69.

¹¹ COM(93) 151 final of 5.5.1993.

¹² OJ No L 342 of 4.12.1987, p. 35

¹³ COM(90) 449 final of 6.11.1990, confirmed by Council Resolution of 21.5.1991 (91/C 142/01) OJ No C 142/01 31.5.1991, p.1.

¹⁴ OJ N° C186 of 08.07.1993, p. 3.

11. Whereas the Council, in its recommendation of 30 June 1993 on access to continuing vocational training¹⁵, recommended that Member States adjust their vocational training policies to ensuring that every worker of the Community be able to have access to continuing vocational training without any form of discrimination and to benefit therefrom throughout his or her working life.
12. Whereas the Commission, in its working paper on the guidelines for Community action in the field of education and training¹⁶, stated that its aim was to rationalise and streamline the action programmes in the vocational training field into a single programme, whilst reinforcing those aspects which appear to be most promising in terms of the European added value and stimulus they can offer;
13. Whereas the added value of Community action must be consolidated and reinforced in the course of the progressive establishment of an open area for training and vocational qualifications which is linked with the creation and operation of the Single Market;
14. Whereas the synthesis of Member States' contributions arising from the Memorandum on vocational training in the 1990s¹⁷ highlighted the major trends jointly faced by the Member States in the said open area for training and vocational qualifications;
15. Whereas the European Council of 10 and 11 December 1993 concluded that because of the institutional, legislative and contractual peculiarities of each Member State, the Community's action must focus on defining objectives, while leaving Member States free to choose the means appropriate to their situation within a general framework defined in common, and that in order to strengthen the capacity of the European economy, Member States should draw on suggestions from the Commission White Paper on the medium term strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment;
16. Whereas, in order to promote a coherent development of vocational training, it is necessary to establish a common framework of objectives which will serve as a reference for Member States' policies;
17. Whereas, in order to raise the effectiveness of Community action, different types of measures need to be organised within three principal strands, the first aimed at providing support for the quality of Member States' systems, arrangements and policies, the second at supporting innovation in actions on the training market and the third at the gradual implementation of a network to support the European dimension in vocational training;

¹⁵ OJ N° L181 of 23.7.1993, p.37.

¹⁶ COM(93) 183 final of 5.5.1993.

¹⁷ COM(91) 397 final of 12.12.1991

18. Whereas the three types of measures involved in the programme (pilot projects, placements, surveys and analyses) are all aimed at transnational cooperation which clearly injects added value into the actions undertaken by the Member States or by the players in the training market, while respecting the principle of subsidiarity;
19. Whereas there is a need to encourage operational links between the action programme in the vocational training field and the intervention of the Structural Funds, especially Community Initiative Programmes.
20. Whereas there is a need to ensure continuous monitoring and systematic evaluation of the programme and measures in partnership between the Commission and the Member States;

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

Article 1

(Establishment of the Programme)

This Decision establishes an action programme for the implementation of a European Community vocational training policy, hereinafter referred to as the "programme LEONARDO da Vinci". The programme shall enter into force on 1 January 1995.

The programme establishes:

- 1) a Common Framework of Objectives for Community action, aimed at promoting a coherent development of vocational training, described in Annex I;
- 2) a set of Community measures, described in Article 4 and in Annex II, to be implemented on the basis of the Common Framework of Objectives described in Annex 1, to support and supplement activities undertaken by and in the Member States.

Article 2

(Definitions)

For the purposes of this Decision, the term :

- (a) "initial vocational training" is used in a general sense to denote any form of initial vocational training of non-university level, including technical and vocational training and apprenticeship, which enables young people to gain a vocational qualification recognised by the competent authorities of the Member State in which it is obtained;
- (b) "continuing vocational training" is used in a general sense to denote any vocational training engaged in by a worker in the European Community throughout his/her working life;
- (c) "firm" is used to denote large, medium-sized and small undertakings, regardless of their legal status or the economic sector in which they operate, and all types of economic activity including the social economy;
- (d) "worker" is used to denote any person having active links with the labour market, including the self-employed;
- (e) "social partners" is used to denote the employers' organisations and trade unions recognised in each Member State for the purposes of collective bargaining, and/or their inter-industry organisations and/or national organisations involved in joint action.
- (f) "training body" is used to denote all types of public, semi-public or private establishment engaged in vocational training, further training, updating or retraining activities, regardless of the way in which they are referred to in the Member States. The term also covers autonomous economic organisations, in particular chambers of commerce and industry and/or their equivalents, and professional associations;
- (g) "university" is used to denote all types of higher-education establishment which provide qualifications or diplomas of that level, whatever they may be called;
- (h) "open and distance learning and training" is used to denote any type of non-traditional training, including the use of new information and communication technologies and services and involving advice on training and individualised tutoring;

Article 3

(Actions to be undertaken at national level)

The Common Framework of Objectives described in Annex I will serve as a reference for the development of Member States' policies, bearing in mind the internal legal powers of the parties concerned and the respective responsibilities of the competent public authorities, firms and the social partners.

Article 4

(Community measures)

1. The Commission shall implement the Community measures specified in Annex II during the period from 1 January 1995 to 31 December 1999.
2. Decisions shall be taken in accordance with the procedure laid down in Article 5 concerning :
 - (a) the priorities in the Community measures described in Annex II and the annual work programme resulting from it;
 - (b) the financial support to be provided by the Community (amounts, duration and beneficiaries);
 - (c) the breakdown among the various strands;
 - (d) procedures for selection, evaluation, dissemination and transfer of results.

Article 5

(Committee)

The Commission shall be assisted by an Advisory Committee composed of two representatives from each Member State and chaired by the representative of the Commission.

Twelve representatives of the social partners, appointed by the Commission on the basis of proposals from the organisations representing the social partners at Community level, shall participate in the work of the Committee as observers.

