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WORK PROGRAMME

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Modernising the systems of education and training towards the common objectives for 2010

German contribution to the “Education and Training 2010” EU work programme

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PRELIMINARY REMARK

The German Federal Republic's Basic Law lays down that Germany is a federal state in which both the overall state (the Federation) as well as the constituent states (the *Länder*) have state status. The German *Länder* are competent for the field of education, including vocational schools, higher education institutions and further education, unless the Basic Law assigns to federal-level authorities competence for such legislation. Under the Basic Law the Federation's competence includes initial and further vocational training outside of the school context, the general principles of higher education, the provision of support for training and measures to promote employment. Competence under constitutional law that could require the education sector to be coordinated, does not apply in the Federal Republic of Germany. Nevertheless, between the *Länder* - cooperating in educational matters in the *Kultusministerkonferenz* (Conference of Ministers of Education) - as well as between the federal-level authorities and the *Länder*, there is a broad measure of consensus regarding the objectives that the education system should be pursuing in its further development in the face of rapid change in the social, economic, scientific and technical fields.

1. Introduction

The continuing further development of education systems in Germany is primarily targeted on the same theme as that set out in the EU work programme “Education and Training 2010”, under the Bologna Process and the Copenhagen Initiative. The challenges in the fields of lifelong learning, mobility and investment in human capital that were set out in the interim report on the EU’s 2010 work programme that appeared in 2004¹ is therefore a matter that is considered highly important in all areas of education in Germany.

The degree to which decisive action is needed is demonstrated by statistics that show that the number of **people able to work** in Germany will fall from today’s 45.3 million to approximately 26.7 million by 2040 provided there are no changes to the status quo (for example migration from abroad).² This drastic reduction of the potential number of people capable of working is happening not only in Germany but in all the EU Member States. This is one of the reasons why Germany attaches great importance to ensuring **access to top-quality initial and further education and training for all citizens**. Access to education and training is also essential for ensuring social cohesion.

Not least in response to Germany’s unsatisfactory results in the PISA study, measures were adopted aimed at improving the quality of general education. One crucial element of this is the establishment of a **system for controlling educational processes that is based on the output of education**. At the core of these output-based control systems for the school sector are educational standards and regular evaluation.

The **strategy for lifelong learning** adopted in July 2004 provides ideas as to how lifelong learning for all citizens at all stages of their lives and in all areas can be promoted at different locations and with wide-ranging styles of learning.

Primarily with a view to strengthening the approach to lifelong learning, that is common to all areas of education, Germany joined the debate on the creation of a **European qualification framework (EQF)**. To involve national actors at an early stage Germany arranged a workshop on EQF in March 2005 at which representatives of vocational education and training and higher education were able to exchange views on the current state of debate at national and European level on a European qualification framework that covers all areas of education.³

Quality and quantity of mobility is being encouraged in Germany under a series of programmes. As a further measure, Germany is advocating a structuring and prioritisation of the EU’s educational programmes that are geared to the needs of target groups and are manageable in practice and is proposing this in the context of the negotiations on the future EU educational framework programme 2007–2013. Germany

¹ Education and training 2010. “Education and training 2010 — the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms — joint interim report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the detailed work programme on the follow-up of the objectives of education and training systems in Europe” published in Official Journal of the European Union (C 104/01 of 30.4.2004).

² cf. Jahresgutachten 2004 des Sachverständigenrates für Zuwanderung und Integration (Annual report for 2004 from the Committee of Experts on Immigration and Integration), p. 182.

³ Papers and proceedings on the workshop are obtainable at:
<http://www.na-bibb.de/eu-arbeitsprogramm>.

is also actively involved in the creation of a European Area of Higher Education (Bologna Process) as well as in closer European cooperation on vocational education and training (Copenhagen Initiative) with a view to ensuring **transparency, comparability and permeability** between the different educational systems.

The Bologna Process and cooperation in the context of EU initiatives and EU programmes provide important thrust for the modernisation of **higher education** in Germany and for enhancing its attractiveness elsewhere in the world. In 2003 the ten theses for the structure of the degrees of Bachelor and Master in Germany created the essential elements for converting the German higher education system to allow it accommodate the two-cycle degree system⁴.

On the subject of vocational education and training new impulses were created within the framework of the Copenhagen Initiative jointly with the Maastricht Communiqué. The priorities of innovation, permeability and enhanced attractiveness of vocational education and training, as well as the development of the skills of young people and of older workers and greater support for disadvantaged groups are the central challenges not only for Germany. The priorities suggested for the national level in the Communiqué demonstrate consistency with Germany's current concerns, in particular the amendment of vocational education and training legislation. This will involve, for example, increasing **permeability** and the **inclusion of socially disadvantaged groups**.

Germany has raised the level of its **investment in human capital and lifelong learning**. Progress is being achieved with the attempt to raise the level of education of people capable of working. This has been achieved with the aid in particular of a constant increasing of the related budgets and initiatives at Federal and *Länder* level aimed at improving the quality of general and vocational education and training.⁵ In addition, in June 2004 Germany organised a conference of experts with the aim of utilising findings relating to the economics of education for political decision-making. Experts from Germany and elsewhere in Europe presented the state of research and indicated possible research priorities for the future.⁶

In 2005 there are to be further thematic workshops relating to the EU's work programme "Education and Training 2010". The aim is to exploit these themes and impulses for EU cooperation on education and for the drafting of educational policy by the Federal and *Länder* authorities and for reforms. In a follow-up measure to the inaugural event held in December 2002 on the EU's work programme there will be in autumn 2005 an event at which a mid-term evaluation report will be produced.

In line with the distributed powers of Germany's federal system the implementation of these educational priorities will involve the Federal level authorities, the *Länder*, the

⁴ Decision of the Kultusministerkonferenz (KMK) of 12.06.2003, <http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/BMThesen.pdf>.

⁵ Cf. Germany's contribution to the Joint Employment Report 2004/2005 adopted by the Council and the Commission on 09.03.2005 to be forwarded to the European Council, 7010/05 SOC 102 ECOFIN 77.

⁶ Cf. Conference documentation published by BMBF (Hrsg.), "Investitionsgut Bildung – Workshop Investition in Humankapital" (Investing in Education – Workshop on Investing in Human Capital), 7 June 2004, Bonn. Further information available on: <http://www.na-bibb.de/eu-arbeitsprogramm>.

educational establishments, scientific and research organisations, the social partners and other actors active in Germany's education system.

2. Reforms in the key areas of general education

Key areas

The priorities of modernisation and reform in school-based and non-school education in Germany were set following publication of the first PISA results in December 2001 and the results of the comparative PISA study of the *Länder* in summer 2002 by the Federal and *Länder* authorities.

The seven areas for action on the part of the *Länder* of December 2001 make express provision for cooperation by the various actors involved in educating and raising children and young people and cover the following:

1. Improving language skills as early as at the pre-primary stage.
2. Strengthening the links between the pre-primary sector and primary school with the aim of starting school earlier.
3. Improving primary education and continuous improvement of reading literacy and the basic understanding of mathematical and scientific concepts.
4. Effective support for educationally disadvantaged children, in particular as regards children and young people from a migrant background.
5. Consistent further development and assurance of quality of teaching and schools on the basis of binding educational standards and result-oriented evaluation.
6. Improving professionalism in teaching, in particular with regard to diagnostic and methodical competence as an element of systematic school development.
7. Extending the availability of school and non-school all-day facilities with the aim of increasing the opportunities for education and support, particularly with regard to pupils with educational deficits and especially gifted pupils.

Within these areas for action the *Länder* have established the following priorities in the wake of the publication in December 2004 of the international results for PISA 2003:

- Improving tuition for the targeted advancement of skills in all competence areas, in particular in relation to reading, geometry and stochastic theory
- Early and targeted advancement of children and young people coming from a socially challenged background or a migrant background as well as targeted remedial action where the educational biography has been unfavourable
- Further development of initial and further training for teachers, in particular in relation to dealing with heterogeneity, improved diagnostic skills and a targeting of support to cater for individual pupils.

