

**Achieving the Lisbon Goal:**  
The Contribution of Vocational Education and Training Systems

# Country Report: Denmark

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This report is one of a series of European country reports. It has been written to support a larger report: **Achieving the Lisbon Goal: the contribution of VET**, prepared by the **Lisbon-to-Copenhagen-to-Maastricht Consortium** for the European Commission. This report is not intended as an official view. But rather independent insight into specific aspects of National VET systems in Europe.

## Contents

<b>1. STRATEGIES AND BARRIERS FOR IMPROVING THE STATUS, FLEXIBILITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF INITIAL VET (IVET) .....</b>	<b>3</b>
A. RAISE THE STATUS OF VET.....	3
B + C IMPROVE ATTRACTIVENESS AND FLEXIBILITY IN I-VET .....	4
D. MAIN BARRIERS AND INITIATIVES TO OVERCOME BARRIERS.....	4
<b>2. REDUCING THE NUMBER OF EARLY SCHOOL LEAVERS.....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>3. INCREASING VET AT TERTIARY LEVEL.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. INCENTIVES FOR UPDATING KNOWLEDGE &amp; SKILLS.....</b>	<b>9</b>
D. SUCCESSFUL MEASURES OF SOCIAL INCLUSION.....	9
<b>5. MEETING THE CHALLENGES OF AN AGEING POPULATION .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>6. EFFECTIVENESS AND EFFICIENCY IN THE SYSTEM.....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>7. IMPROVEMENTS IN LEARNING PROCESSES AND CONTENTS.....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>8. IMPROVING THE INTEGRATION OF DIFFERENT LEARNING SITES; INTEGRATION OF FORMAL AND INFORMAL LEARNING .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>9. EVALUATION AND QUALITY ASSURANCE OF VET PROVISION .....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>10. TEACHERS' QUALIFICATIONS AND STATUS .....</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>11. CHALLENGES &amp; POLICIES IN RELATION TO THE LISBON EMPLOYMENT STRATEGY ....</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>12. INVOLVING STAKEHOLDERS.....</b>	<b>26</b>
<b>13. TRANSPARENCY, RECOGNITION &amp; MOBILITY .....</b>	<b>28</b>
D. EUROPASS AND EURO-CV.....	29

## Theme 1 - Progress of national VET systems towards meeting the challenges of Lisbon

### 1. *Strategies and barriers for improving the status, flexibility and attractiveness of Initial VET (IVET)*

#### **Introduction**

This report draws substantially on research work conducted for the Danish Government by the author, other publications and sources from the Danish Ministry of Education; OECD and from a national report prepared by the author to the OECD LLL initiative commissioned by the Ministry of Education.

#### **A. Raise the status of VET**

The government sets out the overall framework for vocational education and training, but the social partners have a considerable influence on the content of the VET courses. Vocational education and training is governed by the Ministry of Education.

The colleges are financed by the state according to a “taximeter” system whereby every graduated student generates financial support. The Danish VET system is a centralised system. The Ministry of Education lays down all standards in the form of regulations. The social partners prepare the regulations, which are in turn approved by the Ministry of Education. There is no regional level in the VET system, only national and local levels.

In 2002, the present government launched a comprehensive action plan for reforms of the Danish qualification system under the heading “*Better Education*”. The strategy comprises a number of initiatives within the entire educational system. It includes cross-cutting initiatives on credit transfer and recognition of prior learning to ensure greater flexibility, higher proficiency levels, and stronger coherence and progression in the proficiency and competence requirements with clearer formulation of targets and clearer criteria for the assessment of targets.

The action plans states:

*“It is the goal that the Danish education system matches the best in the world, also when evaluation and benchmarking are carried out cross-nationally”*

The *vocational education and training programmes* (VET – technical programmes and commerce and trade) make up the major part of the vocational upper-secondary programmes. At present, there are 90 different programmes within the commercial and technical areas with a total of more than 200 specialisations. Programmes are typically of 3-5 years’ duration, and they all include vocational as well as general components.

The programmes are meant to provide young people with solid professional, personal and general qualifications, which are nationally recognised and address changing demands in the labour market. They prepare directly for specific jobs within the different branches of trade within a tri-partite governance structure. All vocational upper-secondary programmes not only lead to formal vocational quali-

cations; they must also prepare the students for education at a higher level, which has been a central element in improving the attractiveness of VET. An indicator of a raised parity of esteem is that a growing number of students enter I-VET with a qualification from the general upper-secondary youth programme. Another central element in Reform 2000 was the introduction of a personal educational plan for each student, the aim being that each student explore and develop his or her abilities and motivation to the maximum.

### ***B + C Improve attractiveness and flexibility in I-VET***

In June 2003, the Act on Vocational Education and Training was revised (Danish Act No. 448, June 2003, "*Simplification and Flexibility*"). As a follow-up to the legislation, new initiatives have been launched to renew the principles of dual vocational education and in line with the Government's plan "*Better Education*".

With the revision of the act, Reform 2000, the flexibility of the qualification framework has been increased within the perspective of a lifelong learning agenda. All programmes should as far as possible be organised so that students may obtain a partial *named and defined* qualification. The partial programme should be organised so that the student at a later stage may begin the education again, obtaining credit for what was already completed. The qualification should also be of relevance to the labour market and ensure that the student has the right to unemployment benefits. The student will receive certification for the stepwise qualification. Other elements to improve the attractiveness are that:

- Students have to "meet their profession" as early as possible
- Comprehensive instruments for monitoring quality within the system (drop out rates employment rates, use of credit transfer, etc)
- There are extended possibilities for the student to design his/her own path through the system – also as crossovers between the different upper-secondary youth programmes
- The possibilities to step in and out of the system are extended through stepwise qualifications thereby opening up for a lifelong learning perspective
- Real competence is taken into consideration through transfer credits and assessment of prior learning.

The goal of the reforms has also been to improve flexibility between the different upper-secondary programmes including a better credit transfer scheme for the general and vocational upper-secondary programmes, thereby improving the attractiveness of the system. More emphasis is placed on output-oriented target and framework governance. For students within the I-VET programme it is possible with the latest reforms to take courses as electives from the general upper-secondary programmes (HTX and HHX programmes).

### ***D. Main barriers and initiatives to overcome barriers***

Like other dual systems, the Danish I-VET system has - in spite of specially targeted initiatives - had problems creating a sufficient number of apprentice places to match actual demand. This is partially caused by structural changes in the labour market, but is also caused by patterns in preference for certain vocations being overly in demand among the student population.

In 1993 the government introduced the school apprentice model as an educational guarantee for students within job areas with good employment prospects after graduation. The school apprentice system comprises different elements of company placement and – with great variations from trade to trade – many students have ended up getting an apprentice agreement at a later stage with an enterprise.

As part of the latest reform of the VET system in 2003, it has been the specific intention of the government to reduce the number of school apprentice places from approximately 5000 in 2003 to 1200 yearly.

A central element in this is the formulation of stepwise qualifications within existing programmes and formulation of new short vocational programmes. To do so, the government is currently in the process of analysing the labour market through different instruments to uncover potential qualification needs where new short I-VET programmes may be formulated (up to 2 years with or without an apprentice component).

Another element in replacing the number of school apprentice places is the introduction of EUD+. Students who have completed the first level of qualification in a vocational programme that has several defined qualification steps, each corresponding to a recognised job profile, can return to school with or without an apprentice agreement. To return to EUD+ the student must be under 25, and the student must have had at least six months of paid employment obtained by means of the “*Step 1 Qualification*”. The student will go through a competence assessment that will form the basis for a personal educational plan. EUD+ must include a maximum of two months of practical education. Other praxis experience has to be obtained through paid employment. EUD+ may comprise elements from vocational education and training programmes as well as from adult vocational training programmes. It is expected that the first students can begin EUD+ in January 2005.

