

SWOT Analysis

on the national LLL Strategies, the status of implementation processes and perspectives of the national Lifelong Learning strategy processes

Austria

September 2009

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CROSS BORDER IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

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CROSS BORDER IMPROVEMENT OF NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

Introduction

About the project: Cross Border Improvement of national LLL-Strategies

Within the partnership three Central Europe member states (AT, HU, SK) intend to improve during the duration of the project: 01.03.2009-28.02.2010 national processes of development and implementation of national lifelong learning strategies (NLLS) and to start a transnational cross border cooperation in the most essential topics of Lifelong Learning esp. in the concrete situation of the partner countries.

The countries involved in the project have just started, developed or implemented a NLLS process with some common aspects and a lot of different elements.

The increasing mutual economic relations between the three countries as well as the expected further increase in labour exchange (esp. after the end of the transitional period for Austria in 2011) require dynamic and proactive common responses in the field of education and training.

The strategy processes and the identification of success criteria and main critical factor influencing the successful implementation in the partner countries will be supported within the project through a mix of process oriented methods (SWOT analyses and peer learning), content oriented working methods (Thematic Workshops) and structured communication with stakeholders involved in the development and implementation of NLLS.

Within the project a specific topic based on the European benchmark 'participation in lifelong learning' was chosen - because of the special challenge in at least 2 of 3 partner countries - to exchange good practice cross border and to learn from the best performing countries in Europe (SE, DK and FI).

The main results of the project are: Recommendations concerning to the process of development and implementation and sustainable effective work on NLLS at national level, cross border level and for Lifelong Learning strategy processes at European level; Commitment for further cooperation between the partner countries in the field of LLL

The Partnership consists of the networks responsible for the development and implementation of NLLS in the partner countries represented by the three partner organisations actively supported by the education ministries. This guarantees a direct and sustainable conversion of findings to improve the development and implementation of NLLS on regional, national and cross border level.

Ministries	Organisation / Institution
Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture	Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft (<i>co-ordination</i>)
Hungarian Ministry of Education and Culture	Tempus Public Foundation
Ministry of Education of the Slovak Republic	Academia Istropolitana Bratislava

The aims of the work package “Peer Learning” is to enhance a common understanding of philosophy, principle and criteria of development and implementation of Lifelong Learning Strategies in the countries by learning from each other and in this way to get an effective support for planned and running processes of preparation, development of implementation NLLS.

Within the workpackage the methods of ‘SWOT-analysis’ (of the national LLL Strategies) and ‘peer learning’ are combined and will lead to recommendations to improve the national LLL strategies and the implementation.

During a **Start-up Workshop** in the first month of the project in Austria comparison and analyses of the current situation of development and implementation of national Lifelong Learning strategies in the partner countries was made by discussing, clarifying and defining the detailed tasks of the WP.

On basis of these discussions and questions **SWOT analyses** of the national LLL Strategies and about the status of implementation processes in the partner countries are accomplished.

The SWOT analysis for each partner country is made on national level (self-assessment).

The three SWOT analyses are basis for the preparation of **study visits of a cross boarder peer learning team** (AT / HU / SK) with 3 persons of each country, directly involved in the development of the national LLL strategy.

During these 2 days study visits the process of the development of the national LLL strategy and the status of implementation will be discussed. Study visit reports summarise the key findings for all partner countries and are the basis for the development of recommendations to improve the national LLL strategies in the partner countries but also to improve the strategy process cross border and on EU level.

SWOT Analysis¹

The SWOT Analysis Is a planning tool used to understand the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats involved in a project or in a business.

It involves specifying the objective of the business or project and identifying the internal and external factors that are supportive or unfavourable to achieving that objective. SWOT is often used as part of a strategic planning process.

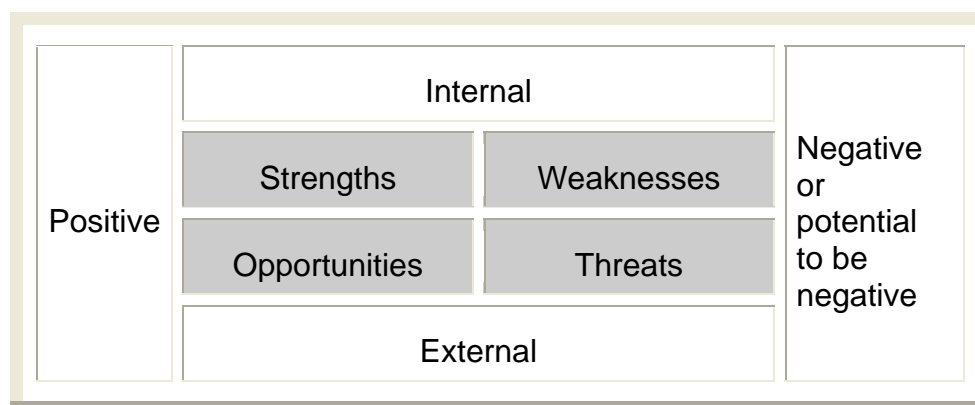
SWOT is an acronym for **Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats**

The origins of the SWOT analysis technique is credited by Albert Humphrey, who led a research project at Stanford University in the 1960s and 1970s using data from many top companies.

The goal was to identify why corporate planning failed. The resulting research identified a number of key areas and the tool used to explore each of the critical areas was called **SOFT analysis**. Humphrey and the original research team used the categories “What is good in the present is **S**atisfactory, good in the future is an **O**pportunity; bad in the present is a **F**ault and bad in the future is a **T**hreat.” This was called the **SOFT analysis**.

In 1964 Urick and Orr at a conference changed the F to a W, and it has stuck as that, soFt to sWot

The SWOT Matrix Model



To analyse the national LLL Strategies, the status of implementation processes and perspectives of the national Lifelong Learning strategy processes the model of SWOT Analysis was used to reflect the national situation and to make use of the results for further development.

¹ <http://www.rapidbi.com/created/SWOTanalysis.html#top>





SWOT Analysis on the National LLL Strategy in Austria

The chapter is written by Peter Härtel and Michaela Marterer, Styrian Association for Education and Economics based on the results of national workshop by using reports of the implementation of the NLLS, Austria

Some remarks to the Austrian SWOT analysis in principle

The common approach in the Austrian SWOT analysis is a kind of “holistic, integrated” view of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats.

It is not an (Austrian) “relativity”, it should be a positive, constructive way to deal with all these dimensions in a targeted way, with the main aim to improve policy programs and practice of national LLL strategies in all relevant fields.

There is no strength without a “but”, each strength has some aspects and elements with the direction to the “weaknesses” – but, in opposite to this, no weakness exists without a “but”, e.g.:

The rather slow process of establishment of a national LLL strategy in Austria – no doubt, this is a weakness – has the effect of an increasing common understanding concerning the importance of an overall thinking in the dimension of LLL, a common understanding regarding the linkages between the sectors and segments in various areas of LLL, improvement of communication, cooperation and common actions between the relevant stakeholders, not only in the field of education, also in economics, employment and labour, social affairs and other areas of policy and strategy at governmental level as well as with the social partners, with the public employment service, with administration and institutions in the field of school, tertiary sector, adult education and other fields of LLL

Although the papers and documents concerning the national LLL strategy – especially the so called “Donau University Krems paper” and the “Consultation paper – knowledge – chances – competencies” has no legal background, the main elements of these papers start to have strong affects.

The five key strategic lines

1. Orientation on all phases throughout life
2. Centralization of learners
3. Lifelong Guidance
4. Competence orientation
5. Support of participation in LLL

are more and more accepted. A lot of activities, also with formal background and legal regulations, are orientated on this strategic framework.

It's maybe an specific Austrian feature – it should be discussed together – that this more “informal” process could be both – a weakness concerning of duration, consistence and continuity of an implementation process of a strategy, but a strength concerning the sensitive involvement of all relevant partners and stakeholders, to try to find a common understanding and transparency of a process – e.g. the consultation process of national LLL strategy – with the chance, to have a strong background and commitment in all relevant areas of Lifelong Learning just at the moment, if a legal act at national level could be decided.

Assembly of the group that conducted the SWOT Analysis

Because of the broad and widen consultation process within the last years in Austria, and the already involvement of different stakeholders and relevant actors of the different sectors of LLL on regional level as well on national level together with the Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and the Arts and other involved ministries it was decided to invite for the SWOT Analysis representatives of the “Meta-level” of the different ministries, Social Partners and research institutes with the aim to discuss the SWOT Analysis within a small working group of experts who followed the process of consultation the last years.

Following ministries and organizations were invited by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture:

- Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affaires and Consumer Protection
- Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth
- Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research
- Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training
- Conference of Adult Education Austria (KEBÖ)
- Public Employment Service Austria
- ibw (Institute for Research and Development at the interfaces between education, business and qualifications)
- Chamber of Labour

During the national Workshop held to the topic the ibw, the Public Employment Service Austria, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research could not attend, the results are available for them and will be communicated to the responsible persons. After all 8 persons participated in the national workshop.

The SWOT analysis process

Because of the current situation of the development of the NLLS the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture intended to combine two objectives: on the one hand to prepare the CBI project SWOT analysis and at the other hand to discuss about further perspectives within the process of establishing the NLLS.

An afternoon meeting was held on 29th of September 2009 in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. The meeting has been divided in three parts.

The first part was used to inform all participants about the project CBI-NLLS in general and about the status quo within the project lifetime.

The second part was focused on the SWOT Analysis by itself. For preparation of the meeting all participants got a list of questions concerning the process of the establishing of the NLLS a few days before and additional a short summary of the project, the list of participants who will attend, the basis document ““Donau University Krems paper” and the prefinal version of the so called “expert paper of July 2009”.

These documents were the basis for an open discussion within the small expert group which was chaired by Peter Härtel. The discussion was focused first on the process of establishing of the NLLS but also in the third part of the meeting concerning the perspectives of further process on the content of the NLLS. The results of the afternoon meeting can be summarized like below and SWOT table summarizes all of items mentioned.

Strengths:

- Concerning the process the participants identified a way of an transparent and open minded consultation process regarding national LLL strategy, an increasing common understanding of main principles, criteria and core strategy lines as an powerful instrument, also to endorse the communication and cooperation between different sectors and levels of stakeholders, policymakers, social partner etc.
- A lot of activities can be found as concrete effects of the (not official decided) NLLS strategy in governmental papers, strategic and operative programs at national level and concrete activities in the most of the strategic areas of NLLS are implemented from pre-school level to adult education.

Weaknesses:

SWOT Analysis on the National LLL Strategy in Austria

- Regarding the process it is evident, that there is no existing, formal decided national LLL strategy and the long process of development of papers, consultation, synopsis, reflection, communication is considered as well as weakness as well as the e.g. still existing misunderstandings of terminology and strategic approaches.
- There are deficits in special areas of educational and strategic processes, missing links between the different educational sectors and also segmented developments on vertical and horizontal areas of education.

Opportunities:

- All strengths and all weaknesses contain opportunities to develop – strengthen the strengths, reduce the weaknesses and were defined also as opportunities for the further process of development and implementing the national Lifelong Learning Strategy in Austria. Different elements were mentioned e.g. the use of transnational and EU processes to give initiatives at national level as well as the use of processes in field of education like the NQR development and use of additional networks within European networks, like ELGPN, EQA-VET

Threats:

- All participants agreed, that the process runs too slow also caused by the complexity in governmental, administrative and procedural structures which also sometimes arouse an impression of internal “blocks” for necessary reforms in educational sector
- The transfer of projects results is still insufficient regarding the sustainability of processes and progresses within LLL

In order to development specific programmes the lack of evidence and data was mentioned combined with lack of using existing data of national and transnational sources (Bildungsbericht, Statistik Austria, PISA, EU benchmarks and interim report etc.



SWOT Analysis on the National LLL Strategy in Austria

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing process of developing national LLL strategy involving all relevant stakeholders, policy makers governmental, social partner, institutions etc., also regional and local level • Transparent and open minded consultation process regarding national LLL strategy, responses, synopsis, reflection as base for further common strategy and policy processes • Increasing common understanding of main principles criteria and core strategy lines of the national LLL strategy • Concrete effects of the (not official decided) NLLS strategy in governmental papers, strategic and operative programs at national level (e.g. ESF) and regional level (legal regulations at provincial level) and activities at the level of programs, projects and practice • Concrete activities in the most of the strategic areas of NLLS e.g. • Pre school – free of charge, compulsory (legal based) • Primary, lower secondary – educational standards, “Neue Mittelschule” • Upper secondary – centralized examina as quality program • Tertiary sector - “Hochschul-Plan” • Adult education - new contract based grant philosophy; national – provincial negotiation for a new model of fomenting for special fields, especially base competences, ect.; accreditation of competencies, quality management model <p>Additional</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lifelong Guidance strategy • Concepts for new education and qualifications for all pedagogical professions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No existing, formal decided national LLL strategy • Long lasting process of development of papers, consultation, synopsis, reflection, communication etc. • No common coherent concept of an national LLL strategy, • Still existing misunderstandings of terminology and strategic approaches, e.g. between the term “Lifelong Learning” and “Adult education” • Deficits in special areas of educational and strategic processes, e.g. for employed people, older workers, special groups at risk etc. • Missing links between the fields of education, employment and labour, economics and social affairs • Segmented developments in various areas of in education, vertical “(e.g. primary, secondary, tertiary education), and horizontal (e.g. between general and vocational education) • Lack of resources in some core strategic fields (e.g. guidance etc.) • etc.

Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All strengths and all weaknesses contain opportunities to develop – strengthen the strengths, reduce the weaknesses • A strong opportunity is to use transnational and EU processes to give initiatives at national level – through networks, projects, common conferences, interactive reflections, to learn from each other • The economic crises could help to find some core approaches to the real essential aspects for future development – LLL must be an essential part of it • Use the increasing commitment about importance of LLL and common processes as a base for common national Lifelong learning strategy processes • Make visible the ongoing activities in several fields of LLL as existing elements of a possible common LLL strategy • Use of processes in field of education like the NQR development as an stimulating part for establishment and improvement of national LLL strategies • Use of existing parts of national LLL strategies – like the Lifelong Guidance strategy – as examples of good practice for other key strategic lines within the NLLS • Use of transnational processes – e.g. transnational project CBI-NLLS, additional networks and projects coordinated from Austria like “School and WOW”, and the cooperation within European networks, like ELGPN, EQA-VET, etc. to stimulate national LLL strategy processes • etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process runs too slow • Complexity in governmental administrative and procedural structures • Lack of sustainability in project based activities • Lack of performance in transfer and results of projects into regular programs and processes • Lack of evidence and data, lack of using existing data of national and transnational sources (Bildungsbericht, Statistik Austria, PISA, EU benchmarks and interim report etc. • Lack of recourses for necessary projects and progresses • Internal “blocks” for necessary reforms and reorganization processes in the educational and LLL sector • etc.



Background: About the National LLL Strategy in Austria

Definition of Lifelong Learning

The Austrian strategy of lifelong learning is based on a holistic concept which regards all areas of learning in all phases throughout life. This concept follows the aim to develop strategic concepts consequently from perspectives of learners, not by the reason of institutional purposes or legal and administrative needs and demands.

Based on this holistic approach the Austrian LLL Strategy the concept of lifelong learning covers the early childhood education as well as the complete school sector, general and academic education as well as vocational education and training, also tertiary education, general adult education and in-company further training.

