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**EUROPEAN REPORT
ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING
IN EMPLOYMENT POLICIES**

VOLUME 2

**Analysis by Member State
of the National Action Plans for Employment for 2000**

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GERMANY

- The total rate of employment stood at 64.8% in 1999. This broke down into 37.8% for the 55-64 age group and 45.6% for women. The rate of unemployment in 1999 was 8.8 % and was higher in the *Länder* of East Germany.

- In close conjunction with the social partners and the *Länder*, the Federal Government set the objective of **modernising the general and vocational education systems and strengthening links between education and training establishments and the world of work**. Training opportunities for young people improved in 1999 thanks to the efforts of the business sector and thanks to programmes financed from public funds.

- **The dual system of training continues to modernise**. A major effort is being mounted to ensure that a sufficient number of training places for young people are available and to develop continuing vocational training, particularly in the eastern *Länder*.

I - Guideline 6: developing lifelong learning

1.1 Implementing measures

The ongoing development of the education system in order to promote lifelong learning for everyone is supported jointly by the Federal Government, the *Länder*, the social partners, the business sector, the organisations responsible for general and vocational education and the education institutions. The following measures were taken in 1999:

- inception of the action programme “Innovations and jobs in the information society of the 21st century” (increased use and dissemination of the new media throughout education, improved access to the new technologies, particularly for women);
- measures to support the continuing vocational training of jobseekers, implemented by the public employment services;
- public subsidies from the Federal Government and the *Länder* for the vocational training of skilled workers in order to allow them to further their careers, and in order to encourage business creation;
- support for pilot projects in lifelong learning.

1.2 Objectives and initiatives for 2000

An institution covering all the sectors of education has been set up in order to guarantee access to lifelong learning for everyone. People must thus obtain the qualifications they need for lifelong learning and use the opportunities for informal education in their daily lives and at work.

◆ The Federal Government:

- is preparing an **action programme “Lifelong learning for everyone”** which includes all the measures taken by the Federal Government to promote lifelong learning (lifelong education and training networks, an initiative entitled “Learning and developing skills” launched in order to set up effective continuing learning structures, to strengthen individual occupational skills and to design strategies to keep up the skills of jobseekers);
- is pursuing the action programme entitled “Innovations and jobs in the information society of the 21st century”;
- is promoting the development of blocks of technical and autonomous skills needed for continuing vocational training;
- is seeking to improve the structure of vocational training in order to permit the career progression of skilled workers and to enhance their employability;
- plans to establish a skills centre in order to link up and consolidate all those activities which increase the participation of women in training programmes in the new technologies sector.

◆ The federal employment service:

- is endeavouring to increase the qualifications opportunities for workers who are already qualified in the new technologies sector.

◆ The social partners have proposed that companies:

- include more unqualified workers in their internal continuing training schemes;
- are helping older workers to pursue their training in order to prevent a lack of qualification leading to premature exits from the workforce and are increasing the use of “job rotation” by taking on jobseekers.

◆ The *Länder*:

- are seeking to set up a lifelong learning system combining general education, initial vocational training and continuing vocational training.

II - Guideline 7: reducing the number of young people who drop out of the school system early and easing the transition from school to work

Although the number of young people leaving school without a qualification has increased in recent years (83 000 in 1998 compared with 76 000 in 1995), the percentage of the 15-17 age group without qualifications has remained constant (at around 9%, of which only 35% are girls).

A “pre-employment” training programme lasting three years will enable 44% of those leaving secondary education without a qualification to obtain one. The proportion of young people without qualifications in the 17-20 age group as a result stands at around 5%. By the age of 27 this percentage falls to between 3 and 4%.

With the objectives and initiatives for 2000, the *Länder* pursued measures to improve the capacity to learn. Part of the effort was focused on an ongoing review of the programmes and harmonisation of the key subjects taught at school with the requirements of vocational training and vocational teaching establishments. In order to attain this objective:

- regional initiatives sought to improve the transition from school and work through cooperation between youth aid services, schools and local businesses;
- young people with insufficient knowledge and results were to be offered catch-up classes, practical courses and special vocational measures such as work experience and a preparatory training year. Guidance backup was to be provided by youth employment counsellors;
- in conjunction with the *Länder* and the social partners, the Federal Government planned to launch the “School-business-workplace initiative” in order to promote cooperation between schools and the regional business sector. The aim of this action is to improve pupils’ capacity to understand how important vocational training is, to improve employment opportunities for the disadvantaged groups and to bring down the number of young people leaving school with no qualifications.

III - Guideline 8: developing apprenticeship training

3.1 Implementing measures

Two thirds of the young people from each age group enter the dual vocational training system, which means that they are trained both directly within a company and in a vocational training establishment.

The dual system is a major factor in the improvement of employability as it heads off unemployment amongst young people and provides a direct bridge to employment (in Germany, unemployment amongst young people stood at 4.7% in 1999).

The Federal Government, the *Länder* and the social partners in 1999 agreed that the **dual training system should be reformed**, in particular by measures to improve training opportunities for socially disadvantaged young people.

The Federal Government’s action programme “Innovations and jobs in the information society of the 21st century” is designed to improve the acquisition of skills in the new media sector and “net-based” teaching by modernising education institutions and providing them with multimedia equipment.

The *Länder* have spent some DEM 81 million on the initiative “Schools on the net” and will substantially step up funding to the information and communication sector over the coming years.

3.2 Objectives and initiatives for 2000

There are three main objectives:

- modernisation of the dual training system in order to promote the creation and preservation of quality training places in companies, particularly in the growth and innovative sectors;
- schools and vocational training establishments should provide each pupil with the basic knowledge for using the new technologies. By 2001, each education establishment should be equipped with computers with multimedia capacity and Internet access;
- the proportion of female students in informatics was to be increased and should reach 40% by the end of 2005.

The following measures were planned:

- modernisation of the dual training system, laying emphasis on the modernisation of the professions (offering additional qualifications, increasing flexibility, promoting cooperation between training sites, adapting the examining structure and developing a European approach in vocational training);
- organisational link between training programmes focused on employment and continuing vocational training for disadvantaged young people;
- the *Länder* intended to develop new approaches to cater for the requirements of the labour market, to build up regional cooperation, to introduce additional qualifications through vocational training establishments, to use intercultural skills, particularly those of young people of foreign extraction;
- creation of an educational software development program for general and vocational teaching establishments. Reiteration of the need to train women in the new information and communication technologies (NICT);
- the *Länder* planned fresh initiatives for schools and universities to promote the ICT (creation of education networks in schools, universities, continuing training establishments and libraries, intensive training for teachers);
- development of new syllabuses and qualification modules for women in the ICT technologies, improvement of access for women to the biology and technology streams.

For a period of five years starting in 2000, the Federal Government planned to release a total of DEM 100 million in funding to develop education software, to create and use multimedia information sources for teachers and students and to establish informatics networks for schools. Over the same period, DEM 100 million was to be made available for vocational training to cover the same objectives. An equivalent amount of funding would be provided by the *Länder*.

IV - Guideline 9: promoting a labour market open to all

The integration of disabled persons and foreign nationals is a priority in the employment policies. There are around 6.6 million severely disabled people in Germany (8% of the overall population) and some 7.3 million foreigners (8.9% of the total population). Integration measures are open to all foreign men and women provided they have the status of long-term residents. Specific steps are implemented to promote the integration of the disabled persons on the employment market.

The Federal Government expected there to be a considerable improvement in 2000 as regards the employment situation of people having a severe disability. A legislative programme is envisaged in order to bring about a significant fall in unemployment over the next two or three years. In particular, there will be an initiative to improve the job prospects of severely disabled women (proportionally greater in number than men).

In order to improve the linguistic, occupational and social integration of foreign workers, support measures backed up by substantial resources are being implemented at federal, *Länder* and municipal level. The Federal Government's framework programme to bring down unemployment among young people in the year 2000 also applies to young foreign people.

V - Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self-employment

Steps have been taken to support the creation of new businesses by creating a favourable environment in schools and universities. A pilot project developed in nine *Länder* is designed to give young people the skills needed for self-employment. Some twelve universities in 1999 developed additional teaching relating to business creation.

The federal programme "Exist" provides support for people wishing to start up new businesses from university or research establishments. The five Exist regional networks led to the creation of some 100 new businesses in 1999.

Those involved in the "Exist-universities" programme in the preparatory stages of setting up a business were expected to receive aid in 2000 to cover subsistence costs. In addition, school projects were to be introduced in all the *Länder* in order to promote entrepreneurship.

V - Guideline 13: exploiting the new opportunities for job creation in services and business services

In support of this objective the education system was to be modernised by creating new vocational training and qualifications in the new services sector, particularly by incorporating the new ICTs and by increasing the percentage of women following vocational training courses having a link with the new technologies.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

To reduce the skilled labour deficit on the employment market by improving the framework — particularly incentive measures — of continuing education, training and apprenticeship, in conjunction with the social partners, and by defining an overall strategy accompanied by qualitative and quantitative targets for lifelong learning. There is a need for action at school and in training establishments in order to ensure a smoother transition to modern jobs at the place of work.

AUSTRIA

The employment rate in Austria was 68.2% in 1999. This breaks down into 29.2% for the 55-64 age group and 50.8% for women. The rate of unemployment in 1999 stood at 3.8%. The rate of unemployment among young people is the lowest in the European Union and was 2.9% in 1999.

I - Guideline 6: developing lifelong learning

1.1 Implementing measures for the 1999 National Action Plan

The aim was to increase the proportion of low-skilled workers who every year follow qualification or continuing training courses and bring it up to the same level as workers having an average level of qualifications (in 1997 this proportion stood at a mere 8%). The measures to increase the participation in these training actions were to target women and older workers to a greater extent.

The possibility for young people who dropped out of school early to complete their compulsory education later was extended and thus includes 23 courses followed by 450 participants 150 of whom benefit from various individual teaching backup arrangements.

There were also pilot projects specific to compulsory secondary school establishments and the pre-occupational year programmes in order to improve the testing and counselling structures (targeted preparation for examinations, specific groups receiving additional teaching aid in order to limit the number of young people not completing their compulsory education). These pilot projects covered approximately 350 pupils during the 1998-1999 school year.

The development of cross-curricular forms of distance teaching for universities, schools (for working people) and adult education establishments was stepped up.

In order to encourage the use of the new media in learning and correspondence courses, the government presented a two-year programme to help in the acquisition of multimedia teaching material.

There was encouragement for adult education, particularly for women. In addition, it will in future be possible to take education leave of 3-12 months.

1.2 New implementing measures for the 2000 guidelines

- Increase in programmes allowing young people who dropped out of school early to complete their compulsory education (50 programmes per year followed by around 850 participants) and development of material for personal studies.

- Increase in distance teaching programmes as part of continuing training and adult teaching programmes, particularly those targeting women and the new technological fields.
- New lifelong learning measures, particularly targeting immigrant workers.