Students in a school apprentice programmes, which includes several qualification levels, can only remain in the school apprentice programme until they obtain the first recognised qualification level. An example is the Data Technician programme: students can remain in the school apprentice programme - in case they do not find an apprentice place – only until the qualification level “IT-supporter”. After this, students must find employment. If the students find paid employment based on the first qualification level for a minimum of six months, they have the right as described above to return to education and complete a full programme to the journeyman’s level.

The question remains if these measures will lead to a general lower qualification level among vocational graduates, where programmes typically have had a longer duration, or if it could lead to reduced dropout rates among students with different forms of learning difficulties. Another question is the future employment prospects of graduates with short-cycle vocational qualifications given the general increase in qualification levels in the population, structural changes in the labour market, and - not least - growing outsourcing outside DK in several sectors.

## 2. Reducing the number of early school leavers

### *Educational attainment of the population aged 25-64 by ISCED level,% (2002)*

	Level of education		
	ISCED 0-2	ISCED 3-4	ISCED 5-6
EU-15	35%	43%	22%
Denmark	20%	53%	27%

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#### DENMARK

2000 2002 2003

11.6 19.6

2

In 2001, 82.8% of 15-19 year olds were enrolled in an educational program.

Denmark does not have a long tradition for being an immigrant country.

For students who completed lower-secondary education in 2001, 97% are expected to continue in an upper-secondary programme, 54% are expected to continue in a general upper-secondary programme, 36% in a vocational upper-secondary programme, and 7% in a non-competency-giving programme.

### *Proportion of students completing a programme they have started, by level of education, 1992 – 2001*

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
	%									
Vocational introduction courses <sup>1)</sup>	85	89	79	83	83	78	79	81	81	87
<b>General upper-secondary education:</b>										
Gymnasium and HF	89	88	88	87	89	88	87	87	86	84
HHX and HTX <sup>1)</sup>	86	80	82	82	78	81	80	80	79	77
<b>Vocational upper-secondary education:</b>										
Basic courses commercial vocation <sup>2)</sup>	79	85	87	85	87	73	82	83	82	81
Basic courses technical vocation <sup>2)</sup>	91	87	91	97	96	96	92	82	72	64
Main courses, vocational, etc.	88	88	87	87	86	86	88	85	84	82
<b>Higher education:</b>										
Short-cycle higher education	71	68	69	70	72	70	72	69	70	71
Medium-cycle higher education	72	72	70	69	72	73	75	74	73	72
Bachelor programmes <sup>3)</sup>	65	69	70	64	64	61	61	59	59	56
Undivided <i>candidatus</i> programmes <sup>4) 5)</sup>	47	47	55	55	73	70	69	69	70	72
<i>Candidatus</i> part of divided programmes	69	71	66	67	54	63	69	63	65	63
Philosophiae doctor (ph.d.)	73	82	75	75	77	80	77	76	82	.

1 ISCED 0-2: Pre-primary, primary and lower-secondary education  
 ISCED 3-4: Upper-secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education  
 ISCED 5-6: Tertiary education  
 Source: Eurostat, Newcronos, Labour Force Survey)

2 Percentage of the population, aged 18 to 24 years having left education and training with a low level of education (2000, 2002), CEDEFOP, country reports

1) In 1994 and 1995 HTX (higher technical examination course) and HHX (higher commercial examination course) respectively were extended to become 3-year courses. At the same time, the access route was changed from a VET-school period to direct access from basic school. From 1996 to 2001 the table figures lack reporting concerning entrance examination for Bachelor of Science.

2) From 1994 to 1997, there were problems with the registration of completed and non-completed courses. A large part of the non-completed courses were erroneously registered as completed courses. Consequently, completion rates for this period are too high. From the middle of 1996, the introductory course for the commercial VET-programmes was changed so that the students could prolong it from 1 to 2 years. Around half of the students availed themselves of this possibility. On 1 January 2001, the new VET reform took effect whereby the 1st and 2nd school periods were replaced by 7 access channels. However, experiments with this new structure had already been initiated as of 1999. The basic course can vary from 20-60 weeks, but currently averages 22 weeks.

3) The fact that there are figures for the bachelor programmes from before the programmes were formally initiated is due to the fact that the bachelor of economics and business language programmes had this structure before the reform and because pilot projects were being carried out with certain bachelor programmes. In general, the bachelor reform has led to some uncertainty in the data basis during the restructuring period. For the last few years, there is insufficient reporting on the number of completed bachelors from certain universities

4) Examples of undivided candidatus programmes are engineering, dentistry, pharmacy, and music/art under the Ministry of Cultural Affairs.

5 See also note 3) on insufficient reporting.

Until the mid-1980s less than 3% of the Danish population were immigrants or descendants of immigrants - this figure includes people from the Scandinavian countries and Western Europe and the USA. In the past 15 years the number has increased. As of January 2001 there were 395,947 immigrants and their descendants in Denmark, corresponding to 7.4% of the population. When the current government came into power, a number of regulations were implemented to reduce the number of refugees and limit options for family reunification.

Not only immigrants but also many children of immigrants who have grown up in the Danish educational system experience difficulties and have a higher dropout rate or non-completion rate than that of average Danish youth in the vocational education system (OECD 2002- AFK 2002).<sup>3</sup> When it comes to completing an upper-secondary general qualifying programme the differences are fewer, though more marked for young women than for young men.

From the point of view of education, descendants of immigrants manage considerably better than their parents. Nevertheless, the analysis shows that just under half of the young male descendants and just over one third of the female descendants have neither completed nor are participating in a qualifying education.

### ***Programmes for students with special needs***

Programmes for students with special needs are also an important part of the training offer.<sup>4</sup> There are two initiatives that target young people who are not in employment or have difficulties finding employment. These initiatives do not lead to a qualification but are aimed at qualifying these young people for a job in the labour market or to enter an upper-secondary youth programme. The programmes are:

<sup>3</sup> Research Council of the Danish Counties and Municipalities (Amternes og Kommunernes Forskningsråd), Immigrant Integration in Denmark (in Danish, "Indvandrernes integration i Danmark"), Nina Smith, Hans Hummelgaard et. al., February 2002

<sup>4</sup> Speech given by the Danish Minister of Education. "Danish experiences with educational programmes for students with special needs and measures to reduce drop out in I-VET", October 2003

- The *Initial Foundation Vocational Programme (Erhvervsgrunduddannelse (EGU))* which has a duration of two or three years. It is aimed at young people who are not in employment, who have not started an upper-secondary programme, and who due to various disabilities would have difficulties completing an ordinary vocational qualification programme. The programme has a practically-oriented school component and an apprentice component. There are approximately 1000 students in the programme per year. Once a student has completed the programme, he or she has the right to register to receive unemployment benefits.
- *Production schools*, which do not form part of vocational education and training (VET) and are not part of the ISCED framework, as they do not provide a qualification. They may, however, offer single subjects from the VET programmes. They target young people under 25 who have not attained an upper-secondary qualification or who have dropped out of an upper-secondary programme and who do not have immediate abilities to complete an upper-secondary qualification. The Danish Act on Production Schools stipulates that the offer should be organised with the particular aim that the pupils acquire qualifications so that they can complete an upper-secondary qualification.<sup>5</sup>

### **3. Increasing VET at tertiary level**

#### **Short-cycle programmes**

There are 15 short-cycle education programmes leading to qualifications covering both the service sector and technical fields. Students who have completed a relevant VET programme or another upper-secondary programme have access. These programmes can be used as transfer credit towards a medium- or long-cycle higher education programme.

The number of students has increased over the years. In 2000 there were 23 781 students enrolled, compared to 12 292 in 1990.