In summer 2002 the Federal authorities presented their programme entitled "Zukunft Bildung" (Education for our Future) comprising the following elements:

- Promotion of all-day school investment programme "Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung" (The Future – Education and All-day school)
- Development of a system for joint reporting on education by Federal and *Land*-level authorities

- Setting national-level education standards and developing a national evaluation institution
- Support of education research
- Implementation of the action framework adopted jointly by Federal and Land-level authorities covering the fostering of structural innovation in education arising from the recommendations made by the Education Forum.⁷

This joint action framework dating from 2002 covers the following areas of schooling for which the *Länder* are responsible. These are

- Advancement of speaking, reading and writing skills
- Support for migrants and
- Advancement of skills in mathematics and sciences.

In these three areas particular attention is devoted to earlier and targeted promotion of individuals, in particular in the case of children and young people who have learning difficulties.

Central reform measures in the areas for action⁸ and as set out in the “Zukunft Bildung” programme

Strengthening the links between the pre-primary sector and primary school

The educational responsibilities of children’s day care centres were set out in 2004 in a joint framework⁹ for early education at children’s day care centres. This framework attaches particular importance to optimising the transition from the pre-primary sector to primary school. With a view to ensuring continuity of the education biography, in which the individual development processes of the child are supported and assisted, children’s day care centres, primary schools and the parental home need to work closely together. Flexible models for starting school that largely avoid delaying the commencement of a child’s school education and allow every child to be supported individually take the educational process started at the day care centre further. Within this joint framework the *Länder* are adopting an approach that is tailored to their particular situation in terms of differentiation and implementation. The educational remit of the day care centres is concentrated on early consolidation of individual competencies and learning dispositions, support and challenge of a child’s urge to explore, the imparting of values, the advancement of learning skills and on learning within social contexts. The educational plans for the pre-primary sector define the underlying educational concept and describe the particular educational remit of children’s day care centres.

Support for educationally disadvantaged children and young people

Supporting children and young people with learning difficulties and who are socially disadvantaged is also at the centre of an agreement between the *Länder* that dates from

⁷ <http://www.blk-bonn.de/bildungsreform.htm>

⁸ A synopsis of further measures in the seven areas for action can be found in “Bildungsbericht für Deutschland - Erste Befunde” (Education Report for Germany, initial findings) published in 2003: <http://www.kmk.org/doc/publ/bildungsbericht/index.htm>.

⁹ Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen (Joint Framework of the *Länder* for early education in children’s day care centres) (Decision of the Jugendministerkonferenz (Ministers for Youth) and the Kultusministerkonferenz (Ministers for Education) of 13./14.05.2004 and 03./04.06.2004 respectively).

http://www.kmk.org/aktuell/Gemeinsamer_Rahmen_Kindertageseinrich_BSJMK_KMK.pdf.

2004.¹⁰ This stresses the need for joint efforts by school and youth services with the employment administration aimed at developing strategies and individual support plans for the young people concerned. Individually helping children and young people from a migration background can take the form of the introduction of a language diagnosis test and obligatory courses in German language for children prior to starting primary school.

The FörMig programme (Förderung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Migrationshintergrund) [Assisting children and young people from a migration background] that was implemented as part of the joint action framework of the Federal and *Länder* authorities systematically identifies language skills, increases support in language learning and plans out the transition to employment.

Development and assurance of quality

The SINUS-Transfer programme that is being implemented as part of the joint action framework of the Federal and *Länder* authorities is systematically making available to a broad range of schools a proven approach to the cooperative development of quality in the teaching of mathematics and sciences at primary and lower secondary level with the aid of scientific back-up.

The enhanced orientation towards output for controlling the educational system described in chapter 1 is backed up by the ever-greater importance of **monitoring and evaluation**. Evidence of this in Germany's schools is the setting, standardising and assessment of educational standards applicable in all *Länder* and the introduction of educational reporting that applies to all areas of education. In addition to this, the *Länder* are increasingly implementing internal and external evaluation procedures in schools.

In 2003 and 2004 the *Länder* jointly adopted binding **educational standards**¹¹ for the primary sector (grade 4), the *Hauptschulabschluss* certificate (grade 9) and the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* certificate (grade 10) for German language and mathematics. Also adopted at the same time were standards for the first foreign language (English/French) in the two leaving certificates of lower secondary education and standards for the *Mittlerer Schulabschluss* certificate (grade 10) in the subjects biology, chemistry, physics. When the standards were being drawn up account was taken of the results of the scientific opinion "Zur Entwicklung nationaler Bildungsstandards" (Developing national educational standards)¹² that date from 2002. With the introduction of these educational standards in schools with effect from the academic years 2004/2005 and 2005/2006 respectively, it is now possible to measure the development of quality in schools throughout the country for the first time by using a jointly agreed yardstick in the form of standards for average performance.

Educational standards primarily affect the core areas of any given subject. They do not cover the entire spectrum of a discipline but rather formulate subject-oriented and cross-

¹⁰ Zusammenarbeit von Schule und Jugendhilfe zur „Stärkung und Weiterentwicklung des Gesamtzusammenhangs von Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung“ [Cooperation between schools and youth welfare services to strengthen and develop the overarching concept of education, teaching and support] (Decision of the Jugendministerkonferenz dated 13./14.05.2004, Decision of the Kultusministerkonferenz dated 03./04.06.2004), http://www.kmk.org/aktuell/Zusammenarbeit%20von%20Schule%20und%20Jugendhilfe_BS_JMK_KMK.pdf.

¹¹ <http://www.kmk.org/schul/bildungsstandards/bildungsstandards.htm>.

¹² Zur Entwicklung nationaler Bildungsstandards, http://www.bmbf.de/pub/zur_entwicklung_nationaler_bildungsstandards.pdf, http://www.bmbf.de/pub/the_development_of_national_educational_standards.pdf, http://www.bmbf.de/pub/le_developpement_de_standards_nationaux_d_formation.pdf.

curricular basic qualifications that are of importance for ongoing school-based and vocational education and training and make it possible to continue learning on the basis of competencies already acquired. The standards are illustrated with examples of tasks. Educational standards guarantee that the school leaving certificates awarded at different types of schools are comparable.

The institute for quality development in education (IQB)¹³ that was founded by the *Länder* in June 2004 at the Humboldt University in Berlin will scientifically monitor quality development in education throughout Germany and make a major contribution to the standardisation, assessment and further development of educational standards.

In the upper secondary level of general education there are signs of an enhanced emphasis on competencies, *inter alia*, the step-by-step revision of the standard examination requirements for the *Abitur* school leaving examination (*Einheitliche Prüfungsanforderungen für die Abiturprüfung*) in more than 30 subjects¹⁴ since 2000 and the prior further development of the upper secondary level in general education (*Gymnasiale Oberstufe*).¹⁵ This establishes the consolidation of basic competencies, the development of a structured subject-based knowledge and independent learning and working as being elements of particular importance.

Educational standards that oblige schools to achieve certain results are also a prerequisite if schools are to be allowed greater autonomy. Strengthening the role of the individual school as a place for the development of quality in the educational system is a major objective of educational policy in Germany. Schools' autonomy is to be increased and the role of the head teachers and school supervisory authorities is to undergo change. This means that on the one hand there will be a strengthening of educational independence for each and every school, to be achieved by developing programmes, budgeting and the individual advertising of teaching posts, and on the other hand that quality of school and tuition will be ensured not least by requiring schools to account for their results.

The **reporting on education** aims to provide information and accountability and makes a major contribution to the transparency of essential developments in education. It also offers an additional basis for the effective control of educational processes. Systematic reporting on education for Germany as a whole has been under development since 2002:

At the end of 2002 the *Länder* commissioned an initial report on education that concentrated on the school as central theme and it was published in October 2003.¹⁶ The report was produced by an independent scientific consortium. The first report on education presented essential statistical data on education backed up with a systematic analysis of selected results from the large-scale assessment studies TIMSS, PISA and PIRLS, correlated the German data to available international studies such as Education at a Glance by the OECD, contained targeted references for further development of the education system in Germany and thus made a major contribution to an empirically based debate on education policy. In 2003 the Federal-level authorities commissioned reports aimed at producing the notional bases for educational reporting in the field of

¹³ <http://www.iqb.hu-berlin.de>

¹⁴ <http://www.kmk.org/doc/publ/pub.htm#faecher>.