The Commission representative shall submit to the Committee the draft measures to be undertaken. The Committee shall deliver its opinion on the draft, within a time limit which the Chairman may lay down according to the urgency of the matter involved, by taking a vote if necessary.

The opinion shall be recorded in the minutes; in addition, each Member State shall have the right to ask to have its position recorded in the minutes.

The Commission shall take the utmost account of the opinion delivered by the Committee. It shall inform the Committee of the manner in which its opinion has been taken into account.

Article 6

(Consistency and complementarity)

1. The Commission shall strive to ensure overall consistency between the programme and the Community programme on education.
2. The Commission, in partnership with the Member States, shall foster an element of complementarity between the operation of the programme and the intervention of the Structural Funds, especially Community Initiative Programmes. It will strive, in particular, to ensure that Community measures implemented in this programme shall contribute to improving the structural interventions in the field of vocational training, with a view to:
 - (a) disseminating and enhancing the relevant comparative information on vocational training systems and arrangements;
 - (b) stimulating the implementation of transnational actions related to vocational training, based on the results of the programme's pilot projects;
 - (c) promoting greater synergy with policies to promote employment and which support equal opportunities for access to initial and continuing training for disadvantaged groups.
3. The Commission, in partnership with the Member States, shall encourage the coordination of activities between the programme and the Fourth Research and Development Framework Programme.
4. The Commission, shall set up the appropriate operational links between the programme and the activities within the Social Dialogue Framework at Community level.
5. In implementing the programme, the Commission shall be assisted by the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP)¹⁸.

¹⁸ Council Regulation (EEC) No 337/75 of 10 February 1975 establishing a European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training - OJ No L 39 of 13.2.1975, p. 1.

Article 7

(Monitoring, evaluation and reports)

1. The programme shall be continuously monitored on a partnership basis involving the Commission and the Member States. This shall be done by means of reports drawn up by the Member States and of specific activities, thus enabling the programme to be redirected in the light of the needs identified.

Monitoring, financial management and control of the transnational measures shall be the task of the Commission.

2. The programme shall be evaluated at regular intervals through a partnership involving the Commission and the Member States.

The results of Community measures shall be evaluated by outside bodies at regular intervals.

3. The Member States shall forward to the Commission a report on vocational training on 31 December 1995 and every two years thereafter.

This shall include:

- any appropriate information on existing systems and arrangements in the Member States for promoting and funding vocational training;
- a description of any activities undertaken to give tangible form to the Common Framework of Objectives described in Annex I;
- a description of any complementary operational links established at national level between activities under the programme and the interventions of the Structural Funds, especially Community Initiative Programmes.

4. The Commission shall submit to the Council, the European Parliament and the Economic and Social Committee before 30 June 1998 an interim report on the launch phase, and before 30 June 2000 a report on implementation of the programme.

Done at,

For the Council

For the President

ANNEX I

COMMON FRAMEWORK OF OBJECTIVES

Bearing in mind that the Member States should pay particular attention to the following measures:

- improving vocational training systems. Continuing training is, in particular, to be facilitated so as to ensure ongoing adjustment of skills to the needs of competitiveness and to combating unemployment;
- specific measures concerning young people who leave the education system without adequate training,

the Common Framework of Objectives shall combine:

1. Facilitating adaptation to industrial changes, especially, through vocational training and retraining and, in particular:

- a) promoting anticipation and forecasting of requirements in terms of skills and training;
- b) promoting the acquisition of new qualifications and key competences;
- c) developing continuing training with regard to the results of research and technological development programmes;
- d) encouraging training of executives and managers of SMEs, focusing on the mechanisms governing internationalisation of the economy, the rules of the single market, the new technologies and their implications.

2. Improving initial vocational training and continuing training in order to facilitate integration and reintegration into the labour market and, in particular:

- a) promoting the vocational training of young people and their preparation for adult and working life¹, developing continuing vocational training² and supporting innovation in the field of vocational training resulting from technological change³;

¹ Article 1, paragraph 1 of Council Decision 91/387/EEC and Article 2 of Council Decision 87/569/EEC-PETRA

² Article 5 of Council Decision 90/267/EEC FORCE

³ Article 4 of Council Decision 89/657/EEC-EUROTECNET

- b) supporting the consolidation of vocational guidance arrangements and the diversification of training courses on offer;
 - c) supporting the development of high-quality training for the designers, planners and managers of training policies;
 - d) developing the freedom of training bodies to provide services in the Community, and exchanges of information and experience on obstacles to the creation of an open European area for training.
- 3. Facilitating access to vocational training and encouraging mobility of instructors and trainees, and especially young people and in particular :**
- a) providing all young people in the Community, who so wish, with access to one, or if possible, two or more years of initial vocational training following on from their compulsory schooling on a full-time basis and leading to a vocational qualification recognised by the competent authorities in the Member State in which it is obtained⁴;
 - b) implementing common guidelines on access to continuing vocational training, the basic principle being that every worker should be able to gain access to continuing training without any form of discrimination and to benefit from it throughout his or her working life⁵;
 - c) promoting effective equality of access to continuing training for women thereby helping to open up new areas of work to them and encouraging them to return to work after a break;
 - d) developing the Community dimension in training through transnational placements and promoting the mutual recognition and /or validation of the skills acquired;
 - e) encouraging the development of open and distance learning and training to facilitate access to training.

⁴ Article 1 of Council Decision 91/387/EEC-PETRA

⁵ Council Recommendation 93/404/EEC

4. Stimulating cooperation on training between training establishments and firms and, in particular:

- a) developing a European dimension into cooperation between universities and firms as regards training in technology, their application and transfer⁶;
- b) improving cooperation links between initial and continuing training in order to develop an approach based on life-long learning.

5. Supporting exchanges of information and experience on issues common to the training systems of the Member States and, in particular:

providing support to promote applied research into vocational training and to develop exchanges of information and experience on training systems and arrangements and on qualification and certification systems.