#### **Medium-cycle programmes**

Medium-cycle programmes *normally* last three or four years. Examples of these programmes are those leading to qualifications as diploma engineer (BSc in Engineering), librarian, primary and lower-secondary school teacher (*Folkeskole* teacher), journalist, educator, social worker, nurse, occupational and physiotherapist, midwife, HD (diploma in business economics, under the open education system after 1990). The admission requirement is normally a completed examination at general upper-secondary level, but it is possible to transfer credits from other programmes as well as to be awarded credit for occupational experience, for instance in connection with admission to the educator and social worker programmes under the upper-secondary I-VET scheme.

#### **Further vocational education and training for adults**

The advanced further adult education system is aimed at adults who have qualifications and work experience. The further education system is the framework for continuing education and competence development for adults. In terms of refer-

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<sup>5</sup> Act on production schools 2003

ence level it corresponds to higher education in the ordinary education system. The further education system is offered at three levels:

- \_ Short -cycle adult education (*videregående voksendannelse, VVU*) corresponding to short-cycle programmes (*korte videregående uddannelser, KVU*) in the ordinary system.
- \_ Diploma programmes corresponding to medium-cycle programmes (*mellem-lange videregående uddannelser, MVU*) in the ordinary system.
- \_ Master programmes corresponding to long-cycle programmes (*Lange videregående uddannelser, LVU*) in the ordinary system.

The educational programmes may be principally structured in two different manners:

- \_ As regulated programmes where the specific regulations governing the programme are defined through legislation for that particular programme
- \_ As flexible programmes where the educational programmes are specified in a personal educational plan for the individual within the overall framework of the further education system. This form of structure offers a great level of flexibility for the individual both regarding content and the individual components of the programme, but also in a manner that ensures validity and transparency within the overall reference system.

#### **4. Incentives for updating knowledge & skills**

Educational traditions and approaches, particularly in adult education, still have their roots in the “*Danish Folk High School (Folkehøjskole) tradition*” (OECD 2000).<sup>6</sup> Education is not just seen as an instrument for economic development. A central objective of education is to contribute to the furthering of the individual’s personal development in its broadest sense so that he or she can actively participate in and contribute to a democratic society. The high participation rate in adult vocational education and training and enterprise motivation to let employees participate in education and training can undoubtedly be ascribed to the high level of public funding.

#### **D. Successful measures of social inclusion**

##### **Basic adult education**

Basic adult education (*grundlæggende voksendannelse, GVU*) is not a new educational programme following the adult education reform, but a new organisation of existing vocationally-oriented programmes at upper-secondary level. It has the same exams and gives the adult the same nationally recognised qualification and professional title as does the general vocational education system. The central element in the GVU framework is that it offers formal learning (notably adult vocational training) to adults with low levels of education. In addition, work-based experience is assessed and recognised as part of a formal education and training programme, thereby considerably reducing the duration of the residual VET programme. Based on the adult’s total qualifications and competencies, an individual

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<sup>6</sup> Background report, Denmark- OECD Adult Learning, 2001

and flexible plan for supplementary training and education is established, which can lead to a formal qualification as in the general vocational VET system. With “GVU,” adults no longer need to enter an apprentice agreement with a company in order to obtain a nationally recognised vocational qualification. It offers adults above the age of 25 the option of obtaining a vocational qualification within the legal framework of the general VET system, but on other terms regarding structure, duration, and financing.

The adult education and the adult vocational training systems were reformed in 2001. The aim of the reform was to create a coherent further education system for adults that offered the same qualifications to adults as the general qualification system offered to youth in general. Such a system was constructed with parallel reference levels with the aim to motivate adults to return to learning within a life-long learning agenda.

Another central element to motivate adults to participate is that the reform also ensured that adults be credited for competencies they have already acquired through the formal education system, informally, through on-the-job training schemes, or through work experience.

The aim of the reform of the system has been to create a coherent and uniform structure and transparency in the basic and further education system without dead-ends, and to create a framework for lifelong learning for the individual with a point of departure in the individual’s experiences and educational aspirations. The legislation was amended in June 2003 (*Danish Act no. 73*) together with the legislation on adult vocational training programmes (*Danish Act no. 74*) following the change of government.

From 2002, the same legislation and governance framework included VET schools (technical and commercial colleges), agricultural schools, and adult vocational training centres. This has constituted the basis for a unified institutional structure, paving the way for mergers of training centres and VET colleges (one-house strategy).<sup>7</sup>

Important objectives of the adult education reform have been:

- To offer good and relevant adult education and continuing further education and training programmes to all adults at all levels, from the low-skilled to university graduates.
- To ensure that the provision of further and continuing education and training constitutes a transparent and coherent system of competencies with well known and comparable competence levels. Vocationally-oriented adult education and general adult education consistently mirror the levels of the general education system.
- To ensure good possibilities for “bridging” education programmes and education levels, thus avoiding dead ends.
- To offer new possibilities of more systematic recognition of adult vocational training courses into adult VET programmes including the new basic adult edu-

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<sup>7</sup> The Danish Ministry of Education- *“Adult learning in Denmark”* (2002)

cation framework (GVU), ensuring recognition of competencies for low-skilled adults to increase their motivation and benefits regarding lifelong learning.

- To add new and more flexible instruments for recognition of non-formal and informal learning, especially work-based learning, both in CVT, the Adult VET programmes and within the GVU framework, as well as in the organisation of advanced further education.
- To offer new provisions for basic literacy and numeracy skills for the low-skilled.

Admissions requirements are two years of relevant work experience and a general school proficiency level that corresponds to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade basic level in subjects relevant to the programme.

Literacy and numeracy courses introduced with the adult education reform are free of charge to all adults over 18. It must be offered in connection with work, education and training, or leisure time. Experience shows that when these courses are offered in a familiar setting where the participants feel safe or at work with colleagues with similar problems, the participants' barriers can more easily be overcome. (National Report Lifelong Learning, 2003).

### ***5. Meeting the challenges of an ageing population***

The retirement age and a focus on incentives to make youth complete their education at an earlier age are on the political agenda to increase labour market participation in a medium term perspective.

Compared to other EU countries the employment frequency among men between 54-64 is higher in Denmark than in the rest of Europe. The average retirement age is 62.2 – 1.5 year later than the EU average. The balance between the elderly and persons in the employment active age is not as unequal as in other countries (OECD Employment Outlook, 2001).

Despite the high participation rate, some economists expect that the anticipated demographic developments will lead to bottlenecks in the labour market in the future. While the aim in the 1970s was to reduce unemployment by reducing the workforce through early retirement, the government now seeks to provide incentives for people to remain in the labour market until the pension age, at 65. Conditions for early retirement were tightened with the early retirement pension reform in 1999.

With a view to ensuring a more gradual retirement, the government took a number of initiatives during 2003:

- Possibility to postpone pension after 65 with the option to defer payment of old age pension to a self-chosen higher age in return for a higher pension.
- Adjustments of senior policy projects with sharper focus on instruments to be used in enterprise senior policies.
- Strengthened senior job-placement schemes

### ***6. Effectiveness and efficiency in the system***

With the reforms of the past decade the system has evolved from a rather prescriptive system based on detailed regulations to a framework-governed system with management through objectives. This has given greater autonomy and co-responsibility to the different actors in the educational system both in terms of financial resources, content, and in assuring that targets and proficiency levels are reached. It has also created greater efficiency within the VET system insofar that it is possible to make considerable changes in programme duration, curricular content, etc., without changing the overall legislation.

With the change of government in 2001, the labour market education programmes (AMU programmes) were transferred from the former Ministry of Labour to the Ministry of Education. The aim has been to create better opportunities for a coherent and uniform structure for the entire educational system.

In June 2003, the Danish parliament approved Danish Act no. 73 on a new structure and descriptive framework for the adult vocational training programmes. This legislation took effect as of January 2004. The aim of the changed legislative basis has been to harmonise the forms of description used in the vocational education and training programmes and in the adult vocational training programmes.

