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IMPLEMENTING THE 'EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010'

WORK PROGRAMME

2005 Progress Report



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**DANISH CONTRIBUTION TO THE 2006
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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORK PROGRAMME**

“EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010”

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1. INTRODUCTION: THE DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL POLICIES AND THE LISBON AGENDA

1.1. Please report in this section on whether the Lisbon strategy has been an explicit factor in the overall development of education and training policies and systems, and which mechanisms are put in place to follow/monitor and measure progress achieved at national level, against the Lisbon objectives.

There is no doubt that the extensive international focus on education and lifelong learning for the last years forms the background for several of the government's initiatives in the field of education and training. The Lisbon strategy has, however, not been a starting point as such of policy making in the field of education.

The government does, however, stress international cooperation in education and training as a means to enhance efficiency, improve quality and strengthen educational standards in the Danish educational system. Denmark therefore targets these fields in its work in the EU, the OECD and the Nordic Council of Ministers.

The Bologna process has heavily influenced educational policy work in higher education in Denmark. It laid the foundations for the Act on Medium Cycle Higher Education in 2000 and the Executive Order on Professional Bachelor Programmes. Further, the Bologna process was a factor of great importance for the degree structure in higher education (3+2+3 structure) and for Diploma Supplements. At present, a key competence framework for higher education programmes with inspiration from the Bologna process and tools for improved quality assurance in accordance with the Berlin and Bergen communiqués are being prepared.

The Copenhagen process in initial and adult vocational education and training, which was initiated under the Danish EU presidency in 2002, has enjoyed considerable national attention. Follow-up on action areas given priority in the Copenhagen Declaration is included in the government's policy paper on enhanced internationalisation of Danish education and training, which was submitted to Parliament in April 2004 (<http://pub.uvm.dk/2004/internationalisation>).

The following actions have moreover been taken in line with European references developed during the Copenhagen process:

- Certificate Supplements are prepared for all initial vocational training programmes and may even be issued for specific state approved continuing vocational training programmes,
- Recognition of prior learning based on individual competence assessment is introduced in initial vocational education and training and in adult education and continuing training,
- In 2005, the government implemented an action plan based on a statement to Parliament in 2004 on the recognition of prior learning in education and training. The statement follows European principles for identification and recognition of prior learning,
- The common European framework for reference for quality assurance is presented to vocational training providers and included in the ongoing development of quality assurance in vocational training programmes and at colleges. Denmark moreover participates in trans-national peer learning activities on quality assurance.

No national objectives for investment in human resources have been set up in Denmark (see 2.1.2.).

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has set up a contact committee for the Lisbon Strategy, which consists of representatives from all relevant ministries and parties, including social partners and representatives from the educational sector.

The OECD's PISA studies have been quite influential in inspiring new policies. Danish students have not performed as well as expected in the studies, which led Denmark to ask for an OECD review on Quality and Equity in School Outcomes. The direct result of the review has been the introduction of attainment targets at specific age levels as well as national tests (call for tender is out in the summer of 2005).

1.2. Please express any difficulties you might have faced in trying to associate more closely the Education and Training 2010 priorities with national education and training policy development?

In Denmark, no specific difficulties were encountered in relation to the implementation of the priorities of the work programme Education and Training 2010.

The work programme was promoted and given visibility in Denmark. Two conferences were held in 2003 with relevant participants. One conference made status on progress for the first year, and the other used as point of departure the notice from the EU Commission from November 2003 on future objectives for education and training systems. In November 2005, a conference is planned in connection with the preparation of a national action plan for lifelong learning. In connection with the Bologna process a national conference on EQF in higher education was held in January 2005.

One separate meeting was held with Danish representatives in working groups under the EU Commission on achieving the goals.

2. INVESTING MORE AND MORE EFFICIENTLY: FOCUSING REFORM ON THE KEY AREAS

2.1. Identification of national priorities for reform and investment

2.1.1. Which are currently the top priority areas for modernisation / reform in your country's education and training systems?

It is a declared aim for the government that anybody should have access to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences as required by the labour market, if they so wish. This applies to both young people and adults, and high priority is given to specific action taken for the low educated and other groups vulnerable to exclusion, among others immigrants, at the labour market.

"New Goals", Government Platform from February 2005 (hereafter called the Platform), puts focus on the future role of Denmark in the global economy. Within the framework of three pillars, efforts should be made to make Denmark, Danish companies and the individual Dane better at responding to the challenges posed by an increasingly open international economy. One of the three pillars is world-class education.

Primary and lower secondary education (the *Folkeskole*) is at the core of this pillar. Education in Denmark at this level is among the most expensive ones in the world, but analyses

indicate that results do not compare favourably with efforts. The performance of Danish pupils is second-rate in international comparison.

The Platform builds on several initiatives from the political consent in 2002 on primary and lower secondary education that are already implemented, in particular a targeted effort to strengthen educational standards. This implies, among others, more evaluation of the pupils' learning outcome by introducing mandatory tests in several subjects. In this connection a council for evaluation and quality development in primary and lower secondary education was set up (see 2.3.). It is expected that a strengthened documentation and evaluation culture will keep focus on the core tasks of schools and ensure that action is taken in time if specific support or more challenges are required for individual pupils.

In addition to this, Danish language lessons will be strengthened as will educational standards in maths and natural science, a national action plan for reading will be introduced, and basic and further teacher training improved. Furthermore a reform of teacher education will be presented to Parliament within the Parliamentary session 2005/06.

An action plan for ICT in primary and lower secondary education which runs from 2004 to 2007 was initiated by the government. Total funding for the action plan amounts to DKK 500 million. The majority of the funding (75 per cent) is earmarked to ensuring that pupils in the lowest grades have access to computers as a daily, personal tool. Another DKK 50 million is earmarked for the development of new forms of online teaching material. A similar amount should be spent on other ICT-related development activities, such as the development of ICT-based teaching material.

