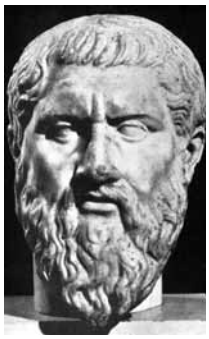


"If our youth is and continues to be educated correctly, all our affairs will take a happy course, if not..... the rest is better left unsaid"

Platon

From divergence to convergence

A history of vocational education and training in Europe

Originator of the exhibition and head of project: Norbert Wollschläger
Design and texts: Helga Reuter-Kumpmann

The texts are drawn from contributions to the conference on 'The History of Vocational Education and Training in Europe in a Comparative Perspective', organised by Cedefop in Florence in October 2002.

Why the history of vocational education and training in Europe?

Because to decide where we are going, we must find out where we are coming from.

'The Lisbon European Council in March 2000 recognised the important role of education as an integral part of economic and social policies, as an instrument for strengthening Europe's competitive power world-wide, and as a guarantee for ensuring the cohesion of our societies and the full development of their citizens. The European Council set the strategic objective for the European Union to become the world's most dynamic knowledge-based economy. The development of high-quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.'

'The enlargement of the European Union adds a new dimension and a number of challenges, opportunities and requirements to the work in the field of education and training. 'The Copenhagen Declaration', November 2002

'With every step forward that we take, every problem that we solve, we not only discover new and unsolved problems but we also realise that where we thought we were standing on firm ground, it is in fact shaky and uncertain.'
Karl R. Popper (1902-1994), school dropout, apprentice carpenter and philosopher of science

What does this tell us?

Several surprises:

- that vocational education and training were the same in most European countries during the Middle Ages;
- why entirely new and different forms of vocational education and training arose in the various European countries during the 18th and 19th centuries;
- what common features have been created in Europe over the past 50 years.

It also shows that the history of vocational education and training is always our own history, and that our view need not be the same as the views of the historians who write about it.

Common origins

In nearly all European countries and for many centuries after the establishment of the guilds, the work of artisans and their vocational education and training were very similar.

Guilds were associations in which, from the 12th century, people who worked in the same trade or craft joined together in a town or city. Guilds wrote their own bylaws, rules that were binding upon all members of the guild. These rules and regulations defined how things were to be made and set 'consumer-friendly' prices. Merchandise was subject to strict quality control. The guild rules ensured that:

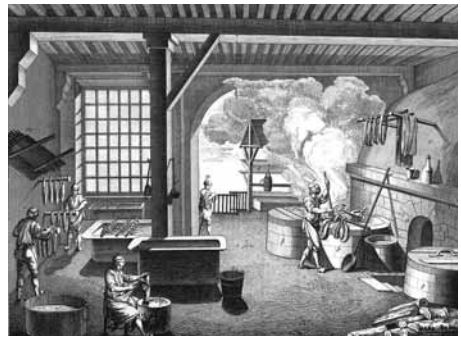
- masters' earnings were appropriate to their status;

- poorer members of the guild were taken care of, including the widows and orphans of guild members.

The guild rules also laid down the requirements for membership of the guild and for the training of apprentices and journeymen. In most cities, the guilds played an important political and economic role. But there were conflicts over their influence in civic affairs, e.g. when guilds prevented non-members from settling and plying their trade.

In the 18th and early 19th centuries, the guild system in Europe lost much of its importance. Liberal economic doctrine, which encouraged the 'free play of forces', regarded the traditional guild system as an obstacle to competition and a hindrance to free trade.

This woodcut from a Dutch incunabulum (1470) shows artists and craftspeople with their tools: pigment grinder, painter, goldsmith, sculptor, organ-maker, clockmaker, and scribe.



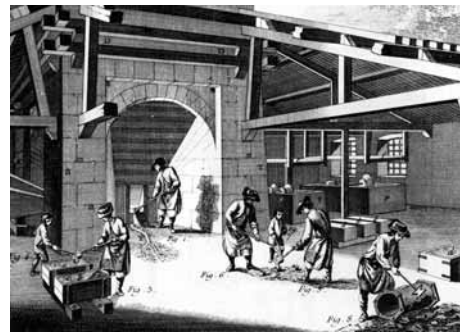
This beautiful illustration of silk-dyeing from Diderot and d'Alembert's 'Encyclopedia' clearly shows the various stages of work in this craft. But it does not show the danger of contact with poisonous substances - one of many reasons why the 'golden craft' also had a darker side for its practitioners.

