

# Achieving the Lisbon goal: The contribution of VET

## Executive Summary

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# Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of vocational education and training

## Executive summary

In a learning society, vocational education and training (VET) has a pivotal role to play in raising the skills, knowledge and competencies of high- and low- skilled workers as well as labour market entrants. The ageing profile of European populations makes this task the more urgent as fewer young recruits are available to enter the labour market yet employment levels should rise, as older people have to be encouraged to remain economically active for longer, and as competing demands make a strong call on limited public expenditure.

The Lisbon strategy aims to create by 2010 a highly dynamic and competitive knowledge-based economy in Europe that will deliver sustainable growth, generate more and better jobs and create greater social cohesion. Implementing lifelong learning has a key role in achieving the goal. The Copenhagen Declaration and its follow-up have raised the profile of VET, in terms of improving the quality of education and training, facilitating access for all and opening up education and training to the wider world.

VET equips people with skills and competences that they can use in the labour market. It performs a wide range of both economic and social functions for individuals, public authorities and stakeholders. These encompass meeting labour market skills needs, contributing to innovation, providing a transition pathway between schooling and work for large numbers of young people, tackling social exclusion and, more recently, helping to improve levels of mobility across Europe. VET also has to respond to rapid change.

Systems of initial and continuing VET in Europe vary considerably, and are firmly based on national, local and sector traditions, values and arrangements. Co-operation among member states across Europe is growing as Europe strives towards the Lisbon goal. Yet the indications are also that countries and sectors will continue to develop reforms that are most appropriate to their own traditions, circumstances, challenges and aims. This means that member states will progress the Copenhagen actions according to rather varying sets of priorities. A 'one track' synchronised development is unlikely. In some cases, inadequate funding will prove to be a barrier to reform. In other cases, agreed priorities such as developing credit frameworks are less likely to be high on the innovation agenda of some member states, in the face of other pressing priorities, such as sector development or improving quality in VET. Furthermore, sector developments, while innovative, are also likely to proceed at different speeds and with somewhat different priorities.

**European VET as a whole has distinctive characteristics. Crucially it builds on the values, priorities and infrastructures of national, sector and local systems of VET. Increasing levels of co-operation at the European level is providing support and leadership for building VET systems for optimal economic and social performance.**

The study has considered the enlarged European Union of 25 member states, as well as Norway, Iceland and Liechtenstein and three accession countries, Bulgaria, Romania and Turkey. As the EU member states identify and implement strategies to create a learning economy and a learning society in their own circumstances over the next five years (15 years might be a more realistic timescale), it is noticeable that in many respects the Nordic EU member states are in poll position. The Nordic countries perform highly on the UN Human Development Index, which means that they combine steady growth with high levels of social cohesion. They have high levels of participation in initial VET combined with high levels of participation in continuing VET, and they score highly on the indices of basic skills for young learners and for adults. Added to this, productivity per hour exceeds or comes close to matching that of the USA (overall productivity is lower than USA's mainly because of shorter working hours, also in some cases lower levels of labour market participation). In some key respects measures of innovation and ICT-penetration are as high as in USA.

The Nordic member states could claim to be as close as anywhere in the world to forming inclusive learning societies. Anglo-Saxon countries perform well on some of the economic indicators such as growth and levels of labour market participation, but less well on productivity and some of the inclusiveness factors. Core European and Mediterranean member states are not currently performing as well as the Nordic states on a range of indicators. Except as concerns a lower levels of school dropout and high levels of participation in education and training at upper secondary level, the new member states (the EU10) begin from a position of consolidation (catch up) on many of the indicators, and this is a long-term process: Ireland's steady progress on the economic indicators over two decades of consolidation may offer some helpful lessons to the EU10 and candidate countries.

This executive summary addresses three themes.

1. It reports on how ready VET systems in Europe are to meet the challenges that the Lisbon agenda has set. This is important because VET has a dynamic part if lifelong learning strategies are to be implemented effectively.
2. It analyses key areas of innovation that are taking place in teaching and learning. This is important because the modern paradigm for VET puts the learner at the centre. It emphasises the acquisition of competencies, and recognizes that the workplace has a central role in shaping and providing VET learning.
3. It discusses the extent to which VET plays, or can play, an important part in creating a more open labour market in Europe. Governments, regional and local agencies, social partners, training providers, learners and other all have a stake in ensuring that opportunities for skills and mobility in the labour market are maximised, that people's qualifications are transparent and that their competencies are recognised across boundaries.

Key messages are highlighted in the text. Examples and cases are placed in text boxes. The information is drawn from our own research and analysis, from self-assessment reports prepared by the Directors General for Vocational Training (DGVTs) and from specially prepared country reports.

## The readiness of Europe's VET systems to meet the challenges of Lisbon

The Lisbon process identifies indicators for 2010 in terms of economic reform, employment, innovation and research, social inclusion and the environment, as well as for education and training. The European Commission's verdict is that progress across the EU as a whole towards achieving the objectives is slow and that few of the Lisbon structural indicators are likely to be met in 2010. An exception is the youth education attainment level indicator, which is likely to be met – particularly with the EU10 having high levels of attainment at ISCED level

3 (upper secondary level). The employment rate target of 70 per cent in 2010 could also be reached with strong economic growth, but the target for the employment rate of older workers will not be met on current trends. Long-term and youth unemployment remains a stubborn issue in many countries.

If the Lisbon goal is to be achieved even on a longer time scale, VET has a contribution to make across all the fields mentioned above. If lifelong learning policies are to succeed, continuing learning in the workplace has to be both effective and inclusive. **The main competitors outside Europe have higher levels of qualifications among their adult populations than does, on average, Europe. Participation in initial VET in European countries is on average higher than in the USA, Japan and other competitor countries.** It has therefore to be high quality and status, and open up pathways for its graduates into the labour market and also into higher education. VET pathways in tertiary education also have an important role, yet **Europe on average has a smaller percentage of higher education students enrolled in VET courses than do competitors in North America and Asia.**

The evidence suggests that there are returns to education and training for the individual, employers and society as a whole. As concerns efficiency of VET, the evidence is that investing more in the lifelong learning of those who are most in need (the low skilled, those lacking basic skills, older workers, excluded groups such as migrants and school dropouts) is worthwhile from an economic point of view as well as on grounds of social cohesion.

### **Quality in initial vocational education and training (IVET)**

The evidence points to the conclusion that ensuring a supply of good quality vocational programme at ISCED level 3 is an effective measure to foster high levels of graduation from the upper secondary level. Furthermore, most European countries that have low levels of early school dropout also have high levels of participation in VET pathways.