Upper secondary education: (either upper secondary education qualifying for admission to higher education or vocational education and training providing labour market skills). The government has set as an aim that 85 per cent of a youth cohort completes an upper secondary education programme by 2010, and that the figure increases to 95 per cent by 2015. The government has plans for a number of initiatives to reach these aims. Today, 78 per cent of an age cohort completes a youth education programme. The government also set the aim that another 25,000 immigrants are in employment by 2010, and that one of the means for this is to offer basic and further education opportunities.

In initial vocational education and training, already ongoing activities contribute to more young people completing a vocationally oriented education programme. In 2005, the government initiated committee work to identify new ways of education in initial vocational education and training that consider the needs of students that have a practical turn of mind.

(See 2.2.1. on reform of upper secondary education).

In adult vocational training and continuing training, strengthened efforts will be made, not least regarding training of the low educated. The government established a tripartite committee on lifelong learning and education for all at the labour market (3.1.2. on committee mandate).

Higher education: The government has set the aim that at least 45 per cent of a youth cohort graduate from higher education by 2010 and that 50 per cent do so by 2015. The government will improve opportunities for students to study abroad as part of their educational programme, and for attracting highly competent foreign students to complete higher education in Denmark. Efforts will also be made to encourage students to complete higher education in fewer years than is the case today. The government wants to improve teacher training and therefore proposes that teachers of core subjects, that is Danish and maths, in the future only teach pupils in either lower or upper grades and that the

educational coherence between subjects is more pronounced. Natural science in teacher training should be strengthened. The long-term objective is that teachers only teach subjects in which they are specialised, and not in core subjects if not specialised. The government will make an effort to increase the number of university graduates teaching the upper grades in the primary and lower secondary education on the same terms as teachers trained at colleges of education.

The government will implement a reform of the educational programme for teachers that strengthen professional skills, allow for immersion, improve opportunities for specialisation and practical training, and provide a more coherent educational programme. The government aims at offering education that creates professional, strong educationalists with competences to solve the new tasks that follow in the wake of the government strategy for providing a good start for all children.

Other prioritised items on the agenda are the recognition of centres for higher education (called *Center for Videregående Uddannelse, CVU*) as university colleges, and the approval and development of knowledge centres (see 4.1.4. and 4.1.7.).

2.1.2. The extent to which more/more efficient investment is a key factor in confronting these reforms, and progress made and specific difficulties encountered in adapting investment patterns accordingly.

Denmark is highly ranked in EU and OECD comparisons in terms of total investment in education and training. It has therefore been a separate aim for the government since it came to power in 2001 to make the best use of resources. The government established a reconversion pool for innovation in the educational sector and in specific areas of high priority. It is a new management tool in education and training system. At the same time, the government invests DKK 10 billion in education and research to ensure that the Danish labour market in the future remains among the most flexible and highly adaptable ones in the world.

In initial and continuing vocational education and training, initiatives are made by the government that aim at better use of public resources, and special funding is available to a targeted effort in vocational training and adult and further education.

In the multi-annual agreement on vocational education and training that runs until 2006, the government allocated another DKK 445 million to vocational education and training to improve quality and ensure that more individuals complete a vocational education and training programme.

In adult education and continuing training, the government allocated in its political intervention in spring 2004 and in the 2005 Appropriation Act a total of DKK 500 million extra to further training of the low-educated, in particular, from 2004 to 2008. In 2004 and 2005, specific funding is earmarked to improve basic reading and arithmetic skills of skilled workers and young adults. It is also now possible for the 60-64 years old to benefit from adult education grants to complete adult education and continuing training with a view to staying on at the labour market.

Higher education: In the coming years investment in the educational system supports the educational policy objectives of the government, among others the aim of increasing the number of young people graduating from higher education, improving the number of graduates, and reducing the number of drop-outs.

2.1.3. Whether EU funds (e.g. from the ERDF, ESF or EIB) were a significant factor in supporting these reforms

No, they were not, though educational institutions when developing their programmes and curricula use EU funds from time to time.

2.2. Extent of correlation between Member States priority areas, and the common European objectives

2.2.1. Reforms in the structure of education / training institutions e.g. administrative structure reforms such as decentralisation; public/private initiatives such as private provision of (non)academic services, e.g. research contracts or accommodation services; or organisational changes such as school reforms targeted at pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds.

When the government came to power in 2001, it presented the action plan "Better education" which reformed primary and lower secondary and upper secondary education, and fundamentally reformed vocational training and adult education and continuing training by increasing coherence between the two types of vocational education and training.

In primary and lower secondary education, differentiated teaching has since 1993 formed the basis for teaching pupils from any background so that special needs education is an offer which is given only when the individual pupil's educational needs are not covered by ordinary teaching.

The integration of ICT in teaching is considered an advantage for both low and high performing pupils, in that ICT is also used as a tool to improve the regular cooperation between teachers and pupils in all age groups. At the initiative of the Ministry of Education, a project on ICT, Media and the primary and lower upper education (ITMF) was carried out, and results indicate that systematic use of ICT as a tool and medium in concurrence with organisational change may contribute to schools reaching the aims on differentiated teaching as set out in the Act on the Folkeskole (primary and lower secondary education) (see 2.1.1.).

In this connection, bilingual pupils were identified as a specific target group (see 3.1.3. on action for specific target groups and Danish as a second language).

Teaching gifted children is a regularly discussed subject in the public debate and in professional environments. To improve opportunities for all children, the Minister of Education has set up a committee to discuss problems related to teaching gifted children.

Upper secondary education: As of August 2005, upper secondary education is subject to a reform. General, commercial and technical upper secondary education will now share the same structure but with individual educational profiles. All programmes start off by a basic programme of six months. The subjects of Danish, English and maths are taught in the basic programme of each educational profile, but other subjects vary from profile to profile. At the end of the basic programme, students may shift to one of the other profiles. The basic programme is followed by a main programme of 2½ years where schools offer educational programmes according to guidelines set out by the Ministry of Education. The reform enables students to choose between educational programmes where the combination of subjects is given in advance so that they support each other and create knowledge in a more coherent way than if the subjects were non-related, as was the case before the reform where the programmes each were based on a considerable number of electives.