II - Guideline 7: improving the quality of the education system

2.1 Implementing measures for the 1999 National Employment Action Plan

- Efforts have been stepped up in recent years to develop the teaching of the new ICT in schools and commercial schools and to set up educational establishments specialising in these new technologies. These initiatives have been backed up by teacher training programmes. The current level of Internet access is 100% for the federal teaching establishments and 43% for the teaching establishments in the *Länder*. Approximately 50% of teachers have been trained in the use of the new technologies.
- During the 1999-2000 school year a pilot project was launched on the European economics programme for higher secondary education. Another pilot project was planned for the 2000-2001 school year on international economics. In addition, the programmes of the commercial schools offer specialised training such as marketing or international commerce and training in business creation and management.
- There was great emphasis on equal opportunities for boys and girls in education, particularly in the area of technology.
- Since the winter semester 1998-1999 places have been set aside in polytechnic schools for people already in jobs (approximately 1 000 yearly for starting training). To improve the training opportunities for working people, a quarter of the total number of places in the programmes of polytechnic schools and a third of the places for people already in jobs were subsidised for the 1999-2000 school year. This one-third quota will be maintained until 2005.
- Under the ongoing reorganisation of all university syllabuses, many programmes were adapted and 22 university doctorate programmes restructured.
- In July 1999, the "JobNET" initiative for Austria was launched in order to network the placement services of six universities. It was scheduled to end in December 2000.
- An information campaign - F.I.T. (women in technology) - lasting several days was conducted to raise awareness among young female pupils of non-conventional university programmes (electrical engineering, civil engineering, telematics).

These projects were introduced at the university at the beginning of the 1999-2000 academic year with the technical and natural science programmes. 722 young women took part.

- The matter of adult education is incorporated into basic training. An “adult education week” was organised to draw people’s attention to their responsibilities when it comes to continuing education and training.

2.2 New implementing measures for the guidelines for 2000

In order to bring down the number of young people leaving the education system early:

- new measures were to be introduced to reduce the early dropout rate from school;
- broader access to vocational secondary teaching qualifications would be encouraged by developing specific modules.

III - Guideline 8: developing apprenticeship training

3.1 Implementing measures for the 1999 National Employment Action Plan

- The policy to increase the practical emphasis in vocational establishments was to be pursued by extending and promoting the “training firms” and commercial or technical training centres.
- School syllabuses were adapted to include the teaching of basic skills. The new school syllabuses were to be applicable at the start of the 2000-2001 school year. They (i) provide for the introduction of a central core and options, (ii) are to a greater extent focused on the development of dynamic skills (social skills and personal skills) and (iii) lay greater emphasis on the interface with the world of work.
- The development of apprenticeship in the new professions was stepped up in order to cater for the current needs of the labour market. Twenty-four new apprenticeship training options were introduced in 1999. As at 31 December 1999 a total of 4 255 apprenticeship contracts had been signed in these new sectors.
- A non-taxable allowance of ATS 20 000 was introduced for the first year of training as an apprentice. This incentive is designed to increase apprenticeship training. The recent tax reform took this allowance up to ATS 60 000. Companies training apprentices pay lower social contributions.
- A network was set up in 1998 to provide a broad choice of vocational training options for young people. 4 200 young people took advantage of this network in the year 1998-1999. In 1999-2000, some 4 000 young people found an apprenticeship through this network. Disadvantaged young people who find it difficult to get an apprenticeship can opt for a pre-apprenticeship scheme lasting up to two years.

3.2 New implementing measures for the guidelines for 2000

- Practical training in vocational schools to be more closely focused on entrepreneurship.
- Enhance knowledge of English as a working language.

- Development of training in the new technologies.
- All schools to have an Internet connection in 2002.

IV- Guideline 9: promoting a labour market open to all

4.1 Implementing measures for the National Employment Action Plan for 1999

Disabled persons and ethnic minorities have to contend with specific obstacles on the employment market. The number of disabled persons concerned has continued to increase in Austria in recent years. However, in 1999 for the first time, unemployment amongst disabled persons fell, even if this fall is lower than that for overall employment. In 1999, 39 378 disabled persons (of whom 36.6% were women) were registered as unemployed, i.e. a 2.9% fall compared with 1998. The number of recruitments of people with a physical or psychological disability, on the other hand, rose in 1999.

4.2 New implementing measures for the guidelines for 2000

The public employment services have taken steps to improve qualifications and access to employment for over 7 500 disabled persons in order to bring down long-term unemployment. To promote the occupational and social integration of ethnic minorities, a series of steps are being taken (courses in German, measures to promote their occupational integration, guidance and vocational counselling).

V- Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self-employment

Klagenfurt University has established a chair for innovation in management and business creation. The University for economic science and business management in Vienna and the University of Linz have been asked to establish a chair for business creation.

VI - Guideline 19: countering gender discrimination

The Federal Minister for Education and Cultural Affairs has pursued the implementation of steps to ensure equal opportunities, particularly as regards the content of teaching and the training of teachers.

BELGIUM

Total rate of employment: 58.9%, but only 25.5% for the 15-24 age group (compared with the European average of 36.2%). Rate of unemployment: 9.1%.

I - Overall strategy for employment and objectives

If employability is to be improved, then the trend whereby young people leave school early without any qualifications needs to be reversed. In the Dutch-speaking community, experiments have been conducted as part of “modular preparation of vocational training”. In the German-speaking community, efforts have been made to achieve better coordination between school education and the vocational training system. Lastly, in the French-speaking community, a range of measures, the content of which is not specified, have been taken.

For the three communities, these measures have been taken in order to increase the opportunities on offer to young people to undertake work-related training and to obtain work experience. In addition, specific programmes have been designed in order to improve young people's familiarity with new technologies. Lastly, better cooperation between all the players involved, including the world of education, has been established in training in order to expand and strengthen the provision of active employment measures.

II - Guidelines 7 and 8: easing the transition from school to work

2.1 Implementing measures for the 1999 action plan

- In the Dutch-speaking community, the new vocational experience plan offers the opportunity to incorporate as part of school learning a vocational experience module for young people studying at school on a part-time basis. A project to “improve the quality of apprenticeship” was launched. In addition, a number of schools have since September 1999 been taking part in the experiment “modular preparation of vocational training”. This action will be continued until 2006 and is designed to use a system of intermediate diplomas to bring down the number of young people leaving school without qualifications. The standing observatory “transition from school to work” (SONAR) is now operational. Lastly, the action plan “a PC for everyone” releases funds to purchase hardware and software and provide for the continuing training of teachers.

- In the French-speaking community, training placements organised either during training or during the final year of studies allow familiarisation with the world of work. The “jobs unit” within the universities continue to provide information to students on the employment market, on professions, what they involve and recruitment procedures. In addition, there is encouragement for any action to allow teachers and trainers a better understanding of the reality of the business sector. Efforts are continuing to provide secondary schools with computer equipment.

- The new federal framework has extended the field of application of apprenticeship.

2.2 Steps taken or anticipated under the guidelines for 2000

Each community has established initiatives in order to bring down the number of young people dropping out of school early.

- The French-speaking community has introduced in-company placements into higher education programmes. It also encourages any action designed to bring teachers and trainers closer to the reality of the business sector. These actions include (i) the production of tools and training channels for defining new training profiles in close conjunction with the business sector as part of the drive to raise the profile of technical and vocational education, (ii) the organisation of training sessions and (iii) in-company placements.

- The Dutch-speaking community hopes to reduce by 20% by the end of its term of office the number of pupils leaving school at 18 without a secondary school leaving certificate or a second year certificate of the third degree of vocational secondary education or a complete training in vocational secondary education or specialised secondary education training or a VIZO training. The project for module-based vocational education will thus be consolidated. The aim of this project is to equip young people with the skills needed for a successful entry into the employment market and for lifelong learning.

- An action plan was planned in order to give technical and vocational education a higher profile in the communities.

- There are various apprenticeship systems. There are those organised by the small business sector (preparing young people for self-employment), apprenticeship for salaried professions and part-time education. The Walloon region is attempting to promote work-linked training (3 000 contracts yearly) while the Flemish region has opted to develop the part-time education system.

- Support is provided for occupational integration pathways, particularly for young people having the greatest difficulties, for part-time pupils and for special secondary education, through work experience projects.

- In Flanders, incorporating the new technologies for education purposes was to be stepped up by using the ICTs at all levels and in all sectors of education, particularly through the action programme “a PC for everyone”, the creation of regional networks of experts and the definition of quality criteria for educational software.

- The Dutch-speaking social partners have offered a commitment to (i) create additional jobs of good quality for pupils and teachers, (ii) consolidate work experience for young people undertaking training on a part-time basis and (iii) to extend the project concerning occupational profiles. The sectors concerned would be encouraged to develop occupational integration actions for young people.

- The Walloon social partners have undertaken to develop placements, organise information campaigns on the importance of technical and vocational education.

- Lastly, the German-speaking community introduced two new measures to encourage education and work on a part-time basis.

III - Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self-employment

Each of the three regions has, for the pillar “development of entrepreneurship”, introduced training initiatives and backup measures to stimulate entrepreneurial spirit. The project “the new entrepreneur” launched in Flanders is designed to support and train innovative startup companies on the basis of an individual plan. Jobseekers wishing to set up in their own right can benefit from various training and support schemes. Wallonia is continuing to develop management training and to provide support for business creation (e.g. through the CREA “chèque création” start-up arrangement). In the Brussels capital region future entrepreneurs receive guidance from the local economy access points.

IV - Guideline 18: raising skills levels in companies

4.1 Implementing measures for the 1999 action plan

- In order to implement the pillar “promoting the adaptability of companies and their workers”, the federal, community and regional authorities are encouraging investment in human resources and in-company training.

- The Walloon region is encouraging continuing training through skills centres which seek to cater for companies’ training requirements as they face technological change. Every centre provides an average of 40 000 hours training yearly. Through the “training cheque” system, an effort is made to strengthen the continuing training of self-employed and salaried workers in SMEs and microenterprises (approximately 150 000 hours of training yearly). A “job rotation” pilot scheme has also been successfully implemented and will be extended to the whole of the region.

- In Flanders, several initiatives were conducted in 1999 to boost lifelong learning, particularly through the “Vlaminvorm” (reduction in property tax, which is reinvested in continuing training) and incentive loans (“crédit levier”) for innovative training.

4.2 Steps taken or envisaged under the guidelines for 2000

- The policy to stimulate investment in human resources and in-company training was being pursued.

This prompted a commitment by the companies, which is included in the cross-industry agreement, to step up the drive to develop continuing training.

- The Flemish government was to launch an initiative in conjunction with the social partners to set up a forum on continuing training issues and on lifelong learning. These “Edufora” were expected in 2000 to conduct actions in the regions in order to establish a training map and produce a report on the coverage of training requirements.

- In the Walloon region, the concept of skills centre was to be expanded to other sectors of activity, e.g. the environment and the building sector. Lastly, the “training cheque” arrangement was to be consolidated and made accessible to companies having 1-250 employees.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

Design and implement a comprehensive lifelong learning strategy in order to forestall skills shortages and to place the economy and the knowledge-based society on a firmer footing.

DENMARK

The unemployment rate stands at 5.2%. The employment rate in Denmark is already above the objectives set for the European Union. It stands at 66% for the 15-24 age group.

I - Overall employment strategy

The essential aim of the employment strategy is to increase the labour force. Therefore Denmark has to enhance workers' skills and qualifications. This objective hinges on improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training programmes. It has accordingly been decided to reform the vocational training system, which will be simplified and more clearly focused on the needs of the labour market, particularly with respect to those who have the lowest qualifications.

II - Evaluation of the implementation of the 1999 guidelines

- Efforts which are described in detail in the 1999 NAP were implemented in order to increase the quality of labour supply by encouraging more and more young people to complete their secondary schooling and/or higher education, and students to complete their studies more quickly.