Sixteen out of the 19 countries that have 50% or more students in vocational programmes at ISCED 3 have low levels of early school leavers. This includes both school-based and apprenticeship-based systems. The exceptions are Bulgaria, Romania, and Italy, which have high levels of students in IVET (a preponderance of pre-vocational courses in the case of Italy) and high levels of early school leaving. Countries with less than 40% of upper secondary students in vocational programmes vary much more. Iceland, Malta, Portugal and Spain have low levels of IVET participation and high levels of early leavers, while the Baltic States, Cyprus, Greece and Ireland have low levels of IVET and low levels of early school leavers. The proportion of young people in initial VET compared to general education is increasing on average in the EU15, decreasing in the EU25.

In some countries, for example Italy, the improvement in completion rate is pronounced. There are, however, countries with increasing rates of youth not completing upper secondary education: Portugal, Sweden, Norway and Romania. Across Europe, a higher proportion of males leave school early, with Luxembourg, Germany, Austria and the Czech Republic being the exception to this rule.

**The challenge for member states is to maintain and improve the quality of IVET, to make provision attractive to stakeholder and client groups, and to provide flexible linkages between pathways, and with general and higher education.**

All countries report the introduction of measures to raise the attractiveness and flexibility of VET for young people.

***Increasing flexibility is taken up through a scale of actions. Countries mention:***

- Modularisation (**Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Hungary, Iceland, Luxembourg, Malta, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, Sweden, Turkey**);
- Establishing national qualification systems/frameworks (**Czech Republic, Ireland, Lithuania, Malta, Netherlands, Slovenia, UK**);
- Establishing competence based programmes (**Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Estonia Hungary, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia**);
- Increasing access to higher education (**Austria, Finland, Germany, Liechtenstein, Portugal, Spain, Sweden**).

A measure targeted at young people is to make higher education more accessible for students on VET programmes, together with the creation of occupationally oriented programmes at higher education level. Even in countries with a high participation rate in IVET (e.g. Germany, The Netherlands) increasing the access to tertiary education attracts policy attention. Also popular are pedagogical reforms (e.g. Austria, Cyprus, Finland, Sweden), diversification of routes and programmes in VET (e.g. Bulgaria, France, Poland, Portugal) the establishment of guidance and counselling systems, the integration of vocational subjects into general programmes and vice versa, and launching information and promotion campaigns. Some good practice examples follow.

***Country examples of measures intended to raise the attractiveness of VET for students***

**Austria:** the introduction of new pedagogical approaches (competence based learning); creation of VET programmes in higher education / access to higher education via VET; Including general education in VET

**Belgium:** more opportunities for students to design courses themselves/tailor made internet based learning covering a variety of courses; including general education in VET; Information campaign on the added value of VET

**Finland:** an ‘ Occupy your time’ campaign aiming to increase awareness of vocational education and training; all qualifications can be completed in three ways: school-based, apprenticeship or competence-based; shift to a student centred approach in learning; competence based programmes/ individual based VET; access to higher education via VET

**Latvia:** the introduction of basic vocational programmes allowing learners to enter VET at age 15 without having obtained any qualification; creation of VET programmes in higher education

Meeting labour market needs by creating close partnership with industry and the social partners is a needed component in making IVET both attractive and flexible. This is a key issue in the EU10 and is identified as a priority for reform in countries such as the UK and Norway.

***Country examples of measures intended to raise attractiveness of IVET to social partners***

**Czech Republic:** direct links between educational institutes and social partners in regions; the establishment of a demand – supply relation between regional social partners and VET institutes

**France:** cooperation between schools and industry aiming at local economic development

**Lithuania:** a change of status of the state vocational schools into self governing institutions to provide better possibilities to cooperate with the industry, social partners and other public institutes is considered

**Norway:** a proposition for cooperation between social partners and national and regional authorities in a more dynamic model with closer contacts with the labour market and a reduction in the number of the sector councils (from 20 to 11)

As the Lithuanian and Norwegian cases show, decentralisation is a major trend in the governance of IVET institutions. This calls for robust mechanisms for assuring the quality of provision through quality assurance mechanisms and the transparency of learning and outcomes through qualification frameworks.

IVET in European countries has an important role to play in lifelong learning systems designed to achieve the Lisbon goal. Raising its status through improved quality is a challenge in most countries, and particularly those with high levels of early dropout and low levels of upper secondary graduation.

### Continuing vocational training (CVT)

Participation in lifelong learning is one of the main means to ensure the continuous adaptation of skills to the requirements of the economy and the quality of life in society. Yet overall levels of involvement in CVT in Europe are so low as to constitute a major challenge if effective lifelong learning strategies are to develop. This is a challenge for all stakeholders.

In May 2003 the Council set the benchmark of an average level of 12.5% of the adult working age population participating in lifelong learning in a period of four weeks prior to the survey. Reaching the benchmark by 2010 'poses a significant challenge for many European countries' (Progress towards the common objectives in education and training, Indicators and Benchmarks, p. 6). In 2002, the EU15 average was 8.5%, while the acceding countries were performing somewhat lower with only 5.0% on average. Five EU member states have participation rates well above the benchmark: **United Kingdom, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, and the Netherlands**. All other countries of the European Union are performing between 1.2% (**Greece**) and 9.1% (**Slovenia**).

Between 1999 and 2002, EU15 countries with low rates of participation did not improve much, with the exception of Luxembourg, and decreasing participation rates were reported for **Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Estonia, Italy, Lithuania, Spain, Sweden and Portugal**. In all, in EU15 the participation rate has risen by only 0.3 percentage points between 1999 and 2002.

In most of the member states women have a higher participation rate than men.

Adult learning reinforces skill differences resulting from unequal participation in initial education – the “Matthew-effect”: those with lower levels of educational attainment have a low rate of participation in continuing education and training. For EU15 those rates were only 2.3% in 2002 and 2.4 % in 1999. For those with high education level the participation rate in 2002 was more than 6 times as high. Disparities according to educational attainment have been stable since 1999. These country- and education- related disparities are heightened by three other factors.

- Industries such as post/communications and banking/insurance tend to have training levels three or four times higher than industries such as textiles;
- Workers in large companies tend to have greater opportunities to train than in SMEs;
- Younger workers (25-29) tend to have training participation rates three to four times higher than workers aged 55-64.

As we shall show, the workplace can be a leading edge for innovation and for learning. Yet many people in the workplace face barriers to learning, often associated with a negative image of learning from earlier experiences. Countries report initiatives to raise opportunities and take up of CVT. Prominent among these are: funding incentives, the recognition of informal and non-formal learning, provision of learning opportunities in non-traditional ways.

