

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.

Further training is a concern of both the company and the employed person and is usually implemented individually without state influence. To a major extent, the range of further training possibilities is oriented towards the requirements of the companies with the labour market policy playing a supporting role.

The increasing importance of further vocational training makes it necessary to reconsider the schools' curricula. The reasons for necessary restrictions in initial education are manifold e.g. the danger of overstrain in time and contents.

The idea of „general education“ is to be fundamentally reviewed. A modern vocational training depends, among other things, on the instruction of key qualifications, e.g. the application of information technologies, the intensification of foreign language instruction and the introduction of autonomous school regulations. Further vocational training can then directly relate to the basic knowledge acquired at school.

2.1.7. Vocational Counseling

A basic prerequisite for an efficient educational policy is the detailed and comprehensive vocational orientation of youth as well as information for adults on the broad range of further training possibilities (by means of data banks and central information facilities).

The choice of education and vocation still seems to be based more on current individual interests and preferences than on long-term vocational prospects. Free education orientated on private interests with subsequent free re-training means an inefficient use of available resources from an overall economic and social point of view.

Improving the vocational guidance for graduates from high-school continues to be a topical task, though some progress has been achieved by expanding study and vocational counselling activities (e.g. fairs) as well as of career guidance centers. The vocational counselling centers should be increasingly oriented also toward the needs of adults seeking advice.

The social partners have developed a concept for restructuring vocational and educational counselling for the first grades of secondary and higher secondary education. The working group of the Ministry of Education should advance its implementation.

2.1.8. Apprenticeship Training

The dual vocational training certainly deserves merits for the integration of young people into the working world. It has definitely contributed, in past decades, to improving the skilled labour supply for the enterprises and to keeping youth unemployment low.

However, reforms are necessary also in this field: Only a broadly defined initial vocational training that concentrates increasingly on the instruction of social and communicative skills which become of greater importance will be