84% of one age group in 1998 reached secondary or equivalent level and 42% of higher education. The government's aim is to increase over the next ten years the percentage of young people completing secondary education or an equivalent level and completing higher education to 95% and 50% respectively.

- One of the main objectives of the new **vocational training reform** to be introduced as from the start of 2001 is to reduce by half the early drop-out rate from the school system (a rate which in addition must not exceed 12%). At the same time, the early drop-out rate from higher education must be brought down from 27% to 17%.

- The main components of the **action plan for information technologies** presented in the 1999 NAP have been implemented. Information technology has become a compulsory subject in all vocational training programmes. The two information technology schools have developed new information technology education programmes at different study levels. The needs of young people with learning difficulties have been taken into account within this framework.

Given the high demand for workers in the area of new technologies, the aim is to increase the number of students in programmes of education in the new technologies (i.e. 1 000 students over the next three to four years).

There will be special emphasis on women. Lastly, vocational training establishments are proposing training (on a part-time basis and geared to the needs of the labour market) in information technologies for "managers".

- A **major reform of the vocational training programmes for adults** has overhauled the structures and introduced innovative learning methods based on individual requirements.

- A joint action plan conducted by the government and the social partners has been agreed in order to provide quality apprenticeship places catering for the requirements of the different sectors of activity and the needs of young people. The target is 36 000 apprenticeship places for 2004. In addition, it is planned to halve the number of young people leaving apprenticeship early.

The social partners are closely involved in efforts to improve integration into the employment market. In pursuit of the objective set in the 1999 NAP, 6 300 training places have been created, i.e. 69% of the target.

Lastly, the government and the social partners have in recent years paid particular attention to **lifelong learning**, although no target has been set for the number of people to benefit from measures in this context. The social partners in the public and private sectors have, for their part, produced collective agreements adopting a framework for developing skills, although no target figures have been set.

III - Steps taken or envisaged for the implementation of the guidelines for 2000

♦ Guideline 6: encouraging lifelong learning

- The government has put forward a reform for the system of continuing vocational training and adult vocational training, whereby the public authorities take on overall responsibility for guaranteeing continuing training for everyone. This reform hinges inter alia on greater consistency and better mutual recognition of training provision between the adult vocational training and the continuing vocational training systems (e.g. through better coordination of training programmes) and between these systems and basic training programmes.

The government's aim is for all adults to be able to gain access to lifelong learning, particularly those who fail to complete their compulsory education and training or who do not have the basic skills. A particular effort will be made in the area of ICT.

The Education Minister has taken the initiative of building up training provision in the new technologies for all teachers. The aim was to get 25% of teachers involved in these training programmes in 2000.

♦ Guideline 8: easing the transition from school to work

93% of lower secondary school classes in Denmark use computers and 85% have an Internet connection. All classes should be so equipped before 2002.

♦ Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self-employment

Steps have been taken in support of individual entrepreneurship and the creation of new businesses. These include the improvement of the general economic environment in order to promote stable growth with low inflation, stronger support and guidance structures, easier access to funding and to co-funding for innovative companies.

♦ Guideline 16: encouraging continuing training in companies

A training fund has been set up for companies wishing to promote training. This fund contributes up to 50% of training costs. The number of employees benefiting from this system corresponds to 2% of the overall workforce. The job rotation system and the adult apprenticeship system strengthen companies' adaptability while allowing workers and the (long term) unemployed to enhance their employability. Furthermore, Denmark has a system of "training leave" which allows employees to undertake training.

SPAIN

Although the rate of employment for young people in the 15-24 age group rose in 1999 to 29.8%, unemployment remains high in this group at 12.5%. The overall employment rate remains low at 52.5% for the 15-64 age group.

I - Evaluation of actions contained in the 1999 National Action Plan

♦ A second national vocational training programme was developed for the pillar “Improving employability” with the aim of **promoting lifelong learning**, particularly amongst people with low levels of qualifications. 567 000 young people accordingly undertook initial training. Other actions were also organised:

- creation of the Qualifications Institute, a framework within which the social partners and the Autonomous Communities jointly prepare (i) an integrated vocational information and guidance system for students and the active population in general, (ii) the bases of the future National Qualifications System as an instrument assembling the various vocational training arrangements and (iii) indicators for following up and evaluating the quality of vocational training;
- in the specific area of initial training the responsibilities for managing education are being transferred to all the Autonomous Communities.

The number of pupils participating in initial vocational training programmes rose by 27% in 1999 over the previous year. There was a 14% increase in these programmes which are designed to provide young people aged 16-21 who did not complete their compulsory education with the skills needed to enter the employment market.

A training programme to **ease the transition to working life** was introduced, particularly targeting young people with specific needs. In addition, over 100 000 pupils undertook a practical training module in a company. A framework cooperation agreement was signed between the Ministry of Education and the Council of Chambers of Commerce in order to increase this figure.

It should be noted that under the Community programme Leonardo da Vinci, a pilot project entitled “Alba” was launched in order to enhance the employability of women. Childminding facilities increased by 42%, again with a view to the same objective of strengthening equal opportunities policies.

Vocational information and guidance have been strengthened in all initial vocational training cycles.

Teacher training has also been consolidated. Some 8 000 (vocational training) trainers took part in refresher courses.

A series of measures on the training of workers were also launched:

- worker training was increased by 15%. In addition, disadvantaged groups, particularly women, the elderly and unqualified workers, were given priority in the continuing training programmes organised by the business sector;
- although the target as regards training unemployed persons could not be met (16% short of the objective set), 10% of them took part in “employment training” programmes such as training workshops, craft apprenticeship centres and employment workshops;
- a new pilot project was launched in order to adapt the national vocational training centres to the European model of quality management based on the self-assessment of objectives.

Under the government initiative “Infoxxi — the information society for everyone” it was planned to step up the use of information technology in education and training in order to head off social exclusion and enhance the levels of qualification for getting into new jobs.

♦ In the third pillar “Encouraging adaptability in businesses and their employees”, the continuing training measures already mentioned under the first pillar encourage the adaptability of workers in relation to changes in society and the organisation of work.

II - New actions to attain the objectives set by the guidelines for 2000

♦ In order to implement guidelines 5, 6, 7 and 8, the plans for 2000 were to strengthen vocational training under the second vocational training programme which will be in force until 2002. The main thrusts of this programme are:

- to develop an adaptable training system which takes due account of the needs of the employment market, by bringing the world of training and the business world closer together;
- to generalise training periods in companies as part of vocational training;
- devise an integrated vocational training system which is easy to understand for companies and workers alike.

483 000 pupils were expected to follow an initial vocational training course in the year 2000 (a budget of EUR 1 625 million). In the context of initial vocational training the following should be stressed:

- the organisation of exams with the cooperation of the Autonomous Communities in order to obtain vocational training course qualifications provided for by the regulations in force;

- the preparation of distance vocational training courses for intermediate and higher levels, as a function of the most sought-after occupational branches on the employment market, so that the training can be available to rural areas or people wishing to train on a distance basis as a function of their occupational and their personal requirements;
 - increasing the provision of social guarantee programmes and other programmes targeting the most vulnerable groups: immigrant workers, disabled persons, older workers, women;
 - the European quality management model (EFQM — European foundation for quality management) was to be introduced in six of the 28 national vocational training centres, the aim being to eventually introduce it in all centres.
- ◆ The following points are worth noting as regards training for workers:
- all in all, over 550 000 training actions were planned, i.e. a 9% increase over 1999 (even if the number of beneficiaries is smaller because of the fall in the number of jobseekers);
 - a module on the new technologies was to be incorporated into the training programmes for jobseekers. A total of 135 000 people were expected to benefit from this measure through training or “employment training” programmes;
 - the number of workers benefiting from training actions was expected to increase by 27% with an equivalent increase in public funds to finance these actions. Women and the elderly represent a greater proportion than in 1999 in relation to a total number of beneficiaries.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

To devise and implement a coherent lifelong learning strategy setting objectives and embracing basic and continuing teaching and training in order to raise the level of studies and the rate of adult participation in education and training actions. The problem of persons dropping out of the school system prematurely should receive special focus.

FINLAND

The government's objectives on education and training are to:

- bring down the number of pupils dropping out of school;
- develop the information society dimension. In particular, everyone must have a basic knowledge of the new technology;
- strengthen lifelong learning.

The rate of employment stands at 66.3% in Finland and unemployment at 10.2%.

I - Implementation of the 1999 National Employment Action Plan

1.1 Guidelines 5 and 6: encouraging lifelong learning

The general level of education amongst young people is considered satisfactory. Approximately 83% of the 30-34 age group has followed at least one cycle of higher secondary education (80% of men and 86% of women) whereas approximately 40% of the 50-54 age group have no vocational training. Women are better educated than men in all age groups.

Some 42% of employees took part in 1998 in training lasting on average four days. Those who participated the most are the 35-44 age group, those with higher education qualifications, those performing tasks of responsibility and those working in big companies employing at least 200 people.

Lifelong learning is the key principle in the Finnish strategy for growth, competitiveness and employment. All young people have the opportunity to pursue their studies beyond basic education. In recent years, the raising of the level of qualifications of the population in response to the rapid pace of technology has become a priority. As for the main measures in 1999:

- nearly 40 000 basic or secondary level vocational teaching and training places were opened up to adults (i.e. approximately 9 000 more than the previous year). In 1999, 61 000 people enrolled for training linked with the requirements of the labour market in order to acquire an occupational qualification or additional vocational training;
- measures to promote lifelong learning as part of training linked to the requirements of the labour market were clarified and training at the place of work made more effective. An average of 2 100 people monthly took part in these actions. Based on the encouraging experiences observed, provision of this type of training was to be expanded in 2000;
- shared work models were introduced in order to back up lifelong learning. Some 11 000 people used this system of job rotation or part-time work opportunities. Roughly 10% of them were following occupational studies during their spare time.

1.2 Guidelines 7 and 8: easing the transition from school to work

People leaving general education can follow vocational training or move on to higher secondary education. An estimated 9% of these (12% boys and 6.5% girls) do not take up this opportunity immediately. Some of them will resume their education at a later stage.

Approximately 15% of those obtaining a higher secondary education qualification are still students one year later. The number of young people who have found a job has increased and stands at 55%, whereas the number of young people in a transitional phase upon completion of their education or training has fallen.

80-90% of general education establishments, 90-95% of higher secondary establishments and all vocational establishments were connected up to the Internet at the start of 1999. During the period 1996-1998, approximately 54% of teachers received training in the new technologies.

The main measures taken in 1999 include:

- further efforts to ensure that all basic vocational training courses include a period of practical training. This was the case for 70% of all training courses which began in 1999. The practical training consists of specific training undertaken in real working conditions. Practical training experience for course supervisors were implemented as part of Objectives 3 and 6 programmes and partly funded by the European Social Fund;
- the “innovation workshops” were introduced in vocational training institutes. These enable pupils who dropped out of school to continue their studies. Around 30 of these workshops are operational and cater for 1 088 pupils, including 37% of women. These workshops have helped to reduce the school dropout rate and enabled these pupils to complete their studies. The “innovation workshops” for young people (approximately 350) continue to support young people facing the threat of exclusion (8 000 young people take part every year in these workshops);
- an action programme covering the period 1998-2002 is in progress in the electricity, information technology, electronics and communications sectors. The number of new students being trained to university level in the information technology sector thus increased in 1999.