Formal education and training pathways – e.g. education in school, in universities etc. – are as well important pillars of LLL as non-formal education and training pathways – like technical or commercial courses for further training – or informal learning processes e.g. through gaining competences and skills during the working life.

The process of development and establishment of an Austrian lifelong learning strategy is close connected with relevant initiatives in the European Union. The essential core elements are also related to the main priorities in OECD and UNESCO. Regarding the international priorities Austria follows a joint approach between educational, economics and social affairs policies within the development and implementation of the LLL Strategy. This includes the fight against disadvantages, the improvement of base qualifications, approval of informal or non-formal gained knowledge skills and competencies and the development of new methods for teaching and learning. Interrelation between lifelong learning, employability and social inclusion has high significance also at the level of concrete measures and activities.

History of the national Lifelong Learning Strategy

The National Lifelong Learning Strategy development process started with the process about the memorandum of lifelong learning in 2000 at the latest.

Based on intensive discussions about the six key messages and strategic developments in some areas in the education system in the year 2006 a comprehensive consultation process was held in Austria in the course of which a coordinated expert paper was developed that dealt with “Guidelines for a coherent LLL-Strategy for Austria until 2010”. This paper builds on five strategic guidelines witch serve as guiding principles for all systems and levels of education and training and form a coordinated framework for procedural further development and concrete definition at the various levels.

After the decisions at the council from Feira about the development of coherent strategies for lifelong learning by the European member states in Austria an expert group where established with the order to work out key points of an Austrian strategy for LLL. The proposals of the expert group where discussed in more than ten “round table” events with representatives of all relevant Federal ministries, with the social partners, with the “Länder” and with representatives of universities and universities of applied science. More than forty written comments where incorporated into the proposals of the experts. The final version of the “Leitlinien einer kohärenten LLL-Strategie für Österreich bis 2010” (Guidelines of a coherent LLL-strategy for Austria until 2010) were presented in January 2007.

In autumn 2007 several aspects of LLL where discussed in six additional events with the main issues “LLL in tertiary sector” and in “adult education”. End of 2007 a meeting took place in Vienna with more than 200 experts from all sectors of education, with scientists and researchers, representatives of the “Länder”, the relevant Federal ministries and the social partners.

Based on these discussions the official consultation paper “Knowledge – Chances – Competencies / Strategy for implementation of lifelong learning in Austria” was elaborated and published as the official paper for an broad consultation process.

This paper contains a basic definition of LLL, perspectives for implementation of a strategy, main aspects for improvement of co-operation and co-ordination and the connections to the governmental program and the European aims and programs.

Additional the paper contains

- Already current activities and measures regarding the five strategic key lines.
- Middle- and long-term aims and developing perspectives, (middle-term 2-5 years, long-term 5-10 years).
- Measures and indicators for controlling and evaluation
- Further steps for concrete activities in several open fields of activities

To each chapter a setting of questions for the consultation process was added, with the invitation to all relevant stakeholders, institutions and persons for answers, comments and remarks.

All written comments and remarks (in sum 63) were published on the website of the responsible ministry in an open, transparent process. After the deadline of the consultation process a small external expert group elaborated a synthesis and additional proposals for the further process.

In the meanwhile some particular strategic processes were promoted, e.g. the development of a national qualification framework, installment of an expert group for school and teacher education reform, development of standards in school education, a new philosophy of financial support in the area of adult education and a strategy for

the key strategic line “Lifelong Guidance” which was reported to the commission in the “Austrian national report 2007 on the implementation of the education and training 2010 work programme”.

The project “CBI-NLLS” was a strong incentive to build up on these previous developments, to give the common strategic process a new momentum, especially with the SWOT-Analysis and the following recommendations.

The Strategy itself

The elementary aims of the LLL-Strategy for Austria are

- to build up a framework for education and training which facilitate all persons independent of age and previous educational pathways, to start educational processes and to complete, to widen and to deepen qualification and competencies.
- to build up structures of stimulations as well as an economic and social atmosphere which increase the awareness of LLL as a core value in society and individual life and to motivate particular low qualified persons and age groups with difficult access in education and learning.
- to improve the accredit ability of qualifications and competencies with the goal to make visible knowledge, skills and competencies which are gained in non-formal in informal ways to formal qualifications, as a contribution to a up-to-date outcome orientation of learning processes.

5 strategic key-lines

Based on this elementary aims of the LLL-Strategy the strategy contains five strategic key-lines, which are close connected together and underlay the standard criteria for institutions and structures in education and qualification in the future.

1. **Orientation on all phases throughout life** (to provide educational processes independent of the age and fitting to the age)
2. **Centralization of learners** (conjunction of places for learning, development of new learning architectures and new methods for teaching and learning, flexibilisation of learning, development of the role of teachers and trainers)
3. **Lifelong Guidance** (comprehensive support of learners, improvement and development of guidance and counselling, professionalisation of practitioners)

4. **Competence orientation** (transparency and comparability of qualifications, development of instruments for competence portfolio, accreditation and recognition of informal knowledge and competencies)
5. **Promotion of participation in LLL** (strengthening of learning motivation, enjoying learning, incentives and support measures, offers for basic education and qualification).

Policy principles and areas

In the consultation paper each key strategic line is explained in detail, with formulations of aims and targets, connections to areas of activities and to the objectives of the governmental programme of the Austrian Federal Government. Already currently running activities are described, intended middle- and long-term targets are defined from the point of view of all Federal ministries which are represented in the inter-ministerial LLL strategy working group, added are possible indicators for evaluation of the attainment of the aims.

Special chapters of the consultation paper deals with actors and stakeholders of the Lifelong learning process, places of learning, instruments and mechanisms of financing and funding of Lifelong learning and European and transnational relations and connections concerning the Lifelong learning strategy process.

Especially explained in detail are the process to develop the national qualification framework, the system of ECVET, the developed and decided Lifelong guidance strategy, key competences for Lifelong learning and the ICD initiative i2010.

Finally are defined principles and milestones for governments, especially LLL as mainstream approach is postulated, in the direction of improvement of an “evidence based policy”.

In the Annex currently running activities and measures are described in detail.

Areas of intervention

After the deadline of the consultation process a small expert group – including international experts – made a summary and a synthesis of the comments and remarks and they developed proposals for indicators and reference values for the key strategic lines and special aspects within these lines. A main recognition of the synthesis is, that the acceptance of the five key strategic lines is highly significant and well balanced.

A key result of summary and synthesis is a proposal of a setting of about sixty indicators and reference values and priorities for the next phases of implementation of the National Lifelong learning strategy.



The reference values concerns on the one hand the field of the five key strategic lines, on the other hand to the areas of pre-school education, school and initial education system, catching up certificates and qualifications, alternative transition systems, support- and funding mechanisms, basic and key competencies for adults, evidence based reform of teacher training, new learning architectures, adult education, career guidance, output – orientation, educational standards, non-formal and informal education, etc.

All these results, documents and materials were the source for the process of SWOT Analyses within the CBI-NLLS-Project with the aim to give new initiatives and an additional momentum for implementation and improvement of the Lifelong learning strategy process in Austria.

The national process in Austria

The Slovakian Study Visit with the focus on “Guidance in the context of lifelong learning” gave a lively insight in the national lifelong Guidance Forum. The high engagement of all involved stakeholders could be recognised as well as the complexity of finding common solutions.

The Austrian Study visit was focused on the vocational education and training with different visits from basic education in school to adult education. The partners expressed their impression in comparing the relationship between the government, social partners and other non government organisation concerning education policy and LLL.

From the point of view of Austria the aspects of competence orientation, competence measurement and modularisation in VET were from main interest within the Study visit in Hungary. For the competence-based approach of teaching in public it was important to see how the approach to teaching has and has to be changed from input orientation and focus on knowledge transfer to output and competence orientation.

Within the aspect of competence measurement the role of soft skills / social and communicative competencies were expressed. The discussion about the difficulty to work on them as they are some sort of cross-curricular matter and cannot be attributed to particular subjects come up for the Austrian situation and how and where to find enough room to develop these competencies.

Special interest for further insight from the point of view of Austria exist in the field of competence measurement systems and modularisation in VET, regarding to experiences and perspectives, how these approaches could be used for quality development in education system and LLL.

The thematic workshop in Budapest in October 2009 was focused on the topic Learners motivation with the focus on adults.

Background: About the National LLL Strategy in Austria

“Learning from the best performing” was visible through 3 well chosen topics from Sweden, Finland and Denmark with impressive inputs. Some main findings concern to the attitude in comparison the Scandinavian countries with Austria.

The general attitude of respect to personality, individual interests of all concerned persons independent of age, function and educational and social background can also influence general educational policies.

The professionalism and pragmatism concerning the LLL practise in the Scandinavian countries, the “hands on practise” is visible by e.g. the participation of adult in LLL:

Because of the current situation of the development of the NLLS the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture intended to combine two objectives within the project: on the one hand to prepare the CBI project SWOT analysis and at the other hand to discuss about further perspectives within the process of establishing the NLLS. So the first national workshop and the SWOT analysis were combined.

An afternoon meeting was held end of September 2009 in the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture. The meeting has been divided in three parts. The first part was used to inform all participants about the project CBI-NLLS in general and about the status quo within the project lifetime.

The second part was focused on the SWOT Analysis by itself. For preparation of the meeting all participants got a list of questions concerning the process of the establishing of the NLLS a few days before and additional a short summary of the project, the list of participants who will attend, the basis document “Donau University Krems paper” and the prefinal version of the so call “expert paper of July 2009”.

These documents were the basis for an open discussion within the small expert group. The discussion was focused first on the process of establishing of the NLLS but also in the third part of the meeting concerning the perspectives of further process on the content of the NLLS.

Because of the broad and widen consultation process within the last years in Austria, and the already involvement of different stakeholders and relevant actors of the different sectors of LLL on regional level as well on national level together with the Federal Ministry of Education, Culture and the Arts it was decided to invite for the SWOT Analysis representatives of the “Meta-level” of the different ministries, Social Partners and research institutes with the aim to discuss the SWOT Analysis within a small working group of experts who followed the process of consultation the last years.

Following ministries and organizations were invited by the Austrian Federal Ministry for Education, Arts and Culture: Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection, Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth, Austrian Federal Ministry of Science and Research, Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training, Conference of Adult Education Austria (KEBÖ), Public Employment Service Austria,

Background: About the National LLL Strategy in Austria

ibw (Institute for Research and Development at the interfaces between education, business and qualifications) and the Chamber of Labour.

Nearly all invited institutions and departments worked within the national workshop on the first SWOT analysis in Austria concerning the development and implementation of the National Lifelong Learning Strategy, which built a basis for further national perspectives.



Annex: For the National LLL-Strategy

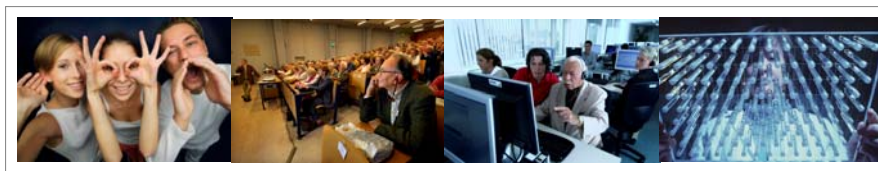
Austrian National Report 2007

on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme

Vienna, April 2007



AUSTRIAN NATIONAL REPORT 2007
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF
THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010 WORK PROGRAMME



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Preface



High-quality education and training is the major prerequisite for a good start into a successful working life and active and self-determined participation in society.

The increasing speed of change in our world, however, also requires every individual citizen to take part in continuous further development and training as well as in the process of lifelong learning. Only if everyone's creative potential is enhanced will our society be able to develop in an innovative and lasting manner.

Against the background of the Lisbon Strategy, which aims to increase the EU's competitiveness in a sustainable way and develop Europe into a knowledge-based economy by the year 2010, European education ministries jointly agreed on the following common objectives: improving quality; increasing accessibility; and opening-up of education systems vis-à-vis the world. For the past five years much work has gone into implementing a joint EU Education and Training 2010 work programme with the aim to promote joint attainment of objectives by all EU member states.

These European developments hence also exert a considerable influence on Austrian education planning. The main focuses in this connection are on: enhancing the quality and attractiveness of school-based and vocational educational institutions in general; modernising universities; motivating adults to take part in continuous education and training; and increasing international mobility. To ensure consistent linking of all education sectors and the lasting attainment of these objectives, Austria is currently working on developing an overall strategy for lifelong learning.

This 2007 National Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme aims to inform about the current status of reform work in Austria and provide an overview of future priorities regarding the further development of our education system.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claudia Schmied'.

Dr. Claudia Schmied
Federal Minister for Education,
the Arts and Culture

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Johannes Hahn'.

Dr. Johannes Hahn
Federal Minister of Science and Research

OBJECTIVES AND CONTENTS OF THE 2007 NATIONAL REPORT

The national reports form the basis of the analysis of the bi-annual interim reports' assessment of the progress achieved in implementation at EU level. Following the 2005 National Report, this year marks the second time that an Austrian progress report on the implementation of joint European objectives has been drawn up.

The 2007 National Report is a policy report laying down priority educational policy objectives to implement the 2010 work programme and presenting cases of good practice as well as future challenges. The Report's structure largely corresponds to the European Commission's guidelines aiming to achieve comparability of all national reports. The 2005 Implementation Report was used as a reference document.

The first chapter of the Report presents the current state of activities to develop a coherent lifelong learning strategy in Austria: Following a nationwide consultation process, an expert paper with five major guidelines has been prepared, which will serve as a basis for the political consultation process that has now been launched.

The second chapter of the report provides a presentation of overarching measures affecting all fields of education and training. In particular, it describes current initiatives to establish a national qualifications framework, to validate non-formal and informal learning, set up a lifelong guidance strategy in Austria, and promote international mobility.

The third chapter deals with concrete measures to achieve the joint European targets in the individual sectors of the education system. From a lifelong learning perspective, it reports in particular about quality assurance measures, improvement of equal opportunities, development of output-oriented (vocational) education and training concepts, and improvement of administrative structures. Apart from individual initiatives to achieve the five EU benchmarks of the 2010 work programme, measures to increasingly involve society in national education processes are also focused on.

The *Annex* to the Report then presents further information and 'cases of good practice' regarding achievement of joint European education targets.

On the one hand, the 2007 National Report for Austria meets reporting requirements at the European level (national contribution to the 2008 Interim Report), on the other hand it provides Austrian educational administration actors and the interested public with a detailed overview of all major reform steps regarding achievement of the objectives: quality, access and opening up of systems.