⁶ Article 3 of Council Decision 89/27/EEC-COMETT II

ANNEX II

COMMUNITY MEASURES

Part A : Measures

The measures draw on the experience gained in implementing the Community's COMETT, EUROTECNET, FORCE, PETRA and IRIS programmes.

They cover initial and continuing training systems, policies and actions as defined in the Member States, and are based on strengthened cooperation between the various players in vocational training, in particular between firms and universities or training bodies.

These measures are divided between three main strands :

Strand I: Measures to support the quality of Member States' systems, arrangements and policies;

Strand II: Measures to support innovative capacity in actions on the training market.

Strand III: Network, Language Knowledge and Support measures.

STRAND I: MEASURES TO SUPPORT THE QUALITY OF MEMBER STATES' SYSTEMS, ARRANGEMENTS AND POLICIES

This first strand is designed to furnish Community support for projects with a direct impact on national vocational training systems and arrangements. The aim is to contribute to greater effectiveness and quality of vocational training systems and arrangements and their ability to respond to the training needs of individuals and firms and promote the quality of vocational training methods, processes and tools.

Projects aimed at supporting the quality of systems shall be submitted to the Commission upon a proposal from the Member States.

They shall be coordinated by a public operator, by a partnership involving private operators, public operators or the social partners, or, finally, by a non-public operator with direct responsibility in the structuring and development of the Member State's system, arrangements or policy.

L1 Transnational pilot projects

(a) Design projects

Assistance in devising, developing and experimenting with transnational vocational training pilot projects.

Community support shall be forthcoming, in particular, for projects involving :

- the improvement of **initial vocational training** through the implementation of training programmes and modules, the recognition of acquired skills in the national systems and the training of instructors and tutors; the training of vocational qualification specialists or analysts; the implementation of projects in the vocational guidance field, including networking of vocational guidance centres; the training of guidance counsellors and specialists;
- **equal opportunities between men and women** in vocational training;
- the **training of planners and managers** of vocational training arrangements;
- the **training of socio-economic players** involved in contractual policy on vocational training;

(b) Multiplier-effect projects

Assistance in dissemination and transfer of training methods, products, results and tools arising from the design projects into the training systems and arrangements, including the setting up of open and distance learning and training drawing on new information and communication technologies and leading to transferable training products, such as those developed in the context of the "General interest telematic systems - Flexible and distance learning" of the Third Framework Programme for Research and Technological Development.

L2 Transnational placement and exchange programmes

(a) Placement programme for young people undergoing initial training

Assistance for transnational placement programmes for young people undergoing initial vocational training, with priority being given to occupational sectors most affected by change, particularly in the context of completing the single market. Such placements shall be for short periods, from three to twelve weeks, or for long periods from three to twelve months, where the latter form an integral part of transnational training agreements including the recognition of acquired skills.

(b) Transnational placement programme for young workers

Support for transnational placement programmes for young workers or for young people available on the labour market, aimed at equipping them with validated vocational experience or an additional qualification. Such placements shall normally last three months, and at most twelve months.

(c) Transnational exchange programme for decision-makers

Assistance for exchange programmes for national or regional public decision-makers and organisations representing the social partners designed to foster mutual understanding of how vocational training systems and arrangements work, and the transfer of experience.

This action shall be integrated into the study visit programme run by CEDEFOP on the Commission's behalf.

L3 Surveys, analyses and exchanges of comparable data

a) Surveys and analyses on the quality of training systems and arrangements

Community support will be provided for work developed on a transnational basis, on issues common to the Member States related to implementation of the Common Framework of Objectives set out in Annex I.

The aim here shall be to help the public authorities to raise the quality and effectiveness - through a reference framework at Community level - of their activities in the field of vocational training.

It will involve:

- the setting up of general systems for anticipating training and qualification requirements;
- new training methods for SMEs;
- new types of apprenticeship or sandwich courses and of cooperation between firms and training bodies or universities;
- new methods and tools for evaluating the quality of training on offer;
- new training curricula for training designers and planners;
- the transparency, recognition and validation of vocational qualifications;
- the development of the right to training (youth credits, etc.);
- the accounting of training expenditure in national and corporate accounts, especially from the point of view of investment in training.

b) Exchange of comparable data

In close cooperation with EUROSTAT's "Education and Training Statistics" Working Party, the Commission shall systematically collect data existing in Member States, shall develop comparable concepts on the basis of work done at national level, shall consolidate the Community surveys under way (Labour Force Survey, Continuing Vocational Training Survey, etc.) and draw up a joint overall methodological framework which can be used in all Member States.

STRAND II: MEASURES TO SUPPORT INNOVATIVE CAPACITY IN ACTIONS ON THE TRAINING MARKET

This second strand is targeted at vocational training market operators and players offering training measures or products. The aim is to support innovation in vocational training management, methods and materials, promote and transfer technological innovation through vocational training, improve the capacity of vocational training and qualification systems to respond to change, and promote the development of open and distance learning and training.

On proposals from the various players involved in vocational training, firms, the social partners, universities and training bodies, projects for supporting innovative capacity shall be submitted to the Commission.

II.1 Transnational pilot projects

a) Design projects 'support for innovation in training'

Assistance for devising, developing and experimenting with transnational pilot projects promoting innovation in training, in terms of instruction, content, tutoring, methods, tools, equipment, and methods of anticipating needs and assessing training.

Community support shall be forthcoming for:

- the implementation of projects related to **adaptation to industrial change** and changes in production systems;
- the implementation of projects in **contractual policy** on continuing vocational training;
- the implementation of projects in the field of **personal development, individual career plans or skills assessment**;
- the implementation of projects related to anticipation of needs in terms of qualifications, skills and training within **occupational or technological sectors**;
- the development, via transnational networks and partnerships, of transferable methods, content and products for **continuing vocational training of employees**;
- the implementation of projects related to training of executives of **SMEs**.

b) **Design projects 'training to promote the transfer of technological innovation'**

The emphasis shall be on:

- the development of highly qualified human resources through quality training based on **strengthened cooperation between firms and universities**;
- the **quality and effectiveness** of innovation and technology transfer support **services**;
- the **improvement of industry's capacity** to absorb new technologies, in particular SMEs and traditional sectors of industry.