Similarly, a retraining course for those wishing to move towards a career in information technologies was followed by 2 400 people in 1998 and 1999. A specific campaign is being conducted to attract women to training courses in the new technologies.

II - New initiatives for 2000

♦ The government set out the conditions to be met in order to promote the long-term development of **employment and lifelong learning**. Multiannual, systematic and global measures were therefore planned in cooperation between the government and the social partners, particularly in order to improve qualifications in the SMEs. These measures provide for:

- studies to improve the definition of training requirements and the practical conditions for implementing training actions;
- the development of new vocational training methods in order to reduce the dropout rate and support pupils in danger of exclusion;
- an effort to improve the qualifications of teachers in workshops in order to further help young people to integrate the world of work;
- action to strengthen the information society dimension;
- by 2002 all educational establishments to evaluate their programmes and define a programme to develop the new technologies and encourage entrepreneurship;
- teachers to acquire the basic skills stemming from the use of the NICT.

♦ With regard to **guideline 11** “Encouraging the development of self-employment”, the Finnish government launched a specific project on the development of entrepreneurship for the period 2000-2001. The project breaks down into five parts: “a performing market”, “entrepreneurship as a career choice”, “starting in business”, “the first difficult years of a company” and “the growth of a firm”. The entrepreneurship dimension will be strengthened in study programmes as well as in the basic and continuing training of teachers.

♦ For **guideline 16** “Encouraging continuing training in companies” the common objective for the government and the social partners is to develop work organisation in the long term. The measures planned included notably the legislation on the vocational training of “motivated” adults, which was scheduled to come into force in August 2000. There were also plans to boost provision of training, in particular with the support of the ICTs.

Lastly, the Finnish National Workplace Development Programme was to be pursued and extended in conjunction with the other ministries concerned.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

Pursue the reform of the taxation and allowance arrangements in order to increase incentives to employment and recruitment and to target lifelong learning policies on the older categories so as to keep them in occupational life longer.

FRANCE

In order to spread the benefits of growth amongst everyone, France is pursuing a lifelong learning policy through action designed to reduce the number of young people leaving the school system without any qualifications, to strengthen partnership with the business sector and to give higher education a greater vocational orientation.

Young people have been the ones who have benefited primarily from a buoyant employment market. The rate of unemployment among young people stood at 8.2% at the end of 1999. Education and training policies setting out to achieve better integration on the employment market (arrangements under the *Mission générale d'insertion* (general integration unit policy) have played a major role upstream in bringing down the number of unemployed young persons.

I – Guideline 1 and 2: giving young people and the adult jobless a fresh start

1.1 Implementation of the 1999 National Employment Action Plan

The French National Employment Agency (ANPE) provides an individualised service to young people aged under 25 for the first six months of their period of unemployment and to adults in their first 12 months of unemployment. This “fresh start” gives each jobseeker the opportunity to receive proposals tailored to their requirements (customised approach to employment, access to training and, if required, help in drafting a training project, social support for the persons in greatest difficulty). This programme will be implemented gradually until 2002. In 1999, 841 000 benefited from this programme, 54% being women.

1.2 New initiatives under the NAP for 2000

It was planned to develop the programme linked to the individual service for a fresh start for employment around two thrusts: strengthening of preventive action and increasing the numbers completing the programme and moving into employment and training.

II - Guideline 3: increasing the number of people benefiting from active measures capable of making their occupational integration easier

1999 was characterised by an increase of the numbers entering work-related training arrangements under a contract of employment: qualification contracts ((+1.4%), guidance contracts (+17%), apprenticeship (+3.7%), plus 3 100 entering adult qualification contracts (new measure).

III - Guideline 6: encouraging lifelong learning

3.1 Implementation of the 1999 NAP

A White Paper on the reform of vocational training was presented in March 1999. One of the thrusts of this reform was the **recognition of occupational experience**. There have been several initiatives in this context.

- The National Ministry of Education has developed access to the diploma-based validation of occupational experience. 346 000 were processed within these arrangements in 1998 and 1999. This represents 20% more than the previous year. In addition, 6 100 people received support and nearly 5 000 obtained a validation, i.e. an increase of 26%. The recipients of the diploma-based validation of achievements are mainly people in work (59%) and jobseekers (27%).
- A local individualised provision leading to a qualification (validation of achievements or diploma) was developed in 1999 by the *Education nationale* (national education authority) and by the Association for Adult Vocational Training (AFPA). The *Education nationale* trained 400 000 people in universities and just under 500 000 in consortia of adult training establishments (GRETA). The AFPA took in 150 000 people in training, including 95 000 jobseekers; over 40 000 qualifications were issued by the Ministry for Employment and Solidarity (20% of them in women).

3.2 New initiatives under the NAP 2000

The Ministry for National Education set out to achieve a rise of approximately 20% in the numbers covered by the academic arrangements for validation of occupational experience and to step up validation in higher education establishments.

Through the reform of the arrangement for validating occupational experience, it has sought to simplify the procedures and instruments in order amongst other things to allow the most vulnerable and least qualified target groups to obtain an occupational diploma through validation of occupational experience alone.

The Ministry for Employment and Solidarity and the Ministry for National Education planned to build up a consistent local public provision throughout the country, leading to a qualification and/or validated by a diploma. This concerns particularly the AFPA, the GRETA and the universities.

The *Education nationale's* continuing training network was to test a new quality standard designed to guarantee teaching quality (customisation, recognition and validation of achievements, language learning).

IV - Guideline 7: reducing the number of young people who drop out of the school system early

Priority education was re-launched in order to prevent pupils leaving school without qualifications. The result was an increase of over 40% in the number of schools concerned (865 priority education action zones/networks involving 8 553 schools and 1 688 000 pupils). This drive represented EUR 530 million (FRF 3.5 billion) in additional funding.

Bridging classes were introduced in 1999 to specifically cater on a temporary basis for pupils excluded from the school system (customised assessment, special timetables, cross-disciplinary teaching methods). At the start of 2000, 150 bridging classes and 10 bridging boarding establishments were operational. Preliminary surveys show that one year after entering bridging classes, over three quarters of pupils had been reintegrated into general or vocational education or were following teaching within a specialised structure.

Specific arrangements leading to a qualification in order to integrate young people and assembled under the generic title of “*mission générale d’insertion*” (general integration unit policy) were expanded. A total of 3 500 actions involved 54 000 young people and made it possible for 29 000 of them who have not reached level V in the qualification process to pursue training (+ 25% compared with 97/98). Another 7 000 young people (+ 15%) were catered for by 756 new actions (+ 27.5%).

Pilot sites were introduced in order to reintegrate into school young people aged under 16 who have not completed their compulsory schooling. There are six of these sites and they work in partnership with the local authorities and the government departments responsible (Ministries of Justice, Health, Urban Policy). They cater for a large number of young people who have slipped through the system

4.2 New initiatives under the NAP for 2000

60 000 young people left school without any qualifications in 1998 (8% of school leavers) and 91 000 young people left higher education without obtaining a qualification (24%).

It was planned to pursue the actions undertaken in order to consolidate the action of the priority education networks through support and the conclusion of contracts setting out for three years the objectives selected for pupil achievement and the methods for providing support and carrying out evaluation.

The “New opportunities” programme was to be continued with the aim of:

- better circumscribing the target public by a system of systematic monitoring;
- preventing dropping out of lower secondary school through an array of arrangements, particularly bridging classes, and by countering school failure, combining a programme of research to identify the population concerned and actions at pilot sites;

- building up pathways to qualifications after lower secondary and enhancing the local **provision of level V training** by sounding out the business sector which has requirements at this level with a view to joint preparation of appropriate training ending with the certificate of vocational aptitude (CAP);

- 250 bridging classes were to operational by the end of 2000 and would then be catering for over 5 000 pupils. In addition, around 15 projects for bridging boarding schools were being examined.

V - Guideline 8: improving capacity for adapting to technological change and modernising work-linked training systems

5.1 Implementation of NAP for 1999

The Ministry for Education stepped up the **introduction on a widespread basis of the use of information technologies in school education** by setting up an arrangement to facilitate funding by local authorities, the training of personnel, the promotion of new practices and new contents and the production of educational software.

100% of general and technological higher secondary schools, 50% of vocational secondary schools, 60% of lower secondary schools and 15% of primary schools now have an Internet connection.

5.2 New initiatives under the NAP for 2000

- **A start was made on reforms to vocational education.** The reform is based on the following principles: (i) partnership with vocational circles, (ii) quality based on a teaching continuum between the education establishment and the business sector, (iii) close interconnection between general training and vocational training, (iv) strengthening of the role of the vocational secondary schools in local development involving the SMEs (technological exchanges between establishments and companies) and (v) modernisation of level V diplomas backed up by differentiating between objectives (CAP for the purposes of occupational integration, BEP with a view to further studies).

- **Higher education is also being modernised**, inter alia by the introduction of the vocational degree. The latter has three aims: firstly, integration into a job at level bac+3, (baccalaureate plus three years' study) thanks to close association between training establishments and professional circles; secondly, the construction of the European area of higher education; and, thirdly, teaching innovation.

- In addition, the "master" qualification has been introduced. This is the first stage in the attainment of objectives jointly set by the European ministers and is situated between the degree and the doctorate. It will be awarded to all holders of a diploma obtained at level bac+5, on the basis of studies, professional or personal achievements and periods of study or placements in a European country.

- **The keys for access into the information society must be available to everyone.** All secondary schools (lower secondary and higher secondary) were thus to be connected to the Internet for teaching purposes, along with the masters' training institutes (IUFM).

Special care was to be taken to ensure that the development of the NICT and the teaching methods which go with them was carried out with due concern for equal opportunities for girls and boys.

Staff belonging to the national education system in the education areas, nearly all young teachers, head teachers and inspectorates were to receive training in the NICT. Furthermore, nearly all school teacher training now included sections devoted to the use in teaching of the NICT.

VI - Guideline 13: exploiting the new opportunities for job creation in services and business services

A number of actions sought to **promote entrepreneurship**: development of teaching of entrepreneurship in the mining engineers' schools and telecommunications engineers' schools; launching of a charter of progress for schools training engineers for industry; strengthening of cooperation between engineering schools and management schools, creation of a Franco-British club for higher training in entrepreneurship associating around 60 establishments from the two countries.

VII – Guideline 17: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers

Implementation of this guideline was awaiting developments under the negotiations between the social partners on vocational training and business sector investment in human resources. Moreover, prospective study contracts were planned for many sectors, particularly in the health, social and medico-social sectors, logistics, fisheries, building and public works. Lastly, training development commitments were to be stepped up in the home help, tourism, printing trades, craft trades and the building and public works sectors.

VIII – “Equal opportunities” pillar

Targets were set in order to incorporate the equal opportunities dimension. For instance, it was intended that young women should represent 35% of the young people in apprenticeship by 2000 (compared with 28% in 1999).

In addition, in order to counter discrimination between men and women, the players responsible for basic training and women's rights were being consulted in order to prepare a platform for joint actions in 2000. As for school programmes, the number of women on the national curriculum council rose from 30% in 1998 to 40% at the start of 2000.

The three thrusts for initial training for the implementation of the NAP for 2000 were:

- to improve school and vocational guidance for girls and boys and adjusting the provision of initial training to the job opportunities available;
- to promote education based on mutual respect of the sexes;
- to strengthen the instruments for promoting equal opportunities and the training of the different players concerned.