National Reports 2005 and 2007 on the Implementation of the Education and Training 2010 Work Programme

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/europa/bildung/abb2010/abb2010_zwb.xml

Further Information:

<http://www.bmukk.gv.at/europa/bildung/abb2010/index.xml>

http://ec.europa.eu/education/index_en.html

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GLOSSARY

AHS	Allgemeinbildende höhere Schule (secondary academic school)
AK	Arbeiterkammer (Austrian Chamber of Labour)
AMS	Arbeitsmarktservice Österreich (Public Employment Service Austria)
BAG	Berufsausbildungsgesetz (Vocational Training Act)
BAS	Berufsausbildungsassistenz (vocational training assistance)
BFI	Berufsförderungsinstitut (vocational training institutes)
BHS	Berufsbildende höhere Schule (VET college)
BIfEB	Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung (Federal Institute for Adult Education)
Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz	Education Documentation Act
BMBWK	Bundesministerium für Bildung, Wissenschaft und Kultur (Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture, until March 2007)
BMUKK	Bundesministerium für Unterricht, Kunst und Kultur (Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, formerly BMBWK)
BMVIT	Bundesministerium für Verkehr, Innovation und Technologie (Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology)
BMWA	Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit (Federal Ministry of Economics and Labour)
BMWF	Bundesministerium für Wissenschaft und Forschung (Federal Ministry of Science and Research)
BRP	Berufsaufstellungsprüfung (exam and certificate providing university access for skilled workers)
Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat	Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship
Bundeskammer der Tierärzte	Federal Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons
Bundesministerium für Gesundheit	Federal Ministry for Health
Bundesvergabegesetz	Federal Act on Procurement
Büro für Internationale Forschungs- und Technologiekooperation	Office for International Research and Technology Cooperation
DaZ	Deutsch als Zweitsprache (German as a second language)
Donau-Universität Krems	Danube University Krems

ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
FFG	Forschungsförderungsgesellschaft (Austrian Society for Research Sponsorship)
FH	Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences)
Forschungsförderungsfonds für die gewerbliche Wirtschaft	Research Support Fund for Trade and Industry
GM	Gender Mainstreaming
HS	Hauptschule (lower secondary school)
Hochschulgesetz	University Act
Höhere land- und fortwirtschaftliche Lehranstalten	Colleges of agriculture and forestry
ICT	Information and communications technology
IQOQI	Institut für Quantenoptik und Quanteninformation an der ÖAW (Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information of the Austrian Academy of Sciences)
IV	Industriellenvereinigung (Federation of Austrian Industry)
JASG	Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz (Youth Training Guarantee Act)
Kaufmännische mittlere und höhere Schulen	Schools and colleges of occupations in the business sector
KEBÖ	Konferenz der Erwachsenenbildung Österreichs (Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions)
LBVO	Leistungsbeurteilungsverordnung (Decree on Performance Appraisal)
Lehrlingsstellen	Apprenticeship Offices
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MSI subjects	Mathematics – Sciences – Informatics
MST subjects	Mathematics – Sciences – Technology
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NR 2005	2005 National Report on the implementation of the 2010 work programme
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ÖGB	Österreichischer Gewerkschaftsbund Trade Union Federation

ÖZEPS	Österreichisches Zentrum für Persönlichkeitsbildung und soziales Lernen (Austrian Centre for Personal Development and Social Learning)
Pädagogische Akademien	Teacher-training colleges
Pädagogische Institute	In-service teacher training colleges
PH	Pädagogische Hochschule (Teacher-Training University)
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
Polytechnische Schulen	prevocational schools
QIBB	Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung (VET Quality Initiative)
QSP	Qualität in der Sonderpädagogik - Quality in Special Pedagogy
Rat für Forschung und Technologieentwicklung	Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development
Ring Österreichischer Bildungswerke	Ring of Austrian adult education associations
RPVO	Reifeprüfungsverordnung (Decree on the Upper Secondary School-Leaving Exam and Certificate)
SchOG	Schulorganisationsgesetz (School Organisation Act)
SchUG	Schulunterrichtsgesetz (School Instruction Act)
Sonderschule	Special schools
SPF	Sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf - support needs in terms of special pedagogy
Studienförderungsgesetz	Law on the Promotion of Studies
TIMSS	Trends in Mathematics and Science Study
TUG	Technische Universität Graz (Graz University of Technology)
Umweltbundesamt	Austrian Federal Environment Agency
Universität für Bodenkultur	Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences
Universitätsgesetz	University Act
USD	German language training accompanying classroom instruction
Veterinärmedizinische Universität Wien	University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna
VHS	Volkshochschulen (adult education centres)
WBA	WeiterBildungsAkademie - CVET Academy
Weiterbildungsförderungsgesetz	CVET Promotion Act

WKÖ	Wirtschaftskammer Österreich - Austrian Federal Economic Chamber
WUW	Wirtschaftsuniversität Wien - Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration
ZIT	Zentrum für Innovation und Technologie der Stadt Wien - Centre for Innovation and Technology of the City of Vienna

For a detailed overview of the Austrian education system see:
www.bildungssystem.at

1. PRESENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY

1.1 Current state of play

1.1.1 Status and timeframe

In 2006, a comprehensive consultation process was held in Austria, in the course of which a coordinated expert paper was developed that dealt with ‘*Guidelines for a coherent LLL strategy for Austria until 2010*’. This paper builds on five strategic guidelines, which serve as guiding principles for all systems and levels of education and training and form a coordinated framework for procedural further development and concrete definition at the various levels. The current development process is characterised by the following key steps:

- Consultation process: In December 2006, the first results of the consultation process were presented at the conference ‘*Lifelong Learning: Invitation to a Dialogue*’ and individual aspects of an LLL strategy for Austria were discussed in five workshops.¹
- Political process: The objective for 2007 consists in defining further priorities and setting related deadlines. It is also planned to find agreement on concrete quantifiable requirements, together with benchmarks, within the framework of federal consultation processes and in cooperation with the social partners.
- Thematic definition: Parallel to the political process, the year 2007 will see an extended discussion and thematic definition of the LLL strategy. In this connection, events under the joint heading LLL are scheduled to take place with the involvement of different providers and target groups and will be supported centrally.

1.1.2 Plans for future adjustment, completion or modification of the strategy

Now additional working steps are being introduced for developing a coherent LLL strategy. Guidelines in the form of the consultative expert paper form a largely coordinated basis and provide suggestions for structure and process. In 2007, a political process will be launched setting strategy priorities and defining institutional responsibilities. In a parallel step, an extended discussion process will be held with all education policy-makers to define the themes in more detail.

Of great importance is the linking with European projects such as EQF and with the current consultation process regarding ECVET. In addition, closer linking with the EU’s 2010 work programme and the other national strategies currently in preparation (such as the Austrian strategy for sustainable development; the ICT strategy; and the lifelong guidance strategy) is intended.

1.1.3 Obstacles encountered in the establishment of the national strategy that must overcome

In the establishment of a coherent strategy, the following three challenges, in particular, must be overcome:

- Differing responsibilities of the federal government, provincial governments and municipalities in individual segments of the education sector due to prevailing federal structures in Austria: For a target-oriented development of the LLL strategy, new co-

¹ For a summary of conference results refer to the website http://www.bifeb.at/III_tagung/tagungsbericht.htm

ordination structures and the establishment of new mechanisms of strategic cooperation are required.

- The field of tension between LLL as a mainstreaming approach for all education sectors on the one hand and special priorities in the field of adult and further education and training on the other: The consultation process allows increased awareness-raising of LLL in the individual education sectors. In addition, it has emerged that more attention must be paid to adult learning especially due to demographic changes, the more so because it is the education sector that has been covered least in strategic terms in Austria.
- Increased strategic coordination of financing flows at federal level: Due to different legal framework conditions and ministerial competences e.g. in the field of active labour market policies on the one hand and education policy on the other, new strategic coordination and efficiency enhancement instruments at the federal level need to be identified.

1.2. Comprehensiveness, coherence and relevance

1.2.1 *Systems and levels of education and training covered by the strategy*

The guidelines as agreed in the consultation procedure for a coherent LLL strategy are the following: life-stage guidance, putting learners at the centre, lifelong guidance, competence orientation, and promoting participation in LLL. These guidelines build on the six basic messages of the EU memorandum on LLL and take into account the different demographic, (inter-) cultural, economic, political, social and gender-specific dimensions that shape LLL.

The strategic target of these guidelines covers all systems and levels of education and training.

1.2.2 *The challenges addressed by the strategy, including improving the efficiency and equity of education and training systems, and how these have been identified (evidence base)*

The challenges addressed in the strategy development regarding efficiency and equity are reflected in the guidelines. The following special challenges regarding lifelong learning are defined in Austria:

- Expansion of early support measures and pre-school education, particularly for children of immigrants
- Further improvement of individual development options in the primary sector and secondary level I (reduction of the maximum number of students per class)
- Increasing permeability in the tertiary sector (improvement of credit transfers)
- Intensifying measures for immigrants and the low-skilled in the adult learning sector / extension of basic education provision
- Improving labour market policy measures for women and older workers to strengthen labour force participation
- New financing schemes for LLL / development of learning-centred financing instruments.

The need that exists in these areas is revealed by relevant scientific studies and international comparative studies such as PISA, the comparative data identified by EU benchmarks, and studies on the labour market such as the Labour Force Survey as well as various OECD studies.

1.2.3 The priorities for action and policy development within the strategy, in the light of these challenges

Currently of top priority is increased individual support in the primary sector and at secondary level I; the intensification of pre-school education; and further improvement of integration measures in these areas.

Being a cross-curricular subject, ICT plays a key role: Overall, the ICT strategy is seen as a driving force for development processes, innovations and quality enhancement in all areas of the education system. On the one hand, it aims at integrating ICT and new media in the fields of development for education policy (e.g. individual support, educational standards), on the other, at teaching comprehensive digital competences, thus guaranteeing general access to education.

Within the framework of the strategic guidelines for LLL, the year 2007 will see a further setting of priorities and their subsequent gradual implementation in thematic areas that still need to be defined.

1.3. Main policy measures

1.3.1 The main policy measures in the strategy and how these fit together

Two major elements for the ongoing political process will be tackled this year. On the one hand, proposals from the present guidelines for the LLL strategy have been integrated as priority measures in the Government Programme (improving the educational leave scheme; new financing schemes and secured basic structure of adult education; extension of educational guidance; literacy campaigns; quality assurance in adult education; promotion of educational qualifications; nationwide education passport). On the other hand, additional proposals from the expert paper, such as the establishment of bodies to define in more detail and implement the LLL strategy (LLL council; CVET council) are currently being examined. Clarification of competences and concrete coordination between involved ministries and provincial governments constitute major steps to secure joint targets for monitoring, evaluation and benchmarks.

1.3.2 Measures designed to address progress towards the EU benchmarks, including any national targets in these areas

Apart from continuing and partly intensifying the initiatives already laid down in the NR 2005², above all a bundle of measures in accordance with the “guarantee of education until the 18th birthday” as set out in the Government Programme will be established: It aims to reduce the proportion of young people without any vocational or educational qualifications whereby a key prerequisite is safeguarding the acquisition of basic qualifications.

In addition, a current priority theme is that of lifelong guidance in order to be able to increasingly cover major qualification areas (such as MST qualifications in the tertiary sec-

² 2005 National Report regarding the implementation of the EU's 2010 work programme in Austria
http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/12626/abb2010_zwbd.pdf

tor; women in technological occupations; extended access to education; and participation in education and training programmes by adults) as well as to increasingly open up improved educational opportunities to children and young people from groups of the population who are less likely to participate in education. The target consists in implementing EU benchmarks by 2010.

1.3.3 Allocation of resources to main policy measures, including any national targets for greater / more efficient use of funds and the use of EU funds to support lifelong learning (e.g. Structural Funds, European Investment Bank)

In order to enhance individual support (reducing the maximum number of students per class to 25), considerable additional funds will be made available by 2010, as well as for measures of early language promotion in the preschool area. These federal funds aim to support measures by municipalities in accordance with the qualitative targets elaborated by the Ministry for Education.

For programmes aiming at the acquisition of educational qualifications by adults, a total of € 4.1m (including ESF funds) were made available in 2006 (i.e. 10 percent more than in 2005). In order to be able to make efficient use of ESF funds, the BMUKK has meanwhile involved nearly all relevant non-profit education and training programmes in the structural programmes. National funds for the acquisition of educational qualifications by adults will be stepped up by 20 percent in 2007 as against 2005. It is planned to extend options for adults to acquire lower secondary school qualifications free of charge.

1.3.4 Measures to change attitudes to learning

In the autumn of 2005, an awareness-raising campaign regarding lifelong learning and learning motivation called *Lernen bringt's* was carried out. It gained widespread public attention thanks to successful cooperation with the media. As a major awareness-raising measure in the field of adult learning a special award was launched. The year 2006 marked the second time that people with extraordinary educational biographies were conferred awards in the category 'education champion' (see Annex).

1.3.5 Strengthening evidence-based policy-making, using a culture of evaluation, leading to innovation in education and training

With the introduction of educational standards in the subjects of German, Mathematics and English in the 4th and 8th years, significant steps setting the course for qualitative evaluation options have been made (cf. item 3.1.5). In addition, Austria regularly takes part in major international comparative surveys such as PISA, TIMSS and PIRLS. At present, Austria is participating in the OECD study on non-formal and informal learning (RNFIL), for example, and plans to eliminate existing evidence deficits in the field of adult learning by taking part in the PIAAC study³.

In 2002, the Education Documentation Act (*Bildungsdokumentationsgesetz*) was adopted, the further implementation of which is currently being discussed with stakeholders. The gathering of data with relevance for education policies, which was the objective pursued with the Act, aims to ensure that educational-sociological issues can be analysed systematically for the first time in a few years, which will allow major conclusions regarding the increase of social permeability in a valid form.

³ Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies

In addition, the BMUKK and the BMWF regularly commission external researchers to conduct expert opinions on specific issues, the results of which are integrated in political control processes.

1.3.6 Measures to target the needs of disadvantaged people (e.g. immigrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)

People at a disadvantage (population groups that are less likely to participate in education, people with disabilities, people with an immigration background) play a key role in the guidelines on the LLL strategy. Apart from the social dimension, the (inter-) cultural dimension forms an essential basis for the LLL guidelines. The guidelines ‘life-stage orientation’, ‘putting learners at the centre’ and ‘lifelong guidance’ provide a special focus. Also of great importance is the objective to improve access to education and training measures for population groups that are less likely to participate in education (see also 1.2.2.).

1.4. Development, implementation and dissemination of the strategy

1.4.1 Coordination and consultation mechanisms involving all relevant stakeholders

The consultation process with relevant stakeholders, which was launched in 2006, is to be continued in an extended form in the years 2007 and 2008. A key basis for coordinating and consulting on the further development of the strategy is the linking of central and decentralised coordination.

So far, representatives of the following institutions are involved in the development process: federal ministries, higher learning institutions, the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ), adult learning and LLL representatives from the provinces, and representatives of kindergartens, the social partners, the AMS, the senior citizens’ association, the federal youth representation, selected NGOs, representatives of regional education boards, and the federal schoolchildren’s representation. The majority of representatives participated in the process both via round-table talks and written statements.

The website *www.lebenslangeslernen.at*, which is operated by the BMUKK, will be used as the central information and communications portal for the process to disseminate major expert papers, make available the results of round-table talks and workshops to a wider discussion group, and hence set up a platform for thematic events and other activities.

1.4.2 Implementation arrangements, including publicity and dissemination

To implement extended consultation and discussion activities regarding thematic definitions and awareness-raising / public relations work, activities and events at several target group levels are planned for 2007⁴ (see Annex 1.4.2).

⁴ The implementation of this second phase of consultation is partly facilitated with the support of the European Commission within the framework of the Restricted Call 2006 “Implementation of National LLL Strategies – Education and Training 2010”.

2. IMPEMENTATION OF TRANSVERSAL POLICY OBJECTIVES

2.1 Establishment of national qualifications systems and frameworks (in line with the European Qualifications Framework), and elimination of obstacles between levels and systems

Austria is currently in the first stage (“fact-finding mission”) to develop a *National Qualifications Framework* (NQF). With broad support for Austria’s participation in the *European Qualifications Framework* (EQF) in the background, activities at national level are coordinated by the BMUKK and the BMWF.