The structure provides flexibility between educational programmes and increases educational standards through the profiles. Possibilities for accreditation are improved in case of shift between programmes or integration of study periods undertaken abroad.

The description of the objectives for each subject was changed to put focus on study competence rather than on mainly skills. Emphasis is on offering varying teaching and work methods for the purpose of improving students' actual study competence, and in prolongation to this, new examination forms create a natural coherence between daily teaching methods and examination forms. More emphasis has been put on regular evaluation and testing of students.

The reform sets the stage for increased use of ICT and schools may offer virtual lessons for up to 25 per cent of the curriculum in each subject. The international dimension is further stressed in the curricula.

The government has put forward a proposal on a new institutional structure for upper secondary education. Schools administered by the counties previously offered general upper secondary education. A structural reform of local authority abolishes counties and it is therefore suggested that schools become independent institutions with own school boards. Funding for education will be based on the taximeter system, which implies that schools receive funding per student, as is the case for vocational education and training schools and higher education institutions.

In vocational education and training, vocational education and continuing training and adult vocational training, a unified institutional structure applies. Legislation from 2002 aims at creating a coherent system of vocationally oriented programmes at initial and continuing levels.

In 2003, the reform of initial vocational education and training was implemented to provide more flexibility, improve access to vocational education and training programmes and offer programmes which were increasingly directed towards the labour market. This resulted in 25 new, short vocational education and training programmes and in the introduction of 15 new levels in existing programmes. The overall aim is to reduce the number of drop-outs and to ensure that more students complete a vocational education and training programme. In 2004, the dual system was reformed and in this connection, the government implemented legislative amendments to allow more young people than today to start on a vocational training programme doing practical training in a company based on an apprenticeship contract with the company.

In adult education and continuing training, a reform of adult vocational training was implemented in 2003 to increase demand management and coherence in efforts related to initial and adult vocational education and training. The act, implemented 1 January 2004, provides improved access to adult vocational training for unskilled and skilled workers at the labour market. A central element in the reform is development of approximately 150 new competence descriptions which gives educational institutions improved tools and increased flexibility to meet the needs for new skills of employees and companies, considering also the need for further training of immigrants and refugees.

Higher education: Over the last couple of years, the government has sought to enlarge and strengthen higher education institutions to create a basis for more efficient use of resources (see 4.1.4. on university college).

2.2.2. The development of incentives to invest more in education and training, e.g. using tax and benefit systems as the Lisbon conclusions suggest; and incentives to enhance the efficiency and attractiveness of the education and training systems (concerning public and private institutions, learners and their families, teachers and trainers etc.): either financial (e.g. various wage and reward systems for teachers and trainers) or non-financial (e.g. guidance and quality frameworks to guarantee and assess performance).

In terms of financial incentives, the taximeter system, which is the fundamental financing system of education and training in Denmark, ensures an efficient use of resources in vocational training and higher education. Plans are that funding of general upper secondary schools (*gymnasium*) will also be based on this system. For the time being, the Ministry of Education is preparing a comprehensive analysis of the financial management of the educational system (which includes an analysis of the taximeter system). The analysis will be completed in 2005.

In terms of non-financial incentives, a major reform of the guidance system in Denmark was implemented as of 1 August 2004. Guidance on upper secondary education and occupation is now offered by a number of centres located all over the country. A single and improved training programme for guidance counsellors is set up. In connection with the reform, the responsibility of local authorities to ensure that young people remain in the educational system is increased (see also 3.1.3).

During the last years, intensive work was done on the development of systems for assessment and recognition of prior learning in educational programmes. In November 2004, a statement was presented to Parliament on this (see 3.1.3).

2.2.3. Funding mechanisms to increase private investment from enterprises, households and individuals, particularly in the sectors of higher education, vocational training and adult education?

In vocational education and training, special subsidies are introduced to companies entering apprenticeship contracts and offering work placements to young people in vocational training.

Since 2001, user payment at varying levels was introduced in practically all adult education and continuing training programmes for the purpose of promoting demand management and increasing private investment in education. Programmes aimed at low-educated people have a considerably lower level of user payment.

2.3. Monitoring and evaluation of educational policies

The most important instrument for evaluation of Danish educational policy is the Danish Evaluation Institute (*Danmarks Evalueringsinstitut, EVA*). The institute develops and gives visibility to education and is the national knowledge centre on evaluation. Law set up the institute in 1999 as an independent institute under the Ministry of Education.

The Evaluation Institute:

- Reviews specific educational areas,
- Assesses the coherence between various educational programmes and levels,
- Develops and innovates evaluation techniques and methods,
- Collects national and international experiences on evaluation of education.

In addition to this, regular and isolated analyses of specific problem-matters in the educational sector are carried out, for instance following the implementation of new legislation. Often external consultancy firms make these analyses (see 2.2.2. on the financial management analysis).

The Government Platform "New Goals" from February 2005 sets out plans for a more direct use of professional expertise in primary and lower secondary education to develop schools and education at this level. An independent council for evaluation and quality development of primary and lower secondary education (the *Folkeskole*) is therefore set up. The council is supported by a new state authority for evaluation and quality development of education at this level.

3. PUTTING IN PLACE A TRULY COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGY

3.1. Main policy/measure

3.1.1. The state of development of your country vis-à-vis the design and implementation of such a coherent and comprehensive lifelong learning strategy.

Denmark has a well-functioning and flexible educational system with well-defined levels from pre-school to the highest academic level. In addition, a well-developed adult education and continuing training system contributes to competence development through the provision of generally and vocationally qualifying courses for adults in employment at levels equivalent to mainstream education, including flexible pathways, and access is given to the acquisition of knowledge, skills and competences required by the labour market. This applies in particular to the low-educated and other groups vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market. Legislation involves to a large extent the social partners in defining the content of initial vocational education and training and adult vocational training. Funding for education and training is primarily a state matter, including the provision of funding schemes for both young people and adults, despite the introduction of a certain degree of user payment. Employers carry both an individual and a collective responsibility for co-financing initial vocational education and training and adult vocational training.

