FEASIBILITY WORKSHOP ON EUROPEAN SKILL NEEDS FORECASTING

20-21 October 2005, Pafos, Cyprus

The workshop is organised in the framework of **Cedefop's international network on early identification of skill needs "Skillsnet"** (www.trainingvillage.gr).

General information

Workshop venue   Iberostar Ledra Beach Hotel, Pafos, Cyprus

Organisers   European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (Cedefop)
Human Resource Development Authority (HRDA), Cyprus
Research Centre for Education and the Labour Market (ROA), Maastricht University, the Netherlands

No of participants   Max. 30

Participants' profile   Experts in (econometric) forecasting of occupations, skills and/or educational fields at national and European / international level. The workshop shall have a layout of an expert brainstorming. Participants should be familiar with forecasting methodologies and medium-/ long-term forecasting models as well as the data and classifications used in their countries for identification of skill needs at macro-level.

Working language   English

Workshop rationale and objectives

The information deficit about future skill needs in Europe has been observed for a long time. Cedefop and other European organisations have been repeatedly approached with requests for information on this issue. With the free movement of labour much hope is given to increased mobility across European countries helping to reduce unemployment. The European labour market becomes a reality on the EU policy agenda. However and at the same time, occupations, skills, competences and qualifications, which will be in demand in the future European labour market, are not identified. The "Integrated guidelines for growth and jobs" for 2005-2008 explicitly mention a better identification of occupational needs and anticipation of future skill requirements as keys to adapt education and training systems to new skills and competence requirements. Finding ways to obtain information on future skill needs in Europe – or even a joint European action - becomes a priority.

Without doubt, forecasting skill needs and demand at macro level has a number of limitations – reliability and level of detail of the output, lack of information on skills gaps and competence requirements in the workplace – just to mention a few. Nevertheless, due to its relatively low costs, if based on a common methodology and standardised statistics, (econometric) skill forecasting at European level could be feasible in the nearest perspective and could become one important information base among others useful for evidence-based policies. Alternative methods, such as employers' surveys, scenarios, and other 'softer' methods - possibly combined with quantitative forecasting - are equally relevant, but they are costly. These issues will have to be discussed in the framework of Skillsnet in subsequent workshops.

The feasibility workshop in Cyprus aims at reaching an agreement concerning:
1. the usefulness and relevance of this activity at European level;
2. a common approach to European skill needs forecasting in terms of methods and data;
3. possibly an interim solution in terms of a pilot macroeconomic skill forecasting; and
4. a longer-term approach, with concrete suggestions of further practical steps and gradual involvement of all European countries interested, including EEA/EFTA and candidate countries.

In particular the workshop will:
- verify standardised data sets, structures, classifications, sources and time series available for macroeconomic skill needs forecasting at European level;
- identify data gaps and possible ways to fill the gaps;
- verify existing forecasting methods and approaches at macroeconomic level (occupational, qualifications / educational fields) in Member States and the experience to-date at the supranational level (NB: failures have to be taken into account!);
- agree about future concrete steps in the development of a system of European forecasting.

Draft agenda

Thursday, 20 October 2005
09.30-12.30 **Morning session** Welcome and introduction from HRDA Presentation on the workshop rationale, objectives and fundamental questions (Cedefop-Skillsnet team) Presentation of the paper 'Classifications, data and models for European skill needs forecasting: consistency, compatibility, accessibility and quality across countries', Frank Cörvers, ROA. Discussion
12.30-14.00 Lunch
14.00-17.30 **Afternoon session** Short presentations of Member States approaches, classifications and data used for skill needs forecasting followed by short discussion sessions. The provisional list of countries includes: Austria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. The papers for these and other Member States will be prepared on the basis of a template provided by Cedefop.

Friday, 21 October 2005
09.30-10.00 Introduction: main questions and concerns arising from the first day presentations and discussion
10.00-12.30 Discussion
12.30-13.00 Conclusions: further steps

Contact details

Cedefop/Skillsnet

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