Community support shall take the form of assistance for devising, developing and experimenting with transnational pilot projects to promote innovation in respect of training instruction, content, tutoring, methods, tools and equipment.

It shall be forthcoming for:

- projects for training in technology jointly operated by firms , from at least three different Community Member States, in conjunction with universities, in fields related to new technologies and their applications;
- joint projects for management training on transfer of innovative technologies;
- arrangements for open and distance learning and training making use of new training technologies and leading to transferable training products; they shall also include promotion of the activities of European centres for distance training and self-learning.

c) Multiplier-effect projects

Community support shall be forthcoming for:

- dissemination and transfer of training methods, products, results and tools developed by transnational partnerships;
- intensive short courses in training in technology, having a European dimension for rapid application of new technologies through firms/universities cooperation;
- activities aimed at producing courses and materials for open and distance learning and training, as well as the linguistic and cultural adaptation of high-quality courses to allow them to be used in Member States other than that in which they originate.

II.2 Transnational placement and exchange programme

a) Transnational programme of placements in firms for young people undergoing university training

Support for programmes of placements in firms for young people undergoing university training, within a firm in another Member State, in connection with a transnational vocational qualification project supported by cooperation between firms and universities in several Member States in the new technology field. Such placements shall normally last six months, and at most twelve months.

b) Transnational programme of placements in firms for young university graduates

Support for programmes of placements in firms for young people who have completed their university curriculum and young graduates working in their first job, within a firm in another Member State, in connection with an innovation project for SMEs forming part of the development strategy of the firm, groups of firms or SME resource centres. Such placements shall normally last six months, and at most twelve months.

c) Transnational programme of exchanges between firms

Support for programmes of exchanges between firms, primarily of people in charge of training or human resources (on a part-time or full-time basis) and tutors in firms, connected with the development plans of SMEs or groups of SMEs involving the use of new technologies or production processes. Such exchanges shall normally last two weeks, and at most eight weeks.

II.3 Surveys, analyses and exchange of comparable data

Surveys and analyses on the innovative capacity of players in the training market

Assistance for comparative work on common issues connected with the creation of an open area for vocational training and qualifications, with the central aim of supporting innovation in training and enhancing the transfer of innovation through training, for the benefit of all players in the vocational training market.

Community support shall be forthcoming for work carried out on a transnational basis concerning:

- new methods and tools for human resource audits for SMEs and for training in SMEs;
- new forms of work organisation designed to promote the acquisition of skills;
- sectoral surveys on firms' continuing training plans and on new methods of assessing skills at the workplace;
- analysis of contractual policy on training and of the role played by the social partners in training;
- improving knowledge and circulation of information on the evolution of occupations and skills, in cooperation with the CEDEFOP;
- the definition of criteria for and ways of measuring quality, of cost-benefit analyses and of analyses on the cost-effectiveness of training.

STRAND III NETWORK, LANGUAGE KNOWLEDGE AND SUPPORT MEASURES

This third strand includes all the activities in strands I and II and is designed to enhance the European dimension in vocational training : support for the European network of national organising bodies and operational structures to enhance its capacity to support and act as an interface, development of language knowledge and information, monitoring and evaluation actions to enhance the visibility and impact of the programme. At operational level and on the ground it will be necessary to set up active complementarity between the network structures and operators of this Programme and those responsible for the implementation of the Structural Funds.

III.1 European network

- a) Support for initiatives taken by Member States to ensure the openness of the programme, facilitate access to it, strengthen the dissemination of its results and coordinate the national organising bodies and operational structures set up under the COMETT, EUROTECNET, FORCE, PETRA and IRIS programmes.
- b) Establishment of telematic communications, a databank covering the various projects, surveys, analyses, results and products, as well as an electronic mail system. Progressive extension, both regionally and sectorally, of the European network to further promote transnational cooperation, ensure the openness of the programme and boost dissemination of its results.
- c) Implementation of European coordinating activities.

III.2 Action on the development of language knowledge

Assistance for the design and multiplier function of transnational projects aimed at drawing up large-scale linguistic audits for firms or for socio-economic groups, joint curricula, innovative teaching aids and/or recognising linguistic accomplishments achieved through the implementation of these curricula.

III.3 Support measures : information, monitoring and assessment

- a) Implementation of an overall information action on a partnership basis encompassing the Commission, the Member States and the Programme's operational structures.
- b) Monitoring and continuous assessment of the Community measures.
- c) Technical assistance required for the smooth operation of the programme, in particular support, monitoring and continuous assessment of the programme; development of transnational expertise; dissemination and transfer of the methods, products and tools devised and the results obtained.

Part B : THE COMMUNITY'S FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

The Community shall contribute to the funding of expenditure connected with the measures planned for Strands I, II and III.

- A. The Community's financial contribution to transnational projects may amount to 75% of expenditure, with a ceiling of ECU 100 000 per year and per project for:
- design projects under "support for the quality of systems" (Action I.1.a), which may last three years at most;
 - design projects under "support for innovation in training" (Action II.1.a) and design projects under "training for the transfer of technological innovation" (Action II.1.b), which may last two years at most;
 - multiplier-effect projects (Actions I.1.b and II.1.c), which may last one year at most.
- B. The ceilings for the Community's financial contribution to the placement and exchange programmes shall be as follows:
- ECU 5 000 per beneficiary for placement of a young person undergoing initial training (Action I.2.a), a young worker (Action I.2.b) and a young person at university (Action II.2.a);
 - ECU 10 000 per beneficiary for placement of a young person who has completed his/her university curriculum or a young graduate working in his/her first job (Action II.2.b);
 - ECU 5 000 per beneficiary for an exchange between firms (Action II.2.c).
- C. The Community's financial contribution may vary between 50 % and 100 % of expenditure for the network (Action III.1) and may amount to 100 % of expenditure for surveys and analyses (Actions I.3 and II.3), actions related to language (Action III.2) and support measures (Action III.3).