¹⁵ Agreement on the reform of the upper secondary level in general education (Decision of the KMK of 07.07.1972 as revised on 16.06.2000), http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/176_Vereinb-z-Gestalt-d-gymOb-i-d-SekII.pdf.

¹⁶ Bildungsbericht für Deutschland – Erste Befunde, 2003, [Education Report for Germany – Initial Findings] <http://www.kmk.org/doc/publ/bildungsbericht/index.htm>.

vocational education and training and further training as well as on non-formal and informal education for children and young people.¹⁷

From the spring of 2006 onwards an independent, scientific education report for Germany will be commissioned jointly by the Federal authorities and the *Länder*. This joint education report will be produced biannually covering all stages of education – from pre-primary education to vocational education and training to adult education – according to the respective importance of these stages for a person's life. Particular attention will be devoted to the transition stages and interfaces between the various sectors of education and their reciprocal dependency and influence. From an institutional and individual point of view, the contextual, procedural and outcome dimensions of the educational systems and formal educational processes will be covered as well as non-formal and informal education. In addition to a core of central indicators on all areas of education each of the future education reports will review a principal theme. For the spring 2006 report the theme chosen will centre on integrating children, young people and active adults from a migrant background in education.

Professionalism in teaching

Improving the professionalism in teaching requires a reform both of structure and of content:

The criteria for introducing Bachelor and Master structures in initial teacher training¹⁸ were adopted in 2002 by the *Länder* and are currently being implemented. The most important element of this and other reforms in teacher training is the enhanced dovetailing of theoretical and practical training components. The aim is to improve the preparation of future teachers for their profession.

In December 2004 standards for teacher training (education science) were adopted.¹⁹ They set out the skills required in education science that are of particular importance to professional training and practical aspects of the profession and that constitute a basis for in-service training of teachers.

In the third stage of the training of a teacher – the years spent in the classroom – the prerequisites for lifelong learning are provided in the form of the appropriate in-service training schemes. A person's willingness to avail themselves of training on offer may be a criterion in staff-related decision-making.

Extending the availability of school and non-school all-day facilities

The development and extension of all-day support and care at schools is progressing in Germany as a joint venture between schools, youth welfare services and other institutions.²⁰ All-day schools offer extended scope both in terms of learning specific

¹⁷ Konzeptionelle Grundlagen für einen Nationalen Bildungsbericht - Berufliche Bildung und Weiterbildung/Lebenslanges Lernen, [Notional bases for a national education report – vocational education and training, continuing training/ lifelong learning]
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/nationaler_bildungsbericht_bb_weiterbildung.pdf;
Konzeptionelle Grundlagen für einen Nationalen Bildungsbericht - Non-formale und informelle Bildung im Kindes- und Jugendalter,
http://www.bmbf.de/pub/nonformale_und_informelle_bildung_kindes_u_jugendalter.pdf.

¹⁸ Decision of the Kultusministerkonferenz (Conference of Ministers of Education) of 28.02./01.03.2002.

¹⁹ Standards for teacher training: Education Sciences (Decision of the Conference of Education Ministers of 16.12.2004), http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/standards_lehrerbildung.pdf.

²⁰ Vgl. die Empfehlung „Zusammenarbeit von Schule und Jugendhilfe zur Stärkung und Weiterentwicklung des Gesamtzusammenhangs von Bildung, Erziehung und Betreuung (Beschluss der Jugendministerkonferenz vom 13./14.05.2004, Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 03./04.06.2004) [cf. Footnote No 10]
http://www.kmk.org/aktuell/Zusammenarbeit%20von%20Schule%20und%20Jugendhilfe_BS_JMK_KMK.pdf.

subjects and learning social skills. It also creates a good basis for raising motivation and willingness to learn and take advantage of what is available in terms of general education both in classes and as extracurricular activities. Schools and youth welfare services thus become more aware not only of the problems of pupils but also of their inclinations. All-day schools are intended to improve individual support of and care for children and young people.

Since 2003 the availability of all-day facilities in schools has spread considerably in Germany. The “Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung” Investment Programme²¹ is a way by which the Federal authorities support the *Länder* in the period 2003 to 2007 to the tune of EUR 4 thousand million for the creation and extension of all-day facilities where such is needed. The programme “Zukunft Bildung und Betreuung” is supplemented by a parallel programme²², a scientific monitoring research project²³ as well as by a project being run by *Schulen ans Netz e.V.*, which focuses on the use of the media. In 2003/2004 Germany had more than 8.86 million pupils attending primary and lower secondary schools (including special schools). Of these almost 962 700 pupils (10.9%) participated in all-day activities either of a (partly or fully) compulsory or optional type. This means that the number of participating pupils rose by 101 500 (11.8%) in comparison with the 2002/2003 academic year.²⁴

3. Lifelong learning

Strategy for lifelong learning in the Federal Republic of Germany

On 5 July 2004 the Federal and *Länder* authorities agreed the strategy for lifelong learning in the Federal Republic of Germany.²⁵ In line with the framework conditions under constitutional law in Germany this strategy for lifelong learning reveals aspects and contexts regarding which there is a large measure of consensus between the *Länder* and the Federal authorities irrespective of their different responsibilities. The aim of the strategy for lifelong learning is to show how learning can be encouraged and supported for all citizens in all stages and areas of their lives at various places of learning and with a range of styles of learning. In this context "learning" is understood as the constructive processing of information and experience with the aim of acquiring knowledge, insight and skills.

The strategy is geared both to the stages of a person's life from early childhood to old age and to essential elements for lifelong learning, the latter then representing development priorities. Within this structure realistic and sustainable perspectives are opened up that are based on existing educational structures, activities and experience and determine a structured framework for lifelong learning that is flexible and open to the need for continuous further development.

The development priorities for this strategy are the following:

- Inclusion of informal learning

²¹ Vgl. Verwaltungsvereinbarung zwischen Bund und Ländern vom 12.5.2003, [cf. Administrative Agreement between the federal and *Land* authorities dated 12/05/2003] <http://www.bmbf.de/de/3735.php>. Weitere Informationen zum Investitionsprogramm unter/ For further information see: <http://www.ganztagsschulen.org>.

²² „Ganztäglich Lernen“, <http://www.ganztaegig-lernen.de>

²³ „Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagschulen (StEG)“, <http://www.projekt-steg.de>

²⁴ Bericht über die allgemein bildenden Schulen in Ganztagsform in den Ländern in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland - Schuljahr 2002 und 2003, [Report on all-day general schools in Germany during the 2002/2003 academic year]. <http://www.kmk.org/statist/ganztag.htm>.

²⁵ Vgl. [cf.] http://www.bmbf.de/pub/strategie_lebenslanges_lernen_oder_www.blk_heft115.pdf.

- Independent control
- Skills development
- Networking
- Modularisation
- Advice on learning
- New learning culture/popularisation of learning
- Equal opportunities for access.

As part of the strategy for lifelong learning various options for action in the individual sectors of education (preschool, school, vocational education and training, higher education and continuing education) are listed so that the competent actors are in a position to complete the framework set out in this strategy paper in a way which is consistent with the priorities of education policy and their respective areas of responsibility.

Alongside the drafting of the strategy paper there have been tests on innovative projects in the *Länder* as part of an **experimental model programme on lifelong learning**²⁶ that could bring about a change in learning culture and support the necessary process of reorientation in the education system. It is also a question of strengthening the personal responsibility and independence of the individual learner. The aim is to create incentives for learning and to improve the ability of people to learn and this applies both to learning in traditional educational establishments as well as to informal self-guided learning in everyday situations. Lifelong learning is seen in this context not only as a necessary reflex in response to changing structures but also as an opportunity for achieving overall development of the personality and for offsetting the effects of social disadvantage.