Lastly, in order to improve guidance for young girls, an Internet site to help teachers and guidance counsellors was to be set up in the first half of 2000. In addition, a pilot action entitled “apprenticeship for women” was set up in the Grenoble education area in order to improve the channelling of young girls to work-linked training and apprenticeship.

VIII - Mid-term evaluation

- In order to prevent young people dropping out before they obtain a diploma or a qualification, France has given priority to positive discrimination actions: priority education areas and networks which were relaunched as from 1998, bridging classes in greater number. The target set in the NAP for 1998 was to bring the number of young people leaving school without qualifications down from 53 000 to 45 000 over a three-year period.

- It also provided for gradual accession to the first vocational qualification (CAP) by breaking it up into units and strengthening arrangements for the under-16s. These actions were continued under the NAP for 1999. The expansion of training provision for the purposes of the CAP was announced in the NAP for 1999.

- Assistance was also put in place to rechannel university students failing during the first cycle (action continued by the NAP for 1999) and to build up continuing training provision by higher education establishments in order to make it easier for people in work to return to university and allow ongoing adaptation of skills.

- The NAP for 1998, in order to better prepare young people for working life, announced the development of a system of validation of occupational achievement. In addition, in order to bring school and the business sector closer together plans were made to:

- develop and strengthen work-linked training within the school system;
- increase cooperation between schools (particularly vocational schools) and the business sector (particularly the SMEs); this action was re-included in the NAP for 1999;
- introducing, under the aegis of the rectors, “engineers for school” with the task of strengthening the links between school and the business sector; this action was also re-included in the NAP for 1999.

- The NAP for 1999 announced that the vocational dimension of university training was to be stepped up, that the expertise with regard to the relationship between training and employment was to be improved thanks to the introduction of an observatory of professions, and that 10 000 young people were expected to benefit from the development of training useful for occupational integration.

- An action programme to develop the new ICT in teaching was also announced (this action was re-included in the NAP for 1999).

- The NAP for 1999 additionally stressed the need to open apprenticeship to a greater extent to both sexes and to introduce the new technologies in the apprentice training centres.

- A reform of the law on vocational training in order to ensure effective right to lifelong training was planned for 1999. The NAP for 1999 made provision for defining genuine teaching contracts for the periods spent by pupils in a company, to modernise the CAP vocational certificate and propose in-company placements to vocational training teachers.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

Adopt measures to improve the effectiveness of the continuing training system and promote a global lifelong learning strategy.

Unemployment rate: 11.7%

I - Guideline 6: encouraging the development of lifelong learning

1.1 Current situation and policy objectives

Lifelong learning is the main strategy for making a successful transition to the knowledge-based society. Lifelong learning is implemented through policies which essentially concern adults, even if there are measures concerning the education system which make it possible to lay the basis for lifelong learning. Be that as it may, the adult education sector does not have a long tradition. Two main policy thrusts have been defined:

- to give education opportunity to certain categories of the population, e.g. older workers;
- to give those who did not succeed via the formal education system a second chance.

1.2 Progress in the implementation of the NAP for 1999 and outlook for 2000

- The Greek Open University gives those who did not complete their studies, particularly women, an opportunity to train. The method used is distance education. New developments were expected in 2000.
- Optional study programmes offer opportunities for additional training and specialisation to students and graduates. Older workers can also benefit from these arrangements.
- Supplementary education for university graduates and those holding qualifications from technical secondary schools have the objective of ensuring that workers can acquire the specialisations which best respond to market needs.
- The aim of the second chance schools is to give young people who failed at school a chance to resume their training.
- General adult education is for the over-16s who did not complete compulsory education or did not attend school at all, and is designed to address the problem of illiteracy.

II - Guideline 7: reducing the number of young people who drop out of the school system early

2.1 Current situation and policy objectives

The education system must reconcile the traditional principles of education which are focused on personal development and the new requirements for studies and information which are swift, flexible and wide-ranging in order to survive in an international environment which is rapidly changing and increasingly competitive.

The number of years of study is increasing continually and the number of young people dropping out of the education system early is falling. Dropping out of education takes place essentially in groups at risk of social marginalisation and in the rural areas. This problem of dropping out affects only a small number of young people but must be seen as a serious problem in that it runs counter to the objective of equal opportunities for everyone in education.

Increased investment in education is one avenue to explore in order to contribute to the long-term competitiveness of European economies and consequently to create new jobs.

2.1 Progress in implementing the NAP for 1999 and outlook for 2000

- The aims of “**supplementary teaching support**” are to bring down the rate of dropout from the education system, to improve the level of education of those who leave secondary education and to facilitate the entry of young people into the employment market or higher education. The “supplementary teaching support” offered to higher secondary pupils concerns 25% of pupils who can attend 12 additional hours of tuition weekly in the main subject areas. The education staff have been properly trained. It is intended to continue this programme.

- **Catch-up education** is a preventive measure which seeks to strengthen school achievement essentially in the areas which are experiencing a high rate of under-achievement. Its main aim is to prevent young people dropping out of school during the nine years of compulsory education, by focusing attention particularly on pupils following evening courses. At the same time, it seeks to help pupils experiencing the greatest difficulties at higher secondary school. The pilot implementation of the catch-up programme of education was completed using individual preparation methods in which the pupils take part themselves in a limited number of schools in rural areas which have a high rate of under-achievement and early dropout.

Catch-up teaching was implemented in 102 of the 137 schools envisaged in the 1999-2000 school year. An evaluation of the pilot programme has shown that this form of teaching proved very successful.

It should be noted that the programme did not only help to improve the performance of pupils experiencing difficulties but also improved that of all pupils in the classes in which it was implemented. It was planned to use the catch-up teaching programmes within a wider network of schools in 2000, with priority to be given to the areas which have the highest number of pupils dropping out of school and who run the risk of social exclusion.

- The development of **vocational guidance** and **teacher training** programmes also helps to improve the education system and indirectly to prevent dropping out. In recent years, substantial effort has been made to develop vocational counselling and guidance at school to provide rapid information on the employment market. A pilot project was planned in order to integrate school vocational guidance into the programmes. The objective in teacher training was to improve and adapt teacher qualifications. It was intended to continue and extend the training programmes of the Ministry of Education.

III - Guideline 8: easing the transition from school to work

3.1 Current situation and policy objectives

The education system has to be adapted to the requirements of the employment market so that young people with qualifications can gain the skills and qualifications needed to make a successful entry into the labour market. One of the main objectives of education system reforms is accordingly to make it more flexible and capable of adjusting to changes in society and the economy, and to trends on the employment market.

In addition, the emergence of the information society creates new jobs requiring skills in the new technologies. The latter are new factors of productivity and competitiveness for the business sector and at the same time offer fresh potential for growth, employment, prosperity and a high standard of living for workers. The main aim is therefore to equip workers with the knowledge and skills needed and to give them the opportunity to improve their qualifications constantly.

3.2 Progress in the implementation of the NAP for 1999 and outlook for 2000

- Reforms were introduced in teaching and vocational training in order to respond more closely to the needs of the labour market.

- The Ministry of Education has been pursuing “information technology” actions designed to equip pupils at all levels with the knowledge needed to use the new technologies. Steps were also taken with regard to the populations of the disadvantaged regions which lack resources and infrastructures in order to increase access to the new technologies and thus contribute to the objective of social justice and equal opportunities.

In 1999, 116 informatics laboratories were functioning in schools and 441 schools had an Internet connection. The expectation for 2000 was that 370 informatics laboratories would be up and running and 1 000 schools connected to the Internet.

- The links between the education system and the employment market must be improved through actions taken by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Employment.

In particular, practical work experience for university students and technical school pupils is designed to familiarise them with the work environment. This work experience should become compulsory in all teaching establishments.

Apprenticeship schools are on the increase and will be expanded. In the 1999/2000, 47 apprenticeship schools were operational and catering for 7 900 pupils. This number was expected to reach 10 000 in 2000.

IV - Guideline 17: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers

4.1 Current situation and policy objectives

Adapting companies, particularly the SMEs, and their workers to the new production and work organisation environment is a primary objective in the Greek employment policies.

4.2 Progress in implementing the NAP for 1999 and outlook for 2000

- The in-company training programmes organised by the employment agency (OAED) targeted public and private sector employees and were designed to strengthen adaptation to the new technologies and work organisation methods. The agency also implemented a programme for the self-employed and for workers in small companies employing between one and five workers. This programme, prepared by the social partners, was operated successfully in 1999 and was continued in 2000.

- The Ministry for Employment implemented a training programme for the companies and organisations of the public sector in the broad sense in order to enhance the skills of workers and the competitiveness of companies. This programme took into account the deregulation in the telecommunications and electricity sectors scheduled for 2001.

- Under the Community initiative ADAPT, a series of measures were implemented to encourage entrepreneurship, particularly targeting young people, and in order to disseminate the new skills (e.g. the marketing of sport, health and safety, the organisation of tours, the cleaning of beaches, organic farming and other skills in the area of recycling).

The social partners were particularly in the conclusion of agreements on training and the acquisition of occupational experience and in disseminating information on the new trends on the employment market. The other main measures implemented under this initiative related to the development of the information society, the promotion of training in e-commerce, the development of innovative practices in the area of distance training and new forms of work organisation such as "teleworking".



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

To adopt an overall lifelong learning strategy to include targets; to further improve vocational education and training systems in order to consolidate the level of qualifications of the workforce; and to step up support for continuing training, particularly by involving the social partners to a greater extent.

IRELAND

Rate of unemployment: 5.7%. The aim of education and training policies in Ireland is to train individuals having a high level of qualifications in order to respond to the needs of the economy. A human resources development programme (the Operational programme (OP) for Employment and Human Resource Development) was thus launched with the aim of making up the shortfall in terms of manpower and skills deficits.

The OECD report "Key Figures in Education for 2000" states that Ireland ranks 20th amongst the 29 industrialised countries members of the OECD with regard to investment in education (expressed as a percentage of GDP). The main difference is to be found in higher secondary education where Ireland is placed half a point below the average for the OECD countries.

I – Main measures taken in 1999

1.1 Guidelines 5 and 6: promoting employability

- The law on **national qualifications** was adopted in July 1999 and provided for the creation of a "national qualifications body" to establish and maintain a framework for qualifications. A working party was set up in 1999 to start up the work and organise the new structures.

- The funding of **adult** literacy actions rose by EUR 1.8 million in 1997 to EUR 7.2 million in 1999. Reference networks were established locally through a structured mechanism to identify specific needs amongst the regions and individuals. In addition, a White Paper on adult learning was being prepared and was scheduled to be published in the summer of 2000.

1.2 Guidelines 7 and 8: easing the transition from school to work

The problem of early drop-out from school continues. In 1997, 3.2% of young people were leaving school without any qualifications and 15.7% without a school-leaving certificate. The number of pupils leaving primary school with literacy problems remains high.

The **youth support programme (Youthreach)**, which offers two years of teaching, training and work experience or a placement for young people leaving school without qualifications, is constantly gathering pace. Its implementation was facilitated by the introduction of a level 1 certificate in 1999 which offers a steady pathway towards level 3 qualifications for adults and young people who dropped out of school early.

In June 1999, an action was implemented to keep young people at school until they obtain their school-leaving certificate.

The aims set by the "**Information technology 2000**" programme were attained one year in advance. By the end of 1999, there were 60 000 computers in schools and all establishments had an Internet connection. 40 000 teachers were trained.