### ***Country examples of measures targeted on individuals***

**Austria:** tax incentives for employees; a fixed sum to finance educational leave/vouchers provided by regional chambers of commerce

**Estonia:** the creation of a counselling system for adults; universities are obliged to develop a system registering previous work and study experiences

**France:** individual training right for each employee - can be saved up to a maximum of 6 years

### ***Country examples of measures targeted on companies***

**Bulgaria:** a financial incentive scheme for employers to maintain/ enhance the vocational qualification of employees

**Hungary:** subsidies for the training of employees for the purpose of a higher level of working

**Spain:** a new funding model on CVT facilitating SMEs' involvement in training; co-funding

### ***Country examples of lifelong learning measures***

**Denmark:** a coherent system of qualifications for IVET and CVT, including the prevention of dead-ends; a new law increases flexibility, transparency and free choice, and common competence frameworks; pilot funding to set up networks and try out different forms of flexibility and work-based learning

**Luxembourg:** to create a lifelong learning mentality the government has launched a press campaign to make the public more aware of the necessity of lifelong learning

**UK, Austria, the Netherlands and Ireland:** Investors in People – a recognised standard that SMEs and larger firms achieve through putting in practice effective process for the HR development and training of all employees

The social partners take the leading role in many initiatives for both high- and low-skilled workers. Examples of the latter are the Dutch international Frico Cheese company's initiative to accredit prior learning particularly for workers with little previous access to qualifications and training; and the UK Union Learning Fund, whereby trade unions sponsor training and learning activities (particularly to address basic skills deficits) in non-traditional learning situations intended to overcome barriers to learning.

Reaching the Lisbon targets for achieving the participation of older people (55-64) in the workforce is a major challenge. Some countries are near or already exceed the target for labour market participation of older workers, including Cyprus, Denmark, Greece, Portugal, Sweden and UK. Others are around the EU average, but below the target, including Czech Republic, Germany, Lithuania, Netherlands and Spain. The third group of countries is at least 15 percentage points below the target of 50% participation for older workers. Thus, for example, Austria, Belgium, France, Hungary, Italy, Poland and Slovakia sit well below the European average and well below the target.

**Numerous initiatives provide training opportunities for older employees, but there is little evidence of constructive strategies being in place in national lifelong learning plans.** Besides policies such as withdrawing early retirement schemes and retarding retirement age, initiatives should focus on adapting the labour market to enable older workers to stay at work, providing training, wider provision of lifelong learning, and providing lifelong learning provision for older unemployed people. An innovative scheme for older employees is in use in one of Sweden's largest banks.

### **Forening Sparbanken's 55+ programme (Sweden)**

<b>55+</b> Medical Care: Exercise during work, health examinations	On-the-job training: Individual development plan
<b>58+</b> Reduction in working time 80% working time for 90% salary	Days off 3 extra days free from work per year

**To achieve the priority of implementing effective and inclusive lifelong learning strategies in practice, the existing low levels of participation in CVT must be addressed as a matter of urgency in most countries and in most sectors.**

## **VET and social inclusion**

VET contributes to preventing and tackling social exclusion. This is a part of the social drive of the Lisbon goal to create social cohesion, as well as an economic drive to increase participation in employment and raise skills levels and productivity.

Groups at high risk of exclusion include school dropouts, people with poor levels of basic skills, women (in areas of low female employment, and labour-market returners), migrants and people left behind by industrial reorganization. Excluded groups tend to have two things in common: a lack of basic competences and barriers to access training. They are unlikely to enter training system themselves, because the educational system is not accessible for them (e.g. people with disabilities, in prison, migrants with language difficulties), or because they have had negative experiences with the system (e.g. school drop outs, older workers who experienced failure at school), or because they do not have the time or money. A mixture of these factors is often in play.

Targeted programmes, though costly, are effective. Advice and guidance systems can play an important part in facilitating the return of excluded groups to participation in training or preparation for the labour market.

### ***Early school leavers/ young unemployed people***

The EU25 are all faced with the challenges of youth unemployment. If not dealt with now, the medium-term effect may be an insufficient supply of qualified workers with labour market experience. **Latvia** has been successful in creating a subsidised work practice scheme for unemployed youth with an insufficient lack of work experience. The programme involves some compensation to both the unemployed and their mentors. In **Germany**, the JUMP programme, co-funded by the European Social Fund (ESF), has provided some 600,000 young people with new opportunities. The JUMP programme makes funding available so that young people can finish their school certificate or train. Experience in **Portugal**, on the other hand, shows how wider social factors and the persistence of low-skills labour markets may work against intended policy aims of active labour market policies.

### ***Migrants - the case of Roma***

Member states continue to implement measures to support the integration of migrants and ethnic minorities, such as literacy programmes, language courses, diversity plans to increase recruitment of migrants, training and vocational guidance, often funded through ESF programmes. Across borders, for example, the Roma face exclusion from the labour market and from access to education and training. Several countries report initiatives. **Romania**: The Access to Education of the Disadvantaged Groups programme (2002-2004), focused on the Roma population, it is already implemented in **10 counties**. The European Union Phare Programme and the Government of Romania jointly finance the programme. The main objectives are: improving the quality of pre-school education, encouraging students to complete their basic education (prevention of early dropout), increasing participation in distance education as a second chance offered to those having failed to finish compulsory education.

### ***Women returners***

Women tend to drop out of the labour market younger than men. VET can play a distinctive role in recognising and updating the skills of women who have been out the labour force for a long time. **Austria**: specific measures to reduce occupational discrimination by supporting women in technology and science sector. **Bulgaria**: the "Back to work " project targets unemployed women over 50 in motivation and vocational training courses. **Ireland**: 'Return to Work for Women' is aimed at women who have been out of the workforce for some time and wish to return to work. **Luxembourg**: Zarabina Initiativen für Frauen, is a project to develop the region by getting more women into paid work or self-employment. **Turkey**: non-formal training organised by the Ministry of National Education (MoNE) for individuals who have dropped out of compulsory basic education, and illiterate women in the age cohort 14-44.

### ***People left behind by industrial restructuring.***

In the EU10, and also in regions throughout Europe, traditional industries have declined. Emerging opportunities are mainly in the financial sector, business services, tourism and small business start-ups. **Poland**: With EU support, the restructuring of the coal-mining sector. The programme comprised a social and a pro-active employment component. The objectives of the latter were increased occupational mobility and job creation and the main instruments used included re-training, guidance and counselling and support for alternative job creation through SME development.

## **Expenditure on VET, and returns**

The Lisbon European Summit called for an increase in per capita investment in human resources. Competing demands on state, company and family budgets call for efficient spending on VET.

For 2000, public expenditure on education as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) is estimated at 5.0% in the European Union and 4.74% in the EU10.

Between 1995 and 2000 public expenditure on education as a share of GDP decreased in most of the member states, the exceptions being **Denmark, Greece, Portugal, Sweden, Cyprus and Lithuania**. For the last year when comparative figures are available, 2001, an increase has taken place, especially in the EU10, to a spending level of 5.1% of GDP on education. Public expenditure on education varies greatly between countries, with the **Nordic countries** spending the highest shares of GDP on education.

Private expenditure on educational institutions was estimated at 0.6% of GDP (2001, EU15 and EU10), varying between 0.1% (Finland, Slovakia, Portugal) and 1.3% (Cyprus). This includes expenditure of households and other private entities like companies for educational institutions on initial VET.

The EU stands at parity with the US regarding public expenditure on education (5.1%), and spends a considerably larger share of GDP than Japan (3.6%). In comparison to the EU, private investment in education is higher in USA and in Japan.