Support for activities in connection with NQF comes, on the one hand, from an internal project group consisting of representatives of involved ministries (BMUKK and BMWF), on the other hand, a steering group comprising representatives of all relevant ministries and social partners has been set up. A research consortium made up of experts of all involved education sectors has been commissioned with scientific support.

By 2010, in a first step, it is planned to describe the formal education system and implement a national coordination unit. Parallel to this, activities to include non-formal and informal learning are to be encouraged by the responsible ministries.

In another initiative in this connection, the planned European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), Austria was actively involved in the consultation process. With the participation of all relevant actors, the process was coordinated by the BMUKK. A total of 28 statements submitted were analysed by a scientific consortium and presented on the occasion of an event held on 20 March 2007. This synoptic presentation served as a basis for preparing the national position on the framework of the consultation process on ECVET, which was submitted to the European Commission in late April 2007.

In the tertiary sector, preparatory work was already conducted during Austria’s EU Presidency (preparation of the study *EQF in the Context of Tertiary Education*, in German and English). This work served as the starting point for the national process launched in February 2007, in which all stakeholders are involved and preparatory activities conducted within the framework of the Bologna Process are taken into account. The items listed in the NR 2005 (cf. 3.1.3, 4.1.6., 5.1.6) cover developments in the elimination of barriers to transition. As a new development in 2006/2007, improvement of permeability in the tertiary sector (inside Austria) e.g. by safeguarding and improving credit transfer must to be mentioned. Developments within the framework of the introduction of an NQF will create the basis for improving permeability between the various education levels.

2.2 Identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning

Measures in the field of VET are oriented towards several target groups and areas: Measures for immigrants (within the framework of ESF Objective 3) on the one hand comprise vocationally oriented support courses to prevent dropouts from VET schools and colleges, on the other hand, immigrants have the option to take advantage of support classes at evening schools for people in employment. The *exceptional admission to the apprenticeship-leaving exam* is a general transformation mechanism of qualifications acquired non-formally and informally with the aim of obtaining admission to the apprenticeship-leaving exam. Also without attending school it is possible to take an upper secondary school-leaving exam (*Reifeprüfung* or *Reife- und Diplomprüfung*). In addition:

Berufsreifeprüfung, see 3.4.3 (cf. also NR 2005).

The first pilot schemes to recognise non-formal and informal learning processes in adult education are already being conducted with the support of the BMUKK. As a model of good practice, the project *Informal learning in everyday life. The competence portfolio of adult education associations* (ring of Austrian adult education associations⁵) can be mentioned (see Annex). Another pioneer project is called *CVET academy*⁶, which links non-formal learning with recognition of informally acquired competences (see 2.4.4).

Essential is the close linking of related measures with the development of EQF and the corresponding NQF. Further information is expected to come from Austria's participation in the OECD study on recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

2.3 Widely accessible lifelong guidance policies and systems

A national strategy for lifelong guidance was prepared in 2005 and 2006 under the auspices of the BMBWK⁷ by an interministerial working group, involving the AMS, the social partners and other major partners in connection with this theme (for a more detailed description cf. the Annex).

On the basis of national and international studies and in coordination with developments and discussions at EU level, and the preparation of the national LLL strategy, the following programmatic targets were defined as cornerstones of the national lifelong guidance strategy:

1. **Implementation of basic competences in all curricula:** in as many educational measures as possible the objective should consist in consciously aiming at teaching and acquiring major basic competences for being able to take responsible educational and vocational career decisions.
2. **Focus on process optimisation and support:** Top-quality decision-making processes are the prerequisite for successful educational and vocational career decisions in all life stages. Therefore, all support measures should be oriented towards these processes. Therefore, the support aspect should be paid particular attention to.
3. **Professionalisation of counsellors and trainers:** improvement and intensification of training, continuing, further and in-service training of counsellors, trainers, teachers active in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work in various sectors.
4. **Quality assurance and evaluation of provision, processes and structures:** For creating an efficient lifelong guidance system it is necessary to systematically analyse and further develop the quality of provision, processes and structures in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work. In this connection, orientation towards actual citizens' needs must be paid special attention to. The efficiency of the methods used should be evaluated.
5. **Widening access – creating provision for new target groups:** Provision should be designed and custom-made in a way that offers actually reach the people who are in special need of this support. A topic that must still be investigated is what are the specific problems for which there exist no offers at all or too few.

⁵ www.kompetenz-portfolio.at

⁶ www.wba.or.at

⁷ Now: Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture (BMUKK)

Regarding the above programmatic objectives, concrete proposals for measures were prepared for the various sectors and a close mutual linking to the future national LLL strategy was created. In addition, support instruments are to be used to support the strategy's objectives. In the new ESF programming period, for example, it is planned to support mainly measures and measure developments in the fields of information, guidance and counselling that focus on the programmatic objectives of the national strategy.

2.4 Measures to reinforce transnational mobility in all sectors, including through the removal of administrative and legal obstacles, the implementation of the Europass, or by the provision of financial or other support

National measures to intensify transnational mobility have already been elaborated on in detail in NR 2005 (cf. Chapter 6.1.).

To round off the information provided in the NR NB 2005 it must be mentioned that the number of foreign students increased from 43,344 in the winter semester 2005 to 45,776 (total of all students: 224,119) in the winter semester 2006. This means that the share of foreign students at Austrian universities is some 20%. This makes Austria one of the most internationalised higher learning areas in Europe.

Also in the field of EU programmes, Austria continued to take part intensely in Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, partly granting generous additional scholarships. In the year 2005, for example, 1,819 people benefited from Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects, and in 2006 their number rose to 2,128. Erasmus programmes conducted in the 2005/06 academic year helped 4,079 Austrian students to gather experiences in stays abroad of 3-12 months; their figure rose to 4,228 in the 2006/07 academic year.

Effective 1 January, the newly founded *National Agency for Lifelong Learning* took up operation. It is responsible for the very service-oriented implementation of the new lifelong learning programme.

Also the introduction of *Europass training* was very successful in Austria, its high profile can be derived from the increasing access figures to the Europass website: The number of monthly visits to the site rose from 4,400 to 30,000 between October 2005 and January 2007, the template for the Europass CV has been downloaded up to 5,000 times a month. Austria was the first country to create the new Europass Mobility document online (more than 1,200 registration between January and June 2006), and since 2005 the Europass Diploma Supplement has been issued automatically by all universities and Fachhochschule programmes. By October 2006, already more than 1,400 Europass Certificate Supplements in IVET had been prepared by the federal ministries competent for the respective programme.

A major focus at Austrian VET schools and colleges is intercultural education. An essential element to promote it is physical and virtual mobility (e.g. school partnerships). For this reason, the BMUKK supports and promotes the exchange of schoolchildren and international school partnerships. Also the *Intercultural Centre* encourages school partnerships with states that are not part of the European integration process (*New Neighbourhood Policy*).

3. IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICY OBJECTIVES IN SCHOOLS, HIGHER EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING, AND ADULT EDUCATION

3.1 Elements to be reported on for all levels (schools, higher education, vocational education and training, adult learning):

3.1.1 *Governance and leadership of education and training institutions (e.g. organisational and administrative reforms, autonomy and accountability measures, public/private measures)*

One of the priorities in this legislative period in the field of education is the reorganisation of school administration in the sense of a simplification and efficiency increase of administration⁸. Apart from a further extension of school autonomy, the following measures, in particular, are planned to be implemented: creation of education directorates; implementation of the one-stop-shop principle in the field of education by abolishing overlaps; modern and efficient school inspection (cf. also 3.1.6); creation of the option to reorganise school districts; commitment to a decentralised school system also in rural areas; introduction of a middle management for schools.

A comprehensive reform process of non-university teacher training was launched by the 2005 University Act (*Hochschulgesetz*), which created the institution of teacher-training universities (*Pädagogische Hochschulen*). It also provides for the merger of to date 50 teacher-training colleges in Austria and their integration into the tertiary sector. Apart from upgrading the former teacher-training colleges to educational institutions of the tertiary sector with partial legal capacity, the merger is mainly expected to create significant synergies.

Also the Federal Institute for Adult Education (*Bundesinstitut für Erwachsenenbildung*) as an office subordinated to the BMUKK, which aims at the VET and CVET of adult educators and librarians, is equipped with a related control instrument: Thanks to the so-called ‘flexibilisation clause’, it has attained increased autonomous budgetary scope and hence more autonomy in content priorities since 2003.

The 2002 University Act (*Universitätsgesetz*) introduced not only autonomy for universities (for details cf. NR 2005, 4.1.4.) but also a completely novel reporting instrument: the *knowledge balance*. Such a document must be submitted by every university to the Ministry for Education for the previous calendar year and serves as a stocktaking instrument of the pool of knowledge available at universities. This report must include the following information:

1. sphere of activities, social objectives, self-defined objectives and strategies
2. intellectual assets by using a set of indicators

In this way, universities take stock of the available pool of knowledge that is of importance for research, teaching, learning, further education and administrative processes and serves as an instrument to present, evaluate and communicate in an all-encompassing way immaterial assets, performance processes and their effects.

On the basis of the 2002 University Act, the State is obliged to enter into so-called *performance agreements* with universities over a three-year period, starting with the period

⁸ See “Government Programme for the XXIII. Legislation Period“

of 2007. These performance agreements cover 80% of the universities' budgets, the remaining 20% of the total finance for universities is subject to distribution on the basis of a formula. The performance agreements already concluded provide universities with secured budgets for three years and, all in all, some EUR 525m (i.e.: plus 10%) additionally for universities. Another EUR 500m are invested for general reconstruction measures. The implementation of the performance agreements will be accompanied by annual reports and strategic controlling. The goal consists in maintaining the communication process with universities that was already intense during the performance agreement process (cf. also 2.2.1. of the NR 2005).

Another instrument set up is the so-called *foundation professorships* (forms of cooperation between universities and the private sector), as they already exist between the Magna Group and Graz University of Technology. Magna is financing three professorships at Graz University of Technology until 2014, whereas the university, in turn, has set up a separate Department for Automobile Engineering.

3.1.2 Stimulating private investment from enterprises, households, and individuals

A major incentive for private investment in the field of general schooling is *aid for schoolchildren*, which will be adjusted as of 1 July 2007 for the first time since 1999 with an increase by 15% (this means that the maximum aid amount rises from EUR 982 to EUR 1,130).

Measures in the field of VET can mainly be found in the dual training system in the form of financial incentives for apprentices and for training enterprises. Experience has shown that the companies' willingness to provide training has been enhanced and the number of available apprenticeship posts increased particularly thanks to the so-called *Blum Bonus*⁹ – which is a grant for company-based training. Other incentives also exist for apprentices and training enterprises (e.g. apprenticeship training premium, relief for non-wage labour costs, etc).

Furthermore, a nationwide network comprising a total of 18 *apprentices' advisors* has been set up, who open up additional company-based training slots by establishing direct contacts and conducting targeted acquisition activities. Starting in 2004 until September 2006, more than 13,000 companies were contacted and about 5,700 commitments for admission of apprentices obtained.

A general incentive for investments by private households is *favourable tax treatment* of VET and CVET expenses in connection with the exercising of a profession (cf. NR 2005).

In the adult learning sector, different systems of individual promotions have been established in the various provinces, mainly for vocational qualifications. The Upper Austrian government, in particular, can look back on several years of experience with a comprehensive model, in the form of the *educational account*. In Lower Austria, among other measures, since very recently 50% of course fees will be reimbursed if employees are below the age of 45 or receive parental leave benefit. Career break returners after maternity / paternity leave who are registered unemployed with the AMS as well as employees over the age of 45 and recipients of social assistance will get 80% of course fees reimbursed. Individuals are additionally supported in the form of comprehensive information

⁹ So called after the Austrian Government Commissioner for Youth Employment and Apprenticeship, Egon Blum

regarding VET and CVET allowances.¹⁰ Moreover, a CVET Promotion Act (*Weiterbildungsförderungsgesetz*) was adopted in Carinthia, for example.

The Chamber of Labour started to provide incentives for participation in education and training programmes by introducing the *educational voucher* in 2002. Every year, employees receive an educational voucher with a total value of EUR 100, which can be used at various educational establishments such as adult education centres or vocational training institutes. In the period from 2002 to 2006, some 290,000 educational vouchers were requested.

In the sector of enterprise CVET, a 20% incentive scheme termed “*CVET free allowance*” continues to be successful.

To make access to higher education more attractive financially and affordable for disadvantaged people, the BMUKK provides financial support for adult learning provision related to the acquisition of educational qualifications by adults. In addition, the BMUKK bears the costs for the innovative further development of measures (use of IT, individualisation of provision) so the costs do not have to be added to the course fee.

Incentives in the tertiary sector: The last two amendments to the Law on the Promotion of Studies (*Studienförderungsgesetz*) in 2005 and 2006 have brought about improvements to the promotion of studies abroad (grants starting with the 3rd semester); facilitation of the transition from the two-tier to the three-tier study system (bachelor’s, master’s and doctor’s studies); and the establishment of conformity with European legislation regarding equality of European Union citizens and third-country nationals with Austrian citizens by implementing two EU directives.

The Austrian *study grants system* has undergone a positive extension over the past six years: Over that period, the number of recipients of study allowances has risen from 34,000 to 48,000 students. Today, every third student at Fachhochschule programmes and every fifth student at university obtains study grants or allowances; related expenses have risen by EUR 66m to EUR 176.6m since 2000.

It is planned to further expand study allowances: on the one hand, by increasing study grants by 12% (in 2007), on the other, in a second step it is planned to expand the group of recipients of study allowances and bring about improvements in targeting eligible groups (autumn of 2008).

3.1.3 Widening access, and improving equity of participation, treatment and outcomes, especially for disadvantaged learners (e.g. migrants, ethnic minorities, the disabled)

Measures for schoolchildren with first languages other than German (cf. also Chapter 3.2.): Curricula for *German as a second language* (DaZ) exist in the area of general compulsory schooling (primary schools, lower secondary schools, special schools, prevocational schools) and at AHS and schools and colleges of occupations in the business sector under the name *German language training accompanying classroom instruction* (USD).

Depending on local conditions, schools have the option to organise the special support classes in German parallel to instruction, in addition to instruction, or in an integrated approach. The latter form means that a team consisting of two teachers (class teacher or subject teacher plus support teacher) works with the entire class.

¹⁰ Website www.kursfoerderung.at

Not all provinces stipulate that employment is dependent on teachers obtaining a specialist qualification in *DaZ* and intercultural learning. Whereas some teachers have acquired additional qualifications in language instruction for teaching the special support class in German, others have not completed a relevant programme for this task. The restructuring of teacher training is expected to bring about an improved anchoring of qualifications.

Ordinances regarding curricula for *mother tongue instruction* have been passed for general compulsory schools and AHS. These curricula are not language-specific, apply to all languages on offer, and allow the expansion of the language provision at any time. The objective of mother-tongue instruction is to develop and strengthen bilingualism and enhance the bilingual schoolchildren's identity.

Currently, 347 teachers offer the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian (BCS), Bulgarian, Chinese, French, Italian, Macedonian, Persian, Polish, Portuguese, Romany, Romanian, Russian, Slovak, Spanish, Czech, Chechen, Turkish and Hungarian – with BSC and Turkish showing the highest share.