In Denmark, there is furthermore a strong tradition for non-formal and informal lifelong learning, including state support for this, from day-care of children to leisure activities for young people and adults. There is per tradition broad support for and participation in upper secondary and adult education, membership of non-profit associations for young people and adults during spare time, and libraries as active learning centres. A number of initiatives already exist for the assessment and recognition of prior learning in the educational system, which is to be further developed and transferred to other areas according to a government initiative from 2004 (see 3.1.3 and 3.1.4).

3.1.2 Your general approach and policy and how you have designed (or intend to design) such a strategy in your country. Please provide any relevant references (web sites; legislative/strategic documents).

The Platform from February 2005 defines new objectives for Denmark as a leading knowledge society and a highly competitive society. The educational sector is given specifically high priority http://www.stm.dk/publikationer/UK_reggrund05/index.htm. (please note that the English version only cover selected sections of the Platform)

In order to make Denmark a leading society of growth, knowledge and entrepreneurship, the government will formulate a coherent and ambitious globalisation vision and strategy for Danish society, cf. the Platform. The globalisation strategy will ensure that clear objectives are reached on Denmark being a leading knowledge society, a leading society for entrepreneurship, for world-class education and for Denmark being the most competitive society. In April 2005, the government set up a ministerial committee on Denmark in the global economy, and next year, the committee will present its vision and strategy on specific initiatives to be taken to reach the objectives. The permanent members of the ministerial committee are: the Prime Minister (chair), the Minister of Economics and Business Affairs, the Minister of Finance, the Minister of Education, and the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation. The government has also set up a council on globalisation to provide advice to the ministerial committee on a coherent strategy. The council consists of members of the trade unions and employers' organisations and of representatives from education and research. The Prime Minister chairs the council <http://www.stm.dk/Index/mainstart.asp?o=160&n=1&h=4&s=1>.

In autumn 2004, the government set up a tripartite committee to formulate the starting point for further discussions between the government and the social partners on how to promote the aim of lifelong learning and continuing training for all. In the present structure, the social partners are heavily involved in defining the content of vocational training programmes. The tripartite committee's task is to analyse and assess present action in adult education and continuing training as well as in service training in general in relation to future challenges of globalisation, and on this basis identify and assess different models for how work force competences may be enhanced in cooperation with employers, employees and the state. A government priority for the negotiations is expected to be funding, including the distribution of funding responsibilities between the state and social partners.

The terms of reference for the committee work were renewed in the Platform from February 2005 (link to Danish version)

<http://www.stm.dk/Index/dokumenter.asp?o=3&n=0&h=3&t=13&d=2157&s=1>.

3.1.2. Identify the priority reforms (ongoing or planned) engaged by your country to support lifelong learning implementation across the systems, especially as regards investment in the crucial dimensions of lifelong learning policies

The Platform builds on a number of initiatives which were put in progress under the government's former action plan "Better education" from 2002, and initiates more new action in education and training.

Primary and lower secondary education (the *Folkeskole*) (see 2.1.1.) Pre-school class becomes part of compulsory schooling. The present 10th grade is not a part of compulsory education but is an option open to all students.

In Denmark, the educational level of young people has increased at a slower pace the past years than in many other countries. Every sixth young person never gets a qualifying education, and the number of graduates from higher education is lower than in many other countries.

Today, 42 per cent of an age cohort graduates from higher education. It is the government's aim that by 2015, at least half of an age cohort graduates from higher education, and that at least 45 do so by 2010. An analysis will be made at the request of the government of why the number of young people graduating from higher education is relatively low, and of action to be taken to increase the number of students in higher education in technical, natural or

health sciences. The analysis will form the basis for an action plan presented by the government.

Responsibility today for primary and secondary education is divided between municipalities, counties and state. In the structural reform of local authority, presently being turned into legislation, the government suggests a clear distribution of responsibility with municipalities being responsible for primary and lower secondary education and the state being responsible for education at all other levels of the educational system. This creates a more coherent offer of education and supports national mainstream standards.

The government has adopted and is in the process of implementing a reform of upper secondary education (see 2.2.1.) The objective of the reform is to strengthen academic skills in order to facilitate crossing to higher education. This is a necessary step to be taken in order to put a stop to drop-out from higher education. Finally, the educative dimension is given priority by strengthening interaction between various subjects.

In vocational education and training, a reform in 2000 and the latest years' developments based on vocational standards and flexibility has aimed at integrating the dimension of lifelong learning in different ways. The reform implied comprehensive restructuring of vocational education and training programmes, giving pupils the opportunity to change track to another programme. Flexibility was at the same time increased through for instance the introduction of personal education plans with possibilities for extended basic training and specialised electives, thereby providing room for individual pupil needs. The implementation of the reform implied considerable change in pedagogy in vocational education and training, emphasising individual and differentiated teaching. For all vocational education and training programmes, objectives are influenced by competence descriptions. The latest years of focus on vocational standards has led to a general approach and focus on giving a vocational dimension to general subjects.

The reform was revised in 2003 to improve vocational standards and increase flexibility in vocational education and training, for instance by introducing assessment of prior learning. In certain training programmes, focus is to a high degree on giving young people who are practically gifted an education perspective, whereas other programmes strengthen theoretical standards. Focus is also on the development of short training programmes and introduction of levels in existing programmes. The purpose is to give optimal opportunities for young people who have difficulties in completing a full training programme. Students leaving the programme after having completed level 1 may re-enter at a later stage to continue training and complete a full training programme.

The Platform from February 2005 emphasises the crucial role of vocational education and training. The Danish vocational education and training system is analysed in terms of its ability to live up to future requirements and specific importance is attached to learning opportunities for practically oriented young people (craft's apprenticeship).