The most recent comparative data at European level for companies' expenditure on continuing VET is for 1999. Companies' expenditure on continuing training courses probably represents about 1% of GDP. Countries that participated in the earlier survey of company's expenditure on training show an increase in the percentage of labour costs spent on CVT since 1993, with Greece being the only exception. This increase was pronounced in Denmark, Italy, Ireland, the Netherlands and the United Kingdom.

Companies' spending on CVT varied greatly between countries, ranging from 0.3% in **Romania** to 3.6% in the **United Kingdom**. Public expenditure on education and companies' cost of CVT do not follow the same pattern across countries. Again, **Nordic countries** are well above average, but in **Belgium, Portugal, and Lithuania**, having high public expenditure on education, companies spend a comparatively small percentage of labour cost on continuing training of their staff.

Research shows that

- In most European countries the unemployment rates of the low-skilled are higher than for the medium and high skilled (Greece and Romania are the exceptions);
- Training generates performance effects;
- Economic growth will not be fostered significantly if investment is limited to the elite group. Raising the basic skills of low performers produces quite large economic and productivity gains;
- Both individuals and companies yield returns to training;
- The impact of investment in education and training on national economic growth is positive and significant.

Although comparative international research shows that skills and competencies of the work force are often an important element for companies' performance, companies often regard expenditure on training as an immediate cost, not as a longer-term investment.

Funding strategies that depend on the state and also on partnerships with social partners, the private sector, and expecting individuals to bear some of the costs of training are all in evidence. New member states report that the limited availability of private and public funds inhibits policies to improve training provision and levels.

**Denmark:** Public funding of adult vocational training within the annual state budget combined with user payment

**Netherlands:** Making innovation a joint activity of social partners and schools, with joint financial commitment

**Sweden:** Investigation of possibilities to contract out upper secondary education

**Increased levels of expenditure will be required for VET if it is to play its part in achieving the Lisbon goal. This has implications for governments and the public sector, work organisations and the social partners, and for individuals.**

### **Lack of coherent quantitative data on VET**

Adequate indicators and reliable data are a prerequisite for measuring progress in VET. The current indicators do not give a well-balanced coverage for VET. The indicators are not well related to one another and there is a lack of easy access to existing data. Furthermore, monitoring trends encounters further problems because of methodological and technological changes in the surveys over time. Equally clearly, there is a need (and possibility) for improving information on VET (both IVET and CVT) so as to have a clearer portrait of comparative and historical trends for VET across European countries.

These data collection issues have a major bearing on cross-country comparisons and comparisons over time, and hamper policy makers' ability to evaluate their efforts and to track progress.

## Innovation in teaching and learning

In VET, teaching and learning are changing rapidly. Key areas of innovation are occurring in learning content, contexts, assessment and quality assurance. Establishing and developing the profession of VET teachers and trainers still raises challenges.

### **New content and curriculum: competencies, entrepreneurship, ICT**

Workforce skills are being re-designed to emphasise flexible and broad occupational competencies such as problem solving, working effectively with change and communicating with client groups. This is reflected in new goals and content for VET teaching and learning

#### ***Occupational competencies and key competences***

A paradigm change is taking place in the objectives of training and approaches to the content and curriculum of VET. **The development of broad occupational competencies through workplace learning is the key dimension of VET innovation.** Transferable or key competences provide another way to define this approach. In both cases, the context in which the learning takes place has an important bearing on the learning outcome.

**The Netherlands:** *'...Competence-based education is explicitly aimed at the key issues or problems in professions and careers, and prepares the learner to deal with them; the accent is put on an optimal competence development of the learners, tailored to their personal wishes and possibilities. ... Competences and competence development are the pivot around which content, programming, organisation and pedagogic-didactical design of the educational process should be developed.'*

Innovative European projects have worked on developing a curriculum based on the competences needed in particular industries or sectors across national boundaries.

The **'Global Village'**<sup>1</sup> developed an integrated curricular approach to combining the different types of skills and knowledge needed in the international knowledge-based motor-industry. Teachers of different subjects and learners from different European schools co-operate in the production of a mechanical part as a simulation of an internationally dispersed production environment. This integrated different types of knowledge and a variety of skills, such as languages, intercultural awareness, ICT, technical and specialised mechanical competencies and skills (e.g. fitting and turning) as well as the planning and design of joint activities. It was found that apart from broadly clustered competencies in occupational profiles and pathways, the integration of various learning contents is a feature of innovative delivery and learning schemes.

The formation and development of professional competences is an active process. Expertise comes from knowledge gained through experience. Acquisition of competencies through learning and experience is complemented by the role of informal knowledge and 'reflected' experience. In this context, learning is not committing to memory or fragmented and de-contextualised knowledge, but learning by doing.

#### ***Entrepreneurship***

Enhanced entrepreneurship teaching and learning is innovative. On the one hand, entrepreneurship is a key competence that everyone should acquire. Entrepreneurship is a set of active skills that enable people to develop attitudes, qualities and competencies that form a basis for creativity, taking initiatives, taking responsibility and acting independently. Increasingly, governments are adopting statements on entrepreneurship teaching in

<sup>1</sup> See <http://www.theglobalvillage.dk>

mainstream schooling, but there is along way to go before this approach is commonly adopted in practice.

On the other hand, specific entrepreneurship education and training is also a priority in terms of start up and running a business. Initiatives include the following.

<b>Cyprus</b>
Courses on business administration have been introduced in the comprehensive upper secondary schools; pilot projects on virtual enterprises and entrepreneurship have been introduced on a voluntary basis.
<b>Malta</b>
Voluntary pilot projects have been introduced at the secondary level. Some 27 schools are participating in the 'SCOOPS' project; some 350 students are participating in Young Enterprise.
<b>Spain</b>
Modules promote business culture (e.g. administrative marketing and management for small enterprises.)

Nevertheless, the European Commission's DG Enterprise rightly reaches the conclusion that in initial VET in most cases

*'there is not a real focus on self-employment or on setting up a business... The curriculum requires students and apprentices to become employees, since the main task is seen as being to train skilled workers.'* (DG Enterprise, 2002)

CVT offers more business start up training and advice, often through the private sector. Measures are most effective when targeted to particular sectors, markets and target groups. In the EU10 this aspect of VET was slow to develop in the public sector, and this is still the case in EU member states where recognised VET progression pathways beyond ISCED level 3 are not widely available. CVT for craft SMEs in Germany and Belgium provides a well-established progression route including training for entrepreneurship.

<b>CVT for entrepreneurship in Germany</b>
The 1996 <i>Gesetz zur Förderung der beruflichen Aufstiegsfortbildung</i> (Upgrading Training Assistance Act) gives statutory entitlement to financial assistance for master craftsman-level, jointly financed by federal and state governments. The aim is to help individuals acquire a supplementary/additional or enhanced vocational qualification, and provide incentive for individuals who could potentially start up a new business. Larger grants to cover the cost of training courses for persons starting up their own business have been introduced recently.