The core objectives of this education policy, such as raising the participation in education, creating incentives for lifelong learning and promoting talent as well as improving the quality of the education system, are supported by the results of a study of an independent committee of experts that has produced proposals **for the funding of lifelong learning**. In the analysis it presented in 2004²⁷ the committee stresses the importance of lifelong learning for the individual, social and economic development of Germany, primarily from the point of view of the exploitation of learning and performance potential in order to bring about the much-needed innovation boost in Germany and the required stepping up of productivity in economic growth as well as to meet demographic challenges.

Measures in the field of lifelong learning

Setting individual priorities and providing performance-related support are aspects of central importance for the design of schools and courses of study within lower secondary education. To this end efforts are under way to secure the permeability offering scope for transfer to another course of study at school.²⁸ What is more, the Federal and *Länder* authorities promote and support, in the context of **the advancement of talented persons**, nationally recognised **competitions for schoolchildren and young people** in lower and upper secondary education, such as for example *Jugend forscht* or *Bundeswettbewerb*

²⁶ <http://www.blk-III.de>.

²⁷ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/Schlussbericht_Kommission [final report]_III.pdf.

²⁸ Beschluss der KMK vom 03.12.1993 i.d.F. vom 27.09.1996, [Decision of the KMK dated 03/12/1993 as amended on 27/09/1996] <http://www.kmk.org/schul/schulart.pdf>.

Fremdsprachen, the Federal competition in foreign languages²⁹, as well as the *Deutsche Schüler Akademie*.

In many cases particularly gifted pupils are allowed to participate in university classes as **early students**. Without formal registration as students they can thus attend courses and sit examinations, complete study modules and acquire credits. The results so achieved can then at a later stage be credited to them at any university according to their equivalence.³⁰

The programme that assists gifted people in their vocational education and training (*Begabtenförderung berufliche Bildung*) allows particularly gifted people who have completed initial vocational education and training and who want to acquire further training in their profession to receive a grant for up to three years.³¹

Research, development and testing measures in the various sectors of education to promote lifelong learning are set out in an **action programme on lifelong learning for all**³² (*Aktionsprogramm "Lebensbegleitendes Lernen für alle"*) and the main thrust is:

- Enhancing students' own responsibility and self-direction
- Reducing inequality of opportunity
- Cooperative projects for lifelong learning that embrace several areas of education and policy
- Strengthening the links between all areas of education.

Priority is given to innovations in the following areas:

- Networking across several areas of education at regional and supraregional level
- Ensuring quality by means of transparent and comparable procedures
- Certification and/or recognition of employable qualifications and skills, including those acquired in informal learning processes
- Increasing the transparency of available options, improvement of information and counselling
- Promotion of new teaching and learning cultures
- Creation of an environment that is conducive to learning for people in special situations
- Stepping up of exchanges and international cooperation, advancement of international skills.

It is particularly the regional level that is most suited to the organisation of a new learning culture because innovative measures in the field can be targeted to cater for local characteristics. The programme "**Lernende Regionen - Förderung von Netzwerken**" (Learning regions – promoting networking)³³ forms the central core of the action programme "Lebensbegleitendes Lernen für alle" (Lifelong learning for all). This programme, which was set up by the Federal authorities, supports the development and refinement of regional networks that embrace the whole of education and all educational institutions. These networks are operated jointly by as many participating parties as possible (for example educational establishments, enterprises, the social partners, youth

²⁹ Gemeinsame Erklärung der Länder und des Bundes zur Förderung bundesweiter Wettbewerbe im Bildungswesen vom 14.09.1984 i.d.F. von 1999. [Joint Declaration by the Federal and *Länder* authorities on the funding of national competitions in the field of education dated 14/09/1984 as amended in 1999]

³⁰ 306. KMK, 03./04.06.2004, TOP 3.

³¹ Stiftung Begabtenförderungswerk Berufliche Bildung (SBB), <http://www.begabtenfoerderung.de>.

³² http://www.bmbf.de/pub/aktionsprogramm_lebensbegleitendes_lernen_fuer_alle.pdf. [Lifelong learning for all – Action programme]

³³ <http://www.lernende-regionen.info>.

authorities, employment agencies, etc.) and innovative projects relating to lifelong learning are developed, tested and organised on a sustainable basis. The aim is that structures for lifelong learning are created and consistently improved.

Regional vocational education and training centres support the development of various learning pathways and open learning environments. The regional vocational education and training centres promote innovative learning for vocational education and training by ensuring close cooperation between schools, enterprises, guilds and associations.³⁴

To facilitate **the transition from vocational education and training to higher education** it is possible under certain circumstances for knowledge and abilities acquired outside the context of higher education (for example in initial and further vocational training) to replace 50% of a course of study in higher education.

In addition to the above the Federal authorities, the *Länder* and the German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) drafted in September 2003 a joint recommendation addressed to universities concerning the awarding of credits in further vocational training and the crediting of these to a course of study at university.³⁵ Efforts are being made in this connection to award credits acquired during vocational education and training and that are confirmed by qualifications obtained on the basis of examination. These credits would be awarded in accordance with the European credit transfer system (ECTS). Using a support programme established at Federal level³⁶ the aim is to develop practicable transferable procedures for the crediting of such qualifications in relation to courses of university study. The aim is to make it easier for credits to be recognised.

Increasingly, **continuing education is also being offered at universities**. With the introduction of the two-cycle degree system, universities can offer courses of study leading to a Master's degree (including continuing education leading to a Master's degree) in a way that is more closely and more flexibly geared to the requirements of the professional world. These courses support the specialisation and thus lifelong learning by people in employment.

A consequence of the amendment of the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz*) in 1998 was that scientific continuing education fell within the sphere of responsibility of universities in addition to research, teaching and study. In their report on the state of progress with regard to the assumption of the task of providing scientific continuing education at universities³⁷ the *Länder* even in 2001 stressed the need to improve the framework conditions for scientific continuing education and to create structures that would act as an incentive for universities and university teachers.

Measures to raise the number of participants in lifelong learning include:

- Enhancing the supply of continuing education and courses of study that reflect requirements and that make greater use of the new media
- Enhancing the supply of training during employment
- More intensive in-service training for teachers
- Closer cooperation between universities and between universities and the business sector also with regard to continuing education and training.

³⁴ <http://www.blk-bonn.de/papers/heft114.pdf>.

³⁵ <http://www.kmk.org/aktuell/GemeinsameEmpfehlung.doc>.

³⁶ <http://www.bmbf.de/foerderungen/3518.php>.

³⁷ Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 21.09.2001, <http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/wisswei.pdf>.

The **LQW model (Learner-oriented quality testing in continuing education)** developed a procedure for improving and testing the quality of measures in which the learning process is at the centre of efforts to improve quality. "LQW 2" was developed through and for continuing education and is being successfully implemented with the aim of raising the transparency and quality of continuing education. Currently more than 400 establishments are applying the LQW 2 model. This means that the LQW has in a brief period established itself alongside the ISO and EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management) procedures. LQW 2 offers providers support in their internal efforts to assure quality as a permanent task; the certificate offers nation-wide guidance when searching for top-quality training options.³⁸

Against the background of technological, economic and labour-related structural changes the past few years have seen non-formal and informal learning gaining noticeably in importance and this applies both to the skills derived from such learning and to recognition thereof. It is for this reason that as part of the joint project on a continuing training passport with certification of informal learning (*Verbundprojekt "Weiterbildungspass mit Zertifizierung informellen Lernens"*) that the profile passport has been developed following a feasibility study in which all passports for initial and continuing education and training in Germany, in neighbouring countries and at EU level have been included. Since November 2003 the passport has been undergoing a trial phase in which a large number of institutions and regions are involved.³⁹

4. Reform of higher education

Ensuring the comparability of higher education degrees in Europe in terms of structure and organisation

Higher education is facing priorities mainly resulting from the Bologna Process and the associated adaptation of German study structures to cater for the European area of higher education. The core element of the strategy is to increase learning and innovation processes in higher education by **introducing the two-cycle degree system (Bachelor/Master)**. As early as 2002 Germany set the legislative bases for courses leading to the degrees of Bachelor and Master as part of the regular options available at higher education institutions⁴⁰. Courses leading to the degrees of Bachelor and Master may be established at universities and at colleges of equal status as well as at universities of applied sciences (*Fachhochschulen*). In 2003 the *Länder* adopted a fundamental decision on education policy aimed at maximum possible coverage in terms of the implementation of the two-cycle degree system to be achieved by 2010 and set framework conditions for the further definition of the courses of study leading to the degrees of Bachelor and Master⁴¹. As regards courses of study leading to the *Staatsexamen* (state examination after university studies) 11 *Länder* have begun to adapt teacher training to the two-cycle degree system. Further courses of study leading to the *Staatsexamen* (for example law, medicine, pharmaceuticals) and courses of study involving ecclesiastical examinations are still in the preparatory stage as regards adaptation.