In 2003, adult vocational training was reformed (the mainly state financed educational system for skilled and unskilled workers in employment, aiming at improvement of vocational skills). The reform introduced a significant shift in focus from individual training programmes to job areas and labour market skills. This implies that individual training programmes, as from 2004, are grouped according to common competence descriptions related to job areas at the labour market. Competence descriptions indicate skills that are required to fulfil a job in a certain job area and list training programmes that provide such skills. The reform further enhances coherence between vocational training at initial level and adult vocational education and continuing training so as to avoid parallel training programmes at the two educational levels.

Development of higher education outside universities is encouraged, among others by improving conditions for academies of professional higher education and establishing strong and educationally broad centres for education at medium cycle higher education level. Importance is given to close, dynamic interplay between theory and practice in progressive and attractive short and medium cycle higher education programmes (see 4.1.4. on the new quality label of “university college”).

As provided by the new Act on Universities from 2003, research and research based education programmes are consolidated at the 12 national universities. The new act introduces well-balanced and broad bachelor programmes according to the 3+2+3 degree structure in higher education. The government thereby increases opportunities for flexibility and coherence. Students are given the opportunity to enter the labour market directly with a bachelor’s degree or continue studies for a master’s degree, if desired at another university in Denmark or abroad. The new degree structure improves opportunities for credit transfer and thereby for increased student mobility between Danish and foreign universities.

The policy paper “Enhanced Internationalisation of Danish Education and Training” from April 2004 sets out a strategy for internationalisation of education and training. The strategy implies, among others, the introduction of taximeter grants for internationalisation in vocational education and training and short cycle higher education programmes. The overall purpose of this initiative is to increase Danish student mobility and ensure that as many students as possible possess qualifications needed to get on at the global labour market. Danish education institutions may also levy tuition fees from foreign students from countries outside the EU/EEA and exchange programmes (see 6.1. and 6.1.3).

In November 2004, the government presented a policy paper to Parliament on the recognition of prior learning in education and training as a contribution to the offensive competence strategy that prepares Denmark for global competition and the knowledge society (<http://www.pub.uvm.dk/2004/realkompetencer>). The government already initiated activities to promote the assessment and recognition of prior learning in several educational fields. But the main message is the necessity to go further than that in the light of Denmark’s aims of increasing the level of knowledge and competences. Recognition of prior learning should be considered at all levels of the educational system, and initiatives to improve access to education, opportunities for reduced training and documentation for assessment and recognition of prior learning should be taken. The policy paper was approved by all political parties in Parliament, and to follow-up, action plans are being prepared for all educational areas before 1 January 2006. Action is also taken to develop schemes for documentation in cooperation with the social partners and actors from general adult education and non-profit associations (see 3.1.1. and 3.1.4.).

ICT in education: In practically all executive orders on education, it is set out that ICT should be integrated in individual subjects where deemed appropriate. In vocational education and training, individual teaching with requirements for differentiation and inclusion has contributed to a heavily increased use of ICT-based learning activities and adds a strain of ICT to exams. The government has initiated an action plan for ICT in primary and lower secondary education for 2004-2007 with total funding of DKK 500 million. 75 per cent of the funding is earmarked to ensuring that pupils in the lowest grades have access to computers as a daily, personal tool. DKK 50 million is earmarked the development of new forms of online teaching material. A similar amount should be spent on other ICT-related development activities, such as the development of a national learning resource repository.

Special action for groups vulnerable to exclusion: In 2003, the government presented a policy paper to Parliament on vision and strategies for improved integration, including a high number of concrete proposals for initiatives. The paper put three core items on the agenda: 1) a coherent and open society, 2) education and training, and 3) the labour market.

On the basis of an evaluation of Danish as a second language in primary and lower secondary education which identified a number of problems of efforts made, the government recommends several initiatives to improve performance of bilingual pupils at this level of education. The initiatives include bills on improved Danish and consultative language tests for the assessment of the linguistic development of bilingual pre-school children and pupils, and on a more equal distribution of bilingual pupils between schools, etc. The organisation of local governments, Local Government Denmark, LGDK (*Kommunernes Landsforening*) committed to enhance efforts. The local authorities must formulate a strategy that meets local needs. The Minister of Education ensures that the subject area is an integrated part of the ordinary teacher training programme, and that Danish as a second language is a mandatory subject in teacher training. The latest reforms of vocational education and training allow for individual training programmes so that young people who for some reason cannot live up to certain requirements, achieve qualifying education and training. In addition, focus is put on vulnerable groups such as immigrants and students with reading and spelling difficulties. The guidance reform from 2003, described later, gives priority to young people with special guidance needs, among others young people facing marginalisation. In labour market training, special training courses introduce the work areas of different trades, the function of the labour market, and the cultural norms of work places.

An initiative related to the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Employment establishes five knowledge centres to deal with competence clarification of refugees and immigrants to assess existing qualifications for employment or education purposes.

To strengthen efforts for education of the low educated at the labour market, the government implemented in 2003 an action plan for this target group. The purpose of the action plan was to initiate development of new education offers that combined general and vocationally oriented adult education, promoted partnerships between educational institutions, companies etc. on competence development of the low-educated, strengthened initiatives on recognition of prior learning, and improved vocational guidance.

Recent changes to the state educational grant scheme aims at improving the financial conditions for the disabled and family providers, especially single parents, to start and complete a higher education programme.

Today, more than every sixth pupil leaving primary and lower secondary education has insufficient reading skills. The Platform includes the formulation of a national action plan for reading aimed at children, youth and adults. The aim is to provide more opportunities for children, youth and adults to improve their reading skills.

The government implemented a guidance reform. The aim is to offer all young people relevant and independent guidance that provides an adequate basis for making vital choices and decisions on education and employment. Guidance on choice of education and occupation is now provided through a professional and coherent system, independent from sector or institution interests. The reform supports the aim of having a high employment rate, and qualifies the free choice of the individual at the same time (see also 2.2.2).