Instruction is held on the basis of Austrian curricula, mother-tongue teachers are employed and paid by Austrian authorities. Also school textbooks and other teaching material are made available via the textbook initiative (*Schulbuchaktion*) or via the BMUKK.

Special pedagogical support: After integration had been legally anchored for 12 years, stock was taken of the status of special pedagogy in Austria. Currently, proposals for quality development are prepared in the following areas: quality standards for instruction in integration classrooms (*QSP – Quality in Special Pedagogy*, see Annex); individual support schemes; reorganisation of the SPF procedure (SPF = support needs in terms of special pedagogy) in the direction of more extensive involvement of support-related diagnostic principles, participation and transparency; flexibilisation of resource allocation – facilitation of preventive support measures; professional self-image of (special) pedagogues. The next steps will consist in preparing a preliminary final report on political decision-making and the implementation of proposed measures.

At present, curricula of special schools for children with visual impairments and of schools for children with hearing impairments are being redesigned to create modern disability-specific education and training. It is planned to extend design options within the framework of school autonomy, set disability-specific priorities, and eliminate barriers by introducing binding disability-specific exercises and subjects, apply individual support schemes, and increasingly teach personal and social skills with a view to the children's future participation in social and professional life. The learning offers have to be selected individually, in accordance with the children's talents / inclinations and performance. Also, work is ongoing to develop a concept for updating curricula for the general special school: Apart from basic education, individual objectives and aid measures aim to allow an as high as possible extent of school and professional integration, social participation and independent life organisation. In addition, the website CIS¹¹, an interactive platform for the field of special pedagogy, has been modernised (see Annex). For more information on integrative VET cf. 3.4.6.

Adult education: (Cf. 3.4.6) Within the framework of ESF Objective 3, the Community initiative Equal, as well as at a national level, the focus in adult education has been on promoting measures for people at a disadvantage.

¹¹ www.cisonline.at

In the year 2006, measures for basic education and literacy programmes, for the acquisition of educational qualifications by adults and measures for immigrants and disadvantaged women were backed by an amount of EUR 6.2m (including ESF funds), up 30% on 2005. In addition, projects to expand educational information and guidance and for the professionalisation and networking of educational counselling were conducted (government assistance of EUR 789,000 including ESF funds).

Particularly successful was the development partnership *In.Bewegung*, which led to the establishment of nationwide guidance provision for basic education, the preparation of special target-group-oriented learning material, and the intensification of supra-institutional exchange. This partnership was allocated government assistance of EUR 956,000 (incl. ESF funds).

The AMS's instruments have also been significantly adjusted to solve differing individual needs. In the year 2006, therefore, some 39,000 people of non-Austrian citizenship were integrated in various labour market political skills training measures (+20.3% against 2005).

Disabled unemployed people have the chance to receive a special allowance within the framework of comprehensive support and skills training schemes (e.g. at BBRZ, the VET and Rehabilitation Centre). In 2006, the AMS approved skills training support for an approximate total of 26,000 people classified as disabled (+25.8% against 2005).

Tertiary sector: Within the framework of the regular social survey among tertiary students, the special study "*The social situation of students with health problems*" was commissioned. Survey results provide information, on the one hand, about the size of the target group (health problems are not covered at the time of admission to a study programme). On the other, they reveal areas where measures need to be taken to improve participation in study programmes. The implementation of recommended measures will be examined when the universities' performance reports are analysed, and subsequently implementation will be demanded in negotiations regarding the next performance period.

In addition, several universities (in Vienna, Graz and Leoben) offer *university preparation programmes*: They aim to support the international students' preparation for supplementary examinations prescribed in the confirmation of admission decision to establish equivalence of foreign certificates.

3.1.4 Measures to address gender aspects in education and training

Current projects aim to reduce barriers towards non-traditional and technological programmes, widen the occupational spectrum open to young women and increase the number of women in technical occupations in the long term. In addition, backing is given to vocational guidance offices that offer technical and handicraft courses for young women. These projects have also contributed to improving the public's acceptance of women employed in non-traditional occupations.

In recent years, however, there has been an increasing tendency towards a comparable deterioration of boys' performance as against the girls' mainly in terms of school success and literacy (see e.g. PISA 2003). Within the framework of the political task to implement gender mainstreaming (GM) in the education sector, the gender perspective (with a view to *both* sexes) in the past few years has been anchored by supporting projects at schools and creating possibilities of networking i.a. in the field of instruction to facilitate gender-specific learning. In 2006, the first national Gender Day for schools was held.

At the level of teacher training, a network of GM officers has been set up and supported,

and GM seminars and courses in the field of teacher training have been initiated and supported within the framework of ESF support.

Also in all fields of VET, gender equality has been encouraged. To mention one example, targeted career guidance measures to improve labour market opportunities of young women have been conducted (e.g. the skills training and employment initiative “*Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz*” and the programme for women in the crafts and technology “*Frauen in Handwerk und Technik 2006-2008*”). In addition, a reduction of gender-specific segmentation of the workplace is to be brought about, and women are to be qualified and motivated to take on jobs with better income opportunities.

In the field of adult learning, customised projects aim to motivate disadvantaged women who are not used to learning to take part in CVET (e.g. the Equal development partnership “*learn forever*” with the objective to develop attractive learning provision in rural regions; supported with EUR 811,424 incl. ESF-funds) in 2006.

In the higher education sector, a series of measures promoting girls and young women in the field of technology and science studies was launched in 2000: They comprise their motivation to take up a technological field of study (e.g. *FIT* – “*Women in Technology*”); accompanying measures during the study (*ditact Women’s IT Summer Studies*); as well as the promotion of young talented female scientists (e.g. *DOC-fForte*, *WIT* – “*Wissenschaftlerinnenkolleg Internettechnologien*”, *fFORTE* - *Wissenschaftlerinnenkolleg FreChe Materie*). Implementation of these measures has mainly been effected within the framework of the national *fFORTE* initiative and ESF co-financing.

These measures have succeeded in bringing about an increase in the number of female students in recent years. In engineering studies, for example, the number of women has increased by 16% in the period 2001 to 2005 (from 8,436 to 9,797), a similar increase in the number of female students was achieved in scientific studies as well (from 15,125 to 18.064, which is a plus by 19.4%).

All universities of technology take part in the *FIT* programme (“*Women in Technology*”), within the framework of which guidance talks are held with female students of the upper cycle of secondary schools regarding study programmes in technology and the sciences as well as annual information and open days for female holders of the upper secondary school-leaving certificate. The Vienna University of Technology has set up the *Wissenschaftlerinnenkolleg Internettechnologien* (WIT) within the framework of a project to increase the presence of women in the scientific and technological fields (career-supporting measures for female schoolchildren, students and talented scientists).

3.1.5 The use of learning outcome based approaches for the definition and design of education and training objectives, standards and curricula, and their relevance to the needs of society and the economy

In a pilot phase, which will last until 2008, Austria is testing the use of *educational standards* and is in this way supplementing the so far prevailing strategy of input control by a more intense focus on learning outcomes. The standards lay down the competences pupils should have acquired in a lasting manner up to a specific school year. The competences of both pupils and teachers are described in such a concrete way that they can be implemented into tasks and surveyed by using testing procedures.

In the compulsory school sector, educational standards are being developed at grades 4 and 8 in the subjects of German and mathematics as well as English (at grade 8) and piloted in selected schools. By the autumn of 2007, also (cross-curricular) standards for the

natural sciences (at grade 8) will have been developed to an extent that they can be piloted as well. Currently validation tests are conducted in the mentioned subjects. Apart from setting up a testing administration, issues connected with feedback to pupils, teaching staff, principals and school administration as well as the designing of measures for in-service teacher training are in the foreground: Schools are to be enabled to carry out their quality assurance in a more data-controlled way (on the basis of the results of standard testing). In addition, to support this change process, material for self-evaluation for teachers is developed and tested. External and internal evaluations aim to support the continuous quality development process.

In early 2005, the Austrian vocational education and training (VET) sector started to develop educational standards as well (pilot phase as of 2007). To ensure acquisition of a final qualification, first of all educational standards for the 13th year of schooling were formulated for selected general-education subjects and the entire specialist training. This aims to define interfaces and design transitions more smoothly. Current work is focusing on designing and piloting didactic examples for the classroom which are to contribute to improving teaching quality.

In the field of apprenticeship training, the Austrian social partners in their function as major stakeholders have laid a key cornerstone for orientation towards learning outcomes by *defining activity descriptions and occupational profiles*.

In the tertiary sector, both the Dublin descriptors of the European higher learning area and the EQF descriptors have been used to design and describe learning outcomes of education and training programmes and qualifications. Curricula at Fachhochschule institutions are already largely oriented towards learning outcomes, which is due to the programme's practice orientation. At universities, changes from input- to output-orientation have begun in the sphere of curricula development. Another step will be the use of the NQF and learning outcomes laid down in them.

3.1.6 *Quality assurance systems*

Within the meaning of the ministerial initiative "*Q.I.S. – Quality in Schools*" Austrian general education schools are called on to systematically examine their own quality and develop it further (school programme with self-evaluation). In addition, it is planned to link two measures, viz. the reduction of the maximum number of pupils per class, which will become effective as of autumn 2007 for the first years of primary school, lower secondary and academic secondary schools (which is the 5th year of schooling), and pre-vocational schools, from currently 30 to 25 (reference value) with measures to individualise instruction. It is planned to safeguard their quality by elaborating a development plan that is linked with stocktaking and objective-setting discussions between school heads and school inspection.

In current debates on reorganising the Austrian school inspection system, it seems likely that a model will be introduced that foresees the establishment of an external evaluation instance for schools. The results of such an external evaluation are to serve as a major binding basis for the above-mentioned stocktaking and objective-setting discussions of principals and school inspection. Current school inspection should then focus on its core functions of regional control (within the framework of provincial educational directorates still to be set up), quality assurance and conflict management.

Concepts have already been elaborated for national system monitoring, connected also with the preparation of a *National Report on Education*, and their implementation is scheduled for the present legislative period. Work on the National Report on Education

has already begun and is expected to be completed by 2008 at the latest.

In the VET sector, currently the implementation of the *QIBB quality initiative* has priority (cf. 3.4.1).

The objective of grants in the field of adult learning consists in safeguarding quality of education and training provision and to support non-profit institutions in adult education in the implementation of quality management measures (for more details on concrete individual measures, cf. 3.1.1). In the adult learning sector, the BMUKK has supported the establishment of quality assurance instruments since 2001 by providing funds of EUR 1.2m (including ESF funds). Thanks to the support programme, today the majority of non-profit nationwide active adult learning establishments dispose of related quality assurance systems, which are to be extended further.

The *Federal Institute for Adult Learning (BIfEB)*, for example, which is the major Austrian competence centre for the CVET of trainers in adult education, has been certified on the basis of ISO 9001:2000 by *ÖQS-Zertifizierungs- und Begutachtungs-GmbH* since 2003.

During the ESF programming period 2000-2006, it was also possible to achieve major progress regarding quality assurance and quality control in the field of acquisition of educational qualifications by adults. Thanks to regular monitoring of courses aiming at the acquisition of lower secondary qualifications by adults and bridge courses preparing for *Berufsreifeprüfung*, transparency could be enhanced and models of good practice disseminated more easily.

For basic information about quality assurance in the tertiary sector, reference is made to the NR 2005 (item 4.1.5). After universities submitted their Reports on Activities, and the performance agreements (2007-2009) were concluded between universities and the federal government, progress achieved by universities in the establishment of quality assurance systems has become visible. In 2006, universities and Fachhochschule institutions promoted the implementation of European standards for internal and external quality assurance measures. Future priorities will focus on the continuous further development of quality assurance and evaluations by the Austrian Agency for Quality Assurance (AQA) and the accreditation bodies Fachhochschule Council and Accreditation Council in 2007.

3.1.7 Developing learning partnerships with stakeholders (policy-makers at national, regional and local levels, social partners, learners and representatives of civil society)

Traditionally, the social partners are integrated in all major educational issues in Austria, thus contributing – particularly in VET and adult education – to intensive interconnections between educational institutions and society (cf. 3.4.5).

In the field of schools, close collaboration of pupils, teachers and parents is promoted by the legally anchored *school partnership*, within the framework of which rights, duties and common objectives of all actors can be agreed upon on an equal basis in the so-called *school community committee*.¹²

Regarding reintegration of young people into school and working life, the development of joint, supra-institutional strategies is aimed at (cf. 3.2.4).

Special-focus programmes in adult education by the Ministry for Education have been laid down in cooperation with the *Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions*

¹² <http://www.faireschule.at/schulpartnerschaft>

(KEBÖ). In key thematic areas, inter-departmental cooperation is aimed at. The topic of LLL, for example, has been the subject of a comprehensive consultation process with all relevant stakeholders (i.e.: the ministries responsible for LLL, as well as the AMS, regional representatives, social partners, the affected NGOs, representatives of the sciences, etc.) and discussed within the framework of an event organised by the Federal Institute for Adult Education. Also legal developments connected with the *Berufsreifeprüfung* have been conducted in close collaboration with social partners.

In the tertiary sector, the *KPI II.3.2. of the knowledge balance* (cf. 3.1.1), which will be available for the 2006 reporting period for the first time as of mid-2007, will provide information about the number of partner institutions of universities involved in cooperation agreements (universities, arts facilities, non-university R&D institutions, schools) and enterprises.

Partnerships regarding VET and CVET activities are increasingly entered into by universities. The following can be named as examples:

- The *Kplus programme* of the Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology and the BMWA makes a substantial contribution to the development of a new cooperation culture between industry and science.
- Business start-up service *INITIS*, a cooperation of Vienna University, the Vienna University of Technology and the City of Vienna aiming to encourage young graduates to start up businesses.
- A cooperation between Linz University and Fachhochschule Upper Austria to develop study and CVET provision.
- The “*Schumpeter Programme*” is a cooperation model between the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber and the Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration (Executive Academy).

3.2 Schools

3.2.1 Increasing investment in and strengthening pre-primary education

In Austria, early childhood and pre-school education is regulated in a decentralised way, i.e. it is the responsibility of provincial governments. The federal government is only responsible for the training and further training of teaching staff and the creation of framework curricula. Currently there exists no nationwide education plan in the field of kindergarten teacher training (cf. also the OECD country report *Starting Strong* about early childhood education and care in Austria¹³).

The new federal government, however, sees the further development of kindergartens in its task as educational establishments as its priority and is planning to launch the following steps:¹⁴

- Development of a nationwide education plan for kindergartens with specific linguistic early support (for children with a mother tongue other than German also involving their competences in their first language)
- Improvement of the transition from kindergarten to primary school

¹³ <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/57/58/36657509.pdf>;

¹⁴ See Government Programme for the XXIII. Legislative Period, Education Chapter.

- Establishment of an expert group to elaborate proposals for pre-school education provision that is to cover all five-year-olds.

In the field of pre-school support, the so-called *language ticket* was introduced nationwide in 2005: Assistance measures comprise 120 hours of linguistic support for children in the year before their school entry in case they do not have sufficient command of German as the language of instruction; they are organised by provincial and regional governments in kindergartens. The federal government supports these assistance measures both pedagogically and financially with grants of EUR 80 per child. As a complementary measure, an online basic course for self-study (*Language tree*) has been set up¹⁵. The *Austrian Integration Fund* was commissioned with a first evaluation of the “*language ticket*” initiative, its report is scheduled to be submitted in the second quarter of 2007.