The overall goal of the legislation is to:

- Optimise single subjects in the VET programmes and in the adult vocational training programmes
- Facilitate transfer credit in completed labour market training in EUD/adult vocational training
- Implement systematic measurement and evaluation of results
- Coordinate development work between labour market programmes and VET programmes.<sup>8</sup>

The new framework and concept for the labour market educational programmes is intended to offer individuals and employers a more transparent, efficient and integrated educational supply. This reform is closely intertwined with the current government's action plan "*Better Education*". Among other issues, this action plan has particularly emphasised greater flexibility, free choice, and output management. The approximately 2500 labour market training plans are in the process of being replaced by 150 common competence frameworks targeting recognisable job functions in the labour market. It will be possible to include a number of labour market qualification objectives from the existing supply of labour market courses/training plans as well as selected single subjects from the vocational education programmes, from the vocational social and health programmes, and from the vocational agricultural programme within the 150 common competence frameworks.

The many different elements in the action plan *Better Education*, comprising the entire education sector, are currently in the process of being implemented. It is therefore too early to assess to which extent the reformed system will match future societal and labour market demands in a small open economy with a small home market.

The central goals of the recent reforms have been to improve efficiency in the system through a coherent approach to the recognition of prior learning and credit

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<sup>8</sup> "*Better Education*", Chapter 2, Danish Ministry of Education, 2002

transfer, to improve economic efficiency, and to induce a lifelong learning behaviour at all skills levels and age groups. The question remains, however, to which degree the outcomes of these recognition procedures will be viewed as valid both within the educational system and the labour market system, the latter being measured in employment and mobility parameters. It is also uncertain whether or not these new instruments will act as an incentive and lead to a positive lifelong learning attitude for the lowest skilled, improving their foothold in the labour market and their general participation in society.

### **Financing**

By far the majority of adult education and continuing training is provided free of charge and is financed from taxes, although industry now shares the responsibility for both provision and funding of continuing and further education and training for adults in employment.

A fund, the *Labour Market Training Fund* (Arbejdsmarkedets Uddannelsesfinansiering, AUF), has been established into which all employers contribute with an amount per full-time employee. The fund provides financial support to companies when the employees participate in CVT. The fund is governed by the social partners and makes recommendations to the Ministers of Labour and Education on the general need for education and training and the expenditure entailed in the field of CVT. In 2003, the budget limit amounted to DKK 2,3 billion and covered operational expenses for education as well as wage compensation for participants.

Participants in continued and advanced training programmes receive public financial support to cover costs of living. The support is either in the form of *State Educational Support for Adults*, *SESA* (Statens Voksenuddannelsesstøtte, SVU) or a special allowance paid to low-skilled workers. The special allowance for participation in vocationally oriented adult education and training, including CVT, supports adults who participate in these programmes as a compensation for loss of earnings or job opportunity.

SESA supports two types of training:

- Participation in general adult education at lower and upper-secondary level. Support for this type of general education can only be granted to persons with a low level of educational attainment.
- Participation in education at short, medium or long-cycle higher education levels.
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### **Publicly and privately funded adult and continuing education and training**

Type of course	Course participants Number	Calculated as year full time equivalents Number	In employment Percentage
<b>Public</b>	1,235,400	83,600	66.6%
General	366,700	43,800	25.3%
Vocational	689,000	25,100	83.4%
Further	140,000	13,400	91.9%

<b>Private</b>	385,700	6,000	-
General	44,700	1,400	-
Vocational	341,000	4,600	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,727,900</b>	<b>89,600</b>	<b>-</b>

Note: A person may participate in different courses and counts each time as a course participant.  
Source: Denmark's Economic Council – Report of the Economic Advisers (Vismandsrapporten), Autumn 2003

### Duration of programmes and public costs

	Average programme duration - year	Public costs pr graduate- 1000 DKK
<b>General Vocational Programmes</b>		
Retail and wholesale	2.9	63.2
Office and Finance	2.5	63.2
Building and Construction	3.6	109.0
Blacksmith	3.4	113.3
Other Iron and Metal	3.5	123.9
Technique and Industry	3.7	108.1
Food and catering	3.4	121.9
Agriculture and Fisheries	2.2	105.7
Health and Social Service	1.8	51.5
<b>Short further</b>	2.6	190.3
Of these technical	1.7	173.1
<b>Medium-Cycle Further</b>		
Pedagogical Programmes	3.6	170.1
Primary and lower-secondary school teacher	4.2	214.2
Technical programmes	5.4	332.7
Other	3.4	273.5
<b>Long-Cycle Programmes</b>		
Humanities	7.0	226.1
Social Sciences	6.7	210.4
Natural Sciences	7.0	477.2

Source: Denmark's Economic Council – Report of the Economic Advisers (Vismandsrapporten), Autumn 2003

The total costs for I-VET in Denmark has increased from 2.3 billion in 1996 to 2.6 billion in 2002

The public expenditure on adult education and training was 6.5 billion in 2001. In the period from 1998 to 2001 expenditure fell by 21,3% mainly because of reduced activity levels in the labour market course (AMU) and in Open Education (*Facts and Figures, Education Indicators, Denmark 2003, (Tal der Taler)*, Danish Ministry of Education, 2003).

Course duration varies from long-term courses to courses of a few days' duration. The above table does not include courses organised in companies without the assistance of public or private providers. Company costs in 1999 for continuing education and training corresponded to 3% of salary costs, which was the highest expenditure in Europe according to Eurostat figures. In 2001, the public expenditure on adult and continuing education was approx. 6,5 billion dkr according to figures

from the Danish Ministry of Education. The costs for the labour market courses was the single biggest expenditure. According to OECD (Employment Outlook 2003) Danish employees receive an average of 36 hours of training per year, the highest number of hours in all OECD countries.

Investment in continuing education and training is income deductible if it is necessary in order to maintain and update knowledge and skills required in a person's present job.

There is a corresponding possibility for the employer to deduct necessary investments in education/training of staff in order to produce specialised products or to maintain present revenues, without taxation consequences for the employee. In the preparation of this legislation, lifelong learning was the primary motivating factor.

As part of the adult vocational education reform, changes have taken place in the financing regime. From the point of view of government the aim has been to further a higher degree of demand-driven supply so that efforts within education and training better reflect the actual needs of the enterprises and the employees. In order to promote a more demand-driven supply a number of different governance tools were introduced such as user fees, grant and activity ceilings, and reduced allowances - also to meet to the government's target of a general stop in tax increases.

The government believes that by introducing user fees for adult education and continuing training it will ensure that the demand reflects the real needs of the labour market. It is the view that when users have to co-contribute themselves to financing their training, they will consider their needs more carefully. However, a few special priority areas - primarily for those with short educational backgrounds - have been exempted from user fees.

There have been grant and activity ceilings on a number of education and training areas, but in 2003 these ceilings have been restricted to areas where it could be expected that the demand would be "insatiable" and not just aimed at the needs of the labour market. This applies to areas such as IT training programmes, general programmes, and language programmes. As is the case in Holland, approx. 1/3 of the workforce is covered by sectoral levies under branch level collective agreements.

According to present legislation, participants in continued and advanced education and training programmes may receive public financial support to cover their costs of living. Support is given at a level corresponding to the maximum level of unemployment benefits for participation in a full-time education and training programme under certain conditions. Low-skilled adults may receive support for participation in part-time education and training.

The minimum age is generally 25 years (but 20 years for low-skilled). The upper limit is 60 years for the support scheme for general adult education programmes and vocationally oriented education at advanced levels. There is no formal upper limit, however, to the special allowance scheme for adult VET programmes.