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

1. TITLE OF OPERATION

Vocational training

2. BUDGET HEADING INVOLVED

B - 102 - Vocational training
Formerly headings B3-1020/B3-1021/B3-1022/B3-1023/B3-1024.

3. LEGAL BASIS

Council Decision No / /EC of (OJ L ...)

4. DESCRIPTION OF OPERATION

4.1. General objective

On the basis of experience acquired through the implementation of the Community programmes COMETT, EURCNET, FORCE and PETRA, and of other operations and pilot projects carried out in the field of vocational training, the main objective of the programme is to ensure the implementation of a vocational training policy to support and complement operations by Member States. More specifically, the programme is intended to promote cooperation between Member States with the aim of working towards an open area for vocational training and qualifications.

In proposing this action programme, the Commission is following a policy which is in line with the objective of rationalising and coordinating vocational training operations as set out in its working document "Guidelines for Community action in the field of education and training".

In this context, the main objectives of the programme are as follows:

- a) To help improve the effectiveness and quality of vocational training systems and their capacity to respond to the training requirements

of individuals and businesses, particularly SMES, and to improve the quality of training methods, curricula and tools,

- b) To support innovations in vocational training management, methodology and facilities, promote and disseminate technological innovations and developments in production systems through the medium of vocational training and improve the ability of vocational training and qualification systems to respond to these changes and promote progress in open and distance learning;
- c) To develop the European dimension in training at all levels, particularly in the learning and dissemination of Community languages and support the European vocational training network;

In support of these general objectives, the programme makes provision for Community assistance for three types of transnational cooperation: pilot projects enabling knowledge and experience to be exchanged and shared, training periods (placements) in a company or training institute in another Member State in order to support the transfer of experience through physical mobility, and Community studies and analyses to develop common concepts and references.

4.2. Period covered and arrangements for renewal or extension

Five-year action programme (1995-1999).

Renewal on the basis of results obtained following an evaluation of the programme.

5. CLASSIFICATION OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

5.1. Non-compulsory expenditure

5.2. Differentiated appropriations

5.3. Type of revenue involved

None.

6. TYPE OF EXPENDITURE OR REVENUE

- 100% subsidy: yes, for subsidies and surveys.

- Subsidy for joint financing with other sources in the public and/or private sector: yes, projects are normally jointly financed to a maximum of 75%.

7. FINANCIAL IMPACT

7.1. Method of calculating total cost of operation (definition of unit costs)

Set out in accordance with the Annex to the proposal for a Council Decision.

7.2.

Approximate itemised breakdown of cost

in current ECU million

Breakdown	Budget 1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	TOTAL
Strand I						
Support for system quality and policies of Member States						
- Pilot projects	12.2	13.3	14.4	16.5	18.8	72.5
- Exchanges	24.2	25.4	26.6	27.8	29.0	133.0
- Surveys, analyses and exchanges of comparable data	5.7	5.9	6.1	6.3	6.5	30.5
Sub-total	42.1	44.6	47.1	50.6	54.3	238.7
Strand II						
Support for innovation in training operations						
- Pilot projects	42.0	44.6	47.0	50.6	54.4	238.6
- Exchanges	21.8	23.0	24.2	25.8	27.5	122.3
- Surveys, thematic analyses	4.8	5.1	5.4	5.8	6.2	27.3
Sub-total	68.6	72.7	76.6	82.2	88.1	388.2
Strand III						
Networks and accompanying measures						
- Network	13.0	13.7	14.5	15.7	16.7	73.6
- Knowledge of languages	8.7	9.2	9.6	10.4	11.1	49.0
- Accompanying measures	5.8	6.2	6.5	7.0	7.5	33.0
- Monitoring	3.4	3.6	3.8	4.1	4.4	19.3
Sub-total	30.9	32.7	34.4	37.2	39.7	174.9
TOTAL	141.6	150.0	158.1	170.0	182.1	801.8

The breakdown of the appropriations requested according to the three strands and according to the different headings will depend on the total amount allocated by the budgetary authority.

Notes:

The 1995 budget may be reconciled with the 1994 budget (final year of the PETRA, FORCE, EUROTECNET and COMETT programmes which are consolidated by the action programme) on the basis of the figures for the 1994 PDB as follows:

- PDB 1994 (headings B3-1020 - B3-1024) 107.5

- Components transferred from the vocational training programme to the Youth for Europe III programme	- 1.5
- Inclusion of the former Action III of the LINGUA programme	<u>+ 8.1</u>
Total	114.1

The difference between this amount of ECU 114.1 million and the 1995 budget (ECU 141.6 million) is accounted for by the quantitative and qualitative progress expected from the new action programme in relation to the programmes from which it follows on, namely:

- ECU 14 million to be added to pilot projects supporting innovation in operations carried out in the training market to finance the extension of projects into new fields, as set out in the programme (access to continuing training, adjustment to industrial changes);
- ECU 6 million added to Section C (Network) to strengthen initial and continuing training aspects;
- the trend towards increases under each of the three strands of the programme;

7.3. Indicative schedule of appropriations

7.3.1. Schedule for proposed new operation

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999 and subsequent years	TOTAL
Commitment appropriations	141.6	150.0	158.1	170.0	182.1	801.8
Payment appropriations						
1995	113.3					113.3
1996	28.3	120.0				148.3
1997		30.0	126.5			156.5
1998			31.6	136.0		167.6
1999 and subsequent years				34.0	182.1	216.1
TOTAL	141.6	150.0	158.1	170.0	182.1	801.8

8. FRAUD PREVENTION MEASURES AND THE RESULTS OF MEASURES TAKEN

All contracts, agreements and legal undertakings by the Commission make provision for the possibility of spot checks by the Commission and by the Court of Auditors. Among other things, beneficiaries of actions are obliged to provide reports and financial statements which are analysed with regard to the content and the eligibility of expenditure, in accordance with the aim of Community financing.