Vocational education and training in the guild system

A strict hierarchy held sway throughout Europe under the guild system: apprentice, journeyman, master. The title of master was the only written evidence of competence, while 'certificates of apprenticeship' confirmed completion of the first stage of training. (Women - masters' wives or maidservants - played only a subordinate role as assistants.)

Only after a trial period lasting several weeks were apprentices accepted into a guild. The family generally paid the master a fee to cover the apprentice's food and lodging. The apprenticeship generally lasted from two to four years, and longer in very specialised occupations.

The period of apprenticeship ended with a specialised examination when the apprentice was 'discharged'. Each trade or craft had its own customs for this 'discharge' and for the former apprentice's acceptance into the community of journeymen. Journeymen's vocational qualifications were recognised in other countries. Generally without family ties, they travelled from place to place, to augment and broaden their skills by learning from masters in other countries: an early form of occupational mobility in Europe. After journeymen had acquired sufficient experience, they would apply to a guild for admission as masters.



The apprentices lived and worked with their masters' families. They assisted from dawn to dusk in the workshop, and had to do most of the heavy labour. Over the years, and always under the strict supervision of the journeymen and master, they learned the basic skills of the trade by observing, through direct instruction and by doing. Alongside dexterity in performing their tasks, the virtues instilled in the apprentices - frequently by means of corporal punishment - included industriousness, unconditional obedience and subordination to the rules of the guild.
Silk-dyeing, Diderot and d'Alembert's 'Encyclopedia'

An exception

Russia differs from most other European countries because no artisans' associations arose there during the Middle Ages which were comparable to the guilds.

When Tsar Peter I ascended the throne at age 17 in 1689, he dreamt of reigning over a mighty realm with a strong economy and a powerful navy.

In 1697, he sent emissaries throughout Europe to acquire allies against Turkey, but also to search for people who had the scientific, technical and craft skills that were lacking in his agrarian country.

In the medieval printing trade, it was customary to subject apprentices to a cruel 'postulant's revel' at the end of their apprenticeship. By agreeing to undergo severe mistreatment, they had to prove that they were prepared to sacrifice their health for their work. At the same time, passing the cruel test meant that the new journeyman acquired the right to be taken care of by the master, to live in his family and to be cared for in the event of illness.

Beginning in 1698, the Tsar encouraged mining, metallurgy and naval shipbuilding in order to secure and expand his country's borders. An entire education and training system was established: schools of navigation, ballistics, engineering and medicine, academies to train specialist workers, and primary schools.

The population showed little interest in sending their children to these schools, so Peter I passed strict laws to enforce vocational education and training. 'Top-down' control and the influence of political objectives remained a feature of vocational education and training for many centuries.

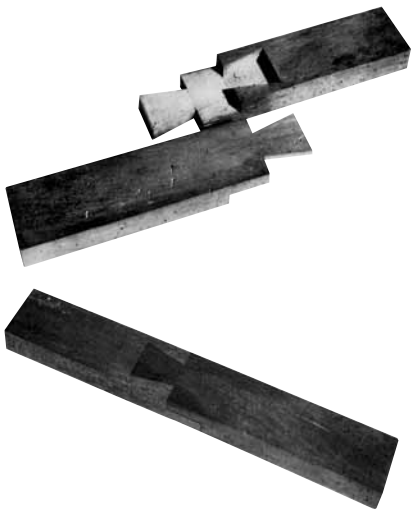
In 1868, the so-called 'Sequential Method' was established by Viktor Karlovich Della-Vos, who was the director of Moscow's Imperial Technical School. Apprentices began

Peter I travelled incognito along with his emissaries on their travels throughout Europe. Many of the emissaries learned various trades and professions as they went. Peter I learned the theoretical and mathematical basis for the art of shipbuilding, and also worked as a carpenter at a Dutch shipyard.

by learning to perform and master simple tasks. In a precisely predetermined sequence, the tasks gradually became more challenging. After its presentation at the World Exhibition in Vienna in 1873, this method spread to many other European centres of education and training.