The labour market reform on “More People in Employment” (National Action Plan 2002) and the latest initiative in 2004 on enhanced adult education and continuing training,

including specific action for groups vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market, ensured flexible rules and sufficient funding to support labour market policy action. A major element of the reform is to reduce periods of unemployment as much as possible for the individual. For many unemployed people, the best way to do this is to be in employment with wage subsidy or do a work placement in a company, whereas others prefer following continuing training courses. Education and training must be oriented towards a job. Access to offers on guidance and continuing training exists, including offers on continuing training in connection with notices of major redundancies.

A new feature is that according to the Social Services Act from 2004, all day-care facilities for children (kindergarten and others facilities) must prepare a teaching plan for the general and personal development of children, their social competences, language skills, physical motion ability, sense of nature and natural phenomena, cultural ways of expression, and values.

3.1.3. Please give details of the extent of use and implementation of the results and instruments that have been developed under the European work programme (Objectives, Copenhagen processes) in the context of putting in place your lifelong learning policies/strategies.

An example is that the policy paper on recognition of prior learning in education and training (see above) sets out several principles for the further elaboration of such principles, which are in line with "Common Principles for the Identification and Validation of Non-formal and Informal Learning" (2004) (3.1.1 and 3.1.3).

3.2. Obstacles and areas for further progress

No comments on obstacles.

Further progress is expected in the reform areas mentioned above from the Platform and a special focus will be put on education of second-generation immigrants.

4. REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION

4.1. Main policies/measures

4.1.1. Enhancing the European compatibility in the structure and organisation of degrees

(changes in degree system, ECTS credits, Diploma Supplement) with a view to limiting the negative impact of fragmentation in European higher education.

- The most recent initiatives linked to the Bologna Process in Denmark are specified in the Act on Universities (act no. 403 of 28 May 2003, <http://www.retsinfo.dk/DELFIN/HTML/A2003/0040330.htm>),
- In the late 1980s, a degree structure based on two main cycles was introduced in higher education in Denmark. The Act on Universities has since consolidated the 3+2 (or in some cases 3+3) degree structure in higher education,
- In 1992, studies for a Ph.D. were defined as three years of full-time studies on top of a master's degree. Ph.D. degrees are awarded by universities, and studies may, for the time being, only be related to one, that is the awarding, university,

- On 1 September 2001, it became mandatory for higher education institutions to indicate ECTS-points for all subjects taught. Intentions are to apply the European Credit Transfer System to lifelong learning in vocationally oriented adult education,
- On 1 September 2002, it became mandatory to use Diploma Supplements. It has since become mandatory for higher education institutions to issue Diploma Supplements in English to graduates.

4.1.2. Enhancing the competitiveness and attractiveness of European higher education in the rest of the world.

- Programmes taught in English: More and more programmes are offered in English, in Denmark for international students as well as abroad in language areas which may not be available for Danish students if not taught in English,
- Institutional partnerships and joint study programmes: Institutional cooperation agreements, including cooperation on joint study programmes, intensive programmes and European modules are available,
- Cooperation via educational programmes aiming beyond Europe, such as Erasmus Mundus,
- Participation in international education fairs (e.g. EAIE and NAFSA) either as a coordinated activity between several institutions or on an individual basis,
- Participation in the European Higher Education Fair in Bangkok, supported by the EU. Marketing and promotion activities by individual institutions. Web-based information on studying in Denmark,
- The Ministry of Education and the state of Victoria in Australia signed an agreement on enhanced cooperation and exchanges between education institutions in the two countries.

4.1.3. Promoting advanced learning and innovation (e.g. through poles of excellence, regional development strategies, brain gain measures).

- Increased focus on internationalisation of higher education has resulted in new scholarship schemes being developed to attract highly competent foreign students and academics to Denmark,
- The Danish National Research Foundation is committed to funding unique research within basic sciences, life sciences, technical sciences, social sciences and the humanities. Based on international evaluation, the aim is to identify and support groups of scientists who are able to create innovative and creative research environments of the highest international quality. Substantial, adjustable grants for up to five years allow centres of excellence to be created, and depending on the outcome of regular international evaluation; support can be given for a total of ten years. At the present, 30 centres are supported in addition to other minor activities.
- Priority is given to the establishment of knowledge centres (see 4.1.7.).

4.1.4. Promoting structural change at universities with a view to enhancing learning and innovation processes as well as internal management capacities.

In May 2003, the Act on Universities was adopted, increasing institutional autonomy and introducing external boards. Implementation is ongoing, and at present, executive orders are issued on:

- Ph.D. degrees (2002),
- Bachelor's and master's degrees,
- Access to university programmes,
- Examinations,
- Quality assurance (spring 2005).

In May 2005, amendments to the policy paper on enhancing internationalisation of education and training were passed by Parliament (see 6.1. on content).

In spring 2004, a new act was adopted which introduced the designation of “university college” as a quality label to education institutions that meet with certain conditions set out by the Ministry of Education. University colleges are centres for higher education which are linked to a profession and which carry out development activities related to education and other knowledge-based areas for a broad target group, building on the centre's knowledge database and on research affiliation to relevant research bodies in Denmark and abroad.

University colleges are characterised by a conglomeration of capacities: There are specific requirements to and basis for acquisition and dissemination of knowledge, professional environments at the college are considered as a community, a development unit is established, well-developed models for research affiliation and networking are integrated, and a strong unit for further and continuing education is established which acts in synergy with basic education activities through the exchange of knowledge between individuals new to and experienced in the profession.

4.1.5. Promoting quality assurance and/or accreditation at institutional and system level (as part of the accountability of education/training institutions to society.

The Danish Evaluation Institute is the agency responsible for external quality assurance (see 2.3.). Higher education institutions are responsible for establishing internal quality procedures. Universities and specialist institutions in for instance arts may choose another but approved (foreign) agency for external evaluation that is not covered by the Danish Evaluation Institute.

Universities decide on the provision of study programmes but new study programmes must be approved by the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation, which is in charge of university higher education. Universities submit information on research base, labour market relevance, quality assurance procedures, access requirements and coherence with other programmes. The Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation monitors the legal fulfilment of the obligations, and if approved, the Ministry decides on the level of funding according to the Danish taximeter system.