9. ELEMENTS OF COST-EFFECTIVENESS ANALYSIS

9.1. Specific and quantified objectives; target population

The aim of the proposal for the action programme to implement a Community vocational training policy is to increase the effectiveness and transparency of Community action in this field. The proposed approach is not merely an addition to operations carried out hitherto under the four action programmes but introduces a true element of rationalisation between the various measures.

At a time when the development of vocational training has a strategic role to play in controlling the processes of industrial and socio-economic change facing the Community, the Commission wishes to ensure maximum

impact and the greatest possible multiplier effect for its operations to support and complement the policies and systems of Member States.

There are three strands, each with its own specific objectives, for implementing the general objectives of the programme and contributing to the progressive achievement of an open area for training and qualifications within the Community:

- Strand 1: Measures aimed at supporting quality in the systems and policies of Member States;
- Strand 2: Measures aimed at supporting innovation in operations in the training market;
- Strand 3: Network and accompanying measures - Promotion of the European dimension.

The programme involves all those involved in vocational training, whether public authorities, private training institutes, businesses, management or workers. The aim is to provide guidelines for these groups to help them improve their methods and practices for defining requirements and designing operations on the basis of results obtained from transnational cooperation.

STRAND I MEASURES AIMED AT SUPPORTING QUALITY IN THE SYSTEMS AND POLICIES OF MEMBER STATES

The aim of this strand is to provide Community support for projects with a direct impact on national vocational training systems. Improving the quality of operations under these systems presupposes increased effectiveness in terms of investment and the level of public expenditure involved. The experience of previous programmes, in particular PETRA (initial training systems), has shown that transnational cooperation enabled national systems to become more efficient. At a time of great pressure on national budgets, the economies of scale and the transfer of innovations which become possible under Community operations have an increasingly important role.

For subjects such as qualifications or careers guidance, which should be considered central to this first strand, the transnational cooperation developed under the programme makes it possible to introduce a true European dimension, which is essential from the point of view of freedom of movement and mobility for individuals for training and employment purposes.

A. Specific objectives

- Transnational cooperation on the design, development and testing of transnational pilot projects for initial training programmes and modules, the training of instructors and tutors, qualifications specialists, vocational guidance, equal opportunities, contractual policy, general systems for

forecasting requirements, the introduction of distance learning systems, the definition of criteria and measures relating to quality and methods of recognition or joint validation;

- Transnational cooperation on pilot projects for the dissemination and transfer of training system methodologies, products, results and tools;
- Transnational cooperation on the placement of young people in initial vocational training;
- Transnational cooperation on exchanges of young workers, with the aim of acquiring valid vocational experience or an additional qualification;
- Transnational cooperation on exchanges of public sector decision-makers at national and regional levels and of employers' and employees' representatives;
- Transnational cooperation on the training of people at Community level who develop and administer Structural Fund operations;
- Transnational cooperation on studies and comparative analyses of systems and trends.

B. Target groups

This first strand is directed at all those involved in national vocational training systems, whether initial or continuing training. However, account must be taken of the fact that public sector systems in Member States are concerned primarily with initial vocational training for young people, giving them a privileged status, particularly with regard to placements.

C. Budget for Strand I

- 30% of total credits (29.6%) are to be allocated to Strand I (quality of systems) over the course of the programme;
- Assessment of the credits allocated to Strand I must take account of the following:
 - a) Promoting and raising the quality of systems, particularly for initial training, is essential, given the need to give all young people basic training and to reduce the risks of youth unemployment, which correlates closely with a lack of qualifications or of suitable qualifications.
 - b) The first phases of the PETRA programme have shown the impact of transnational cooperation on the quality of initial vocational training for young people. Under PETRA there have been more than 700 projects, and 14 000 instructors and 85 000 young people

have taken part in the network's activities since 1988. Such cooperation, and the dissemination of the results of transnational operations (joint training modules or programmes) have led a number of Member States to develop their own initial training systems.

- c) The first transnational measures in the field of continuing training under the FORCE programme have also shown the impact on state intervention systems in terms of quality, particularly in the search for synergy between public and private financing.
- d) The first synopses of continuing training systems have been produced and must be supplemented and refined in order to provide comparable data. A statistical survey is now being carried out in association with Eurostat, and on the basis of a systematic gathering of existing data, Community surveys will be consolidated and a common, global methodological framework will be established for use in all Member States. Building on the work carried out, significant progress still needs to be made in order to reconcile the various sources, cover all fields of vocational training and give decision-makers comparable and reliable references to enable them to tackle cost-effectiveness in the various national systems.

Consolidating these various operations and placing them on a systematic footing requires the availability of significant financial resources to make the most of the added value which transnational cooperation brings to improving the quality of training systems.

Pursuing Community action is even more important in terms of added value given that the period 1995-99 is likely to see increased pressure on national budgets at precisely the time when training requirements, particularly for young people, are recognised as having top priority.

STRAND II MEASURES AIMED AT SUPPORTING INNOVATION IN OPERATIONS ON THE TRAINING MARKET

This second strand is aimed at all those involved in offering training operations or products, i.e. training establishments, companies, management, social partners and universities.

Projects are intended on the one hand to support and develop innovation in vocational training in order to increase its effectiveness, and on the other hand to develop training operations aimed at encouraging and facilitating the diffusion of technological innovations.