Progress is recorded, but much remains to be done.

### **ICT**

The third aspect of innovation has to do with learning in the information age: the teaching and learning of ICT skills. VET systems have to embrace ICT, particularly the integration of ICT into modern work processes.

The importance of ICT is reflected in a number of programmes and initiatives at the European level such as Leonardo da Vinci, Socrates and other education programmes, the e-Learning Action Plan and in almost all national innovation strategies regarding teaching and learning. In addition, Cedefop has developed career space generic ICT-profiles.

Obvious differences can be found between countries in the extent of ICT penetration and learning. More subtle differences can be found in the approach to the ICT curriculum, either as general ICT literacy or as ICT integrated into work processes. In some countries both strands can be found, especially in those with a strong vocational orientation, school-based

as well as work-based. A number of countries have introduced vocational education pathways for ICT occupations integrating formal and non-formal learning, including Austria and Germany.

In initial VET, e-Literacy is now an important component of national VET systems, as well as for employee skill portfolios.

Various countries have inaugurated ICT action plans so as to ensure that ICT contents are included in the different occupational fields. This includes the **Czech Republic's** Outline of State Information Policy in Education, **Denmark's** ICT Action Plan; **Turkey's** Preliminary National Development Plan.

Private players occupy a growing place in providing ICT certification. There is a need for a common set of principles and good practice concerning the role and possible use of certificates.

The majority of European countries consider that by 2010 ICT in vocational learning will be embedded in work and business processes, rather than mainly involving simulated activities or distance learning. This is particularly the case with countries developing work-based VET policies.

For the present, however, the Socrates I-Curriculum Project observes that: *'A focus on operational skills; the competencies tend to focus on how to use ICT rather than .... how technology can be used to model and transform an activity. Even in **Germany**, where the goal is to shift to project-oriented education so that the students understand the relevance of ICT and use it to model and hence reflect on problems, it was noted that operating skills are taught initially then weeks or months later the role of ICT in the wider context is addressed.'*

There is a need for new basic skills in e-Literacy as a result of the wide-ranging impact of ICT in society. However, ICT in vocational training should focus not only on operational skills, but also on how to use ICT for the transformation or modeling of an activity. Learning, in other words, should be 'constructive'.

## **New contexts and methods for promoting lifelong learning**

The emergence of a knowledge-driven economy calls for new forms of work organisation. In turn, this creates a need to develop new learning environments, forms and methods.

### ***New learning methods and environments***

The 'learning organisation' describes the need for companies and staff to engage in a continuous process of learning as a source of performance improvement and competitive advantage. The ORGLEARN<sup>2</sup> project, for example, described how workers in a complex chemical engineering enterprise engaged in learning and reflecting about their work and codified the results in a corporate manual.

A study conducted in **Norway** describes what is distinctive about a learning organisation: *'A learning-conducive environment is one that encourages people to engage in critical thinking and behave in an autonomous and responsible manner. This is a prerequisite for challenging, interesting and attractive learning and for people to develop the capacity for and love of learning throughout their lives. Learning-conducive environments support a genuine learning culture linking theory and practice. Focusing on the learner's needs and motivation, these environments value multiple learning styles, learner-centred approaches, learning together as social participation (i.e. in communities of practice in which people share activities and experiences over time), promoting critical thinking, creativity, autonomy, responsibility and sense of belonging.'* (Skule & Reichborn, 2002)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.itb.uni-bremen.de/projekte/orglearn/orglearn.htm>

Teamwork and the widespread use of peer group teaching and learning certainly contribute to the quality of learning-conducive work. A number of European countries are trying to achieve this goal. Examples include the 'open learning approaches' within school-based learning environments.

In **Denmark** the VET reform of 2000 established open learning cultures in some of the vocational colleges. At the same time, students were supported in defining individual learning pathways through the use of occupational learning management systems and changes in the role of teachers.

Self-directed or group-directed learning illustrates a changing characteristic of workplace learning: individual initiative is expected to drive the learning process. This approach offers new opportunities for students.

In initial VET, for example, **Ireland's** Leaving Certificate Vocational Programme (LCVP) requires students to take activity-driven link modules (enterprise education, preparation for work and work experience). As part of this approach, mini-company activities are supported, through which students plan, develop and manage a virtual or micro enterprise on their own (Irish country report). Similar approaches are found in **Denmark's** VET schools.

Even though open learning environments offer considerable potential for students' self-directed learning, some doubts about the method persist. Open learning arrangements tend to be too demanding for students who perform poorly or lack motivation. These learners tend to withdraw from the learning situation. At the same time, the traditional role teachers take is challenged, and some teachers have problems with the re-definition of their professional identity.

### ***Learning partnerships***

The development of the learning organization links closely to the realization that the effective VET teaching and learning is often now achieved through learning partnerships. Many companies, particularly small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) cannot provide sufficient developmental learning tasks on their own. In some cases small suppliers organise around a larger company, and establish a common platform of work performance cooperation based on shared knowledge and competencies. Workplace partnerships are an innovative way of linking companies and opens the possibility of developing regional innovation centres, including vocational schools and higher education. This has the potential to increase the supply of skills and competences, for both organisations and individuals. Schools can act as brokers of regional information and as network enablers. These activities improve organisations' regional links and market reputation, and should allow them to improve the performance in their core business.

The **GOLO project** is an example of an **SME Workplace Learning Partnership**. Through rotation of apprentices between different companies, learning is enriched and learning opportunities are expanded. This allows apprentices the range of experience to complete a comprehensive occupational profile.

The "**Chance Border region**" network is a cross-border collaboration set up in 2003 to explore, inter alia, cross border VET design between countries adjacent to the new Länder in **Germany**. Seventeen partners from **nine countries** have begun to co-operate on developing cross-border qualification profiles in numerous sectors.

For the school-based VET systems, work placements are intended to enable learners to gain appropriate knowledge, competence and skills in the workplace. Nevertheless, these work placements are often too short, not systematically integrated with the classroom learning, accidental and often with insufficient learning purpose. Improving the integration of learning sites for the school-based VET is, in many cases, to be a priority. The periods of work experience associated with the vocational baccalaureate in France can be cited as an example of good practice in this respect.

## **e-Learning**

e-Learning also moves the learning experience from the traditional classroom into the learner's world, providing access to learning anytime and anywhere without geographical or time barriers. The Internet provides access to learning materials and interaction with experts and fellow learners. e-Learning is a useful tool to help develop learning processes. The take up of e-learning still varies greatly between companies, as experience in Germany shows.