Divergence

The different forms of vocational education and training in Europe have a number of causes such as:



Even today, hundreds of courses of study in Europe are still based on the 'Sequential Method'. Models of wooden joints (Clair, 19th century)

- the abolition of the guild system in the wake of political upheavals;
- the different pace of industrialisation in the various countries;
- the influence of political, philosophical, cultural and religious movements.

By the first half of the 20th century, three basic models of vocational education and training for young people had developed in Europe. The table does not reflect the situation today. Vocational education and training systems are too diverse and they change too quickly. But much of what had come about by that time in the various countries still applies or still has an influence.

Britain was where what we now call 'industrialisation' began in the 18th century. The steam engine and the first mechanical spinning machines and looms were invented. Textile factories arose throughout the country. Countless people left rural areas and settled in the cities to find work.

This led to profound changes in society: the 'Industrial Revolution'.

The guild system was abolished - along with the traditional seven-year apprenticeship. Untrained, low-paid labourers operated the machinery in the factories.

For many years, the rapidly growing industries had little need for skilled workers, so young people received no training.

Two ways of thinking, 'Liberalism' and 'Puritanism', influenced life and work at the time. They continue to influence vocational education in the 'liberal market model' today.

The three 'classical' models of vocational education and training:

	The liberal market model: Britain	**The state-regulated model: France**	**The dual corporate model: Germany**
Who determines how vocational education and training is organised?	Negotiated 'in the market place' between representatives of labour, management, and providers of vocational education and training.	The state	State-regulated chambers of craft trades, arranged by profession
Where does vocational education and training take place?	There are many options: in schools, in companies, in both schools and companies, via electronic media, etc.	In special schools, so-called 'production schools'	In predetermined alternation between companies and vocational schools ('dual model').
Who determines the content of vocational education and training?	Either the market or the individual companies, depending on what is needed at the moment. The content is not predetermined.	The state (together with the social partners). It does not aim primarily to reflect practice in enterprises, but relies instead on more general, theoretical training.	Entrepreneurs, unions, and the state jointly decide.
Who pays for vocational education and training?	As a general rule, the people who receive the vocational education and training are also the ones who pay for it. Some companies finance certain courses, which they themselves provide.	The state levies a tax on companies and finances vocational education and training, but only for a certain number of applicants each year.	Companies finance training within the enterprise and can set off the cost against tax. Trainees are paid a contractually determined sum. Vocational schools are financed by the state.
What qualifications are gained at the end of vocational education and training, and to what opportunities do these qualifications lead?	There is no monitoring of training, nor are there universally accredited final examinations.	There are state certificates which also entitle the best graduates to go on to higher courses.	The qualifications are generally recognised as entitling their holders to work in the relevant occupation and to go on to higher courses.

As late as the early 20th century, child labour was an integral part of dreary daily life in factories, not only in Britain. Children were the cheapest source of labour and were used primarily for jobs under and between the closely spaced machines.

Representatives of labour, employers, and the providers of vocational education and training negotiate 'in the market place' what sort of education and training should be offered.

'Liberalism', i.e. freedom from state intervention, - and from state protection - makes each person responsible for his or her own fate. The 'free play of forces' is supposed to foster the wellbeing of the nation and its businesses.

'Puritanism', a strict Protestant moral code, demands self-sacrifice and industriousness. Prosperity is regarded as the result of industriousness.

France played a leading role in the natural sciences in the 18th century. Its colleges known as 'grandes écoles', such as the Ecole Polytechnique, became a model for technical education in Europe.

Part-time schooling was compulsory for young people under the age of 16 from 1901. Lessons primarily stressed the 'moral' basis for work. Many forms of vocational education and training have existed side by side since then: in schools, in companies, in both simultaneously, via electronic learning, and through some state attempts to introduce 'modern apprenticeship training'.

France did not reach the high point of its industrialisation, however, until towards the end of the 19th century.