A. Specific objectives

- Promotion of transnational cooperation for the design, development and testing of pilot projects with the objective of introducing innovations into teaching (content, tutoring, methods, tools and facilities), in order to produce transferable products, anticipate requirements, provide vocational guidance for adults, adapt to industrial changes, improve contractual policy with regard to vocational training and define criteria and measures relating to quality;
- Development of transnational cooperation on training projects for the diffusion of technological innovations, management of their transfer, dissemination of research results, training in specific technologies and development of multilateral systems;
- Transnational cooperation on transnational placements in businesses for young university students or graduates;
- Transnational cooperation on inter-company exchanges of those responsible for training or human resources;
- Transnational cooperation on surveys and analyses relating to matters of common interest connected with the establishment of an open area for training and qualifications.

Transnational cooperation should make it possible to design innovative projects, and also to achieve a more intensive transfer and multiplier effect at Community level. With regard to the diffusion of technological innovations, training operations are to be linked to Community operations in the field of research and development.

B. Target groups

The second strand is aimed primarily at those involved in the training market, including private or public training establishments, companies, universities, chambers of trade and commerce and employers' and employees' organisations. Training operations organised by them and benefitting from the impact of the Community operation are intended for individuals who are working and are integrated into the labour market.

C. Budget for Strand II

- Nearly 50% of the total budget for the programme (48.4) is allocated to this strand;
- It should be borne in mind that several thousand operators, several thousand products and several hundred thousand beneficiaries are involved, and that the resources being mobilised are in line with the objective of achieving an adequate threshold effect in a context in which businesses

themselves are experiencing significant pressure on their investment in training and, in particular, the requirements associated with updating qualifications, transforming and developing skills and introducing new technologies and production methods into the organisation of work are expanding at an ever-increasing rate;

- The action programmes, particularly FORCE (continuing training) and COMETT (training in the transfer of technological innovations), have shown operators to be extremely active in this field; the number of high-quality projects presented was always far in excess of the number which could actually be financed;
- Community support is granted following a Community expert report on the projects and on the basis of criteria developed at Community level, particularly concerning the importance of the innovatory and multiplier effects of products or operations;
- The external evaluations of the FORCE and COMETT programmes have also shown that, on the one hand, these cooperative projects could not be carried out without support from the Community and that, on the other hand, cooperation between operators involved in a pilot project extends to other areas, such as technology and economic or business relations.

STRAND III NETWORK AND ACCOMPANYING MEASURES - EUROPEAN DIMENSION

A. Specific objectives

- To provide Community support for the rationalisation and coordination of national bodies and operational structures which form the basis for transnational pilot projects and placements in another Member State;
- To improve and extend the European network in order to promote transnational cooperation and ensure the transparency of the programme;
- To increase the induced effects of the programme by reinforcing the dissemination of products and of the results of pilot projects to other operators, particularly through the activities of the European network;
- To introduce a global operation including information on the programme and monitoring and assessment of measures.

B. Target groups

Operational support structures for project promoters at regional or sectoral level and national bodies in Member States.

Particular attention must be paid to extending the competence and support capability of the operational structures in order to enable them to participate fully

in the objective of rationalisation and coordination and to intervene in all areas covered by the programme without creating new structures.

The experts' report on the launching of transnational projects is of great value in the development and transfer of quality and innovation provided for in the first two strands, and must be used to this end.

The quality of intervention by the network of operational structures is a direct guarantee of the quality of the partnerships established, of their extension to a larger number of countries and of the benefits of the projects put forward with a view to receiving Community support.

C. Budget

- The third strand, which represents approximately 22% of all programme resources (21.7%), will benefit from a substantial new input of ECU 6 million to consolidate and structure the European network;
- As a general rule, Community funds are supplemented by national or regional budgets to cover structure and network operating costs, and in most cases a multiplier effect of three to four times the Community's financial contribution is obtained;
- The evaluation reports, particularly for COMETT, have shown that Community support was a precondition for introducing synergy into the financing provided by public or private sector operators, particularly at regional level;
- Information policy and accompanying measures will be developed by the Commission and Member States acting in partnership;
- Monitoring and assessment of measures and programme impact will also be done by the Commission and Member States acting in partnership; this represents an important element in the visibility of Community operations.

9.2. Grounds for the operation

- 9.2.1. The development of vocational training is recognised by the European Union as a necessity, both for reasons associated with economic competitiveness on the world market, where competition is increasingly intense, and for its social cohesion, i.e. reduction of the risks of dislocation associated with unemployment and marginalisation on the labour market.
- 9.2.2. The Community wished to give a new impetus to this development by including in the Treaty on European Union a specific article on the implementation of a Community vocational training policy and laying down the precise objectives.

- 9.2.3. The Member States and the Council have indicated their interest in and support for the development of Community action in this field by deciding, a few years ago, on the current action programmes and by taking an active part in the implementation and monitoring of operations and in the use of results.
- 9.2.4. The European Parliament has given constant support to the development of these activities and has stated its support for the Commission's plan to rationalise and coordinate action programmes.
- 9.2.5. It is important to note that the various measures set out under the programme are all directed towards one objective, namely transnational cooperation, which clearly provides an added value to operations developed by Member States or those involved in the training market.
- 9.2.6. This Community added value must be consolidated and reinforced through the progressive establishment of an open European vocational training and qualifications area in association with the completion of the Single Market.
- 9.2.7. The approach put forward by the Commission follows the guidelines on education and vocational training set out in its working document, which aimed to consolidate vocational training operations in a single programme on the basis of Article 127 of the Treaty on European Union.
- 9.2.8. In the light of experience acquired under current programmes, rationalisation leads to the proposal of major operational strands, one of them being support for high quality in systems in response to requests from public operators or those having a structuring role within the systems, and another being support for innovation on the market, relating primarily to private operators and businesses.
- 9.2.9. The proposed measures support and complement operations carried out by Member States and enable them to use the contributions and results of transnational operations to improve the quality and effectiveness of their systems.
- 9.2.10. Community action in implementing the programmes, which run until the end of 1994, has already yielded valuable and specific results in terms of partnerships, pilot projects, exchanges of experience and networking. These promising results have shown the value of more highly developed and more generalised cooperative operations. Given their organisational and operational diversity, national systems can use transnational cooperation to inspire new trends in development.
- 9.2.11. An important part of the rationalisation approach proposed by the Commission is the reduction of duplication of operations and results. On the basis of a given amount of investment, this makes it possible to take wider-ranging action on the practices of vocational training operators and on the products and methods used by them.