1.3 Guideline 16: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers

A report from a group of experts on the future skills and needs recommended the creation of 5 400 places in advanced technologies during the period 2000-2002. Around 2 000 places were created at the start of the 1999-2000 school year. Generally speaking, the level of qualifications of workers has risen substantially over the past decade and this trend should continue.

According to the survey undertaken by the Irish Employer Federation, companies are spending more on training, the amount representing 3% of the wage bill. These figures would still need validation.

At the end of 1999, there were 21 000 registered apprentices (+24% on 1998). A training networks project (Skillsnet) was also introduced.

II – Action planned for 2000

2.1 Development of the information society

It was intended to step up investment to develop the information society, with fresh resources to be released for the "Information technologies 2000" programme in order to guarantee access to the NICT for all pupils. The aim is to gradually reach a ratio of one computer for eight pupils in primary education and one for five in secondary education. In addition, a programme was planned to allow adults to acquire the basic skills in this area.

In line with the recommendations of the Lisbon European Council, each class was to have a high-speed Internet connection. Teachers were to receive an in-service training programme.

2.2 Lifelong learning and the transition from school to work

- The new "Social Partnership" agreement sets out a timetable for implementing a culture to promote lifelong learning both within and outside the education system. A strategic framework for lifelong learning was to be developed on the basis of a White Paper on adult learning to be published in the summer of 2000.

- In Budget 2000, the Government announced the creation of a new National Training Fund. The fund will be resourced through a levy equivalent to 0.7% of employer's social insurance contributions.

- A range of measures were planned in order to help young people who have dropped out of school and also an action plan to propose an education and training pathway to young people. In addition, young people aged 16-18 would be expected to obtain a certificate in order to be able to find a job. At the same time, the education system was planning initiatives to encourage young people and adults alike to get back into education (on a part-time basis). This framework was also intended to provide a vocational guidance service for adults.

- Investment in education was to be stepped up to enable Ireland to get back into the top quarter of OECD countries in terms of participation in higher secondary education and in terms of quality of education and training. The participation of disadvantaged people in higher education was also to be encouraged by specific means. Lastly, bridges between education and training were to be introduced in order to facilitate access to higher qualifications.

- The links between education, training and the business sector were to be strengthened. The number of people in apprenticeship virtually doubled in 1998-1999 compared to 1995-1996. The quality of apprenticeship training was to be improved. Lastly, it was planned to build up in-company training on the basis of cooperation between the public and private sectors.



Recommendations for 2001 on education and training

Continue and step up endeavours to support increased productivity and improve skills and qualifications amongst the workforce, by laying greater emphasis on in-company training and by developing lifelong learning. Appropriate targets should be set.

ITALY

Unemployment fell from 12.2% to 11.3% between 1998 and 1999, while the rate of employment rose from 51.8% to 52.5%. The Italian economy is nevertheless characterised by substantial differences between the north and the south of the country.

I – Guideline 7: improving the quality of the education system

♦ **Reform of the school system**

Reforms are in progress in the school system. The main features are:

- autonomy of schools (complete implementation as from September 2000);
- strengthening of compulsory schooling;
- reorganisation of school curricula (schools and universities);
- teacher training programmes;
- introduction of the new technologies into teaching and school management;
- opening up the education system to adults.

♦ **Preventing pupils dropping out of school**

In order to counter early dropping out of school, a multi-tier strategy is being implemented: training and working credits, guidance, intensive use of training programmes, integrated teaching/training programmes, stepping up apprenticeship programmes. This action has been pursued by the Ministry of Education, particularly in Southern Italy with the support of the European Social Fund. Nearly 120 000 pupils were concerned by this action in 1998 and 1999.

♦ **Compulsory schooling**

Here the point was to ensure that, starting with the 1999/2000 school year, all young people follow compulsory teaching up to the age of 18 (in general education, in vocational training or under an apprenticeship training scheme). A funding law was adopted in order to finance this objective: ITL 200 billion were allocated for 1999, ITL 460 for 2000, ITL 700 for 2001 and ITL 780 for 2002.

The compulsory schooling provisions will be fully operational as from 2002. A register will be introduced. A register will be introduced in order to control the application of this obligation (this system became operational for 15-year olds as from 2000).

♦ **Higher technical teaching and training programmes**

These programmes are established by the regions on the basis of local needs and in accordance with rules laid down at the national level. The programmes, combining courses and in-plant training, last two to four semesters and are designed to allow the participants to acquire standard/higher vocational skills. After completion of their studies, the students are issued with a certificate which is recognised throughout the country.

The conditions for gaining access to higher technical education and to the training programmes for those who have not obtained a secondary education certificate are set out in a decree which also defines the levels of the programmes, the means for promoting participation in the training systems, the amount of training credits and the certification methods.

II – Guideline 8: improving capacity for adapting to technological change and modernising work-linked training systems

♦ **Improving training opportunities**

The Italian government sees the improvement of the quality of the provision of training as one of the main thrusts of its action. The aim is to adapt the training systems to the requirements of the labour market. There is special focus on the most disadvantaged people and on self-employment.

A better range of training opportunities and a close link with the public employment services should make it possible to implement action to head off and counter unemployment. On the vocational training side, agreements have been signed between the government, the regions and the social partners in order to promote apprenticeship, the certification of skills and the introduction of new training structures.

As regards apprenticeship, which is set to become the main qualification route for young people, efforts will be made to define the contents of training outside the place of work and to step up training actions targeting the under 18s.

♦ **Adjusting to the information society**

A programme was established to develop the new technologies in education. The programme covered the period 1997-2000. By the end of 2000, the access to the Internet and the recourse to multimedia sources should be supplied to all the schools. Within this framework, over 10 000 projects were funded. Two thirds of these projects related to compulsory education, a quarter to higher secondary schools and the remainder to primary schools. 3 000 additional projects were to be funded in 2000 in order to cover all schools.

Over 6 000 projects were funded to purchase and manage multimedia stations for teaching. 60% of these projects were intended for compulsory schooling, 37% to higher education and 3.5% to primary schools. 1 775 additional projects were to be funded in 2000.

There were 135 000 computers in 6 112 schools (i.e. an average of 19 computers per establishment). 62.4% of schools had an Internet connection. Lastly, substantial financial incentives were granted to all higher secondary school pupils for them to buy a PC (interest-free loan).

III – "Entrepreneurship" pillar

A programme to disseminate enterprise culture in schools was implemented. In 1999, 18 000 young people were concerned by this programme (two thirds being girls).

IV – Pillar "Encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers"

In order to promote continuing training, the funding measures provided for by Law 236/93 were continued. In addition, in 1998 and 1999, an experimental project "individual training projects" was launched. Managed by the 16 participating regions, this project made it possible to offer workers "training coupons" to be spent on on-the-job training within the company or under another arrangement. 300 000 workers took part, in addition to the 360 000 who benefited from co-funding under the ESF.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

To adopt and implement a consistent lifelong learning strategy, to include inter alia national objectives; the social partners should contribute to a greater extent in proposing a wider range of training options for the active population.

LUXEMBOURG

Luxembourg had an employment rate of 61.6% in 1999. Unemployment stood at 2.3% while unemployment among young people was 2.2% in 1999.

One of the main reasons for unemployment in Luxembourg is the mismatch between the qualifications held by job seekers and the needs of the business sector. The government has therefore been stepping up its efforts in training policies and has made lifelong learning an absolute priority.

I - Guidelines 7 and 8: Easing the transition from school to work

♦ The Ministry for Education, Vocational Training and Sport in 1999 pursued its process of reform to reduce the number of pupils dropping out of school. A number of strategies were put in place to attain this objective:

- the move from an approach focusing on the problem of failure to an approach focused more on realistic evaluation of the pupil capacities and guidance on making a responsible choice. In concrete terms, the switch from primary school to secondary school has been re-examined: the entry examination has been replaced by a guidance procedure;
- reform of the criteria whereby pupils move up from one class to another in order to allow pupils to progress at a more natural rate and forestall needless failures;
- reforms with regard to certification, particularly promoting essentially manual training routes or training with a socio-vocational end (CITP and CCM) and the introduction of a national certificate attesting to successful completion of the intermediate technical secondary education syllabus.

♦ The Ministry for Education, Vocational Training and Sport is endeavouring to open up prospects for training and integration to pupils with learning difficulties, thanks to close cooperation between technical secondary education and the National Vocational Training Centre (CNFPC). This latter organisation takes in young people leaving school with no prospects of qualification, incorporating them in guidance and vocational initiation courses.

♦ A teaching model for young people making the transition to working life (15-25 years) is currently being developed on the basis of a reform of teaching content. The project started in 1999 and will last until 2001. It includes:

- the drafting of training reference frameworks for the occupational tasks to be carried out by young job seekers and the skills to be acquired in various occupational sectors (metalworking, woodworking, paintwork, the building trade, sales, needlework/home helping, catering, social teaching);
- the drafting of teaching contents for the sectors concerned;

- continuing training for teaching staff, tutors and scientific supervisors for the teaching implementation of the new curricula prepared (as from autumn 2000).

♦ **The promotion of the ICT in teaching** is secured through three structures:

- the Education Technology Centre (CTE) provides technical assistance in equipping schools for the ICT;
- the RESTENA (National Education and Research Teleinformatics Network) caters for the needs in terms of telematics communications of education and scientific research establishments, providing free Internet access for schools and all teachers;
- the SCRIPT (Research and Teaching and Technological Innovation Coordination Service) coordinates research and innovation in the various teaching fields including that of integrating the ICT. It has personnel responsible for informing and advising schools on the use of ICT.

In addition, a programme of initiation in the new technologies has been introduced in the three years of lower secondary technical education. Primary and secondary school teachers receive initial and continuing training in the ICT. Lastly, the Ministry of Education, Vocational Training and Sport now has a structure for regular analysis of vocational training, particularly training with a high technical content, in order to adapt them to the requirements of the business sector, particularly in the area of ICT.

III – Guideline 17: raising the levels of qualification in companies

With regard to the "Adaptability" pillar, the social partners play an essential role in implementing the European employment strategy, particularly as regards the continuing training of workers or apprenticeship placements in companies for young people and adults.

In order to raise the level of qualifications, the recent framework law on continuing vocational training (law of 22 June 1999) is a major step towards qualitative adaptation of companies and employees. This law introduces fiscal advantages for in-company training.

IV - Guideline 20: preventing discrimination between men and women

Mention must be made here of the pilot project "Women, science and technology" developed in order to diversify the school and vocational options of girls. The aim is to give young people, boys and girls alike, the opportunity to understand the major contribution made by women in the area of science and technology, and to promote diversification in the school and vocational options open to women.



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

To continue the implementation of the framework law on continuing vocational training and improve the definition and implementation of these policies, inter alia by setting targets in order to increase the rates of participation in education and training actions.

NETHERLANDS

The rate of employment continues to rise and in 1999 stood at 70.9% while unemployment was 3.3%.

I - Guideline 6: encouraging the development of lifelong learning

♦ Measures to boost training make an essential contribution to solving the bottlenecks on the employment market. The government and the social partners want to increase the number of persons taking part in lifelong learning initiatives and to reduce the number of those who do not have basic skills. The aim is to emulate the performance of the most advanced Member States, Denmark and Sweden.