From 2004-2009, the Danish Evaluation Institute is commissioned to make reports on whether the offer of professionally oriented educational programmes by centres for higher education live up to statutory requirements. The reports are part of an accreditation process where the Danish Evaluation Institute submits recommendations and the Ministry of Education makes final decisions.

In certain educational areas, quality assurance rules apply, for instance in short cycle higher education where an executive order on quality development and quality control is applicable. In the executive order, requirements on the establishment of a quality assurance system are set out and apply at both institutional and educational level.

4.1.6. Making higher education more responsive to the needs of LLL learners and non-traditional students (by offering adapted courses, including foundation courses, building bridges with other levels of education and between the various types of higher education institutions, by validating prior learning, providing non-degree courses etc.).

Specific programmes and degrees for part-time students at all levels of higher education have been introduced. It has also been decided to implement a new structure in the AP Part time programme system, which caters to a lower educated target group than before. Admission conditions are changed and students can participate in preparatory courses if their qualifications are insufficient for starting a specific course. Also the curriculum is made more flexible and the in service training aspect made more visible.

In autumn 2004, the Ministry of Education submitted to Parliament a policy report on lifelong learning, and in November, a report on assessment and recognition of formal and informal learning (see section 3).

4.1.7. Developing technological partnerships between higher education and research institutions and the economy, and the participation of higher education institutions in learning cities and regions and their cooperation with enterprises and social partners.

The 1999 Act on Inventions at Public Research Institutions has provided economic incentive and clarity on intellectual property rights' ownership at Danish universities. From 2005, commercialisation of academic inventions has been further facilitated by a new Act on Technology Transfer allowing for public research institutions to operate subsidiary companies for technology transfer.

A number of recent initiatives focus on developing technological partnerships between higher education institutions and the economy:

- Establishment of Regional Innovation Centres (start in 2005). The purpose of the centres is to strengthen innovation and growth in regions outside the big cities through cooperation between the business sector and knowledge centres.

The partners are educational institutions at all levels, technology transfer institutions/research institutes, companies, trade organisations, regional business development organisations, business councils, etc. State grants are used to start up the network and projects. The establishment of 6-10 Regional Technology Centres is planned throughout Denmark. The centres build on the positive experiences from Regional Innovation Centres, evaluated in 2004.

- Establishment of Innovation Consortia, that is research and development projects run by a consortium. A project should integrate company research and development, and generic research.

A consortium must consist of at least two companies, one university and one technology centre (not for profit providers of technological consultancy firms). All parties must submit manpower, and companies must provide at least 50 per cent of

activities at own cost. Research in universities and technology centres are partly financed by the state.

Priority is given to projects with a high level of innovation, a high degree of use for society and integration within the partnership, and widespread usefulness to companies not taking part in the project. Projects normally run for three to four years, consist of four to eight partners and have a total budget of DKK 25 million. State grants cover 40-45 per cent of the budget.

- Establishment of knowledge networks as framework for permanent and binding networks between companies and knowledge centres.

Adequate meeting facilities for companies and knowledge institutions should support the vision of networks to share and develop research based knowledge for solution of high-tech problems. State grants are around DKK 19 million per year for the period 2004-2007 to support the starting up and maintenance of networks. In 2004, seven knowledge networks were started in areas such as pervasive communication, mobile systems and biotechnology.

- Establishment of knowledge centres at centres for higher education (*Center for Videregående Uddannelse, CVU*) and Academies of Professional Higher Education.

The aim of establishing regional knowledge centres is to disseminate and apply knowledge of education institutions in practice and in correlation with the surrounding world. This implies, among others, a joint effort between the education and training sector and institutions, and local and regional public and private institutions to share solutions to actual regional problems related to growth and welfare. Solutions proposed should be knowledge and research based, and lead to the development of useful processes, organisations and services.

In December 2004, seven applications on the establishment of a knowledge centre were approved, and a total of DKK 42 million was appropriated to such establishments. Knowledge centres are based on one or more education institutions, being rooted in for instance a centre for higher education or business academy.

Knowledge centres and Academies of Professional Higher Education contribute to innovation and quality development in society by transferring knowledge and applying it in practice. In order to transfer and apply the knowledge acquired, a close dialogue and exchange of knowledge is required with other national and international educational institutions, including universities and similar institutions, other knowledge environments, business and innovation actors, and the specific users of the centre's services (for instance students, occupations, companies and regions).

4.2. Obstacles and areas for further progress

No comments.

5. INCREASING THE QUALITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

It is a key priority for the government to provide access for all to vocational education and training for both young people and adults of a high vocational quality. This is clear from sections 1.1. and 2.2.1. as well as from the Danish contribution to the Maastricht communiqué in 2004, and since 2001, several important reforms and initiatives were implemented.

Reforms and initiatives in the fields of vocational education and training for young people and adult education and continuing training were comprehensive and thereby contribute to promoting enhanced European cooperation within the framework of the Copenhagen Declaration and Maastricht communiqué.

To follow-up on the communiqué, the government emphasised in the Platform for 2005 that access to vocational education and training through practical training should be improved, that the low-educated are ensured training, and that refugees and immigrants, in particular, receive further training for employment purposes.

6. CONSOLIDATING THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING

6.1. Increase mobility through removing obstacles and active promotion

See section 2.1. on higher education and the objectives set out in the Platform on improved framework for mobility.

Since the beginning of the 1980s, Danish educational institutions have been allowed to sell specific educational programmes to an international audience. Various short and medium cycle higher education programmes and master's programmes are offered in English. However, foreign students also enrol for ordinary programmes when offered in English to mainly Danish but also foreign students. Foreign students trigger full taximeter support as Danish students do. Ordinary short and medium cycle higher education have attracted a large number of students from countries outside the EU/EEA. In the summer of 2003, the Ministry of Education was therefore obliged to introduce a quota scheme for enrolment of foreign students in short and medium cycle higher education.