As the measure of increased user payment is very new, it is still too early to assess the impact it will have on enterprises' and individuals' motivation to participate

in adult education and training offered through public institutions. Parallel to this, changes in the financing regime, increased unemployment, and a growing use of outsourcing, may also have a negative effect on enterprises motivation to invest in training:

- because there are no acute skills needs except for in specific specialist areas.
- because qualified and cheaper labour may be found in outsourcing countries.

### ***Financing of the apprentice scheme***

The salary costs for apprentices while in school are covered through a collective arrangement among employers. All private and public employers with more than one employee are automatically registered through the payments to the labour market supplementary pension scheme (ATP). The financial bill each year stipulates the year's payment. In 2003, each employer paid DKK 370 every four months for every full time employee-equivalent. In 2003, The Employers' Apprentice Reimbursement (AER) paid more than DKK 2,9 billion in reimbursement to companies with apprentices. This reimbursement covers salaries to apprentices while they are in school and covers student transportation subsidies.

## **Theme 2 - Innovation in Teaching and Learning Processes**

### ***7. Improvements in learning processes and contents***

Reform 2000 was mainly a pedagogical reform inspired by developments in Finland and in Norway. The main intention was that a new descriptive framework should enhance the following central areas:

- \_ individualisation of progress, content, and form
- \_ more emphasis on learning rather than teaching
- \_ enhanced and much more flexible descriptive frameworks
- \_ learning that is offered to allow for a holistic approach in the curricular thinking

The following instruments were introduced in the Reform:

- \_ The student's personal educational plan
- \_ The educational log book
- \_ The contact teacher (mentor)
- \_ Focus on learning to learning and project and problem based, holistic learning
- \_ Guiding administrative instructions ("*uddannelsesvejledninger*") as supplement to the Act on the programmes and the executive order on core subjects ("*grundfagsbekendtgørelsen*")

- \_ The IT Support System (“Elevplan”). A pedagogical planning system to support the student’s overview and choice of modular content and levels (learning activities and target measures (progress chart- “*målepinde*”) as the basis for the personal educational plan. The system also functions as documentation in accordance with the local educational plan and as a counselling tool for a broader group of interested parties.

From the summer of 1999, Reform 2000 was gradually piloted in a number of schools up to the full implementation in January 2001 in order to better understand at an early stage structural, organisational, and pedagogical implications which might require further policy actions

One of the most important general intentions of Reform 2000 was to provide a legal basis for the student to become an active party in the learning process, an active agent in shaping his or her individual learning process. As described earlier, these elements are to be taken further with the latest amendment to the legislation in 2003. These innovative elements will also function as a model within the system of continuing professional adult education and training, for example with regard to offering different exit/occupational levels within a programme, loosening the fixed combination of subjects within a programme, and widening the options for recognition of prior learning.

The curricular content of the programmes and the proficiency levels (“*faglighed*”) have been proposed improved by:

- Creating more options for definition of content within the programmes
- Letting the student try out as early as possible his or her educational choice in a concrete context

The focus of the latest revision is:

- \_ Students have to “meet their profession” as early as possible
- \_ Progress and quality must be assured
- \_ Extended possibilities for the student to design his/her own path through the system- also as crossovers between the different upper-secondary youth programmes
- \_ Extended possibilities to step in and out of the system through the recognition in the labour market and in the educational system of a stepwise approach to qualifications within an overall programme structure - thereby opening up for a lifelong learning perspective
- \_ Recognition of formal, non-formal, and informal learning is taken into consideration through transfer credits and assessment of prior learning.
- \_ Different qualifications levels, offering a stepwise approach to a higher qualification level. Each qualification level represents a recognised qualification in the labour market which gives rights to unemployment benefits.
- \_ More extensive use of modularisation

Evaluations conducted in support of the implementation process have shown that whereas strong achievers thrive in an environment with stronger autonomy and

co-responsibility for their learning processes, it has often been necessary to take particular measures towards students with different types of learning difficulties or motivational problems. Teknologisk Institut, 2001, 2002).

### ***8. Improving the integration of different learning sites; integration of formal and informal learning***

In 1999, the Danish Labour Market Authority launched a national ICT-policy for skilled and semi-skilled workers in Denmark. One of the issues was to develop and implement "ICT-action plans for vocational training" in the vocational training institutes.

In the ICT-action plans, vocational training committees and vocational training institutes would examine existing vocational training courses to see if they have a relevant ICT curricular content and/or they would develop pedagogical methods based on ICT that could facilitate more flexible courses.

In 2002, the Danish Labour Market authorities estimated that 10% of all publicly funded vocational training in Denmark was using ICT in blended learning and in on-the job training. With the latest reform of vocational adult learning, the options for the schools to organise the learning offer suited to different target groups have been considerably increased. In the spring of 2004 the Danish Ministry of Science and Technology launched a pilot scheme aimed at increasing e-learning particularly with focus on work-based learning. Special targets are the public sector linked to e-government efforts and learning in small and medium sized enterprises.

Both regional and national initiatives have been taken to strengthen the role of the vocational educational institutions as regional knowledge centres. Many schools have established or are in the process of establishing services that go beyond mere provision of continuing education and training courses. In the electronics industries in Northern Jutland, and similarly in the high end of the textiles industry and in the furniture industries we already have examples of new models of supply and strategic partnerships. These are based on networking in a one-stop-shop principle with close school-firm and inter-firm local collaboration. From a supply perspective it is a common characteristic for the above-mentioned examples that education and training is understood by the providers within a broader context of innovation and institutional specialisation; providers take a less institutional approach to training and learning. An example of this is the TEKO Centre, the national knowledge centre for the textile industry.

Similarly, in 2001 the County of Aarhus together with the regional labour market authorities took the initiative to establish a knowledge centre for competence planning in firms, hosted by the Danish Technological Institute. The initiative was to first of all target small and medium sized enterprise and low skilled; secondly, the initiative aimed at providing new methods and approaches to public educational providers integrating learning and firm strategy and competitiveness. With support from the social funds and national government funding, numerous projects have been initiated involving firms, regions, sectoral bodies, and social partners, where learning and training is more closely embedded in local economic development and sectoral innovation. Many of these schemes remain at a pilot level, however.

With the latest reform of the adult vocational education scheme, institutions, trade committees, and firms, have had the options to apply for pilot funding to set up networks and to try out different models of flexible and work-based learning.

The changed public funding framework for vocational education will undoubtedly lead to enterprise demand for genuine educational value-added tied to strategic business objectives. Trainers will then need new competencies to understand and meet a skills issue in a business and innovation perspective. New enterprise demands will also no doubt challenge traditional boundaries between informal in-company and intra-company learning and the institutionalised educational supply. With the advance of ubiquitous information and communication technologies (ICT) we can expect e-learning to play a more central role in the skills strategy in firms, but with quite different models and approaches than that of the institutionalised electronic classroom predominant in Denmark.<sup>9</sup>

## **9. Evaluation and quality assurance of VET provision**

### **Quality instruments**

One central principle of the Danish approach to quality is the demand for systematic self-evaluation and follow-up. In a number of educational fields, special regulations have been introduced based on framework governance and with focus on continuous quality development and quality assurance. Institutions providing vocational education are therefore under obligation to employ a system of continuous quality development and assessment of results. Accordingly, these institutions must have procedures for systematic self-evaluation of central areas of institutional activity. They ensure that teaching outcomes target the predetermined goals, i.e. that the school and the teachers engage the students in an ongoing assessment process. In addition, examination results and any external evaluations must form part of this self-evaluation. At an individual level, as mentioned above, instruments for recognition of prior learning are central in the latest reform initiatives.

The school, on the basis of its self-evaluation, must devise a follow-up plan specifying the ways in which the pre-determined goals are to be achieved. It is up to individual institutions to determine their system of quality assurance, since the Ministry of Education does not impose a specific system or method. Institutions vary considerably in size and complexity as regards educational provision and branch structures.