In the wake of the French Revolution, the guild system was abolished in 1791, and the question of training for skilled workers remained unresolved for a long time.

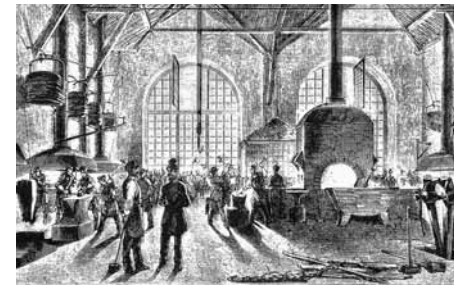
Under the influence of the 'Enlightenment', with its emphasis on the humanities and sciences, the importance of well-planned childhood education for society and the individual was recognised for the first time.

Schools that had first been created for the orphans of soldiers were changed into "Ecoles des arts et métiers', turning out foundry-workers, turners and carpenters for state factories instead of smiths and saddlers for the army.

In other respects, vocational education and training was similar to that in other countries: evening classes, civic and industry schools - but by no means for all young people.

Changes occurred when the Republic was established in 1871:

- Universal compulsory education sought to educate children in the spirit of the Republic, rather than in the Catholic spirit, as had formerly been the goal.
- After completing their compulsory education, 13-year-olds were to be 'taken off the streets' and to become accustomed to working.
- Trained workers were needed above all for modern mechanical and electrical engi-



In the 'Ecoles des arts et métiers', of which there were six in 1900, practical training took place in teaching workshops, while theory was taught in classrooms.

Today, one million young people attend vocational and technical secondary schools. An equal number attend classical secondary education. Roughly 300,000 are trained as apprentices in enterprises.

The 'modern' branches of industry took over the traditional relationship between master and apprentice. Training contracts were signed with young people, who were then trained to become 'skilled workers'. Large businesses set up teaching workshops of their own – like this one in the milling division at the Borsig company.
Photo: Deutsches Technikmuseum Berlin

neering in order to strengthen the nation's economic power and military might.

Two types of public schools were introduced to educate highly qualified, specialist workers and to train manual and clerical workers. The French state continues to regulate vocational education and training today.

In **Germany**, mechanisation of textile manufacture did not begin until the mid 19th century. Afterwards, however, development occurred rapidly in the textile, iron, steel and mining industries. By the end of the 19th century, the electrical, chemical and automobile industries were becoming increasingly important.

Freedom of employment began to spread from around 1811 in Germany, and the guilds were disbanded. This situation did not last very long, however. Traditional craft education and training were legally reinstated in 1897.

At least two reasons played a role in this:

- Strong international competition caused an increase in the need for skilled workers in industrial and administrative positions.

- The workers' movement was becoming increasingly strong, so the government set out to instil its conservative political beliefs into young people. The traditional world of life and work in the craft trades was regarded as a good basis for the social and political integration of apprentices.

In the course of the 19th century, apprentices often attended 'continuation schools' in the evenings or on Sundays. These repeated the curriculum taught at primary schools, and imparted the theoretical knowledge needed for particular trades.

By the end of the 19th century, these schools had developed into 'vocational schools'. In addition to vocational education and training, students were also taught citizenship skills. There was a similar development in Austria, where the vocational education and training system is very like the German.

Today, both elements are still part of apprenticeship: learning on the job and in vocational school.

That is why it is referred to as the 'dual system' of training.

The Netherlands gradually began to establish industries from about 1860. These included iron foundries, factories making machinery, shipyards and many types of foodstuff production.

Under the influence of occupation by France, the guilds were finally broken up in 1806.

Many companies introduced sports and athletics programmes to improve the health of their apprentices and to strengthen their bonds with one another and with the company. ('Fitness' at AEG, 1927)

Classes in the 'ambachtschool' were a genuine alternative to apprenticeship. The exclusive goal, both practical and theoretical, was to train students for jobs.

It is curious that for many years, the Finnish word for 'occupation' (elatuskeino) also meant 'living'. This shows that an independent existence comprised all forms of activity.

At first, the skilled workers who were needed came from abroad or were trained in a few schools. From 1860, burgeoning industry needed many more skilled workers, so full-time craft and technical schools were established throughout the country.