The numbers of those actually opting for the wide range of opportunities that computer-assisted, tele-networked and networked learning directly in the workplace can offer are few and far between in Germany. This is the conclusion of the study on the "learning-conducive design of workplaces for skilled workers on the basis of e-learning", conducted by the **Federal Institute for Vocational Training (BIBB)**. In contrast, in enterprises that have adopted e-learning, learning on the basis of electronic media carried out directly in the workplace already accounts for over 50 % of the overall training effort offering a wide range of e-learning opportunities. A majority of the surveyed small and medium and nearly half of the bigger enterprises do not use e-learning and has no plans to introduce e-learning in the future. The main reason is a lack of experience with this new form of learning. Personnel managers and trainers do not feel adequately prepared for e-learning: three-quarters of this group would welcome assistance in practical planning and decision-making.'

Similarly, take up varies greatly between European countries, as does access to broadband and hardware in schools, homes and businesses.

In the EU10, for example, one group of countries lags behind the EU15 average with regard to existing ICT facilities (e.g. **Poland** and **Slovakia**) and computer/vocational classroom ratios, and another group that is pushing ahead fast (e.g. **Estonia** and **Slovenia**).

**e-Learning clearly has the potential to stimulate learning networks and new forms of training organisation. The basic principle of good pedagogy remains that the design of the whole learning process (possibly supported by e-learning) is the decisive factor for the learner's success. Therefore, European countries' e-learning related measures should not be limited to questions of hard- and software, but rather focus on pedagogy and e-learning in work processes.**

## **Assessing and validating learning**

Assessing and validating learning is a key area in reforms of VET systems in Europe. The emergence of occupational competencies, the importance of situated and contextual learning and the rapid change in job requirements point to the need for developing new methods of assessment. Social requirements, individual needs and the emergence of lifelong learning today allow for greater flexibility and the individualisation of learning and of VET systems. Furthermore, the requirements of the European and global economies establish the need for greater transparency and portability of skills and their certification.

Recent developments in assessment are responsive to individualised forms of learning. The introduction of large-scale international assessments (e.g. TIMSS and PISA) means that testing has received increasing attention at the international level. Attention shifts away from testing formal curriculum-driven and occupational knowledge concepts, to evaluating everyday competencies. However, the overall question of evaluating actual occupational skills remains open to debate.

The increasing importance of assessing competencies, whether acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning, is becoming an issue in many European countries. The assessment methods that attempt to approach competence assessment take three distinctive lines of approach: (a) qualitative and content-oriented investigations, (b) biographical descriptive investigations, and (c) quantitatively based investigations. Although these assessment systems are usually innovative, in other respects they have to fulfil the same criteria as other testing and assessment systems.

### **Competence-based qualifications and skills demonstrations in Finland**

Vocational adult education and training have developed a system of competence-based qualifications. Assessment is through competence tests, which are independent of the way in which skills have been acquired. Qualification Committees play a significant role in this system: the assessment of skills demonstrations involves working life experts from outside vocational institutions, and qualification certificates are awarded by the appropriate Qualification Committee.

The recognition that knowledge and skills can be developed outside formal training is leading almost all EU member states to formulate policies for validating the outcomes of individuals' informal and non-formal learning.

Countries are either planning measures to recognise informal and non-formal learning (**Belgium-FI, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Liechtenstein, Latvia, Malta, Poland, Romania, Slovakia**), or are currently implementing recognition measures (**Austria, Belgium-Fr, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, the UK**). Three examples follow.

**Denmark:** Access for all to validation of prior learning in initial VET and adult vocational training

**France:** A systematic procedure for recognising informal and non-formal learning and competences

**Netherlands:** Developing a system of accreditation of prior learning (APL) and establishment of a knowledge centre on Accreditation of Prior Learning.

Validation of informal and non-formal learning can have a summative or formative component. The latter makes it relevant to active learning in a working context. Appropriate methods and pilots are still needed with regard to the formative component. Many countries' schemes are at an early stage of implementation, and variations are occurring in terms of how broad and how comprehensive a system is envisaged. Most existing schemes appear to have a summative function of giving credit in an educational pathway, with a double purpose of creating system efficiency and widening individuals' participation and motivation to engage in lifelong learning. The construct still needs testing in different situations.

It is also the case that testing and assessment have a summative and formative role. They act as a quality control for learning processes on both the individual and the aggregated level of learning institutions and educational systems. Testing and assessment also have important functions and effects at the individual and group learning levels, such as the recognition and diagnosis of individual mastery, and the improvement of teaching and learning processes. However, summative and formative purposes of assessment may on occasion not fit well together.

**Assessment and testing practice is often caught in a dilemma between achieving efficiency goals by limiting the cost and time of assessment, and aligning testing and assessment with modern learning objectives.**

### **The role of teachers and trainers**

A key problem in vocational teachers' and trainers' search for professional recognition is contained in the paradox that while vocational teachers and trainers are essential to supporting skill development in the workforce, they do not enjoy high status for occupying this role. The profile of VET teachers, at least in schools and colleges, is of an ageing profession, often attracting comparatively low salaries. In the Czech Republic, for example, a goal has been set to increase teachers' wages from a level of 20% below the national average to 37% above it. At the same time, training has diversified in the workplace and the profile of VET teachers and trainers has grown more varied. Profiles include:

Teachers in schools	Trainers in publicly supported institutions, with emphasis on social inclusion
Instructors and assistants in schools	
Trainers and tutors in enterprises, both dedicated and with other responsibilities	Trainers in employers' organizations, private sector training providers, etc.

To these may be added guidance professionals.

The issue of teachers' and trainers' skills and knowledge is acknowledged as an important factor influencing the quality of all educational activities. Up to now, there have been few attempts at the European level to tackle the specific challenges of the education and training of vocational teachers and trainers. This issue deserves special attention in view of the importance of vocational teachers through their direct and indirect influence in the development of skills in the economy, and also in view of the varied occupational tasks they have to fulfil. Two trends are worth watching.

Some countries (e.g., **Estonia** and the **UK**) are taking major steps towards the further professionalisation of teachers and pursuing ambitious goals to improve teacher quality. In contrast, other countries (e.g., **Germany**, **Turkey**) appear much more oriented towards allowing more flexibility in teacher and trainer recruitment policies and practices.

Many European countries have introduced mandatory requirements for teacher continuing training. A quality model of vocational teacher and trainer education, training and recruitment policy has to be flexible in order to attract individuals with different backgrounds, while at the same time raising standards in skills in knowledge (especially with regard to pedagogy and the subject matter).

**Given the fundamental importance of VET teachers and trainers for the further development of Europe towards the Lisbon goal, overcoming the current fragmentation of VET professionals should be high on the political agenda. Strong cooperation among European higher education institutes involved in teacher training may help to raise standards.**

## Quality assurance and the dynamics of innovation.

The increasing autonomy and decentralisation of VET provision is one of the main reasons for the introduction of quality management at the national level. Furthermore, the Copenhagen Declaration envisages that establishing quality standards for vocational education can assist increased occupational and geographical mobility of the workforce in Europe, and enable wider access to lifelong learning.