It is the task of the Ministry to offer support and inspiration to local initiatives. This has been accomplished through advising individual institutions in the various educational fields on quality systems.

### **Governance and inspection**

The Minister of Education has overall responsibility for all fields of education, and institutions are under obligation to provide upon request any information deemed relevant. Thus the Ministry of Education systematically collects data from institu-

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<sup>9</sup> For a further analysis of e-learning in Danish firms tied to their innovation and competitiveness strategy cf. "E-learning in Danish Firms", Technological Institute, June 2003.

tions in all fields of education on finance, graduation rates, student flow and grade averages etc.

The Ministry of Education undertakes systematic legal, financial and academic-pedagogical inspection of all vocational educational provision as well as of short-cycle higher education.

The actual process of inspection may be confined to desktop inspection involving analysis of the data supplied by institutions. This may be combined with visits to selected institutions. Inspection typically focuses on a particular area, for instance, compliance with qualification requirements for teachers, observance of timetables, guidance provisions, the implementation and use of ICT, etc. As mentioned above, there is evidence of a trend towards increasing result-orientation.

### **10. Teachers' qualifications and status**

The Act on I-VET stipulates that teachers should have minimum the following qualifications at the time of employment:

- A vocational qualification supplemented by relevant further education (possibly shorter training courses), or a relevant further education degree.
- Relevant and up-to date professional experience - five year minimum for teachers of vocational subjects, and two year minimum for teachers of general subjects.

Teachers with no pedagogical training must complete a pedagogical teacher training course (*pædagogikum*) during the first two years of employment. The course lasts for approximately 500 hours and ends with an examination. The course is a mixture of practical training and theoretical instruction. The course includes teaching and observation techniques, guidance, didactics, and methodology. The teachers work as teachers during the course.

The legislation stipulates that the schools are responsible in collaboration with the teachers to ensure the necessary continuing adaptation of the teachers' qualifications. The National Institute for Vocational Teachers' Training is responsible for most of the teacher training. The National Institute has a framework contract with the Ministry of Education. Part of their funding is also derived directly from consultancy activities for the schools and from different development projects.

As part of the Reform 2000 process, the National Institute for Vocational Education developed different training programmes and approaches for middle management acting as reform consultants. School directors, and teachers and their representatives have all pointed to this programme as a central component in the implementation process. From August 2002 a comprehensive competence development programme organised as action learning has been implemented in collaboration between the Ministry of Education and The National Institute for Vocational Education. The programme is highly flexible so that it can be adapted to the needs of the specific schools.

Not surprisingly, both managers and teachers found that the reform gave them considerably more work in the first phases. One of the biggest changes that occurred for both managers and teachers was the reshaping of professional identi-

ties and roles, according to surveys conducted by Technological Institute. For management and middle management they have had to work much more proactively with information and delegation and strategies, and they have had to develop a planning understanding with a much tighter fit between leadership, administrative planning, logistics, and pedagogy. More importantly, they have had to learn to be carriers of constant and value-based change. The reform agent training initiative has been central to bringing about this change, as have the meeting forums that have been established between schools. Many of the teachers have had to identify themselves as a facilitator rather than a traditional teacher/instructor, and they have had to begin to work in communities with a broader branch and technological perspective. For many teachers this was and still is a difficult process and has in many cases led to considerable stress.

After the first three months of the first piloting of the reform, 25% of the teachers surveyed considered looking for another job. (Danish Technological Institute, 2001). One solution that has been implemented is the formation of teachers' teams with different occupational profiles. Local development projects were also started with financial support from the Ministry. They have been essential in bringing about new professional identities for those teachers that have been directly involved in developing new tools and materials based on a concept of learning through a "Community of Practice".

Trainers in enterprises who are responsible for apprentices must be master craftsmen, i.e. they must have completed the journeyman's certificate and have work experience.

The trade committees for each VET programme (consisting of social partner representatives) are in charge of approving enterprises as training enterprises. The committees consider technical equipment, variety of products and task performed by the enterprise, and in some instances the number of qualified staff to perform the training. In that way they assess whether the training provided is at an acceptable level.

## **Theme 3 - Building European Competences for a European Labour Market**

### ***11. Challenges & policies in relation to the Lisbon employment strategy***

The Danish levels of employment and labour market participation are high compared with the EU average. Denmark thus already satisfies the Lisbon criteria for employment (NAP 2003, DG Employment).

The Kok report<sup>10</sup> makes the following conclusions and recommendations.

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<sup>10</sup> The Kok report: *Jobs, Jobs, Jobs, Creating more employment in Europe. Report of the Employment Task Force Nov. 2003*

Given the high employment rates, a key priority for Denmark is to ensure adequate supply of labour in the longer term.

Suggestions are a mixture of fiscal policies, social policies relating to the elderly and immigrants, and educational policies particularly with regard to the changed financing scheme for adult VET provision, and with regard to children's basic skills (PISA effect)

80% of the adult population (25-64 years) had at least completed upper-secondary education according to 2002 figures. From 1992-2002, the educational level increased in Denmark. In 1992, 46,9% had a qualification aimed at the labour market. In 2002 this figure was 54,6%; of these, 20,6% held a higher education qualification.

**The population (15-69-year-olds), by level of educational attainment, education area and gender. 1992- 2002**

	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002
	%										
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basic school education	43.4	42.3	41.3	40.3	39.2	38.1	37.1	36.1	35.3	34.7	34.1
Gymnasium and HF <sup>1)</sup>	5.5	5.6	5.8	5.9	6.0	6.2	6.3	6.4	6.4	6.3	6.3
HHX <sup>2)</sup> and HTX <sup>3)</sup>	1.6	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Vocational upper-secondary practical training and main courses	31.7	32.0	32.2	32.5	32.8	33.0	33.4	33.7	33.8	33.9	34.0
Short-cycle higher education	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	3.9
Medium-cycle education	8.5	8.7	8.9	9.1	9.2	9.4	9.6	10.0	10.2	10.3	10.8
Bachelor education	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1
Long-cycle higher education	3.2	3.3	3.4	3.6	3.7	3.9	4.2	4.2	4.3	4.6	4.8
No data <sup>4)</sup>	2.6	2.7	2.7	2.8	2.8	2.9	2.8	2.7	3.0	3.0	2.8
<b>Men, total:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basic school education	39.3	38.5	37.8	37.1	36.2	35.4	34.7	33.8	33.3	33.0	32.5
Gymnasium and HF <sup>1)</sup>	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.4	5.4
HHX <sup>2)</sup> and HTX <sup>3)</sup>	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.3
Vocational upper-secondary practical training and main courses	36.5	36.6	36.8	36.9	37.0	37.2	37.4	37.7	37.7	37.6	37.7
Short-cycle higher education	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.3	3.5	3.6	3.7	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.2
Medium-cycle education	7.1	7.2	7.3	7.4	7.5	7.6	7.6	7.9	8.0	7.9	8.0
Bachelor education	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0
Long-cycle higher education	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.7	5.9
No data <sup>4)</sup>	2.9	2.9	3.0	3.0	3.1	3.0	2.9	2.9	3.1	3.1	3.0
<b>Women, total:</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Basic school education	47.4	46.1	44.9	43.6	42.2	40.9	39.6	38.3	37.2	36.6	35.6
Gymnasium and HF <sup>1)</sup>	6.2	6.3	6.5	6.7	6.9	7.1	7.2	7.4	7.4	7.2	7.2
HHX <sup>2)</sup> and HTX <sup>3)</sup>	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Vocational upper-secondary practical training and main courses	26.9	27.3	27.6	28.0	28.4	28.8	29.2	29.7	29.9	30.1	30.4
Short-cycle higher education	3.3	3.3	3.4	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.8	3.8	3.9	3.5
Medium-cycle education	10.0	10.2	10.5	10.7	10.9	11.3	11.6	12.1	12.4	12.7	13.6
Bachelor education	0.3	0.4	0.5	0.6	0.7	0.8	0.9	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2
Long-cycle higher education	2.0	2.1	2.2	2.4	2.5	2.7	3.0	3.1	3.2	3.5	3.7
No data <sup>4)</sup>	2.3	2.4	2.5	2.5	2.6	2.7	2.6	2.6	2.8	2.8	2.6