From 2006, new funding arrangements replace the quota scheme so that all foreign students from countries outside the EU/EEA whose basis for residence is education pay for education in Denmark. At the same time, a study grant scheme is introduced for highly qualified foreign students from specific countries for time-limited study periods.

The Danish state educational grant scheme, for which nearly all Danish students are eligible, allows students to bring study grants for studies abroad for a period of up to four years.

The internationalisation taximeter grant: To encourage Danish education institutions to promote mobility and ease the administrative burden, institutions receive special taximeter grants for each Danish student sent abroad on credit transferable study periods, and for each foreign student hosted by Danish institutions.

6.1.1. Administrative and legal obstacles to mobility, especially in relation to the transparency of competences and qualifications and, where appropriate, their recognition

Use of Diploma Supplements became mandatory on 1 September 2002. Higher education institutions are required to issue Diploma Supplements in English to all graduates, free of charge. On 1 September 2001, it became mandatory to indicate ECTS-points for all subjects taught. Intentions are to apply ECTS to lifelong learning in vocationally oriented adult education. In most programmes, it is possible to accumulate ECTS-points for accreditation.

Similar Certificate Supplements have been drawn up for all vocational training programmes in Denmark.

In 2000, the Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications was established to provide the framework in Denmark for the assessment and recognition of qualifications obtained abroad. The centre offers quick, efficient and fair assessment of foreign education programmes and specific and general information on the relation between Danish and foreign qualifications and qualification systems. In 2003, the Lisbon Recognition Convention was ratified by Denmark.

6.1.2. The main measures taken, including both EU and other programmes, to develop an adequate organisational framework to improve the quality of mobility and develop virtual mobility in particular in primary and secondary schools?

CIRIUS, national agency for the EU educational programmes (and other schemes), changed status in terms of assignment and administrative structure at the turn of the year. The most important changes are assignment-wise and relate to the aim of having a single administrative structure to provide service to individuals and educational institutions and contribute to solving state-matters on internationalisation of education and training.

This is first and foremost done by transferring tasks related to the assessment of foreign qualifications, that is the Danish Centre for Assessment of Foreign Qualifications, to CIRIUS from 1 January 2005. In connection with changes in assignment, administrative changes are implemented in CIRIUS for the purpose of creating more clarity on the distribution of tasks and responsibility between the Ministry of Education and CIRIUS.

6.1.3. Policies aimed at increasing the mobility of teachers and trainers as part of their career development and of student teachers during their initial teacher education?

In Denmark, the EU programmes are actively implemented for this purpose, and Denmark is an active participant in Nordic educational programmes.

Furthermore, the recent policy paper on enhanced internationalisation includes a campaign for teachers and educational guidance counsellors to raise awareness of the importance of mobility and cooperation in education, and the integration of the international dimension in teaching and learning activities (see 3.1.3).

A Memorandum of Understanding on Education is signed between Denmark and the U.S. in the field of vocationally oriented education and training. The memorandum expires by the end of 2006. The memorandum applies to community colleges in the U.S. and vocational colleges and academies of professional higher education in Denmark. Focus is on initial vocational education and training and short cycle higher education.

Within the framework of the memorandum, a programme was set up in Denmark to provide financial support to collaboration activities, for instance exchanges of students, teachers and other staff at colleges and academies.

6.1.4. The promotion of mobility of people in vocational education and training?

Denmark uses the EU programmes actively for this purpose.

The Danish programme on work placement abroad (PIU-ordningen) applies specifically to students in initial vocational training, basic agricultural training and basic social and health care training. The programme ensures that work placements undertaken abroad are integrated in the Danish training programme and that financial support is available to

individual students (or Danish employers). Students may go on work placements abroad either directly from college or be posted by a Danish employer. Work placements may take place in any EU country and Norway, Iceland, Switzerland and Liechtenstein. Approximately 1000 students avail themselves of the opportunity for a long-term work placement abroad every year.

In January 2005, yet another new scheme was introduced in the field of vocational and education, whereby vocational colleges are entitled to a taximeter grant of approximately DKK 4.900 (2005) for each student sent abroad on work placement (see 6.1).

6.1.5. The main obstacles met in the implementation of policies in the above-mentioned main areas, and in which areas progress still remains to be achieved.

In Denmark, the administrative bureaucracy related to the management of EU programmes is considered as rather substantial and an aspect, which may have a negative effect in terms of user-friendliness (for both students, institutions and employers). Denmark has, however, taken note of the objectives for this aspect, which the Commission presented in connection with the proposal for the new programme on lifelong learning.

6.2. Consolidate the European dimension of education

6.2.1. What are the main measures/policies put in place in your country to encourage a European dimension of learning and to ensure that pupils have by the end of their secondary education the knowledge and competences they need to play their role as future citizen of their country, Europe and the wider world?

In general upper secondary education (*gymnasium*), the reform attaches importance to the general educative dimension by strengthening interaction between subjects. Language subjects play a vital role in this connection.

6.2.2. What measures have been implemented (or planned) to strengthen the European and inter-cultural dimension in the training of teachers and in the primary and secondary level curriculum?

At primary and lower secondary level amendments to the Act on the Folkeskole in 2003 imply that a number of subjects are extended in scope to cover more form levels, among others foreign languages, geography, history and social science. Foreign language education is now introduced as early as in the third grade (English) as opposed to before in the fifth grade. All students must learn two foreign languages. Teachers are advised to consider the international dimension in their teaching planning.

The Ministry of Education has sent common national aims and new curriculum guidelines for all 42 mandatory subjects, non-compulsory subjects, optional subjects and mandatory themes to all schools and municipalities, setting out clear aims and content descriptions.

When implementing the reform in the upper secondary education as of August 2005 the government will focus on the international dimension when setting up the new curricula.

6.2.3. Which are the main areas of progress in which you consider your country still has to achieve in this field and what are the main obstacles met in the implementation of such policies?

Please refer to section 2.