³⁸ <http://www.artset-lqw.de>.

³⁹ <http://www.profilpass.de>. Einen einheitlichen, systematischen und gleichzeitig einfachen Zugang zu Informationen im Weiterbildungsbereich bietet das Anfang 2005 eingerichtete Weiterbildungsportal [Further information on the passport can be found at]: <http://www.iwwwb.de>.

⁴⁰ [Cf. Report on achieving the Bologna objectives] Vgl. den Bericht „Realisierung der Ziele des Bologna-Prozesses. Nationaler Bericht 2004 für Deutschland von KMK und BMBF“, http://www.bmbf.de/pub/nationaler_bericht_bologna_2004.pdf.

⁴¹ KMK-Beschluss [Decision dated] vom 12.06.2003, <http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/BMThesen.pdf>.

During the 2005 summer term, higher education institutions in Germany will be offering 2 925 courses of study leading to the degrees of Bachelor or Master and this corresponds to 26.3% of the courses available overall. 716 of these courses are accredited (315 Bachelor and 401 Master courses). Whereas in 2000 1.8% of all new students in their first term decided in favour of a course leading to a Bachelor's degree, in 2003 this figure was already 7.5%. The number of Bachelor and Master graduates in 2000 was 496 whereas in 2003 it had risen to 5 500, an eleven-fold increase. Half of the 3 000 Master's degrees awarded in 2003 were obtained by foreign students. In the 2003/2004 winter term 108 000 or 5.3% of all students were matriculated in courses of study leading to Bachelor's and Master's degrees. This means that the number has increased more than tenfold compared with the winter term of 1999/2000.

In Germany the courses of study in the two-cycle degree system have to be modular and must involve ECTS credits. The **ECTS** is simply a quantity measure for the overall record of the students showing the study and examination performance figures needed for the successful completion of a course of study. One credit is based on a work input by the students, either in class or when studying alone, corresponding to 30 hours of work. ECTS is currently being used in 67.7% of Bachelor courses and 62.5% of Master courses.

From 2005 onwards all students will automatically receive the **diploma supplement** free of charge. No application is needed. In the 2004/2005 winter term 44.8% of Bachelor courses and 44% of Master courses will include the awarding of the diploma supplement. The German Rectors' Conference (*Hochschulrektorenkonferenz*) has compiled a database, the "Diploma Supplement Deutschland" which offers higher education institutions the diploma supplement in the form of a downloadable file⁴².

A **national qualification framework for higher education degrees** is currently under development with the aim of defining the qualification in terms of learning results, skills and workload and achieving progress with the transparency and comparability of Germany's higher education degrees in a European context. The draft produced by the federal authorities, the *Länder* and the German Rectors' Conference will be adopted in spring 2005. The national qualification framework will then be developed to include further areas of the education sector and developments at European level will also be monitored.

Improving the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education in other parts of the world

As early as 2001 two **initiatives to increase the attractiveness** of German higher education abroad were launched: one was the Joint Initiative for the Promotion of Study, Research and Training in Germany (*Konzertierte Aktion "Internationales Marketing für den Bildungs- und Forschungsstandort Deutschland"*)⁴³ on the part of all the major institutions able to contribute to improving the framework conditions for international students in Germany (federal ministries, *Land* ministries, students' unions, research organisations, representatives of the business sector and the media plus the organisations that act as intermediaries for matters of cultural policy abroad). The other move was to found the "GATE-Germany consortium"⁴⁴ that has meanwhile 115 higher education institutions as members and organises marketing operations for all study and research

⁴² http://www.hrk.de/de/service_fuer_hochschulmitglieder/157.php#Unterstützung.

⁴³ <http://www.hi-potentials.de>.

⁴⁴ <http://www.gate-germany.de>.

options available in Germany. There were also education fairs and media-based support campaigns. An information portal in the internet was also set up⁴⁵ and a worldwide network of more than 40 information centres was established to provide information for interested parties on the spot.

The amendment of the Immigration Act of 1 January 2005 made it easier for non-European scientists with particular specialist knowledge, teaching staff in particular positions, highly-paid specialists and higher education graduates to be allowed to remain in Germany for an indefinite period after completing their course of study. The procedure for authorising residence permits and allowing spouses and family members to move to Germany as well was simplified.

The creation of internationally visible centres for research at higher education institutions, the networking of extra-mural research institutions and the strengthening of interdisciplinary cooperation are the aim of a whole range of **supraregional support programmes**. The EU research framework programme also supplies importance impulses.

By means of a targeted appointment policy (that includes the international-level advertising of vacant posts) and targeted programmes the aim is to recruit top-level scientists and up-and-coming scientists from abroad and to offer the best possible framework conditions (for example, reducing bureaucratic hurdles, providing attractive infrastructure) for research and teaching. As part of the “European Network of Mobility Centres (ERA)” the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation (AvH) saw the establishment of the German Mobility Centre that was tasked with informing scientists and providing advice when they come to Germany for research work⁴⁶.

Support for young scientists is an essential part of Germany’s strategy on excellence. The measures target a greater **structuring of the training for doctorates** (for example in postgraduate study groups (*Graduiertenkollegs*) or doctoral programmes) and on **early independence in research and teaching**. At post-doctoral level groups are given assistance when they cater for young scientists, for example through the Emmy-Noether programme provided by the DFG⁴⁷. With a view to consolidating early independence in scientific new blood during the qualification stage prior to appointment to a professorship for life, also in structural terms, a new category of staff was created, namely the junior professorship (*Juniorprofessur*)⁴⁸. A junior professorship offers top-range scientific new blood an opportunity to conduct independent research and to teach once they have obtained their doctorate. Such positions are attractive, in particular for scientists from abroad.

Support for advanced learning and for innovations

Development strategies in support of advanced learning are being promoted throughout the country also in the field of **eLearning**. Virtual learning has undergone constant further development over the past few years at Germany’s universities. Included in this are teaching options, new education and learning concepts as well as new forms of organisation at higher education institutions. The systematic utilisation of the new technologies is also conducive to the broadening out of the services on offer, for example

⁴⁵ <http://www.campus-germany-de>.

⁴⁶ <http://www.eracareers-germany.de>.

⁴⁷ http://www.dfg.de/forschungsfoerderung/nachwuchsfoerderung/emmy_noether/.

⁴⁸ <http://www.bmbf.de/de/820.php>.

in the fields of continuing education, lifelong learning and the transfer of results from research and development into teaching.⁴⁹

Germany attaches particular importance to raising the number of graduates in science and technology. Building on existing successes, proven measures and projects are being continued at Federal and *Länder* level and within higher education and schools. Decisions concerning courses of study at higher education level in mathematics, science and technology are taken by people while still at school. This is why particular emphasis is being placed on information and image campaigns that are organised in cooperation with schools. Stepping up the support and assistance provided can also have a positive effect. In the fields of mathematics, science and technology there are mentor programmes and small group concepts along with initial moves to improve guidance on courses of study. Another area of concentration is aimed at raising the number of women studying the sciences.