1) HF – Higher preparatory examination course – a 2-year academically oriented course of general upper-secondary education based on the 10<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

2) HHX – Higher commercial examination course – a 3-year course of vocational (commercial) and general education based on the 9<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

3) HTX - Higher technical examination course. Vocational upper-secondary education school form offering a 3-year course of vocational (technical) and general education based on the 9<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

4) A large part are immigrants and their descendants who have not attained an education in Denmark

### Labour market status of 15-29-year-olds not enrolled in education. By highest level of educational attainment and gender 2000

	Basic school <sup>1)</sup>	Gymnasium and HF <sup>2)</sup>	HHX <sup>3)</sup> and HTX <sup>4)</sup>	Vocational upper-secondary education	Short-cycle higher education	Medium-cycle higher education	Bachelor	Long-cycle higher education	No data <sup>5)</sup>	Total
	Number									
<b>15-29-olds, total</b>	<b>168,409</b>	<b>59,724</b>	<b>24,798</b>	<b>187,819</b>	<b>18,559</b>	<b>32,816</b>	<b>4,465</b>	<b>14,757</b>	<b>28,844</b>	<b>540,191</b>
<b>Employed:</b>										
<b>Total</b>	<b>102,111</b>	<b>47,250</b>	<b>21,884</b>	<b>171,876</b>	<b>17,025</b>	<b>30,948</b>	<b>3,806</b>	<b>13,302</b>	<b>9,058</b>	<b>417,260</b>
Men	63,013	19,653	11,318	101,340	9,554	9,435	1,446	7,331	5,749	228,839
Women	39,098	27,597	10,566	70,536	7,471	21,513	2,360	5,971	3,309	188,421
<b>Unemployed:</b>										
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,647</b>	<b>1,733</b>	<b>611</b>	<b>7,870</b>	<b>696</b>	<b>877</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>871</b>	<b>778</b>	<b>25,292</b>
Men	5,852	695	291	3,801	328	236	72	403	464	12,142
Women	5,795	1,038	320	4,069	368	641	137	468	314	13,150
<b>Outside the labour force:</b>										
<b>Total</b>	<b>54,651</b>	<b>10,741</b>	<b>2,303</b>	<b>8,073</b>	<b>838</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>450</b>	<b>584</b>	<b>19,008</b>	<b>97,639</b>
Men	24,194	3,567	1,140	3,067	318	251	186	214	8,237	41,174
Women	30,457	7,174	1,163	5,006	520	740	264	370	10,771	56,465
<b>Percentage distribution:</b>										
<b>15-29-olds total</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>100.0</b>
Employed	60.6	79.1	88.2	91.5	91.7	94.3	85.2	90.1	31.4	77.2
Unemployed	6.9	2.9	2.5	4.2	3.8	2.7	4.7	5.9	2.7	4.7
Outside the labour force	32.5	18.0	9.3	4.3	4.5	3.0	10.1	4.0	65.9	18.1

1) Includes forms 8-10

2) HF – Higher preparatory examination course – a 2-year academically oriented course of general upper-secondary education based on the 10<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

3) HHX – Higher commercial examination course – a 3-year course of vocational (commercial) and general education based on the 9<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

4) HTX - Higher technical examination course. Vocational upper-secondary education school form offering a 3-year course of vocational (technical) and general education based on the 9<sup>th</sup> form of the Folkeskolen and completed by an examination which qualifies for admission to higher education.

5) Education background not registered; may e.g. be immigrants with an educational background from their country of origin.

The retirement age combined with a focus on incentives to make young people complete their education at an earlier age are on the policy agenda to increase labour market participation in a medium term perspective. Compared to other EU countries the employment frequency among men between 54-64 is higher in Denmark than in the rest of Europe. The average retirement age is 62.2 years – 1.5 year later than the EU average. The balance between the elderly and persons in the employment-active age is not as unequal as in other countries (OECD Employment Outlook, 2001). Despite the high participation rate, some economists expect that the anticipated demographic developments will lead to bottlenecks in the labour market in the future.

The objective is to obtain a further employment for 60,000 people by 2010 partially through increased participation rates from 75.4% in 2000 to 78% in 2010 (particularly immigrants and their descendants) and partly through lower unemployment based on the governments Action Plan "More People in Employment" from 2002.

The latest unemployment figures (Statistics Denmark) show the number of unemployed to be 178,700 persons in March 2004 compared to 181,100 in February. This corresponds to an unemployment rate of 6.4% of the labour force compared to 6.5% the previous month.

In April 2004, the Danish Minister of Labour severely criticised the Danish labour Market Agency and the local unemployment services for not meeting the targets set out in the Action Plan from 2002.

According to EU labour force statistics only one out of every five has been unemployed for more than a year. The greatest increase in unemployment has been in the age group 50-66. According to a report from CASA 2002<sup>11</sup> it is part of the overall picture that an additional 95,000 persons are in different forms of activation. The report furthermore mentions that the number of persons on early retirement has increased by 41,000 since 1995 and that the percentage of people on rehabilitation and sick leave schemes has grown by 44% to a total of 85,000. In spite of the stricter regulations concerning the possibilities of receiving social benefits, the number on social welfare has increased from 110,000 in 1995 to 122,000 in 2000. The number of persons on early pension schemes has fallen by 11,000 in the period, but the number of health defined pension schemes has increased by 7,000 in the same period.

These figures indicate that parallel to a reduction in unemployment levels in the last half of the 1990s there has been a noticeable exclusion from the labour market that economic growth and the "Scandinavian welfare model" have not been able to solve. According to the report from CASA one of the negative side effects of the transition to a growth situation and a more knowledge-intensive economy has been that the nature of skills demands in the labour market has changed so dramatically that the labour market also produces exclusion. An analysis in the report based on longitudinal data shows that whereas more people have managed to move from temporary public benefits to being self-supported, the number of persons on long-term public benefits has increased. This seems to confirm that the transition from an industry economy to a knowledge economy tends to have negative effect on those who have the weakest position in the labour market.

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<sup>11</sup> Social Årsrapport 2002, Center for Alternativ Samfundsanalyse.

Among recipients of welfare benefits, the proportion of non-western immigrants has increased from 24% to 35% in the period 1995-2001 according to CASA figures, despite the improvements in employment opportunities in that period.

A recent report published by the Rockwool Foundation<sup>12</sup> takes a critical view of the Danish welfare model, which the authors claim may lead to a model of “*Welfare Poor*”. Since the 1960s, the employment frequency has only grown moderately in Denmark whereas the number of the population in the labour active age who are on different forms of transitional benefits has increased dramatically. According to the authors of this report, this has resulted in a dramatic increase in taxes. In 1994, when the unemployment was at its highest, 900,000 people in the labour market age group were in activation or received different forms of transitional benefits. In 2001, the number had only dropped to 860,000 despite better employment opportunities, according to figures from the report.

The latest proposal in employment policies aims at providing a unified employment service for those on unemployment benefits and those receiving social benefits. This unified employment service will be placed under the governance of the municipalities. There will be incentives for the municipalities based on their success in getting people back in employment. The new governance structure has received severe criticism from the Confederation of Employers (DA) as well as the Confederation of Unions (LO). Both believe such a structure will reduce the mobility and flexibility in the labour market across municipal boundaries.