3.2.2 Modernising school curricula and assessment arrangements (inter alia to address learning outcomes and the attainment of key competences)

In general education (for 10-18-year-olds), the years 2000 and 2004 marked the completion of compact, target-oriented curricula oriented towards schoolchildren’s competences. This means that the curricula reform process is concluded for the time being. Since 2004 outcome orientation has been intensified by developing educational standards (cf. 3.1.5).

There is a clear connection between learning outcomes and curricula: Curricula form the basis for the respective competence model, which in turn is made up of sub-competences that are considered major learning outcomes upon completion of a particular educational programme in Austria after a respective four-year learning period, i.e. in years 4 and 8.

In line with the EU’s *concept of key competences*, the project focuses on major areas of the following school subjects: German (mother-tongue competence or competence of the second language); mathematics and sciences (mathematical and fundamental scientific and technical competence); and modern foreign languages (foreign-language competence), and it describes expected learning outcomes. In this process, subject-related basic competences are defined that are of importance for future school-based education or vocational training within the meaning of LLL. Educational standards express a normative expectation which schools should aim at.

Continuous modernisation of training regulations and framework curricula in VET is of great importance to ensure requirements of modern occupational profiles are met. Initiatives for new regulations are, in general, launched by social partners, but also international developments and educational programmes play a role in this context. In any case, labour market prerequisites and practical requirements of the sector are always in the foreground. The content of training regulations is prepared by the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship or the BMWA. This work is based on surveys and research projects. The task of institutes for research on training and qualifications is to formulate new content and objectives of apprenticeship training programmes. Once a training regulation has been elaborated, the corresponding curriculum for part-time vocational schooling is developed – also with the involvement of the social partners and experts from the education and business spheres.

¹⁵ <http://www.sprachbaum.at/statisch/sprachbaum/de/startseite.ihtml>

3.2.3 *Addressing the specific learning / training needs of teachers (including pre-primary) to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society*

Due to the merger of previously institutionally separated fields of training on the one hand and in-service and further training on the other, of teachers for compulsory schools and segments of VET schools and colleges, under the umbrella of a *teacher-training university (Pädagogische Hochschule, PH)*¹⁶, an educational continuum within the meaning of LLL is created and incentives for in-service and further training enhanced. In addition, due to the role model effect created by teachers who take part in continuous in-service and further training, awareness among schoolchildren of the necessity for LLL is to be raised.

In terms of PH content, the focus is on scientifically founded educational provision in the pedagogical fields of occupation. These include, apart from diploma study programmes for teachers at general compulsory schools, also study programmes for teachers at VET schools and colleges. Another function of PHs is to provide all-encompassing in-service and further training of teachers in all pedagogical fields of occupation, with the option to acquire additional qualifications. Moreover, PHs are obliged to do scientific, job-related and application-oriented research and link research work with their teaching work. This aims to ensure continuous adjustment of teaching content on offer to the fast changing requirements of the teachers' occupational profile in a knowledge society.

This further development of the former teacher-training colleges to teacher-training universities is tantamount to an upgrading of the training provided at these institutions to an academic level.

3.2.4 *Measures to reduce early school leaving, to increase rates of completion of upper secondary education, to reduce the proportion of low-achieving 15 year olds in literacy, and to increase the take-up of mathematics, science and technology subjects*¹⁷ (EU benchmarks)

Segment of early school leavers: On the basis of existing studies, an interdisciplinary strategy paper to reintegrate young people into school and working life is currently being prepared, which will involve all relevant actors in the field of dropouts. By taking preventive measures, considerable attention is paid to the fight against school refusal and timely prevention of dropouts and related complex causes. The enhanced application of peer activities would for example be a promising approach: In cooperation with the Youth Ministry, guidelines on "*Peer mediation at Austrian schools*" were prepared in 2006; in an accompanying measure, several nationwide programmes addressing teachers of all school types have been held on the topic of peer mediation. In addition, a *Centre for Personal Development and Social Learning (ÖZEPS)* has been set up to promote and network social learning across the country by anchoring methods, models and implementation options for acquiring social competences in a lasting manner. Many activities, projects and measures (see Annex) currently taken by the BMUKK at various system levels are contributing towards reducing the rate of early school leavers. By the autumn of 2007, the concept of a national overall strategy on the prevention of violence will be completed.

¹⁶ 2005 University Act, cf. also 3.1.1. Study programmes at teacher-training universities shall commence as of 1 October 2007.

¹⁷ Mathematics – science – technology

The issue of school dropouts does not apply to the part-time vocational school sector directly as it is usually a consequence of the cancellation of the student's apprenticeship contract. Measures in the field of part-time vocational schools for apprentices pursue two objectives: the possibility to increasingly divide classes for particular school subjects, and support for learning progress and the development of team spirit and social competence. To increase professionalism among teachers, the required supporting measures such as in-service and further training provision are taken in consultation with school inspection (e.g. measures to promote learning success, new forms of teaching and learning, etc.).

Efforts to further improve provision related to educational and vocational information, counselling and support in the school sector (cf. also Chapter 2.3) aim to contribute considerably to ensure that more young people than previously complete an advanced education or training programme in compliance with their abilities and interests. In this connection, particularly measures of quality assurance and development have been conducted in recent years (e.g. an initiative to increase the sustainability of career counselling classes; intensification of the training of pupil and educational counsellors; development of nationally uniform standards for school psychological counselling services).

Segment of literacy: To reduce the share of 15-year-olds with poor performance in literacy, additionally to the *LESEFIT* initiative – focusing on elementary school – the “*Promoting reading*” initiative was launched in 2005 (cf. NR 2005). It includes the implementation of a quality process at every school to develop a reading culture backed by the entire body of teachers to increase the pupils' reading motivation and competence and efficiently promote weak readers. This development is supported by the establishment of a support structure, teacher in-service training measures, the provision of teaching and information material, and the implementation of pilot projects, particularly with a focus on themes such as gender, immigration background, and reading socialisation. As of 2007, the “*reading partner*” project, in which schoolchildren read jointly with older colleagues or family members for a daily period of 10 to 15 minutes, will be implemented across Austria in schools and book clubs.

In the part-time vocational school sector, measures to improve reading competence have been launched in the form of a pilot on the theme of *media training*.

A significant contribution to improve the reading performance is also expected from the future reduction of the number of pupils in German classes in pure upper-cycle secondary schools (viz. the upper cycle of academic secondary schools and VET schools and colleges) as of the autumn of 2007: All first grades (9th year of schooling) with more than 30 schoolchildren will be divided for German lessons, which will reduce the average group size from 28.03 to 20.75 students.

Enrolment in MST subjects: The *IMST3* (“*Innovations in Mathematics, Science and Technology Teaching*”) project contributes to professionalising and increasing the attractiveness of mathematical, scientific and technological subjects at several levels of the school system and measures initiated in them; it aims to increase participation in these subjects: Within the framework of a so-called “*MSI fund*”, every year about 180 projects are assisted and professionally supported mainly at secondary levels I and II (as of 2007/2008 also as a pilot project to integrate the primary level). “*Regional networks*” promote the exchange of good practice. At “*national centres for subject didactics*” for MSI subjects, science-based, internationally oriented, innovative subject didactics will be developed among other measures that are aimed to reach schools within a very short time if required (e.g. in case of negative research results) via so-called “*subject-related educa-*

tion and training managers” (currently some 150 teachers of MSI subjects are being trained). As a significant factor ensuring the success of attractive instruction, a motivation-promoting “examination culture” is taught within the framework of an in-service training initiative for teachers. For gender-specific measures see 3.1.4.

3.3 Higher education

3.3.1 Measures to reinforce the knowledge triangle between education, research and innovation

One of the measures to strengthen the knowledge triangle of education, research and innovation, the so-called *knowledge balance* has been introduced for universities. The knowledge balance is one of the elements of the reporting structure by universities to the BMWF and serves to take stock of the pool of knowledge available at universities.

This stocktaking is conducted on the basis of specific KPIs that need to be interpreted in a narrative form and are embedded in the sphere of activity, objectives and strategies of universities. These KPIs can be assigned, on the one hand, to intellectual assets (human, structural and relationship assets) and, on the other, to the core processes of instruction, research and development, and output and effects of the core processes.

For the 2006 reporting period, the following data related to the knowledge balance (see also 3.1.1.) will be available for every university as of mid-2007:

KPI II.2.7: expenses for the provision and operation of online research databases on offer

KPI III.2.2: R&D projects financed by third parties and projects on the development and enhancement of the arts

KPI IV.2.4: patents granted in the name of the university

KPI IV.2.5: income from R&D projects and projects on the development and enhancement of the arts

The establishment of the *Institute of Science and Technology Austria* aims to make a contribution towards improved applicability of research findings and innovative processes in the business sphere (cf. 3.3.3)

3.3.2 Participation targets and measures to achieve them

Austria achieved the objective of the European benchmark ‘increasing qualifications in MST’ in 2004 (increase by 18.7%). In 2005, the objective was specified to double the percentage of female professors at Austrian universities by 2010 (from 13% to 26%). To attain this goal, the programme “*excellencia – a high potentials programme for Austrian universities*” was launched.

Since 2004, the structure of research sponsorship has undergone a reform process. Thus, for example, the *Austrian Society for Research Sponsorship* was set up, as a merger of the *Research Support Fund for Trade and Industry*, the *Technology Impulses Society*, the *Austrian Space Agency*, and the *Office for International Research and Technology Cooperation*. FFG makes available an annual funding volume of approx. EUR 420m (in 2006). Gross domestic expenditure for research and development in Austria was EUR 6,240.30bn in 2006, which is 2.43% of GDP.

3.3.3 Measures to increase excellence

On 19 May 2006, the *Federal Act on the Institute of Science and Technology Austria (Bundesgesetz über das Institute of Science and Technology Austria, ISTA)* entered into force. With this institution, it is aimed to set up a top-quality research establishment that pursues the following objectives:

- to establish top-quality fundamental research in areas still undeveloped in Austria;
- to provide excellent working conditions and possibilities of development for top-notch researchers;
- to provide considerable impetus for the entire scientific system in Austria as part of a comprehensive strategy of excellence and networked with excellence centres of other scientific institutions;
- to give fresh impetus for structural improvement and boosting the competitiveness of the economy by focusing on exploiting prospects and implementing them via spin-offs and close cooperation with industry.

With the *Wittgenstein Award* for established top researchers and the *START programme* for young talented scientists, Austria established two major instruments to promote excellence in research some ten years ago. Both measures have proven to be excellent instruments to initiate and boost top performance in science, particularly fundamental research in various disciplines.

3.3.4 Measures to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (EU benchmark)

Student and graduate figures in MST subjects at present do not suffice to meet the need of business and industry. Despite the strong presence of women in the education sector, more are needed in technology and the natural sciences. Attempts to increasingly support women and men in these subjects in Austria have been launched at several interfaces: Close cooperation between schools and universities aims to increase the attractiveness of MST subjects at schools. In addition, support measures to assist tertiary students in the scientific sphere have been enhanced. Within the framework of events, successful role models from research and technology are presented to enable a detailed discussion of concrete problems of the world of work and specific obstacles (*FForte* programme). Another aspect is the linking with the subject-related development of teacher-training universities: Mathematics and sciences are to enjoy an upgrading in quality and quantity and prepared in a didactically targeted manner. Related projects and programmes are described in detail in the Annex.

3.4 Vocational education and training and adult learning

3.4.1 Measures to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training as well as of adult education

Within the framework of school autonomy, schools are able to set priorities in the VET sector and develop their own attractive profile. The continuous reform of curricula and the creation of new qualifications allow a flexible response to the requirements of the labour market, whereby the social partners are always involved. IVET qualifications are recognised by companies so that graduates as a rule will find an appropriate job. In particular, graduates of VET colleges (13th grade) are employed in areas reserved for graduates of shorter-term tertiary education programmes in other countries (cf. also NR 2005).

Implementation of “*QIBB*” (“*VET Quality Initiative*”) began in some VET schools and colleges in the 2005/06 school year in the form of one-year pilot projects. The experiences gained from this ‘probationary year’ formed the basis for the further development and optimisation of QIBB. In the pilot projects, preparatory work required to implement school-specific quality management systems was undertaken. Activities during the pilot phase concerned the development of required (self-) evaluation instruments; the establishment of required support structures; and the planning of an information and training pack for all people involved in the process (cf. NR 2005).

The 2006 amendment to the Vocational Training Act created the legal bases for modularising the apprenticeship training system. Modularisation aims to flexibilise the VET system, improve compliance with sectoral requirements, create additional numbers of potential new training enterprises, and link IVET and specialisation in occupations (see Annex).

Public Employment Service Austria commissions external education providers to implement skills training measures for AMS customers in accordance with the specifications of the Federal Act on Procurement (*Bundesvergabegesetz*). The conversion of the AMS support system (introducing ‘contracts for works and services’ to replace ‘support contracts’) as of 1.1.2007 makes available resources that are to be used to increase checks of implementation quality (more on-site inspections, etc.).

An important measure to increase the quality at all education levels is also the implementation of the ICT strategy, which has had the result, for example, that all schools have Internet access and apply e-learning contents and methods in the classroom (see Annex).

3.4.2 Measures to reinforce the link between VET and labour market needs including early identification of skills needs, improving the relevance of curricula and qualifications

In 2006, the employment and skills training initiative “*Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz*” was launched. Its objectives are to maintain and extend the qualification level of job-seekers and employed people. Apart from gradually extending (in terms of quality and quantity) the safety net for young people looking for an apprenticeship post pursuant to the Youth Training Guarantee Act (*Jugendausbildungssicherungsgesetz, JASG*) an additional support option for about 35,000 young people was created within the framework of this new skills training priority. One measure pursuant to this focus on youth is the promotion of additional apprenticeship posts by granting the above-mentioned “*Blum Bonus*” (cf. 3.1.2), within the framework of which already 22,700 young people have been given the opportunity of an apprenticeship post since the training year 2005/2006.

The BMUKK’s “*Unternehmen Bildung*” initiative aims at ensuring increased cooperation between educational institutions and business organisations. The goal consists in close collaboration in practical training (e.g. in the form of work placements, holiday jobs, etc.) to be able to jointly respond to the fast changing requirements of the economy. Measures comprise not only intensification of business education in the primary, secondary and tertiary education sectors but also particularly intense contacts with the social partners and school partnerships on business-related issues and work placements abroad.

The range of labour market related research covers short- and medium-term labour market projections and studies on the development and evaluation of labour market policy instruments as well as labour market statistics, and research on occupations and qualifications. Special service provision in this field is the AMS’s Qualifications Barometer, which is a comprehensive online information system on trends in the labour market and

qualifications. On the basis of research results, secondary statistics and analyses of job advertisements, as well as talks with experts, the barometer provides information about which sectors and occupations are promising and which qualifications are in particular demand.

3.4.3 Opening up pathways to further and higher education

At the point of transition from VET college (BHS) to Fachhochschule programmes, the BHS's high standard leads to credit transfer of exams in relation to subject specialisation and reductions of the study duration. Credit transfer of individual lectures and exams is incumbent on universities and Fachhochschule institutions. In this respect, the Berufsreifeprüfung (BRP) has for example become an intrinsic part of the system since its introduction in 1997: Currently some 700 BRP graduates are enrolled at an Austrian higher learning institution.

