

also interesting from an educational point of view – concerning their applicability in Austria (also see „Models for Redistribution of Work to Increase Employment“).

### *2.1.3. Better Coordination of Schooling and Further Training*

The Advisory Council for Economic and Social Affairs already intensively discussed educational issues in the study „Qualifikation 2000“. Some of those proposals have been implemented by the government e.g. the foundation of „Fachhochschulen“ (non-university higher education institutions providing high-quality professional and academic training for specific occupations).

Education and training at schools must be more intensively interlinked with the requirements of the working world and the access to the individual levels of the Austrian educational system must be facilitated.

Schooling and further training are to be interlinked in such a way that schools can become the reliable base for independent learning by individuals in further vocational training. Those willing to learn must have the opportunity to advance in their career through further training by setting individual training targets. In this connection, the Advisory Council is aware of the great importance of establishing Fachhochschulen for working people. At present there are too few study courses for employed persons.

Leaving compulsory schooling without positive final examination results constitutes a particular disadvantage on the labour market and for further training. There should, therefore, be the possibility of taking this final exam at a later date.

### *2.1.4. Financing of Further Vocational Training*

The system of further vocational training is characterized by a great diversity of the range of training courses, facilities and financing sources. The Advisory Council stresses the necessity of aiming at useful synergy effects to be able to use public means as efficiently as possible and to simultaneously create fair competition amongst the suppliers.

Up to now, financing problems and labour and social legislation problems for the time of further training have restricted a comprehensive expansion of further vocational training. Therefore, a further training initiative presupposes improvements in these two central issues.

Enterprises are principally interested in improving skills that can be directly utilized in the job. For such further enterprise-specific training, the enterprises should provide financial support and working-time.

Measures of further training that are exclusively in the interest of employees represent the other extreme. Employees should use their leisure time and financial means respectively, but be enabled to do so by being offered flexible working hours.

In many cases, however, further vocational training will be of interest to employee and employer by providing both enterprise-specific and general

transferable skills. The financing of such measures should be agreed upon in collective agreements as well as company level agreements and should not be exclusively confined to individual agreements. No legal regulations are required, if claims on further training can be satisfied in this way.

The European Social Fund promotes further vocational training of employees within Objective 4. This means an improvement in financing further training activities, as up to now these means of labour market policy have been restricted to the use by the unemployed. The efficient use of these ESF means presupposes an additional effect, no indiscriminate distribution of grants and a better practical orientation of further training calls for a better study of the demand for further training courses on a local level.

To be able to finance at least certain prerogative projects, it is necessary to set the appropriate priorities.

#### *2.1.5. Proof of Further Vocational Training*

The simultaneous existence of vocational education and further vocational training makes accreditation of skills acquired through further vocational training possible in many fields. Certificates to recognize final exams are necessary. Formal certificates increase the motivation for further education and facilitate access to the entire educational system.

The transferability of skills acquired through further training is to be promoted through standardization (curricula for further training) without questioning the flexibility of the system. Further vocational training must provide a valid proof of the acquired skills to improve prospects on the labour market. The further training system should be offered, wherever possible, in form of modules that could be combined into training units and included into the traditional educational hierarchy.

The Advisory Council supports the rapid implementation of the political agreement on the *Berufsreife* (university entrance test for those not having a final examination of a higher secondary school to attain full access to post-secondary and tertiary education and training). The integration of the dual vocational training into the educational system was promoted by the formal integration of vocational training schools into the secondary level of education.

#### *2.1.6. Direct Utilization and Transferability of Further Training*

In the further training sector, it is necessary to find a compromise between two contradictory requirements. On a direct and short-term basis, further training proves to be most successful when it is done for a specific workplace. On the other hand, further training should teach transferable skills (e.g. foreign languages and EDP skills) that sometimes cannot be utilized immediately but represent a precondition for future economic and technical developments.

Companies are generally interested in improving skills that can be directly employed. Yet, the educational assignment of the schools cannot be restricted to instructing skills that can be immediately used in the working world.