The issue of quality assurance is on the political agenda of all European countries. Many have just started planning, while others have implemented quality assurance systems (e.g. Austria, Belgium-FL and Ireland). Many countries are applying new systems of quality development and assurance to VET systems. The range of methods introduced varies between standard quality management procedures such as ISO, and approaches specifically targeted to the needs of schools, such as the QIS (Qualität in Schulen) in Austria. Self-evaluation is emphasized in some quality assurance process for institutional VET, for example in Denmark and the Netherlands.

**Denmark:** the approach to quality is the demand for systematic self-evaluation and follow-up; framework governance; continuous quality development. The task of the ministry is to offer support and inspiration to local initiatives.

An important test of the different country strategies for quality assurance is how well and how fast they are able to scale-up any innovation. The implementation of pilot projects is a well-tried means to introduce or test initiatives in VET teaching and learning in most European countries. However, the sustainability and system building potential of many innovative VET concepts are not fully tapped. This clearly is detrimental to the quality improvement of VET

systems as a whole. Again, Denmark provides a model. Denmark provides a positive example of scale-up from local or regional pilot projects. Well-developed mechanisms and comparatively few institutional and political barriers support a fast, wide and continuous dissemination of innovations in VET. The success factor in this case seems to be a high degree of local and regional networking among VET actors and embedding in regional innovation systems. In the Danish example, a number of piloting locations are selected—an approach which builds a network for the exchange of experiences with innovative practices. Curriculum innovations often originate in problems that arise at the regional level, which are then tackled through close co-ordination between practitioners from schools, regional or sector advisory boards and national policymakers. The experiences and practices gathered at the local level can, after a certain period of time, be transferred to the next higher level. Ultimately, this process leads to a comprehensive system-wide change, because system reform, teacher education and school development are linked.

**If the Copenhagen priority of promoting quality assurance alongside innovation is to be achieved, it seems likely that some countries will need to place reliance on adapting externally developed mechanisms for quality assurance. In addition, instruments and tools should be developed to ensure scaling-up of innovative vocational education practices across Europe.**

## Building competences for a European labour market

Against the background of the Lisbon strategy, wider issues are raised about the challenges VET systems face in opening up to new demands, as they strive to become inclusive and knowledge based economies. These include: the challenge of linking VET policy with associated policy areas; adapting VET to meet future demands for skills; the role of social partnership and social dialogue in matching qualifications to needs; the potential of the Copenhagen process; and, the ways in which VET can contribute to forming a European labour market.

### Challenges for VET in a globalising world

Individual learning, learning in organisations and the diffusion of knowledge are all changing. To respond to these changes, reforms in vocational education and training have to be connected to other policy domains such as labour market and innovation policies, and to meet the growing demands for a highly skilled workforce and, simultaneously, for the inclusion of people who lack basic skills.

The disconnectedness of policies both at national and at EU levels is a challenge, as the DGVT reports underline, if we take as a starting point that to develop learning abilities within systems is a central goal of member states' and EU policy action. Different policy areas connected to the knowledge and learning theme are, for example, entrepreneurship, innovation, inclusion and mobility. Several DGVT reports note a lack of coherence in associated policies at the national level, and this means that countries need to re-configure traditional policy realms in order to develop much more integrated policy approaches. The messages from the Kok report (2003) also suggest a changed understanding in the interconnectedness of different policy domains as a prerequisite to change and innovation. At the European level, this could be accomplished eventually through broader joint initiatives on the theme of adaptation and innovation of our learning systems.

A measured step in the right direction, as several of the DGVT reports suggest, would be to establish fewer and better integrated reporting procedures at the European level. This could also provide the basis for member states to involve wider ranges of stakeholders in reporting procedures and dissemination.

**It would be beneficial to make reporting processes for education and training at the country and European level more coherent, and to improve the links with the reporting processes for employment and social inclusion associated with the Lisbon goal.**

At least three issues emerge in relation to the overall governance models and to the conception of what it means to create a high-skills learning society in the EU.

Are there major cross-European differences in what is understood as the knowledge society, and if so what opportunities and challenges does that pose in terms of governance models and strategic aims for the future orientation of VET?

How should the problem of those marginalised in the labour market and those least educated and least motivated to engage in lifelong learning be addressed within the high skill / high value-added strategy?

To what extent can a European strategy fruitfully provide a common framework in all member states for goals as diverse as competitiveness, inclusion, and civic participation in its broadest sense?

From the point of the view of member states, DGVT responses indicate that member states are taking on board the approach and the instruments of the Copenhagen Declaration, which they see as contributing to national aspirations and reforms. At the same time, the national reports show the multiplicity of approaches and current priorities tied to particular national and regional contexts and trajectories, thereby underlining the necessity of a bottom-up approach as framed by the Copenhagen Declaration. Progress has been made and can be furthered according to the DGVT assessments in a number of ways.

- Increased bench-learning among Member States, not least given the variation in policy contexts and resources available for system reform;
- Implementation of common European reference frameworks as essential to establishing a common exchange mechanism for qualifications given the variations in qualification frameworks and not least also current European sector developments;
- Methodologies for increased use of APL - both in education and training contexts and in work settings;
- A more strategic and stronger linkage between labour market initiatives and VET, and between IVET and lifelong learning; and
- More interconnected use of European initiatives and work groups.

## **VET development: adapting to demand**

As firms and sectors compete on innovation and as globalisation creates turbulence in traditional markets, new types of skills and competencies are called for. In circumstances of rapid change, future skills needs are uncertain and difficult to anticipate. Country and sector examples of innovative approaches to assessing emerging skills needs are in evidence, particularly building on futures methodologies.

**France:** an agreement between the social partners requires that each sector that has not already done so should take the necessary steps to establish *Prospective Observatories* on professions and qualifications

**Finland**<sup>3</sup>: a foresight methodology operates on a nationwide basis using a method known as the manpower requirement method. The refined method uses a computer-based tool. Working groups produce alternative forecasts, for example describing the consequences of a slow, rapid, or steady economic development. An inter-governmental working group on forecasting issues 2004- 2007 comprises 11 ministries

At this stage there is little evidence-based analysis available on the systemic effects of future-oriented approaches to skills identification compared to traditional forecasting methods, nor on the skills needed to apply futures thinking in VET. Cedefop is well positioned to coordinate further exploration of innovative methods for anticipating (uncertain) future skills needs. For countries, sectors, or social partners that are engaged in new methods for innovations regarding skills demands, Leonardo da Vinci programmes can provide a platform for analysing and learning from good practices with a view to systemic uptake.

Most VET systems are currently faced with the dilemmas of becoming more efficient, market-led and inclusive. The European social partner agreement on lifelong learning is a viable framework for countering the possible negative effects of labour market flexibilisation on individuals' lack of possibilities to engage in lifelong learning measures.

A particular issue for active labour market policies is how to balance shorter-term concerns of getting individuals back into employment with providing individuals with skills for the long run. Analysis of available data suggests that this is still an area for further research, particularly focusing on the mix of instruments for different target groups in the labour markets. One possible model is a set of mechanisms that can link labour market programmes to later educational opportunities, involving recognition of informal and non-formal learning. The connection between career-related information, guidance and counselling services shared by both labour market and education programmes has to be effective.