Bridge courses preparing for BRP have been extended considerably in particular in the adult learning sector. All in all, in the winter semester 2005/06, 114 sites offered preparatory courses for this exam. Apart from adult education centres (*Volkshochschulen, VHSs*), vocational training institutes (*Berufsförderungsinstitute, BFIs*), economic promotion institutes (*Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitute, WIFIs*) and other adult learning facilities, also VET schools and colleges have included bridge courses for the Berufsreifeprüfung in their educational offers. The structure and scope of the provision varies in the individual provinces. In the winter semester 2005/06, some 9,500 people prepared for modular exams of the BRP in special courses offered by adult education centres, vocational training institutes, economic promotion institutes and other institutions. (cf. NR 2005)

The newly created CVET Academy (*"WeiterBildungsAkademie"*) enables permeability between the adult education sector and the university-based VET and CVET (cf. also 3.4.4). As of the summer semester 2008, *Danube University Krems (University for Continuing Education)* will offer a Masters programme for LLL. Students holding a university entrance qualification and the CVET Academy diploma can obtain credits for part of the competences acquired, and learning and work performances conducted, at the CVET Academy.

For basic information about the opening up of CVET and HE, reference is made to items 4.1.6. and 5.1.6 of the NR 2005, which deal with Fachhochschule, Danube University Krems and measures for non-traditional students, as well as coordination with LLL. CVET provision offered by universities and Fachhochschule programmes promotes an opening up of education due to the recognition of relevant subject-specific qualifications and their orientation to people in employment.

3.4.4 Addressing the specific learning / training needs of vocational and adult teachers and trainers to enable them to cope with their changing roles in the knowledge-based society

The CVET Academy at the BifEB certifies and issues diplomas to adult educators in a special standardisation and recognition procedure by laying down competences, content and standards and examining their proofs of competence. People active in adult education have the possibility to have credits awarded for their competences, skills and practice periods, which they may have acquired in different ways, via qualifications with a modular structure. They are issued a recognised certificate and diploma. The competences adult educators still lack can be acquired in different educational establishments for adults. The competences and content for teaching/group management/training, educational manage-

ment, guidance and counselling, library and information management can be adjusted continually to changing requirements. Cf. also 3.4.1.

3.4.5 Measures which reinforce social partner involvement in training, in particular sectoral approaches to skills and qualifications

The Austrian social partners are traditionally very well involved in all areas. As an example of this active and intensive involvement in the VET sector, the Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship (*Bundes-Berufsausbildungsbeirat*) can be named (see Annex). Cooperation with the social partners is particularly close in the dual system, in which so-called Apprenticeship Offices in the regional offices of the economic chambers have been conferred State tasks (such as the administration of apprenticeship contracts; the monitoring and inspection of training companies; etc.).

To ensure their legitimisation basis is as wide as possible, social partners are also involved extensively in the field of labour market policies: Employer and employee representatives, for example, are represented in the AMS's organisation at federal, provincial and regional levels in the bodies with decision-making relevance and can, in this way, exert a considerable influence on the objectives and concrete design of training and CVET measures useful in terms of labour market policies, e.g., also by introducing sector-specific specialist knowledge.

3.4.6 Enhancing access and opportunities for learning among the disadvantaged, and alternative pathways, including for early school leavers

The 2003 amendment to the Vocational Training Act created integrative VET and hence set a major impetus towards the integration of socially disadvantaged and less gifted people and people with disabilities in the world of work (cf. 3.1.3). Integrative vocational training can take place either in the form of an apprenticeship with a prolonged training period or teach relevant partial qualifications to affected people. By the end of July 2006, as many as 2,287 young people attended this new training track. A key element of integrative vocational training is support by *vocational training assistance* (BAS) and a preliminary clearing procedure. The BMWA commissioned an evaluation study, which revealed that nearly three quarters of enterprises and almost all questioned training institutions have to date had a positive experience with their integrative apprentices in the day-to-day work routine (cf. NR 2005).

Within the framework of the extended employment and qualifications promotion “*JOBS FOR YOU(TH)*”, young people have the possibility to acquire their compulsory schooling qualifications within the framework of AMS measures. Qualification and employment of people with disabilities is being increasingly supported in 2006/2007 in a customised programme.

Alternative education options for early school leavers, etc. can be found in second-chance education. Apart from course provision, the option of personalised counselling and support is provided. In 2005/06, some 1,500 people at 18 sites took part in bridge courses preparing for lower secondary school qualifications (including basic education before the beginning) – this was mainly financed by the ESF and nationally.

Improved access to adult education for everyone by providing information and motivation has been achieved by extending information and counselling services (in particular also via the information portal *www.erwachsenenbildung.at*), the professionalisation of educational guidance (networking, information exchange, quality development, knowledge pool, etc.), and an information campaign and *adult learning awards* (cf. 1.3.4).

As described under item 3.1.3, the focus in adult education has been on promoting measures for the disadvantaged and people who are less likely to access education. Within the framework of ESF Objective 3, to prepare people who lack required previous knowledge, basic education and literacy courses have been offered before measures aiming at the acquisition of lower secondary school qualifications. Complementary German courses serve to make it easier for immigrants to complete education measures. For severely disadvantaged people, forms of personalised learning assistance and support have been offered. Measures of career guidance and supplementary provision aiming at the acquisition of vocational qualifications have served to facilitate access to the world of work. Bridge courses preparing for the *Berufsaugabeprüfung* have been conducted to address regionally and socially disadvantaged people in particular. Forms of independent learning with tutorial support and specific measures for immigrants have been further extended. The above-mentioned provision affords the option to reach higher education starting out from basic education and school qualifications. They provide alternative learning pathways to acquire educational qualifications by adults and the possibility to re-enter the education system at any time.

Also in Austrian labour market policies, one of the major focuses is on offsetting existing disadvantages: The typical target groups of AMS skills training and qualifications measures are therefore the following: people who have no or no (longer) usable vocational qualifications, re-entrants (following career breaks for family reasons), people with disabilities of relevance for the labour market, older workers, employees affected by structural change and threatened by redundancy.

Almost half of the annual average total of registered unemployed are people whose highest qualification is compulsory school or below (in 2006: ca. 47%). Not least thanks to an all-encompassing skills training initiative within the framework of the Government programme “*Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz*” it has been possible to considerably raise the share of people whose highest qualification is compulsory school or below in 2006 in terms of participation in skills training promotion measures (2005: ca. 47%; 2006: 57%).

3.4.7 Measures to increase the rate of adult participation in lifelong learning, and to reinforce key competences among adult learners and older people whether employed or not (EU benchmark)

The EU benchmark for participation of adults in lifelong learning was achieved in this country as early as 2005 (13.9%), but other measures are conducted on a regular basis to increase this share.

The special programme for older workers aims to promote the target-group-specific qualification and re-integration of older workers with employment problems. In accordance with new targets, the AMS is directing its training activities increasingly towards older unemployed people. The AMS’s regular programme will be extended to include schemes that have proven successful at a regional level, for example. Thanks to the “*early intervention*” strategy, which has been encouraged, unemployed people over the age of 50 (as well as young people below 25) are given the chance to take part in a training or re-integration measure within three months. Within the framework of the ESF, supra-corporate usable, company-oriented skills and qualifications for employees (with the focus on older workers and women) continue to be promoted. In order to ensure the focus of skills training and qualification measures on older workers, at least 50% of available funds are used to assist employees aged 45 or above.

In the field of adult education, educational provision for disadvantaged people, provision

to acquire basic skills and key competences, as well as educational guidance and counselling systems are further expanded and supported financially within the framework of the EU structural programmes.

VET and CVET are at the centre of tasks of Austrian labour market policies. This focus has been expanded largely in recent years and particularly in 2006 in the course of the government-initiated qualifications and employment offensive *Unternehmen Arbeitsplatz*. Therefore, pursuant to preliminary data, a relevant AMS skills training grant was offered to as many as approx. 252,000 people in 2006 (+68% against 2001). Target groups primarily covered by these measures mainly include young people and women. Some 53,000 people have been facilitated participation in a measure (supported by a grant for course fees) on the 'external' education market, and about 24,000 were awarded a grant within the framework of the AMS's subsidisation of apprenticeship posts. The latter had been clearly extended in the autumn of 2005 by a programme promoting additional apprenticeship posts.

ANNEX TO THE 2007 NATIONAL REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010 WORK PROGRAMME

The Annex to the National Report on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme includes – as a supplement to descriptions of policy measures in the Report – more detailed information as well as some examples of concrete current projects in the sense of examples of good practice. The individual items below refer to the respective chapters of the 2007 National Report.

ad 1.3.2.

Ongoing measures in VET in the field of the EU benchmarks are the following: acquisition of the lower secondary school qualification by adults; measures against dropouts; language promotion at preschool age – particularly relevant for immigrants.

ad 1.3.3

Within the framework of the ESF Objective 1 programme, initiatives in the fields of ICT and the further training of teachers were taken for the province of Burgenland. Within the framework of the Community initiative Equal, educational projects in the form of so-called development partnerships were carried out.

ad 1.3.4

As a major awareness-raising measure in the field of adult learning, a special award was launched. The year 2006 marked the second time that people with extraordinary educational biographies were conferred awards in the category “education champion”. In the call for tenders, the following criteria for participation were listed: completion of CVET activities in difficult personal situations such as illness, detention or difficult family settings, as well as remarkable CVET by people with disabilities. Also the bridging of large distances or a particularly high number of completed courses were among criteria.

The aim of the “education champion” award is to show that learning is possible in every situation and can improve the quality of life. The presentation of special learning biographies aims to have a motivating effect and create awareness that learning can be an integrative part of everyday life.

ad 1.3.6

Equal Development Partnership: The indirect objective pursued with all activities of the development partnership is the use of strengths and competences of young people with impairments within the framework of integrative vocational guidance and integrative vocational training: It aims to launch appropriate structures, activities of qualification and for preparation and guidance. The aim is also to strengthen the multipliers’ competences both at part-time vocational schools for apprentices and at relevant institutions and in collaboration between companies with training establishments as well as in relevant provision – such as clearing measures and vocational training assistance – in order to safeguard that processes of preparation, inclusion, training, employment and CVET of young people with special pedagogical support needs, learning impairments or other social, physical or

mental barriers are strengthened. The development of products has been completed; dissemination will be effected gradually to ensure sustainable results.

ad 1.4.2

Activities within the framework of implementing the extended consultation on the LLL strategy:

- Starting in May 2007, as a follow-up to the conference *Lifelong Learning: Einladung zum Dialog*, four workshops coordinated by the BMUKK on the topic *Vom Dialog zur Umsetzung: Lebenslanges Lernen* will be held. These thematic expert workshops aim to focus on priority themes, formulate LLL strategies especially for the adult learning sector, and discuss interfaces to other education sectors. The workshops will be documented accordingly and integrated into the further development of the LLL strategy.
- In the autumn of 2007, events at Graz and Klagenfurt universities and Danube University Krems will be held on the topic of *LLL and CVET*. The focus will be on the Bologna process, the permeability of education systems, and mutual recognition, as well as outcome-oriented curriculum design.
- To ensure a broad basis for discussions and communication as well as for documentation purposes, the online platform www.lebenslangeslernen.at will be used and closely linked with other web platforms.

ad 2.2

Other measures to determine and validate non-formal and informal learning

- A large number of part-time provision of VET schools and colleges for people in employment – entry possible also in higher grades, depending on previous knowledge.
- Graduates of five-year colleges of engineering are awarded the professional title of *Ingenieur* following at least three years of relevant professional practice. The same applies to graduates of colleges of agriculture and forestry.
- Graduates of VET schools or colleges are entitled to exercise regulated trades after submission of proof of professional practice.
- Competence portfolio: The systematic documentation of competences acquired in honorary, volunteer work by the ring of Austrian adult education associations: Within the framework of an action plan, 23 competence workshops were held. Relevant model projects are also conducted by the Tyrol Centre for the Future and VHS Linz.

ad 2.3

Preparation of a national lifelong guidance strategy (example of good practice)

Starting point / societal developments:

- Increasing individualisation of educational and vocational pathways.
- Increasing interconnectedness of IVET, employment and CVET.

- Educational and vocational career decisions have to be taken repeatedly over the lifespan and often revised.
- Lifelong learning requires lifelong guidance at the same time.
- Lifelong guidance is therefore seen also internationally as a central point in connection with the knowledge society, individualisation and globalisation.

Bases

- OECD study ('Career Guidance Policy Review') 2003
- Resolution by the EU education ministry council, May 2004
- EU Policy Handbook, December 2004

→ Download at www.schulpsychologie.at/guidance

Definition and scope

Studies and discussions at an international level build on the following definition of the lifelong guidance concept:

"A range of activities designed to assist people to make decisions about their lives (educational, vocational, personal) and to implement those decisions"

The following elements are therefore important:

- Information (e.g. information and communication activities by the BMUKK and the BMWF as well as subordinate offices in the fields of education and employment; brochures, websites, inquiry offices, information activity by school counsellors and educational guidance officers, etc.)
- Guidance (e.g. process support via teaching or course programmes, vocational guidance classes, vocational guidance projects, career-finding programmes and courses, etc.)
- Counselling (e.g. school counsellors and educational guidance officers, school psychological counselling offices, advice centres for students, career guidance at universities, educational guidance offices for adults, etc.)
- Practical experience (e.g. shadowing apprenticeship training, work placements, excursions, etc.)
- Support, coaching, mentoring – personal assistance in the orientation and decision-making process by relevant subject experts

Objective

- to improve coordination of provision and strategic development in the field of information, counselling and guidance for education and career
- to establish a close link to the lifelong learning strategy development
- to establish close ties with pan-European developments in this field (participation in the planned EU lifelong guidance network)

Working procedures

- Establishment of a working group at the BMBWK encompassing various general di-

rectorates (March 2005)

- Expansion of the working group with external partners (representatives of the BMWA, the AMS, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Chamber of Labour, the Federation of Austrian Industry, BFI, Euroguidance, Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft) in October 2005
- Joint definition of basic strategic objectives in May 2006
- Concrete definition, review and linking with the national LLL strategy in October 2006

Two studies have been commissioned to be able to assess the status quo.

(a) The anchoring of basic values and objectives in Austrian legislation:

Efforts focused on the issue as to what extent and in what way the values and objectives formulated in relevant European documents are included in Austrian legal regulations already.

(b) Survey and analysis of initiatives and projects affecting the policy areas of the EU guidance resolution and proposals of the OECD country report.

Within the framework of this study, current initiatives were surveyed and then analysed and evaluated regarding the challenges and criteria laid down in the two policy papers.

In addition, the social partners drew up a joint ‘social partners paper’, in which they list current challenges and activity options from their perspective.

Outcomes

1. Specification:

Coordination and strategy development comprise all provision and measures to be summarised under the concept of ‘information, counselling and guidance for education and career’ in all sectors and all target groups.

Therefore, provision and measures are mainly

- both wide and target-group-specific
- both broad in terms of scope, extensive and personal, intensive
- mainly one-off but also long-term supporting
- preventive as well as addressing current problems

(cf. also “Definition and scope”).