The State gradually took over the burden of financing these schools, many of which were initially private 'ambachtscholen', i.e. vocational schools. These schools remained successful well into the 20th century.

Another type of school, the 'burgeravondschool', was attended in the evening after work. The original intention of these schools was to complement the general education offered in elementary schools. Very soon, however, these schools were reorganised to meet occupational needs.

The apprenticeship system has played a certain role in crafts and smaller trades. 'Dual' education on the job and in school became more widespread after World War II, but has still not acquired the importance that 'full-time school' education continues to enjoy.

Finland, which was ruled for many centuries by Sweden and then by Russia, concentrated industrialisation on the manufacture and processing of agricultural and forestry products, and on the machinery and tools needed for these tasks.

Finland became an autonomous principality within the Russian Tsarist Empire in 1809. Finnish society began to reorganise itself, and politics, the economy and education underwent far-reaching changes.

Interest initially focused on educating the rural population: itinerant advisers and specialist schools trained rural people to work more efficiently in agriculture. For a long time, responsibility for establishing industries and for vocational education and training were in one and the same hand. Around 1840, one of the first national authorities for the encouragement of production established the earliest craft and commercial schools.

Since 1890, the unanimous desire to escape from Russian influence prompted new and greater efforts to encourage industry and schools. This led to the establishment of state-run, full-time, vocational schools for girls and boys. Alongside occupational knowledge, students were also taught citizenship skills.

It is interesting that commercial subjects in trade schools are regarded as part of general education rather than as vocational education and training. Perhaps this is not surprising in a trading nation.

Although there have been political efforts to introduce training in the form of company apprenticeships, the number of trainees is quite small. Most young people today learn their occupation through education in school.

Public teaching workshops and full-time schools (like those in France) began in 1884. Combined training on the job and in vocational school was also introduced: a 'dual system' similar to that of Germany and Austria.

Unity in diversity

Is **Switzerland** a model for Europe? Four official languages are spoken in the Swiss Confederation, whose people come from four different cultural backgrounds: German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romanic.

This diversity is reflected in the system of vocational education and training. The Swiss economy has flourished for many centuries:

- guilds in the Middle Ages,
- watchmaking and textile industries since the 18th century,
- engineering in the early 19th century,
- and many other branches of industry since then.

It was a long time before the state became involved in vocational education and training. There was no federal support for vocational educational and training facilities until 1884.

A third element has been added to the two in the dual system. This 'third place of learning' forges links between learning on the job and in school. For example, it provides introductory courses so that students can try new approaches and make mistakes, learning to master challenging tasks without pressure.

How does Swiss vocational education and training differ today from that in other European countries?

Laws about vocational education and training apply to the entire country, but allow for variation from canton to canton.

As in all other countries, the traditions of vocational education and training have deep local roots in the cantons and are resistant to drastic change.

Nonetheless, good ideas, experimentation and improvements in one canton often lead to cautious reforms nation-wide.

Tradition and renewal in vocational education and training are no longer mutually exclusive - an example for Europe to follow.

'Aptitude'

Entrance Examinations are found nearly everywhere nowadays. For many activities there is a procedure designed to test and evaluate applicants' suitability - for admission to school, to vocational training and to employment.

Optometer to test eyesight and ability to judge distance.
Industry soon developed techniques to select potential apprentices according to attributes that were deemed important by employers: intellectual capacity, reaction time, dexterity, strength, a good eye, ability to judge distance, etc.

The types of demand made on vocational abilities have changed. Creativity, individual responsibility, and the ability to adapt well and quickly to others play increasingly important roles.
Photo: Uwe Völkner

Who measures what and why? An interesting question!

The first procedures to measure vocational aptitude were developed by German psychologists during the First World War. The tests were supposed to show which candidates would be best able to drive a motor vehicle under wartime conditions.

The selection process was obviously designed to help the German army. But did it help the candidates who were selected or rejected?

After the war, the Social Democratic government and the trade unions used so-called 'psycho-techniques' in other fields: young people were to be selected for vocational training according to their abilities rather than their backgrounds. Aptitude tests were also intended to reduce dangers to the general public, e.g. on the railway.