Support for structural change in higher education with a view to increasing learning and innovation processes and internal management skills

The reform of Germany's higher education is aimed in particular at increasing the performance orientation and autonomy of higher education institutions. The principal basis for this was the 4th amendment to the Framework Act for Higher Education (*Hochschulrahmengesetz – (HRG)*)⁵⁰ that was enacted in 1998 and stipulates performance orientation as the guiding principle for the funding of higher education institutions. The amendment also deregulates the statutory provisions governing the organisation and administration of universities. All-inclusive budgets, performance-related funding and agreements concerning objectives between the state and the higher education institutions have been introduced with this amendment as new controlling instruments to replace state regulation.

The structural change that has occurred in the higher education institutions is progressing in tandem with a large number of support programmes, which include the Higher Education and Science Programme (*Hochschul- und Wissenschaftsprogramm*)⁵¹ created by the Federal and *Länder* authorities that provides, under the guiding principle of equality of opportunities for women in research and teaching, funds totalling around EUR 1 thousand million for structural change during the period 2001 to 2006.

Ensuring quality/accreditation

Ensuring quality in Germany is tackled jointly by accreditation and evaluation. The quality assurance system in Germany takes account of international developments and is an integral part of international networks.

In Germany **accreditation** is considered to be a core element of quality assurance. The accreditation system for the new Bachelor/Master course structure has generally proved itself. In order to cater for rising demand it is being further developed in a number of essential areas. The central accreditation institution in Germany, the Accreditation

⁴⁹ Einen Überblick zum Einsatz digitaler Medien enthält die Website [See this website for a synopsis]: <http://www.bildungserver.de/zeigen.html?seite=1208>.

⁵⁰ Bekanntmachung der Neufassung des Hochschulrahmengesetzes vom 19.01.1999, zul. geändert durch Gesetz vom 27.12.2004, http://www.bmbf.de/pub/HRG_20050126.pdf.

⁵¹ <http://www.blk-bonn.de/hwp02.htm>.

Council (*Akkreditierungsrat*),⁵² became a foundation under public law in 2005, a move which put its work on a different and new legal footing. The task of the Accreditation Council is to assess agencies and to accredit them so that they in turn can accredit courses of study that lead to the degrees of Bachelor and Master. The agencies and the courses of study that they accredit are awarded a quality seal by the Accreditation Council if they are deemed to be successful when assessed. In addition, the Accreditation Council defines minimum requirements for the accreditation procedures that the agencies apply. The Accreditation Council also seeks to ensure that there is fair competition among the accreditation agencies and to defend German interests in international quality-assurance networks.

Institutional accreditation is gaining in importance for the area of non-state higher education because the globalisation process is bringing with it ever-more private higher education institutions. The *Länder* use institutional accreditation in their accreditation procedures as an instrument for quality assurance. The central actor in the accreditation of non-state higher education institutions is the Science Council (*Wissenschaftsrat*).

Since 1998 **evaluation** has been a permanent part of higher education institutions' general remit under the Federal level Framework Act for Higher Education and meanwhile it has found its way into all of the higher education legislation at *Land* level. Evaluation is intended to demonstrate the strengths and weaknesses of the higher education institution and/or of its syllabus so that the higher education institutions can adopt systematic strategies to ensure and improve quality. Instead of a national coordinating evaluation institution Germany has developed an infrastructure of institutions at regional or *Land* level and they set up the procedures for quality assurance in higher education. The evaluation procedures in Germany are consistent with the requirements of the Bologna Process (internal evaluation, external peer review, frequently with international participation, inclusion of assessments by students and the publication of the results in a suitable way).

Since 1998 the German Rectors' Conference has been pursuing the Project Q (Quality assurance) that facilitates the exchange of information and experience in relation to quality assurance.⁵³

Technological partnerships/networking of the business sector and higher education institutions

Cooperation between higher education institutions and the business sector is a basic requirement for innovation and competitiveness. Germany attaches great importance to the utilisation of research results in industrial applications. In addition to transfer “head to head” there are other new forms of technology transfer namely the networking and extension of technology transfer centres at higher education institutions, involving higher education institutions in trade fairs and higher education patent initiatives that have proved worth while.

A large number of programmes, in particular the EXIST-Programme,⁵⁴ have allowed business start-up networks to be established in and around higher education institutions and have contributed to improving the business start-up climate at higher education

⁵² <http://www.akkreditierungsrat.de>.

⁵³ http://www.hrk.de/de/projekte_und_initiativen/121.php.

⁵⁴ <http://www.exist.de>.

institutions and raise the number of innovative business start-ups by students, scientists and graduates.

5. Improving the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training (VET)

Germany is open to the idea of closer cooperation in Europe in the field of vocational education and training and of creating, by the year 2010, a European area of education that will include vocational education and training (VET).

Reform of vocational education and training and support for transnational mobility

Germany is bringing to the European development scene an effective vocational education and training system that has proved itself because it is geared to vocational practice. Discussions over the past few years on the reform of vocational education and training in Germany have led to a fundamental recasting of VET legislation that entered into force in April 2005. The aim of this VET Reform Act⁵⁵ is to ensure in a particular way that young people entering the world of work are given full vocational ability to act in a broad area of activity for skilled workers. This broad vocational competence is intended to allow them to come to terms with the constantly changing job requirements and so allow them to lay the foundations for a life that they determine for themselves. At the same time, this is an important component in the quality assurance in Germany's vocational education and training system.

What is more, the new law will **promote transnational mobility**. Now it is allowed to define fixed-term periods of the VET course to be completed abroad. This means that a period abroad is seen, by the law, as a part of the VET course, provided it is consistent with the objective of the training and, for example, provides language skills or other additional skills. Foreign periods should not exceed one-quarter of the period of training specified in the training regulations (*Ausbildungsordnung*). Easing the mobility of persons undergoing vocational education and training is also ensured by the agreement between the Federal and *Land* authorities on participation by the students attending vocational schools in exchange schemes with foreign countries⁵⁶ and by the recommendation on leave of absence for students attending vocational schools⁵⁷.

Securing the availability of training places

In order to ensure that there are enough **training opportunities** the Federal and *Länder* authorities are supporting the efforts of the business sector by offering improved framework conditions and financial assistance. With a good 54 000 training places outside of companies the availability of training at the workplace is appropriately supported by measures adopted by the Federal and *Länder* authorities and the Federal Employment Agency. The temporary supplementing of training-at-the-workplace options by nationally funded training places is intended to overcome regional bottlenecks.

⁵⁵ Der Gesetzestext ist abrufbar unter: <http://www.bmbf.de/de/1644.php>.

⁵⁶ Vgl. Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 08.06.1999.

⁵⁷ Vgl. Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 30.05.1980.

These developments are being given a powerful boost by the **National Pact for Education and Training and Young Skilled Workers (Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs)**⁵⁸ that was signed on 16 June 2004 by representatives of the leading business associations and the Federal Government for a period of three years (known as the Vocational Education and Training Pact or *Ausbildungspakt*). This agreement obliges the business sector over the next three years to create some 30 000 new training places every year along with 25 000 places for introductory training every year.

Over the past few years the *Länder* have extended the availability of vocational education and training in full-time vocational schools so that in particular those people who have failed to find a training place in the dual system (training at work coupled with education at vocational schools) or wish to learn one of the more demanding professions (assistants), can obtain qualified vocational education and training. Successful completion of these courses allows direct transition to the employment system and with appropriate additional tuition can also lead to admission to higher education. There are also signs of considerable increases in VET courses that target primarily the acquisition of a higher education entrance qualification.