♦ The commitment of the social partners is essential as they are the parties responsible for the training of employees. In June 1998, the government and the social partners reached a **framework agreement on training at the place of work**, within which several projects were launched:

- a timetable for employability was established and began to be implemented in 1999. The social partners stated their readiness to accept shared responsibility (including financial responsibility) for basic training programmes targeting job-seekers and those already in work;

- step up implementation of the system for validating qualifications ;

- an experimental system of individual training accounts was planned along the lines of what is done in the UK so that each individual can enhance his own level of employability.

♦ Training opportunities will be extended for people not in work and for the long-term unemployed. Programmes combining training and work were launched in January 1999. Experiments are underway to develop training programmes which do not lead to loss of social assistance.

II - Guidelines 7 and 8: easing the transition from school to work

The Netherlands have in recent years given priority to improving the quality of the workforce by investing in the quality of teaching and addressing the problem of those dropping out early from the school system.

♦ **Improving the quality of school education**

- **Reducing the size of classes.** The plan to reduce the size of classes was scheduled for implementation in August 2000.

The expectation is that class size for the first four years of education (children aged 4-8) can be brought down to 20 pupils per teacher by August 2002.

- **Reform of secondary education and secondary vocational education.** Schools were to be helped in various ways to improve the level of teaching provided, with the focus on informal education, the active participation of pupils and the consideration of differences between pupils.

- **Making up the shortfall in teachers.** In 1999 the government launched a comprehensive programme to increase the number of people opting for teacher training. The measures proposed include wider diversification of recruitment on the labour market, reform of the teacher training programme, the development of new quality systems for teachers, the modernisation of conditions of employment and a new personnel policy.

♦ **Preventing pupils dropping out of school**

- The law on regional coordination and registration was due to come into force on 1 January 2001. It will ensure better registration of dropouts so that individualised advice can be given to the young people concerned..

- In December 1999, agreements were signed between the government and the 25 largest towns in an endeavour to counter school dropout.

♦ **Boosting the dual work/training programmes**

The government is encouraging the work/training combination in all sectors of teaching. In the coming years, priority will go to promoting quality of on-the-job training provision and making the role of training establishments in supervising trainees more explicit. Since the 1999/2000 school year, higher education of students following dual training programmes have the same rights, particularly on the financial front, as full-time students.

♦ **Incorporating the new technologies in teaching**

In the wake of the conclusions of the Lisbon European Council, the government and the social partners are encouraging the development of NICT skills in schools, the development of distance learning and the use of digital teaching instruments.

In order to incorporate the new technologies in teaching, concrete steps have been taken:

- all schools are to have an Internet connection by 2001 (rate of Internet access in 1999: primary schools 38%, secondary schools 90%, higher education establishments 100%);

- it was anticipated that all teaching establishments and all teacher training establishments would be linked to the "knowledge network" by 2001, one year ahead of the forecasts. This network offers teaching establishments Internet access but also provides a secure digital area where information and services on the education service can be found;

- in Autumn 1999, all teaching and training establishments received funding to top up their budget for the new ICT so that computers, peripherals and software be as widely available as possible.

- Various projects have been launched to promote the use of the NICT in education and to increase pupil and teacher skills in this area. On average, primary schools have one computer for 16 pupils and secondary schools one computer for 13 pupils. This ratio will be improved over the coming years.

III - Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self employment

The government is working on proposals to help young people undertaking studies to learn how companies work.

IV - Guideline 17: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their employees.

The legislation in force provides for funding across various initiatives to train workers and job-seekers. A study of the problems linked to the system of fiscal incentives is also in progress.

PORTUGAL

The comparatively high rate of growth (3.1% in 1999) was accompanied by an overall rate of employment higher than the Community average (67.6% in 1999). Unemployment was down on 1998 and stood at 4.5% in 1999, with unemployment among young people at 8.1%. The fall in unemployment was spread across all levels of education in 1999, with the exception of people leaving the third cycle of basic education and higher level training.

The services sector recorded the highest increase in employment. While the proportion of low-skilled jobs remained high, highly qualified professions increased substantially (6.9%).

The levels of education and training reached by adults (25-64 years) are below the Community average. Accordingly a special effort has been made in recent years to raise the level of education of young people. The proportion of the population in secondary and higher education rose from 19.6% in 1998 to 20.7% in 1999.

I – Main objectives for the year 2000

Portugal set two main priorities for education and training:

- to develop lifelong learning in order to strengthen the business sector's capacity to adapt to structural changes in the economy, with particular emphasis on the new ICT and closer involvement of the social partners;
- to continue to modernise the education system, particularly through general introduction of vocational training leading to a qualification and training teachers in the new teaching contents, including the new technologies.

Main targets for 2000

- increase by 25% (in relation to 1998) the number of unemployed persons benefiting from vocational training measures;
- double the number of young people in apprenticeship over the next five years;
- bring up to 16 500 the number of practical training placements for young people;
- bring up to 40% the proportion of students in technical or vocational education;
- offer an education or employment opportunity to all under 21s registered in employment agencies who have not completed the third basic education cycle or the secondary education cycle;
- maintain the objective of 117 500 young people to benefit from training under the education system;
- gradually increase the number of employees receiving training, in order to reach 10% of the total number of employees over the next five years.

II – Implementation of the guidelines for 2000

2.1 Guideline 6: encouraging the development of lifelong learning

Given that the level of education in the population at large is low (particularly amongst the over 40s), Portugal has decided to introduce a lifelong learning strategy in order to allow everyone to refresh their skills and qualifications. In addition to steps taken under this guideline, other initiatives included under other guidelines are also contributing to this objective. The point is therefore to implement a global coordinated strategy to promote lifelong learning.

No fewer than 17 specific actions are planned by Portugal in this area, the emphasis being on:

- promoting lifelong learning, particularly through information and counselling, negotiation of agreements between the social partners and introduction of a system to validate skills acquired throughout life;
- strengthen lifelong learning for adults, particularly for younger adults and the over 45s, including in the area of the NICT, in order to head off the risk of social exclusion;
- identify regional and national training requirements and support the development of training in companies, particularly the SMEs;
- strengthen the learning of the new ICT, particularly through the creation of a certificate of basic skills in the new technologies.

2.2 Guideline 7: reducing the number of young people who drop out of the school system early

The employment action plan sets the medium term objective of gradually putting an end to the problem of dropping out. In order to attain this objective, Portugal has set as priorities: (i) opening up access to pre-primary education, (ii) diversifying the forms of education and training in order to respond to the requirements of everyone and those of the labour market, particularly thanks to greater involvement of the business sector, (iii) optimise the use of vocational training leading to a qualification, and (iv) promoting the continuing training of teachers. These priorities provide the platform for tangible actions.

In order to cater for the needs of young people with learning difficulties, it was planned to develop appropriate teaching contents and implement specific support measures. In addition, young people not continuing their studies beyond compulsory schooling were to be offered additional vocational training, including in the NICT.

2.3 Guideline 8: easing the transition from school to work

Young job-seekers have to contend both with a lack of occupational experience and the absence of effective machinery for making the switch from school to working life. For instance, if it were envisaged to offer additional training to young people leaving school after secondary education, there would currently be a lack of training places.

In order to stem this trend, the Portuguese government intends to (i) develop vocational training for young people, including via the apprenticeship system, (ii) to increase the percentage of students in technological, vocational or specialisation training courses and (iii) broaden access to counselling and guidance, particularly in order to increase the number of young girls in the scientific and technological channels.

Portugal is thus strongly promoting the NICT through a range of initiatives, the aim being to connect all schools to the Internet by 2002 and develop teaching tools using the new media. Lastly, reforms to the secondary education system were planned for the year 2000.

2.4 Guideline 17: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers

The development of continuing training in companies is an integral part of national policy on lifelong learning and contributes to improving the competitiveness of the economy and to strengthen workers' adaptability.

The main thrusts of the government's action are (i) to develop training support actions in the SMEs, (ii) to bring about a significant increase in adult participation in in-company continuing training and (iii) to include the NICT in at least 50% of the training actions in progress.

In order to achieve this, the government planned a total of 11 actions, designed mainly to promote continuing training in companies, inter alia through tax incentives and job rotation, and to promote sectoral agreements to develop continuing training in certain specific sectors.

Recommendations for 2001 on education and training

Pursue the endeavour to design and implement an overall lifelong learning strategy which also addresses the problem of young people dropping out of school, sets clear targets and provides the means for taking action. Special attention should be taken to the quality of teaching and training in order to avoid a shortfall of qualifications.

Continue efforts to implement an approach based on partnership and support real commitments by the social partners, particularly with regard to modernising work organisation, to adjusting employment relationships, including labour law, and to continuing training.

UNITED KINGDOM

The National Action Plan 2000 sets as priorities the improvement of the quality of teaching and encouraging lifelong learning. The UK's objectives for 2002 are accordingly to: (i) increase the participation in lifelong learning, (ii) expand skills, (iii) bring about a one third reduction in the number of young people dropping out of school early, and (iv) to connect all schools to the Internet.

The productivity of labour in the UK is lower than in many other countries (USA, Germany, France), at least in part owing to the lack of working population qualifications. Nevertheless, the rate of employment in 1999 (70.4%) was still higher than the Community average.

Unemployment stood at 6%, the rate for young people being 8.6%, but higher among men (10.1%) than among women (7.0%). The unemployment rate for the 16-17 age group is 20.4% and 11.2% for the 18-24 age group. At the same time, the rate of employment in the 15-24 age group has dropped substantially; this is the result of the extension of the duration of studies.

In the areas of training and the development of skills, it is not simply up to the government but also to the employers and the persons concerned. They will therefore be involved to a greater extent in action on lifelong learning.

I – Pillar "Improving employability"

1.1 Main objectives

The range of initiatives under the "New Deal" was extended in order to help a greater number of unemployed persons. The over 50s (in work or unemployed, can now join in the "New Deal 50 Plus". As from April 2001, adults employed for 18 months can joint a more intensive "New Deal 25+".

In order to improve employability, the government has raised the level of funding to nearly £ 3.9 billion in further education. In addition, the Further Education Funding Council intends to increase the number of those taking part in continuing education, particularly targeting people in difficulty or people with disabilities.

1.2 Guideline 6: encouraging the development of lifelong learning

- A closer relationship is emerging between the government and the two main social partners under the NAP.

The social partners are committed along with the government in the "New Deal" programme, which includes measures to enhance basic training. Thanks to the programme "Work-Based Learning for Adults", 30 000 people have found a job.

Future training needs have been identified with the assistance of the social partners. The government is working with the social partners to set up a "Learning and Skills Councils" in order to modify education and training systems for the over 16s up to higher education.

On the employers' side, initiatives such as "Investors in People" encourage employers to provide training and to undertake ongoing evaluation of its effectiveness in practice. By the autumn of 1999, 15% of employees had received practical work-linked training. Career Development Loans and Individual Learning Accounts have been introduced in order to support people wishing to train.

- In order to assess the progress of the switch to the knowledge society, the government has set national knowledge targets to be attained by 2002. The NAP sets local and regional objectives. The "Learning Partnerships" improve the consistency of local education for the over-16s and pursue local teaching objectives.

- The University for Industry ("Learn direct") is due to be launched in autumn 2001 with the aim of extending and raising the level of the national network of training centres for teaching the skills needed in the world of work and to provide vocational qualifications. "Individual Learning accounts" entitle all applicants to a sum of government money to contribute towards training of their choice.

- There are other measures for centres which provide teaching in the ICT, working in particular in areas where people facing the risk of social exclusion live, while the "a computer for everyone" initiative is designed to lend computers to low-income families.