Other countries, especially France, borrowed many of these psycho-techniques and developed new ones. The International Association for Psycho-Techniques was founded.

In Paris in 1951, representatives of six European countries signed the agreement that established the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC). From left to right are: the foreign ministers of Belgium (Paul van Zeeland), Luxembourg (Joseph Blech), Italy (Carlo Sforza) and France (Robert Schuman), the German Chancellor (Konrad Adenauer), and the foreign minister of the Netherlands (Dirk Uipko Stikker).
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

Representatives of six European nations signed the agreements in Rome in 1957 which set up the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom.
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

Nowadays, aptitude tests increasingly serve to discover a person's strengths and to encourage further development to the benefit of the person tested and the employer.

Convergence

Europe and vocational education and training - an issue for more than 50 years

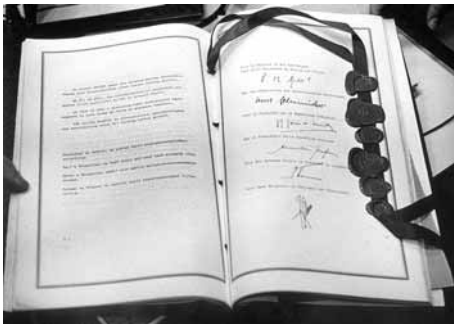
Although there was nothing in this agreement about vocational education and training, it nonetheless laid the groundwork for subsequent joint activities in this field.

In 1953, the governing body of the ECSC, the 'High Authority', referred in its first report not only to economic but also to social reasons for joint action. For example, vocational education and training would improve occupational safety in the mining industry, where accidents killed or injured hundreds of miners each year.

The following programme was gradually implemented after 1953: collection of documentation; organisation of regular meetings and exchange of information among those responsible for vocational education and training in the Member States; and establishment of a 'Permanent Commission for Vocational Training'.

Another important initiative was the financing of vocational training for unemployed miners.

The need for vocational education and training was expressed more clearly in the Treaties of Rome than in the ECSC agreement. It was



The Treaty signed by the six Member States in 1965 came into force in 1967 and set up the European Community, the EC. This acted as the executive for the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC) and Euratom.
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

described, for example, as a means of achieving 'a harmonious social situation with a full-employment policy'. Joint action in the field of vocational education and training was identified as a precondition for the free mobility of the workforce and the exchange of young workers within the EEC.

Europe and vocational education and training – common interests?

On 12 May 1960, the Council of Ministers decided to speed up implementation of the vocational education and training programme of 1957. The aim was to overcome the shortage of skilled workers, to alleviate the high levels of unemployment in some regions, such as the south of Italy, and to improve workers' living conditions.

Following consultations with experts in the Member States, trade unions and employers, the Commission put forward a ten-point programme for joint action. France and Germany were particularly opposed to the plan

In 1972, Denmark, the United Kingdom and Ireland signed the treaty of accession to the EC. (The photograph shows the Irish Foreign Minister, Patrick Hillary, and Prime Minister, John Lynch.) Greece joined the EC in 1981, Portugal and Spain in 1986. Austria, Finland and Sweden followed in 1995.
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

Student unrest in the late 1960s demonstrated the seriousness of the crisis facing the education system in nearly every country.

to transfer responsibilities in the area of vocational education and training to the Community.

There had been much political opposition in the 1960s, but this changed after the summit meeting in The Hague in 1969: the social partners were now to be involved in resolving social issues, and vocational education and training were to be encouraged.

The economic crisis after the Yom Kippur war of 1973 reinforced this trend.

In 1975 the Council of Ministers issued a directive setting up a European research and documentation centre for vocational education and training, Cedefop.

The European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training

The idea of a common policy on vocational education and training was slow to develop and met with repeated serious opposition from Member States.

It was feared that tried and tested forms of training might be replaced.

A change occurred after 1970.

The choice of Berlin as the site of the Cedefop offices was intended to demonstrate that the western section of the city was part and parcel of the EC. After the fall of the Wall and the reunification of Germany, it was decided in 1993 to transfer Cedefop to Thessaloniki.

Governments and trade unions in particular took up the question of initial and continuing training. Vocational education and training was to be improved through research. Institutions to carry this out were set up in many countries.