- 9.2.12. The Community budget for vocational training is modest compared to those of Member States or businesses. It must be borne in mind here that national budgets are largely earmarked for operational expenditure or for making up the remuneration of trainees during training. They make only limited provision for innovation and experimentation with new methods or products and, given the pressures on public financing, this trend is increasing. The Community's relatively modest contribution is crucial for the modernisation and development of systems because it is concentrated on dynamic action and progress.
- 9.2.13. A similar observation must be made with regard to the synergy between operations under the programme and those forming part of structural policy, in particular those under the European Social Fund. The multiplication of innovations and new practices as part of the pilot projects and partnerships under the programme within the most significant structural policy operations represents a powerful impetus for the development of systems and practices in the Member States.
- 9.2.14. The activities supported under the framework of the vocational training programme mainly involve actions for the preparation of training, the design of innovative methods and products and the diffusion and multiplication of the results. The programme targets training actions as such in only a marginal way. On account of this, expenditure eligible for Community support involves mainly expenditure linked to the design of and preparation of actions and not the costs of the provision of training, (the salaries of trainers or of beneficiaries, training costs). This element increases the interest of the complementarity between the action programme and the finance contributed within the framework of the European Social Fund which is mainly devoted to costs linked to the realisation of training actions subsequent to their design and preparation.
- 9.2.15. The largest share of programme financing should be allocated to the design and implementation of transnational pilot projects on vocational training. Transnational cooperation is thereby applied to a specific objective and the implementation of joint vocational training operations.
- 9.2.16. With regard to transnational placements, assessment of current programmes, particularly COMETT, has shown that they form a "fast lane" for the transfer of experience and know-how not only for the direct beneficiary but also for the originating and host institutions. Integrating placements into a specific company development project should be a new way of reinforcing this characteristic.
- 9.2.17. Decision-makers in the field of vocational training, whether representatives of public authorities at national or regional levels, are seeking Community reference points in order to improve their practices. Placements allowing a direct comparison with, and specific experience of, existing practices in another Member State make it possible to transfer practices at low cost.

Multiplication in the originating institution and system is another important characteristic in this case.

- 9.2.18. Perception of Community operations is developed firstly within universities and in the world of research, with significant results being obtained through cooperation. The labour market and businesses have become involved more recently in cooperating at Community level on vocational training. The current economic situation gives vocational training policies a decisive role in reestablishing favourable conditions for economic competitiveness and employment. Training professionals, and above all businesses, are indicating a strong demand for increased cooperation in order to increase the effectiveness of their training investments, to disseminate experience and best practice and improve the cost-effectiveness of their spending.
- 9.2.19. It is also important to stress the role of surveys and analyses at Community level. Member States develop systems which differ widely, having little in common from the point of view of the concepts and methods used. Studies and surveys carried out at Community level provide a reliable and homogeneous picture of the reality of vocational training expenditure and operations within the Community. A common Community frame of reference is thereby provided.
- 9.2.20. Initial vocational training systems are being widely developed to counteract the difficulties experienced by young people in integrating into the world of work, with the objective of rooting out the economic marginalisation associated with underachievement at school, particularly with regard to the most disadvantaged young people. Improving the quality of systems, the objective of Strand I, represents an important contribution here. Promoting high-quality training operations for those young people with the greatest difficulties very much increases their chances of integrating into working life.
- 9.2.21. The multiplier effect relating to the products and results of transnational partnerships is a prerequisite for efficiency and economies of scale. It is also a factor in ensuring equal access for those sections of society whose requirements are insufficiently met by traditional operations. From this point of view, emphasis must be placed on the priority given by the programme to the development of training measures in and for SMEs, which all too frequently lack the necessary qualifications for overcoming the current socio-economic changes.
- 9.2.22. With regard to continuing training, the various measures under the programme, particularly those relating to pilot projects and surveys, require involvement and active participation by management and workers. This constitutes an element of support for Member States with a tradition of participation by both management and workers, and an innovation for those Member States with little experience of such practices. Bearing in mind the structuring role which management and workers are called upon to play

in order to make vocational training effective, this is a substantial added value element for the Community operation.

- 9.2.23. A significant proportion of the success and impact of the current programmes is due to the presence and networking at European level of operational structures with a central role in forming partnerships, participating in the preparation of projects and ensuring the dissemination and multiplier effect of results. Improving the operation of this European network, mainly by means of information and communications technology and capitalising on the expertise within these structures must be an important factor in the rationalisation process.

9.3 Monitoring and evaluation of the operation

9.3.1 Selected performance indicators

Quantitative indicators:

- number of pilot projects;
- average number of partners per pilot project;
- total number of participants in placement schemes;
- total number of beneficiaries of a training measure or product;
- number of SMEs participating directly in pilot projects;
- number of transferable products resulting from pilot projects.

Qualitative indicators:

- the evaluation should make it possible to measure more exactly the impact of the Community operation on the systems or practices of operators by means of the following indicators:
 - * application of quality criteria and measures in training systems and operations;
 - * use of Community references for practices;
 - * development of training modules arising from pilot projects in national systems;
 - * definition of a transnational qualification profile, particularly at sectoral level.

All these indicators will form a basis for continuous joint evaluation by the Commission and each Member State.

9.3.2

In accordance with Article 7 of the proposal for a Decision:

- before 31 December 1997 the Commission will present an intermediate evaluation report covering the launching period of the programme;
- before 30 June 2000, the Commission will present a final report. On the basis of this report, the Commission may submit proposals to the Council and the European Parliament concerning readjustment and subsequent development.

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