The Federal authorities will over the next few years be concentrating on various programmes, in particular on the **development of regional cooperation structures** to secure an adequate supply of training places, both in quality and quantity terms. Experience from supporting innovative projects in the JUMP Programme, from the “Regio-Kompetenz-Ausbildung” programmes in the *Länder in eastern Germany*⁵⁹ and STARegio in the *Länder in western Germany*⁶⁰ shows that by means of concrete action on projects, the establishment of networks, coaching in training and the initiation of training partnerships it is possible to develop structures in the regional training markets that can help to secure and extend the availability of training places.

Vocational guidance and preparation

In 2004 the *Länder* resolved to deepen cooperation on vocational guidance and preparation for choosing an occupation with the Federal Employment Agency under a new framework agreement.⁶¹ The objective is to ensure that all young people at the end of their schooling are in a position to decide clearly and realistically what their vocational future is to be. Preparing them to choose an occupation starts no later than two years prior to the end of schooling. The measures of schools and vocational guidance services are backed up with enhanced support and the development of partnerships between schools and the region’s economic operators and the stepping-up of cooperation between the *Länder* and the parties to Germany’s training pact.

The federal level has set up the programme “Schule-Wirtschaft/Arbeitsleben”⁶² (SWA – school-economy/working-life) to give teenagers guidance in exploring their social

⁵⁸ Der vollständige Text des Ausbildungspaktes ist als pdf.-Datei abrufbar unter[See the following for the full text]: <http://www.bmbf.de/pub/ausbildungspakt-2004.pdf>.

⁵⁹ Vgl. Berufsbildungsbericht 2005, Teil II, Kapitel 1.1.4.[Cf. Report on Vocational Education and Training 2005 etc]

⁶⁰ Vgl. Berufsbildungsbericht 2005, Teil II, Kapitel 1.1.4. [ditto]

⁶¹ http://www.kmk.org/aktuell/RV_Schule_Berufsberatung.pdf.

⁶² <http://www.swa-programm.de>

competences and a future profession while still in school. The programme started in 1999 and is co-financed by the ESF since 2001.

Activities centre on the **interface between general education and vocational education and training** so that young people at school experiencing problems with the transition to vocational education and training can be given targeted support. Essential steps in optimising the transition are the development of what are termed ‘qualification modules’ that are incorporated into vocational preparation under the Vocational Education and Training Act (*Berufsbildungsgesetz*). These last up to 420 hours and offer information about recognised training occupations. Pedagogical support can be promoted under existing social legislation (SGB III - Employment promotion).

Alongside these support measures under SGB III the Federal authorities have continued with the programme commenced in 2001 known as “Kompetenzen fördern - **Berufliche Qualifizierung für Zielgruppen mit besonderem Förderbedarf**” – (BQF-Programm) (Promoting skills – Vocational qualification for target groups with particular needs)⁶³. The aim is to increase the efficiency of existing support measures to secure greater integration in training and employment and to improve the targeting of the support to cater for specific groups, such as migrants. In September 2004 the Federal Employment Agency adopted major elements of the “New support structure” that were developed and tested as part of this programme and incorporated them into its system of measures.

The results of a study **to establish medium-term labour market developments** (a labour market radar system) dating from 2004⁶⁴ could in future provide important help for vocational counselling. The aim is to provide young people choosing a career with guidance on options and risks on the labour market by means of accurate and up-to-date information on qualifications and occupations that are particularly in demand on the labour market in the medium term. This will allow them to plan their future using more reliable data than is the case today. The labour market radar will allow training providers and political decision makers to tailor training options more specifically to needs.

Modernisation, ensuring quality and fostering permeability

Vocational education and training is being made more attractive, inter alia, **by the reorganisation of recognised occupations requiring formal training (*anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe*)**. Since 1998 some 180 such training occupations have been reorganised. This means that they were revised/modernised or else that new occupations were created. The reorganisation process includes revision of the framework curriculum (*Rahmenlehrplan*)⁶⁵ for the school part of the VET courses in the dual system. The basis for the revision is the concept of areas of learning (*Lernfeldkonzept*) that guarantees targeted learning with a view to securing the qualified vocational, private and social skills needed for taking action. The standards set in the framework curricula are geared to the requirements, in terms of action and work processes, of the occupation in question. Half of all young people are currently being trained either in these modernised or newly created training occupations.

⁶³ Vgl. Berufsbildungsbericht 2005, Teil II, Kapitel 3.2.2.1. [ditto]

⁶⁴ http://www.bmbf.de/pub/abschlussbericht_arbeitsmarktradar_gesamt.pdf.

⁶⁵ <http://www.kmk.org/beruf/rlpl/lehrplan.htm>.

The quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training was further boosted by an initiative of the Federal authorities for the **early identification of skill needs** by providing adequate amounts of valid information regarding the constantly changing qualification requirements at the intermediate level. Various research projects analysed the new qualifications that are required for various sectors, areas of activity and target groups. All of the results, including existing recommendations for action, are available in the Internet based Frequenz Network.⁶⁶ This information is made available to the stakeholders in VET policy (Federal and *Länder* authorities and the social partners), educational institutions and enterprises. With the aid of this information it has proved possible to develop new qualification concepts and use them under reorganisation procedures relating to the occupations that require initial and further training.

The Frequenz Network also proved useful for setting up a European network for the early identification of skill needs (Skillsnet) at CEDEFOP. By comparing trends in qualifications with other European countries this network allows closer European VET cooperation in this field and contributes to the achievement of the Lisbon Objectives. The transfer between European countries of results and procedures for early identification is a particularly important component.

In continuing vocational education and training ongoing modernisation is being supported by targeted measures, programmes and initiatives. The programme "**Lernkultur Kompetenzentwicklung**" (The learning culture for skills development) is supporting a modern and quality-oriented vocational education and training system by developing efficient and continuous learning structures. The central aim of this programme that is funded by the Federal authorities and the ESF is a strengthening of individual vocational skills and the development and testing of strategies on skills maintenance and skills development in the event of unemployment along with e-Learning and new learning concepts (including service-based concepts) in further training institutions. The programme is composed of a variety of fields in which the intensity of learning involved in certain trades plays a decisive part⁶⁷. The more options available for learning at work the greater the potential for the development of vocational skills. Other individual projects ensure that regional aspects are taken into account, specific problem groups are catered for (for example young people on the threshold of transferring from vocational education and training to work) and that there is evaluation and scientific monitoring in addition to the programme assistance referred to above and that networks ensure transfer occurs.

Comparative tests of further vocational training⁶⁸ that examine the quality of training media and training measures have been organised by the Federal authorities since 2002. Persons interested in continuing training can clearly understand the quality they can expect and how they can find or recognise good offers of training courses. Providers gain as well because they can view quality from the learner's perspective and thus target their quality improvement efforts by concentrating on important information that can be used for optimising specific products and offers.

These measures form part of efforts to improve the structural prerequisites **for lifelong vocational learning**. The aim is to seek clearly contoured permeable paths for vocational

⁶⁶ <http://www.frequenz.net>.

⁶⁷ Einzelheiten zu den thematischen Bereichen siehe [For details see] <http://www.abwf.de>.

⁶⁸ <http://www.weiterbildungstests.de>.

developments and sequences of opportunities not only between vocational preparation and VET courses but also in terms of achieving higher vocational qualifications. To **make the transition from initial to further training** as fluid as possible existing scope is being further developed to enable elements and components from recognised training occupations as well as additional qualifications for trainees to be credited to any following further vocational training.

The opportunities for young skilled workers to embark on **staged, promotion-gearred further training** are being extended by enhanced modular further training courses. The aim of **allowing more vocationally qualified people to access higher education studies** should also be seen in this context along with enhanced scope for extending the crediting of related vocational qualifications to their university-level performance. The agreement on the awarding of *Fachhochschule* admission qualifications (*Fachhochschulreife*) in the context of VET courses⁶⁹ improved the scope for obtaining such qualifications in the context of vocational education and training.

6. The European dimension of education and training

Increasing mobility and the securing of the European dimension are important objectives in school, in vocational education and training and in higher education.