In response to a proposal from the Economic and Social Committee of the EC, the Council of Ministers resolved on 10 February 1975 to establish the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, Cedefop for short, with its offices in West Berlin.

Among the tasks with which Cedefop was charged were the following:

- documenting developments, research and institutions in vocational education and training;
- disseminating information;
- promoting initiatives to facilitate a concerted approach to vocational education and training;
- acting as a meeting point for the parties concerned.

Vocational education and training policy invariably touches on the regulation of society. It is concerned not only with teaching, with skills, knowledge and economic performance, but also with social institutions.

Equal representation of the four interested parties is therefore crucial to the work of the Centre. The Management Board of Cedefop is composed of representatives of government and employers' and employees' organisations in all Member States, and of the EU Commission.

The Lisbon European Council decided in 2000 that: 'The development of high quality vocational education and training is a crucial and integral part of this strategy, notably in terms of promoting social inclusion, cohesion, mobility, employability and competitiveness.'
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

The Union of Industrial and Employers' Confederations of Europe (UNICE), the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the other states in the European Economic Area send observers.

Through its technical and scientific work, the Centre makes a vital contribution to the further development of vocational education and training in Europe: from divergence to convergence.

Europe and vocational education and training common paths

Collaboration in vocational education and training has become ever closer since the mid 1980s. Alongside individual 'action programmes', the foundations have gradually been laid for joint political action.

At the European Council in Lisbon in 2000, heads of state and government dealt for the first time with issues related to education policy.

'Action programmes'

European action programmes were introduced in 1986. One example is a common action programme known as 'Leonardo da Vinci', which has become a testbed for innovation in the field of lifelong learning. Since 1995, this programme has supported projects in which educational institutions, companies, chambers of commerce, etc. from different countries collaborate to encourage mobility and innovation, and to help people to improve their occupational skills throughout their lives.

The European Training Foundation

began activities in 1995 as an EU agency working for over 40 non-EU countries, including the candidate countries, in order to assist and support in reforming and modernising their vocational education systems. The Foundation works closely with Cedefop.

Lisbon European Council, March 2000

The European Union set the strategic goal of becoming the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world by 2010.

'Since 1 January 2000, training skills acquired abroad can be registered in a personal document, the "Europass-Training". In March 2002, following the request of the Lisbon European Council, the Commission recommended a common format for curricula vitae. The new "European CV" (curriculum vitae) is different from most other CVs in that it emphasises the importance of non-formal and informal learning.'
Photo: European Commission Audiovisual Library

Stockholm 2001

The European Council set three goals:

- 'improving the quality and effectiveness of education and training systems in the European Union,
- facilitating access for all to education and training systems,
- and opening up education and training systems to the wider world.'

The way ahead

The 'Bruges-Copenhagen Process' shows that shared goals for full and harmonious personal and working lives can be successfully developed and pursued in Europe.

The process is named after the 'Bruges' initiative of the heads of vocational education and training (October 2001), which resulted in November 2002 in the education ministers of 31 European countries (EU Member States, candidate countries and those in the European Economic Area - the EEA) adopting the 'Copenhagen Declaration' on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training.

'Economic and social developments in Europe over the last decade have increasingly underlined the need for a European dimension to education and training. Furthermore, the transition towards a knowledge-based economy capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion brings new challenges to the development of human resources.' Quoted from 'The Copenhagen Declaration'

The Bruges-Copenhagen process supports the 'aim to increase voluntary cooperation in vocational education and training, in order to promote mutual trust, transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications, and thereby establishing a basis for increasing mobility and facilitating access to lifelong learning.' Quoted from 'The Copenhagen Declaration'.

The Member States, EEA countries, the Social Partners and the Commission have begun cooperation at a practical level on a number of concrete outputs:

- A single framework for transparency of competences and qualifications,
- a system of credit transfer in vocational education and training,
- common criteria and principles for quality in vocational education and training,
- common principles for the validation of non-formal and informal learning,
- lifelong guidance.

The future of vocational education and training in Europe is closely linked to the goal of improving 'quality of work' by improving people's employability, qualifications, performance and health.