It could be argued that a knowledge-intensive economy will always be characterised by skills mismatches. Given the time lag between the emergence of new skills requirements and the graduation of a new cohort with the appropriate skills profiles, VET systems are pressured to be able to cope with continuous adaptation and change to meet short-term employment requirements as well as longer-term employability and broader civic requirements.

## Social partnership and sector dialogue – matching qualifications to needs

The European social partner framework agreement on lifelong learning has moved lifelong learning higher up the agenda at the European sector level and created a large number of new initiatives. In many of the EU10 and some other member states it is also evident that a closer collaboration with the social partners and with sector bodies is important in changing the VET to becoming more demand-driven.

The **Electricity Sector:** Joint statement on lifelong learning

**Metal, Engineering and Technology**-based sectors: Joint conference on skills shortages and achieving the Lisbon Goals

**Postal sector:** new launch of good practices on training and skills development

The **European graphical sector network (EGIN):** currently working on adapting a Europass particularly for the sector with participation of employers, employee organisations, and VET institutions

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.oph.fi/english/page.asp?path=447:490:6750>

The sector initiatives provide an important contribution to the Lisbon objectives, for example in sectors where there is little tradition for education and training, and in sectors such as ICT that have a strong international character. They have the potential to ensure more equal access for disadvantaged groups. Thus, both more and better jobs may be created. However, the Copenhagen objectives imply sufficient inter-connection between sector initiatives. This is to ensure that frameworks, standards, and certifications allow for cross-sector integration and mobility, as sectors converge and new occupational profiles develop. It is urgent that a common European qualification reference framework be implemented. The framework has the potential to become a common template that connects to national systems and that allows for horizontal and vertical cross-sector initiatives to be mutually compatible. The mapping initiative led by Cedefop on sector initiatives is a first important stepping stone. Further analysis should show how these initiatives could best interconnect with innovation efforts in national systems.

There is clear evidence that the establishment of work-council type bodies can increase efficiency of CVT and focus attention on its benefits. Monitoring their impact can assess the extent to which they contribute to a European labour market model for competitiveness based on dialogue, decentralisation, and innovation from the floor made possible by a well qualified labour force, with transferable skills and work organisation practices.

## Progress on the Copenhagen Declaration

Each of the identified priorities of strengthening the European dimension, improving transparency, recognition of competences and qualifications, promoting quality assurance and the associated concrete actions continue to play an important role in furthering the contribution of VET to achieving the Lisbon goal. Strong systems and practices for lifelong guidance are, for example, a prerequisite for flexible systems of VET and lifelong learning that are able to meet future skills needs that are often difficult to identify in situations of rapid labour market and technological change. A similarly positive conclusion can be reached for each of the concrete actions being developed.

**Innovation in teaching and learning for VET is not given sufficient priority or visibility in the follow up to the Copenhagen Declaration, or in the OMC (Open Method of Coordination) process for education and training. This action has the potential to enhance collaboration between the policy, research and practitioner communities at all levels, for example using measures under the Leonardo da Vinci programme.**

This also provides the opportunity to draw communities of practitioners into VET activity at the EU or inter-country level.

Although the Bologna process is further advanced than the Copenhagen process, it seems important not to await the results of the Bologna process concerning developments of a European qualification framework. Development should be harmonised. The risk of delaying the process is that a European framework for VET then gets locked within a higher education context, and that it thereby will be more difficult to develop an overarching framework encompassing both VET and higher education to enable the development of lifelong learning policies.

**Other than the omission from current actions of cooperation in innovation in teaching and learning as a major action, the evidence (in particular from DGVTs' responses) is that the blend of current actions resulting from the Copenhagen Declaration is appropriate.**

## Labour market mobility

The overall volume of expected inwards migration after enlargement and from the remaining candidate countries is much less than predicted in the public debate and policy rhetoric in many member states. Looking at the profile of potential migrants, the expected flows could improve the socio-economic base in the receiving countries of the EU. Investments in

adequate lifelong learning options as part of employment policies and firms' competition strategies in the new member state countries could reduce unintended negative effects.

The outflow of migrants from the EU10 has been estimated at between one and four million within the EU over the next fifteen years. A new study based on data from the European Foundation for the Improvement of Working and Living Conditions concludes that the most probable volume of intended migration from the EU10 within the next five years will equal to about 1% of the population of these countries. Furthermore, data collected by Byrska & Venables (2004) tend to show that migration is likely to be of a short-term nature, but also that the largest migration potential is among the young, well-educated, and mainly unmarried citizens of the EU10.

The quality of life and better economic prospects are the main drivers for migration among young and better-qualified people. **EU mobility policies should focus on and expand options for short-term educational work and study mobility through European grant schemes for young people** and through financial incentives for sending and receiving institutions. These programmes could strengthen the development of a European knowledge space.

**As Europe develops towards a more open and international labour market, VET can reduce barriers and ease frictions that currently inhibit mobility of workers and learners. VET has a contribution to make towards a European labour market, but it is not the major driver for creating greater migration of people.**

For the long term, mobility of teachers and learners impacts on mobility on the labour market. Without institutional strategies for internationalisation, mobility easily becomes an effort of the few and is easily seen as a cost and an administrative burden. Sharing best practice European and national cases on institutional internationalisation - and its benefits seen from a learner, teacher, employee, and employer perspective - could contribute to a more strategic approach to internationalisation in VET institutions.

If mobility is to become an option for a much wider group of VET students, then mobility must be defined in a broader manner than it is in many instances today. Mobility should at a system level and at an institutional level comprise several elements.

- Study visits and actual placements for school leaders, learners, teachers, social partners, and new VET graduates;
- Guest teachers from other VET systems;
- Courses offered in other language than the native language and with an international dimension in the curriculum including comprehensive opportunities for language and inter-cultural training;
- Financial incentives for school administrations to offer mobility schemes;
- Virtual mobility whereby students can follow modules or collaborate with VET students on joint projects, or whereby VET teachers can share/ develop curriculum and practices.

The instruments associated with mobility have to be known and understood, also at an operational level. The member states have a particular responsibility to ensure that the Europass launch is successful.

## In conclusion

Member states and the social partners should consider how they could encourage greater participation in European collaboration for VET in pursuit of the Lisbon goal, involving wider communities of policy makers, researchers and in particular practitioners and learners.

The question for the Commission is whether agencies such as Cedefop and ETF can facilitate new networks that involve far larger numbers of participants including more practitioners than has been the case up till now, and whether it can develop communication tools that will enable more such innovative collaboration to take place between practitioners than is presently the case. The social partners' actions and EU regional policies and networks could nurture this expanding involvement.

**Future European cooperation for VET should involve a wider public, including wider communities of policy makers, researchers and practitioners.**