1.3 Guidelines 7 and 8: easing the transition from school to work

- Improving the general of level of education is a priority. By 2002, the government intends to bring about a one third reduction in truancy, irregular attendance in lessons and exclusion from the school system.

- The government has taken several steps to better prepare young people for the world of work and give them the knowledge and skills they need in the area of ICT.

- As from September, the revised National Curriculum in England will offer better understanding of the links between education, employment and the business sector. As from April, the initiative "education/work links" will increase the involvement of companies in schools, particularly in the disadvantaged areas. Similar measures will be taken in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

- All schools and all libraries are to have an Internet connection by 2002. In November 1999, 62% of primary schools and 93% of secondary schools already had a connection. As from May 2001 the initial training for teachers in the ICT will be supplemented by tests in numeracy and ICT.

- A major reorganisation of the support provided to young people sets out to achieve greater continuity and greater consistency in the provision of training in order to facilitate effective participation in appropriate education, improve the success rate and prevent dropping out. As from 2001 in England, the “Connexions” service will target young people aged 13-19 in order to ease the transition from school to work. This service will be linked to other initiatives such as the “New Start” or the “Education Portal” designed to develop innovative approaches for access to training through local partnerships.

In Scotland it was planned to establish an action plan in spring 2000 to ease the transition to post-school education, training and employment. In Wales steps were planned to address the problem of young people in the 14-17 age group dropping out of school by using local partnerships; there have been around 2 500 positive outcomes. Starting in April 2001, young people will receive guidance and support for work-linked education under the “Career Wales” initiative. Since September 1999, the “Youth Gateway in Wales” has helped over 600 young people by offering them opportunities in post-compulsory education, training or employment.

The law will moreover make it compulsory to evaluate pupils with special needs if they leave the education system for post-compulsory education or training.

- As for vocational training, the General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs) have been strengthened and made more stringent. Local and national partnerships have joined forces to provide improved training.

- As from 2001, the “modern apprenticeships”, will make it possible to offer training to young people aged 16 to 19. Over 100 000 young people have thus begun training under these “modern apprenticeships” in 50 industrial and commercial sectors; over 260 000 young people are following higher level training in 81 professional sectors. Wales has set a target of 14 000 “modern apprenticeships” by 2002 and work is currently in progress to remove obstacles and encourage young people to follow apprenticeship training or training under national placements. Scotland has set a target of 20 000 “modern apprenticeships” by 2003.

- In September 2000, an apprenticeship system was due to be introduced into higher education and employers are being consulted on the introduction of a new basic university qualification.

1.4 Promoting a labour market open to all

It is planned to introduce legislation on education for disabled persons in England.

II – Pillar “Developing entrepreneurship”

2.1 Guideline 11: encouraging the development of self-employment

The revised National Curriculum in England establishes closer links between teaching and the business sector:

- in higher education, the extent and potential of self-employment as an occupational future is being examined. There is a pilot project to enable students to design and manage a company;
- the “New Deal” also offers training and support for business creation projects for new entrepreneurs. The employment option of the “New Deal” includes self-employment;
- study grants for young businessmen living in disadvantaged areas will provide training in management and business;
- the best practice in SME management training in business schools will be identified.

2.2 Guideline 14: making the taxation system more employment friendly

The UK offers one of the most advantageous fiscal structures for businesses investing in human resources. Training costs are wholly deductible from taxable income. The government is determined to take further steps to encourage business investment in human resources, in particular by continuing to offer loan opportunities for funding training expenditure through Career Development Loans, Small Firms Training Loans and through the introduction of Individual Learning Accounts.

III – Pillar “Encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers:

- In July 2000, the UK transposed the European directive on part-time working, which improves current legislation and will guarantee fair treatment for the many part-time workers.
- The social partners have stressed the need for a sound balance between flexibility and security. This principle has received the support of the 1999 law on industrial relations. The NAP sets out the detail of the steps taken by the government and the social partners to promote work training through initiatives such as the Trade Union Learning Fund and the Partnership Fund.

IV – Pillar “Strengthening the equal opportunities policies”

Responding to the recommendation adopted by the Council in 1999, the government is seeking to encourage young girls to pursue their studies in order to bridge the income gap observed between men and women. There is also an action plan on equal opportunities which sets participation targets for the “modern apprenticeships” initiative as a function of sex, race and disability. The aim is to reach 45% of women in the total number of modern apprenticeships and 55% in National Traineeships.

V – Mid-term evaluation

- Since 1998, the UK’s national action plans have stressed the need to raise the qualifications levels, particularly by improving the quality of the education and training systems.

New national targets for education and training were announced in 1998: 90% of young people aged 16-18 should pursue some form of education and training and 85% of young people aged 19 should obtain a level 2 qualification.

The following steps have been taken to improve the quality of education:

- developing pre-school education (1998 plan);
 - teaching technical skills at an early stage in schooling (1998 plan);
 - increasing the flexibility and relevance of school syllabuses;
 - asking schools to establish and publish every year outcome targets for pupils;
 - offering young people a broader spread of high quality training;
 - encouraging young people to pursue their studies beyond compulsory schooling;
 - increasing the number and level of qualifications in line with national objectives;
 - giving all young people aged 16-17 work experience or work-linked training during the period of full-time education.
- In order to support young people experiencing difficulties, 25 education action zones have been set up associating the business sector, schools and the local education authorities in an endeavour to modernise teaching in problem areas and to head off social exclusion (1998 and 1999 plans).
- The implementation of the “New Start” programme is designed to motivate and reintegrate young people in the 14-17 age group who might drop out of school or have already done so. This programme is designed in particular to restore the links between education and training and the business sector (1998 and 1999 and 2000 plans).
- Under the 1998 NAP a lifelong learning strategy was implemented and a legal framework developed for Individual Training Accounts. This strategy was extended and strengthened in the 2000 NAP. Nevertheless, the initial education and training systems are comparatively unaffected by the implementation of lifelong learning.
- The 1999 NAP announced the development of "modern apprenticeships" in order to allow young people to reach level 3 qualifications (this action was pursued in 2000).



Recommendation for 2001 on education and training

Step up efforts on the lifelong learning front, particularly those intended to increase the general level of basic qualifications, and show that the categories normally disinclined to grasp this type of opportunity or unable to find appropriate provision will have access to these initiatives.

SWEDEN

The rate of employment stood at 72.2% in 1999. The objective set by Sweden was to halve the unemployment rate by the end of 2000, i.e. bring it down to 4%, and to increase the employment rate to 80% in 2001. The unemployment rate at the start of 2000 stood at 7.2%, compared with 6.1% for young people.

I - Overview of the implementation of the 1999 action plan

Vocational knowledge and skills are one of the decisive factors in maintaining a high level of productivity in the Swedish economy. This makes increasing the rate of activity and raising the level of skills of the workforce the lynchpin of employment policies.

The education system must comply with the most stringent quality standards internationally and contribute to improving the capacity for entering the labour market. The objective of consolidating access to education, particularly higher education, for everyone is an important component in this policy.

In order to cope with bottlenecks, the national agency for higher education would be required to analyse how the programmes proposed by higher education could be better directed towards labour market requirements. The biggest promotion campaign ever in the area of adult education in Sweden was undertaken under the Adult Education Initiative. In parallel with this, a new form of post-secondary vocational teaching was being developed in close conjunction with the labour market.

In 1999, funding corresponding to over 100 000 places yearly for students were allocated to the Adult Education Initiative. In adult higher secondary education, the proportion of participants aged over 30 continued to increase and had nearly reached 60% by spring 1999 (one third being men).

The government's initiative concerning the NICT in schools has been implemented. The aim is to equip 60 000 teachers with enhanced skills in this area. Local authorities everywhere will be offered a government grant to improve access to the Internet and to provide all pupils and all teachers with an e-mail address.

Pre-school teaching opportunities for children aged 4 to 5 will be introduced in 2003.

II - New policy initiatives in the Action Plan for 2000

2.1 Action taken in response to the Council's recommendations

In response to Council recommendations on policies to promote equal opportunities on the labour market, the government intends to appoint a commission to re-examine the range of higher secondary education programmes. The starting point for establishing new programmes will be to reduce the socially distorted recruitment in the various programmes and introduce criteria for a more liberal educational and vocational choice for girls and boys. A new technological programme was to be introduced in higher secondary schools in 2000.

One of the aims of the Adult Education Initiative is to mark a break with gender-based choices in education. One way of achieving this is to increase school and vocational guidance.

In higher education, steps were planned to reduce gender segregation on the labour market. Higher education establishments are to be accountable to the government for measures taken to obtain fairer distribution between the genders as regards subject areas where there is a difference, research posts, posts available or doctorate study grants, and the recruitment of teachers. In this context, the National Higher Education Agency has developed projects to promote equal opportunities in higher education.

2.2 Measures envisaged or implemented based on the guidelines for 2000

♦ **Guideline 3: substantially increasing the number of people benefiting from active measures capable of making their occupational integration easier**

Adult education will be developed until 2003.

♦ **Guideline 6: encouraging the development of lifelong learning**

Sweden has well-developed lifelong learning facilities which encompass not only formal education but informal education which takes place in occupational life and during leisure time. A major factor in this context is the entitlement to study leave.

Adult education has a special role to play in lifelong learning. For instance, higher education establishments must step up their efforts to make education accessible to everyone and not only to those who have an occupational activity. The aim of adult education is to provide adults with the opportunity to acquire new skills and to supplement their initial education so as to be able to respond to the requirements of the labour market while taking due account of personal needs and aspirations.

Post-secondary vocational education includes many programmes based on a variety of rules and types of supervision.

In order to better adapt programmes to qualifications requirements a common platform for syllabus organisers is needed. The government intended putting forward a proposal on the organisation of post-secondary vocational education at the end of 2000. The basis of the project for future post-secondary vocational training should be a strong link with occupational life and the flexibility which has characterised the experimental programmes of vocational education leading to a qualification.

♦ **Guideline 7: reducing the number of young people who drop out of the school system early**

Pre-school education will be strengthened. It is designed as the first stage of lifelong learning. As from 2003, all children aged 4-5 will have a place in pre-school education.

Under the "urban zones" initiative, the government has allocated SEK 50 million yearly over a period of three years as from 1 January 1999 for action to develop languages in schools.

Steps will be taken to increase teacher competence in several strategic areas. In addition, teacher training will be revamped in order to improve the quality of the education system.

Pupils needing specific support will get appropriate measures. Lastly, the number of hours of teaching per pupil will be increased in the higher secondary syllabus as from 2001.

♦ **Guideline 8: easing the transition from school to work**

In order to cope with rapid technological trends and structural changes cooperation has to be stepped up between the business sector and schools. It is in particular extremely important for more young people to take scientific and technological subjects. The pilot apprenticeship programme sets out to improve cooperation between schools and the world of work.

The higher secondary teaching syllabus will be overhauled in order to respond to the needs of the labour market. In particular, the new ICT will receive substantial funding.

The individual guidance needs of young people at school will be examined and analysed.

It was planned to create 89 000 new places in higher education between 1997 and 2002, the objective being for half of each age class to undertake higher studies before the age of 25. Higher education must move closer to the world of work. Financial assistance to students was to be increased.

♦ **Guideline 17: encouraging the adaptability of companies and their workers**

At the start of 2001 the government will propose the introduction of an individual savings scheme for developing skills and will earmark over SEK 1 billion yearly for implementing this proposal through tax deductions.