## 12. Involving Stakeholders

Since the establishment of the employers’ and the employees’ organisations in the late 19th century, the social partners have helped build a welfare society with one of the world's most peaceful labour markets. Cooperation with the social partners is an integral part of the national labour market policy, also in areas which are primarily regulated by statute such as health and safety at work, job placement services, labour market training, vocational education, measures to combat unemployment, and unemployment insurance.

Trade Committees (comprised of management and labour representatives) constitute the backbone of the whole Danish VET system. For each individual VET course a trade committee must be established. They perform a central role in relation to the creation and renewal of VET courses and have a dominant position in the formulation of curricula. The committees normally have 10-14 members and are formed by the labour market organisations (with parity of membership). They are responsible for the following matters relating to the individual VET course:

- objectives
- duration
- contents
- final examination standards

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<sup>12</sup> Rockwool Fondet (2003) Fra mangel på arbejde til mangel på arbejdskraft, Peder J. Pedersen, Nina Smith et al.

- issued final certification

There are 59 Danish trade committees who are responsible for approx. 180 individual courses. The trade committees decide the regulatory framework for the individual courses - they decide which trade is to provide the core of the training and the ratio between classroom teaching (approx. 1/3) and practical work in an enterprise (approx. 2/3). The committees also approve enterprises as qualified training establishments and rule on conflicts that may develop between apprentices and the enterprise providing practical training. The trade committees and their secretariats are financed by the participating organisations.

In July 2003 a new advisory structure was introduced. The Advisory Council for Initial Vocational Education and Training (Rådet for de grundlæggende erhvervsrettede uddannelser – REU) provides advice to the Minister of Education on educational matters.

Denmark has a long tradition for involving the social partners in the organisation of CVT programmes. The Ministry of Education is in overall charge, and subject to its approval the social partners decide on the aims, content, duration, and final status of the various CVT programmes.

The social partners play an important role in the management, priority setting, development, organisation, and quality assurance of the programmes.

At local and decentralised level, the CVT committees and the local school boards and education committees cooperate to provide the programmes best suited to fulfil the needs of the labour market, the business sector and the individuals.

The CVT programmes provide the participants with qualifications and competencies that are directly applicable on the labour market. The programmes may either deepen the participant's existing knowledge within a particular field or broaden it to related fields. Each participant has a personal training plan that outlines the goals to be achieved at the end of the programme. The participants may start from scratch and end up by completing a VET programme over a period of time.

### ***Forecasting Skills***

In an economy undergoing dramatic change, traditional forecasting instruments may not be sufficient to dimension educational supply. It has therefore been a central aim in recent reforms to create more efficient and faster response mechanisms to ongoing changes and emerging needs in the labour market caused by factors such as outsourcing of functions to other countries, localisation of knowledge intensive international firms in Denmark, technological advances, and sector convergence. Instead of primarily basing the dimensioning of the public educational system on statistics and prognosis, the reforms over the past years give the educational institutions together with social partners greater autonomy and co-responsibility to make decisions on the volume and nature of the educational supply within a national framework governance structure.

Early adaptation to changes of qualification requirements takes place through specific mechanisms in the VET structure, including CVT. Needs for new or modified training programmes are systematically identified and fed into the VET system by the trade committees in VET and local training committees in CVT. They have the

task of initiating renewal and scanning the respective sectors of the labour market. If they see a need for change, their recommendations must be accompanied by quantitative and qualitative data. The committees must, for example, provide information on opportunities for employment and practical work training, on the annual student uptake for the scheme, and information on any existing analyses and forecasts concerning qualification requirements.

More qualitative methods to address the issue of future skills demands have also been taken up by employer confederations and unions. For example, the Union for Commerce and Trade in Denmark has recently established a research working group that will use scenario methods. The first phase will focus on two employment areas undergoing rapid change, ICT industries and the service sector; in a latter phase this will possibly be supplemented by the building and construction sector. In order to identify a number of new short-duration initial vocational training programmes as a replacement of 1200 current school apprentice places, the Danish Technological Institute has been commissioned to identify new educational opportunities through different types of semi-qualitative methods. Moreover, the Confederation of Danish Engineers has tried out scenario methods and other future-oriented qualitative methods to discuss and focus on drivers and uncertainties concerning future demands for skills.

### ***13. Transparency, recognition & mobility***

The following points, explained in more detail in other sections, provide a brief overview of elements in the VET system with specific relevance to the Copenhagen Declaration and the Lisbon process

- **Education- an instrument in economic development, to welfare and democracy.** Education is seen as central not only to economic development but also to a continuous development of and participation in a democratic society and as a central instrument to further social inclusion.
- **Benchmarking** - both national and international benchmarking plays an increasing role for quality purposes and for internationalisation purposes.
- **National definition and recognition of qualifications and certifications across the educational system and in the labour market.**
- **Comprehensive quality development arrangements with delegation of responsibility to the different actors.**
- **Pilot projects and action-based evaluations.** The system has undergone concurrent reforms during the past decade. Many of these reforms have been introduced based on a strategy of focused pilot projects combined with snapshot evaluations to provide feed-back to aid planning and policy evolution at all levels of the system.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> For further reading cf.. Shapiro and Neuiwenhuis Learning through policy evaluation, 2003, CEDFOP in press

- **Credit transfer as an element in an efficient and inclusive lifelong learning strategy.** With the most recent reforms the system provides substantial options for offering horizontal and vertical pathways and linkages. These options comprise the general educational system as well as the pathways between the general educational system and the adult vocational system. Students in upper-secondary vocational education and training thus have options to obtain partial or full double qualifications, which provide them with different and flexible pathways either within the initial vocational educational and training system, or at a later stage as adults.
- **Modularisation.** The general education system and the adult education and training system are both organised in a modular manner. The personal educational plan, validation of prior learning, and single subjects, are key elements in these efforts.
- **Stepwise approach to qualifications.** The latest amendments to Reform 2000 and the adult education and training reforms will increase options for obtaining a certificate based for a qualification recognised in the labour market and with the rights to unemployment benefits. This qualification expresses one level within a broader level-based qualification. An example is *IT-supporter*, which is a recognised qualification in the labour market. At the same time, it is also a step towards the qualification *Data Technician* (Datafagtekniker). This offers the individual increased options for re-entering the educational system at a later stage as an adult either in adult vocational training (CVT) or in the further education system for adults to obtain a higher level of qualification.
- **Recognition of prior learning** based on assessment of people's genuine competencies. It is currently being proposed to have one common framework within I-VET and the adult education and training system as part of a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy.

Since 2001, the adult education and continuing training system has been reformed with the aim of creating a coherent further education system for adults. This system is to offer the same qualifications to adults as does the ordinary initial qualification system, and is constructed with parallel reference levels within the vision of a lifelong learning agenda. The reform also ensured that adults be credited for competencies they have already acquired through the formal education system, informally, through on-the-job training schemes, or through work experience.

The legislation was been amended in June 2003 (Danish Act no. 73) together with the legislation on labour market education programmes (Danish Act no. 74) following the change of government.

#### **D. EUROPASS and Euro-CV**

The certificate supplements have been drawn up in three languages in cooperation with the social partners. Denmark has special support schemes for participants and institutions aiming a study visits and mobility abroad ([www.cirius.dk](http://www.cirius.dk)).

The use of Europass in international placement schemes is also fully implemented.

The next steps concerning Europass II are expected to be implemented once the legislation has been approved by the European parliament providing a broader mobility and training passport.

The European CV is not yet widely known. In connection with the launch of a national counselling portal in January 2005, the EuroCV will be made available. Denmark has a special centre for assessment of foreign qualifications, the Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications. The centre is responsible for co-ordination of a general scheme for mutual recognition of skills.