School

The recommendation “**Europa im Unterricht**” (Europe in the classroom) of 1978 (as amended in 1990)⁷⁰ sets out the elements and guidelines for teaching school children about Europe in all the *Länder* and lays down some recommendations on how this can be developed further. It is a matter of principle that the entire syllabus at a school should serve to open up the European dimension when children are being taught and educated. In particular in the subjects geography, history, social affairs/politics and those with an economic or legal component it is important to consider European questions and the development of Europe and this is mandatory in all types of school education.

Of particular importance at school is the **learning of foreign languages**, in particular by extending the teaching of foreign languages in primary school. This concerns primarily grades 3 and 4, in some *Länder* even grades 1 and 2⁷¹. In addition, the *Länder* are currently working on a common language portfolio for Germany that is in line with the model produced by the Council of Europe. By means of pilot schemes in a number of *Länder*, different portfolios will be tried out. Well-established schools partnerships and exchanges, for example under COMENIUS or bilateral programmes, promote direct contacts with partners of the other language group. These contacts serve to further linguistic skills and also motivate and encourage people to gain intercultural skills. In 2003 the number of participating students rose by almost 15 000 to nearly 130 000. There were 11 700 teachers involved in COMENIUS projects. There was also a

⁶⁹ Beschluss der KMK vom 05.06.1998 i.d.F. vom 09.03.2001, <http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/Vefhsr01-03-09.pdf>.

⁷⁰ Europa im Unterricht (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 08.06.1978, i.d.F. vom 7.12.1990).

⁷¹ Bericht „Fremdsprachen in der Grundschule – Sachstand und Konzeptionen“ (Beschluss der Kultusministerkonferenz vom 10.02.2005), [Report by the KMK on foreign languages at elementary schools] http://www.kmk.org/doc/beschl/fremdsprachen_in_der_grundschule.pdf.

pronounced rise in the number of disadvantaged teachers (307) and students (more than 9 000).

Encouraging **mobility among teachers** occurs at all stages of their careers, from initial training to the classroom. Students in initial teacher training enjoy many opportunities for periods of study and work in EU countries as well as in non-EU countries (a term abroad, working as an assistant teacher) and financial support is often provided. A growing number of trainee teachers are availing themselves of this possibility, either under a German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) scheme, an EU programme under SOCRATES or as part of the programme for the exchange of foreign language assistants through the Pedagogical Exchange Service (PAD) of the Conference of Ministers of Education (KMK). Over the past ten years some 25 000 German and foreign students have taken part in the PAD scheme for language assistant exchanges. Periods of study and teaching work abroad are normally credited for trainee teachers in Germany. As a further measure cross-border training courses have been set up in regions around national borders⁷². In-service training for teachers includes, for example, sitting in on classes and exchange programmes which are organised by the PAD and operate on a reciprocal basis.

Vocational education and training

As regards the LEONARDO DA VINCI programme, Germany attaches great importance to improving the quality of mobility projects and providing support for longer-term periods spent abroad. In the pursuit of these objectives models were developed in 2004 for **dual transnational training schemes** and they were given national priority. Support is provided for projects run by training companies, vocational schools and other actors active in vocational education and training that allow longer-term periods to be spent abroad for training that forms a component of the national training⁷³. In the longer term this dual transnational training scheme will help in the achievement of a European area for education, training and employment.

With its **bilateral exchange programmes** for vocational education and training Germany is seeking closer cooperation with selected partner countries (for example with France, the Netherlands, the UK, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic and Hungary). The exchange arrangements are as a rule anchored in stable partnerships between training companies, vocational schools, Chambers of Commerce and other actors involved in vocational education and training. Apart from promoting mobility these programmes also make a cross-border transfer of innovation in vocational education and training possible.

In 2004 the Federal Ministry of Education and Research commissioned an evaluation of the bilateral exchange programmes with France, the Netherlands and the UK which showed that these programmes are of a highly specialist nature and geared to working practices, which means that they can serve as a basis for the further development of LEONARDO DA VINCI.

⁷² Z. B. in Baden-Württemberg das bilingual ausgerichtete Europalehramt - Englisch oder Französisch –[Baden-Württemberg e.g. has a bilingual teaching posts scheme for English or French](http://www.ph-karlsruhe.de/lehre_stud/studiengaenge.html) oder der binationale deutsch-französische „Integrierte Teilstudiengang“ [or bi-national Franco-German integrated partial study course].

⁷³ Weitere Informationen unter: http://bibb2.skygate.de/info3/upload/bildg_fuer_europa_April2004.pdf.

In 2004 Germany und France agreed on the general comparability of qualifications in the field of vocational education and training⁷⁴. The resulting transparency and comparability of qualifications boost the trust that enterprises have in the quality of the training in the other country and increase their willingness to accept workers from the partner country for employment. Cooperation with Austria is aimed at achieving a similar agreement. Such bilateral agreements on general comparability of vocational qualifications can serve as models for European initiatives to increase transparency and comparability (Europass, European qualification framework).

Higher education

The proportion of German students who have spent at least one term of their course abroad was 15% in 2002. The proportion of foreign students at German higher education institutions rose by 9.9% in 2000 to 12.2% in 2003 measured against the overall number of students attending German higher education institutions. For the academic year 2003/2004 almost 21 000 German students spent part of their study course in another European country under the ERASMUS programme and this was about 2 200 students more than in the year before. The most popular host countries were Spain (4 325 or 20.9%), France (3 997 or 19.3%) and the UK (3 159 or 15.3%). The number of German students spending part of their study course in Central and Eastern Europe rose also. A total of 964 students went to those countries and this was 275 more than in the year before.

The **exchange of students, graduates and scientists** operates under grant programmes, primarily from the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), examples being the Free Mover Grants Programme⁷⁵ for Europe, the European Excellence Programme⁷⁶ (both since 2005/2006) and the Carlo-Schmid Programme⁷⁷ for traineeships, including at the EU institutions. In addition, the DAAD runs about 20 integrated binational programmes leading to a dual degree.

The DAAD also funds periods of work for foreign scientists, artists and higher education administrators at a German institution of higher education under partnership schemes between higher education institutions. In 2002 the Go East⁷⁸ Initiative was launched⁷⁹ that in addition to awarding grants also advertised possibilities of going to study at higher education institutions in Central and Eastern Europe and in the CIS. So far, more than 1 400 students and graduates have taken part in this programme under the auspices of the DAAD.

In addition to extensive efforts in favour of the European dimension in higher education curricula, particular reference should be made to the **double degree and joint degree projects**. In the first round of calls for proposals under ERASMUS Mundus 19 Master's

⁷⁴ Gemeinsame Erklärung auf dem Gebiet der beruflichen Bildung über die generelle Vergleichbarkeit von französischen Abschlusszeugnissen in der Berufsausbildung und deutschen Abschlusszeugnissen in der Berufsausbildung nach Berufsbildungsgesetz, Handwerksordnung sowie Schulrecht der Länder, 26.10.2004, [Joint Statement on Vocational Education and Training concerning the general comparability of French and German leaving certificates etc.]

http://www.bmbf.de/pub/gemeinsame_erklaerung_berufliche_bildung_dt-frz.pdf.

⁷⁵ <http://www.daad.de/hochschulen/de/5.4.3.html>.

⁷⁶ <http://www.daad.de/ausland/de/3.4.2.43.html>.

⁷⁷ <http://www.daad.de/ausland/de/3.4.2.15.html>.

⁷⁸ <http://www.goeast.daad.de/>.

⁷⁹ <http://goeast.daad.de/>.

projects were approved from all over Europe, 13 completed with German involvement and in the second round German higher education institutions are involved in eight out of a total 17 European-level Master's programmes for which funding was provided.

Since 2001 grants under the Federal Training Assistance Act (BaföG)⁸⁰ allow students to continue their studies elsewhere in Europe. Germany attaches great importance to the question of the **funding of study periods abroad** and will therefore endeavour within the group of experts set up by the EU Commission to advocate more generous provisions regarding the portability of training grants and loans.

⁸⁰ <http://www.bmbf.de/pub/bundesausbildungsfoerderungsgesetz.pdf>.