2. Analyses and surveys:

a. The anchoring of basic values and objectives in Austrian legislation:

- In general, there exists a well-founded legal basis for information, counselling and guidance for education and career, and principal objectives and values in Austria
- Practical implementation, however, is often not defined in sufficient detail.
- There are gaps mainly in the following areas:

- employees prepared to undergo reorientation
 - the elderly
 - coordination, information
 - efficiency
 - quality assurance – especially regarding non-state services
- b. Survey and analysis of initiatives and projects affecting the policy areas of the EU guidance resolution and proposals of the OECD country report.
- A total of 104 projects have been surveyed and analysed
 - All in all, projects meet the challenges fairly well, with the exception of the areas
 - specific provision for the elderly
 - evaluation of provision, methods, processes
3. The challenges from the perspective of social partners:
The ‘social partners paper’, which has been drawn up jointly by WKÖ, AK, IV and ÖGB lists challenges and activity options.
4. Definitions of objectives:
Agreement has been reached that strategy development should build on the following definitions of global objectives:
- Meta-objectives
 - orientation towards citizens’ needs
 - teaching/strengthening the basic competences for vocational, educational, and life planning
 - safeguarding wide and easy access
 - linking with LLL strategies
 - Programmatic objectives
 - Implementation of basic competences for educational career and life planning in all curricula
 - Focus on process optimisation and support
 - Professionalisation of counsellors and trainers
 - Quality assurance and evaluation of provision, processes and structures
 - Widening access – creating provision for new target groups

For explanations and detailed definitions, see “Cornerstones of an Austrian life-long guidance strategy” on the next page

More information and documents:

- www.schulpsychologie.at/guidance
- www.schulpsychologie.at/oecd
- http://www.eu-bildung-2010.at/statisch/eubildung2010/de/lifelong_guidance_kroetzl.pdf
- <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/guidance2006>

Cornerstones of an Austrian lifelong guidance strategy

(BMBWK working group with external partners, October 2006)

Priority 1

Implementation of basic competences in all curricula

More detailed content:

in as many educational measures as possible the objective should consist in **consciously aiming at teaching and acquiring major basic competences** for being able to take responsible educational and vocational career decisions.

These basic competences are in particular:

- ability of self-reflection (particularly regarding abilities, interests, efficiency, intentions)
- decision-taking skills (including the ability to design decision-making processes and managing multi-dimensional, partly contradictory bases for decision-making)
- search for information and its evaluation
- ability to define and pursue own targets

Objectives:

Short to medium term (2008)

Extension of activity process-oriented, integrative project teaching

Medium to long term (2012)

Competence-oriented (final) examination

Measures:

Activities

- Implementation in training and in-service training curricula (education standards, European language portfolio, competence-oriented final exam)
- Involvement of: teacher training universities, universities, schools, politics, science, interest representations, pre-school facilities
- Required changes and framework conditions: LBVO, RPVO, support measures, SchOG, SchUG, employment laws, professionalisation / change of apprenticeship trade, inspection ordinance

Priority 2

Focus on process optimisation and support

More detailed content:

Top-quality decision-making processes are the prerequisite for successful educational and vocational career decisions in all life stages. Therefore, **all support measures** should be **oriented towards these processes**.

Therefore, the **support aspect** should be paid particular attention to.

Objectives:

Short to medium term (2007)

- (vocational guidance) classes (implementation of legislation, particularly 7th and 8th grade of AHS)
- Linking with non-school provision
- Transparency of provision
- Networking of provision for life stages

Long term (2010)

- Timely target-oriented, procedural preparation, strengthening of competences and real-life professional experience for everyone

Measures:

Activities

- Extension of coaching provision (e.g. school and educational counselling)
- vocational guidance coordination at school
- Not only integrative vocational guidance classes but separate subject
- Extended option for real-life encounters
 - School
 - Business, educational institutions
- Regional coordination offices

Special initiatives to reduce the size of groups who are less likely to access education

Priority 3

Professionalisation of counsellors and trainers

More detailed content:

Improvement and intensification of training, continuing, further and in-service training of counsellors, trainers, teachers active in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work in various sectors. In accordance with a comprehensive understanding of lifelong guidance, they in particular have to have sufficient **personal competences** for the fulfilment of their task, depending on the type of provision.

Objectives:

Short to medium term (2007)

- Competence profile with minimum requirements in the various sectors

Long term (2010)

- Independent occupational profile
- Certification of an agreed competence portfolio
- Definition of access options (competence prerequisites, qualifications - non-formal, informal)
- Professional association

Measures:

Activities

- Collection of cases of good practice
- National guidance forum
- Integration of lifelong guidance (LLG) in LLL

Priority 4

Quality assurance and evaluation of provision, processes and structures

More detailed content:

For creating an efficient lifelong guidance system it is necessary to **systematically analyse and further develop the quality of provision, processes and structures** in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work. In this connection, particularly **orientation towards actual citizens' needs** must be paid special attention to. The **used methods' efficiency** should be evaluated.

Objectives:

Short to medium term (2007)

- Awareness-raising
- Collection and analysis of methods, examples, etc.
- Resource pool
- Dissemination
- Research

Long term (2010)

- Competence office or national forum

Priority 5

Widening access – creating provision for new target groups

More detailed content:

Provision should be designed and custom-made in a way that offers actually reach **people who are in special need of this support**.

It also has to be examined for which **specific problems** there exist **no offers at all or too few**.

Objectives:

Short to medium term (2007) and long term (2010)

- Target-group oriented measures (life stages, regions, groups of people such as immigrants, unemployed, etc.)
 - Proactive, easy access pathways
 - Demonstrating support and implementation options

Required framework conditions

- Attractive, easily accessible (target group-specific) sites
- Networking, cooperation with representatives of specific target groups

Awareness-raising measures (prevention, elimination of barriers, etc.

ad 3.1.3:

Current projects in the special pedagogical area

- The project *QSP - Quality in Special Pedagogy* (duration 2005 – 2007; http://qsp.or.at/index_a.html) aims at the development of quality standards in the field of special pedagogy.
- In virtual space, the website CIS (community – integration – special pedagogy www.cisonline.at) has been modernised: barrier-free access, the use of a *content management system*, the installation of a barrier-free *community tool* that enables different working groups to exchange information and work together. The site's target group are teachers, principals, parents, students, etc. who are interested in or affected by special pedagogy and integration.
-

Programmes in the higher education sector

- *fFORTE – women in research and technology* is a joint initiative of the Austrian Council for Research and Technology Development, the BMWF, the BMVIT and the BMWA to strengthen women in research and technology. The sub-programmes *fFORTE academic*, *w-fFORTE* and *FEMtech-fFORTE* aim at promoting girls and women during all stages of their educational career and eliminating any barriers to the career throughout their professional life in science, research and the company sector.

- The ESF measure *Women and Science* strengthens university-based initiatives by women in science and research. This measure aims to improve the professional career oriented qualifications of women inside and outside the university-based scientific sphere and initiate measures for the reconciliation of childcare and working life.
- Other measures by universities for technology to promote women: Graz University of Technology provides mentoring for students of mechanical engineering from the first semester onwards within the framework of the YOLANTE project. Within the framework of the Equal projects “*Girls crack IT*” and *IMST*³ Graz University of Technology attempts to raise young women’s interest in technological studies by conducting projects at AHSs.

ad 3.1.7

Measures in the higher education sector

A joint cooperation council set up by Linz University and Fachhochschule Upper Austria is coordinating the development of study and CVET provision.

A cooperation venture between the Upper Austrian provincial government and Linz University aims to increase research and training activities in the field of technology and science as well as adjust study provision further to the requirements of Upper Austrian businesses.

Klagenfurt University grants outcome-oriented practice semesters and diploma thesis projects within the framework of the industrial foundation institute *eBusiness* (via the initiative of the Carinthian economy, entirely third-party financed).

At Innsbruck University, cooperation ventures have been set up in instruction with the Fachhochschule institutions Kufstein and Vorarlberg.

A cooperative venture of the Vienna University of Natural Resources and Applied Life Sciences with the Austrian Federal Environment Agency aims at the division of labour and efficient use of resources in the field of education, training and CVET.

At the University of Veterinary Medicine in Vienna, a working group for CVET in the field of veterinary medicine has been set up together with the Federal Chamber of Veterinary Surgeons and the Federal Ministry for Health.

In the CVET sector, the Vienna University of Technology offers a CVET university course on renewable energy jointly with Energiepark Bruck an der Leitha, University of West Hungary and Energy Centre Bratislava.

Vienna University and the University of Technology in Vienna have founded the start-up service *INITS* within the framework of the *AplusB* programme in cooperation with the Centre for Innovation and Technology (ZIT) of the City of Vienna. It aims to achieve a permanent increase of spin-offs as well as motivate and support young graduates in business creation. The knowledge required for that purpose is aimed to be provided by the CVET programme *INITS Business Academy*.

Within the framework of the *AplusB* programme, a Science Park GmbH is run at Graz University of Technology as a business start-up initiative for graduates of this university, and at Leoben University of Mining and Metallurgy the start-up platform called *Centre for Applied Technology* (ZAT).

Competence centres at universities aim at cooperation of academic research with the

business sphere and continual establishment of the most recent state-of-the-art knowledge. This knowledge is passed on to university students in the form of ‘research-directed’ teaching.

In 1981, Austria started to create instruments to promote cooperative research in the form of the *K* programmes (*Kplus* and *Kind/net* programme lines), which have made substantial contributions to increasing networking of the education system with industry and business enterprises. This enabled efficiently design tuned measures to expand local/regional or sectoral innovation systems.

The *Kplus* programme by the BMVIT and the BMWA promotes cooperation between industry and science.

A total of three calls for proposals have to date led to the creation of 17 *Kplus* competence centres, which conduct top-level research with some 300 business and 150 science partners.

ad 3.2.4

Studies for data collection on an evidence-based policy regarding EU Benchmark 1

- Schulschwänzen-Verweigern-Abbrechen (Skipping school-refusing-dropping out) regarding the theme ‘early school leaving and dropout’, empirical study by Graz University Graz (Volume 19 of the series on education research [Reihe Bildungsforschung] of the BMBWK, 2006)
- Das Befinden von Kindern und Jugendlichen in der Schule (Wellbeing of children and young people at school), empirical study by Salzburg University (Volume 20 of the series on education research [Reihe Bildungsforschung] of the BMBWK, 2006)
- Machbarkeitsstudie bezüglich Erhebung von Jugendlichen ohne positiven Pflichtschulabschluss (Feasibility study regarding survey of young people without a positive compulsory school qualification), IHS 2006

Activities, projects and measures:

- Training for social learning (ÖZEPS; programmes for social skills trainers, peer mediation; tool in the VET college sector)
- Health education (including school atmosphere; primary school project *Becoming independent*)
- Environmental education (ÖKOLOG, sustainability)
- School psychology/educational counselling
- Adult education (LLL; HE courses via ESF)
- Gender initiatives
- Participation and parent work
- *Promoting reading* initiative
- *Fair school* initiative
- Political education (event days; education for democracy)
- Training and in-service training for teachers (*epik*)
- Foundations in curricula; circulars such as obligatory site-related support concept

(No. 11/2005); early warning system and early information system (No. 1/2005)

- Portfolio development, vocational guidance passport, ‘driving licences’, language certificates etc.
- Programmes of general directorates responsible for respective school types such as “*Starting Strong*”, literacy, language promotion, etc.

ad 3.3.2

Programme *excellentia* - a high potentials programme for Austrian universities

Universities will receive an amount of EUR 34,000 for every professor chair occupied by a woman and increases both the existing number of female professorships and the share of women overall as against last year.

(<http://www.bmwf.gv.at/submenue/service/foerderungen/excellentia/>)

ad 3.3.4

Programmes to increase the number of graduates in mathematics, science and technology (EU benchmark)

- **IQOQI junior groups**

The establishment of junior groups at the Institute for Quantum Optics and Quantum Information (IQOQI) of the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) in Vienna and Innsbruck aims to promote and support talented young scientists and secure the Institute’s international competitiveness in the medium term: The objective is to support excellent scientists in a targeted manner within the framework of a fully integrated concept for a limited period.

- **CERN high-tech doctorandum**

Expansion of rate of one doctorate a year by ten more training places in an international high-tech institution: This allows access and know-how transfer regarding different top technologies – from electronics, the information technologies, mechanical engineering to medical technology. The challenges of an international large research company teach and require also social and intercultural competences of relevance for industry and competence in project management.

- **ESI Junior Research Fellows Programme**

At the Erwin Schrödinger International Institute for Mathematical Physics (ESI), talented young scientists are offered a scientific environment similar to American graduate schools. Intensive contacts and cooperation over a longer period make sure that talented young scientists obtain direct access to state-of-the-art research, reduce the necessity of brain drain, and promote the attractiveness of Austria as a training and top research location.

- **WPI programmes and Pauli fellowships**

Within the framework of between four and eight thematic programmes a year, the Wolfgang Pauli Institute (WPI) invitation programme invites about eight guest researchers (of which at least three Olga Taussky Fellowships for women) to Austria. The inclusion of Austrian excellent research groups in the programme in the fields of informatics, mathematics, physics and biology leads to an interdisciplinary and international networking of Austrian research.

- **Project IMST3**

The project IMST (Innovations in Mathematics, Science and Technology Teaching) aims at quality development in mathematics and science classes. IMST3 is a support system for Austrian classroom teaching in the fields of mathematics, sciences and informatics (MSI) and in related subjects. Evaluation and ‘gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming’ are systematically integrated.

ad 3.4.1

Implementation of the ICT strategy

- All Austrian schools have Internet access. The high-quality broadband connection of currently 40% of all schools is planned to be further expanded.
- At present, an average of 15 PCs are made available for 100 students. This share is to be increased also by new hardware concepts, which allow the integration of various devices into the infrastructure of the ‘future of learning’ (mobile phones, PDAs, (sub-) notebooks, active boards, etc).
- In the field of school administration, as many as 99.8% of all school textbook orders are processed electronically. 400,000 ‘textbooks’ with some 200 different titles are delivered solely as electronic media (SbX material).
- Nationwide assistance for the drawing up of e-learning content and its Austria-wide provision in an educational pool with a standardised all-encompassing search function. In every province and at the BMUKK there exists a centralised education server with e-learning content as well as relevant and topical information from the world of education. Portals for the various subjects provide information ordered by subject, with further networking in the planning stage.
- Increased inclusion of e-learning methods in the field of teacher training is planned to allow an optimal use of the newly created ICT platforms in the classroom.)

The implementation process will be supported by the in-service teacher training colleges, which provide half-day seminars for SCHILF events in schools (SCHILF being the German acronym for ‘in-service teacher training’).

More information: www.qibb.at; brochure published by the Federal Ministry for Education, Science and Culture (BMBWK): qibb Qualitätsinitiative Berufsbildung (VET Quality Initiative). Vienna (also available in English).

Modularisation of apprenticeship training

A modular apprenticeship trade consists of a basic module as well as main and specialised modules, which aim to teach qualifications according to special production modes and services of certain sectors. Within a maximum total training period of up to four years, there are relevant options. By about 2010/2011 it is planned to transfer the various sectoral areas into modular occupations.

ad 3.4.5

The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship is a body whose members include representatives of the social partners, with representatives from the VET school sector having an advisory vote. The Federal Advisory Board on Apprenticeship is directly involved in the preparation work to create new occupations, in addition it draws up expert opinions on issues related to IVET for submission to the Federal Ministry for Economics and Labour.



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