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## IMPLEMENTING THE 'EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010' WORK PROGRAMME

# 2005 Progress Report

# SPAIN

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***Modernisation of the Education and Training Systems  
towards the 2010 common goals***

**Preparation of the 2006 Joint Council/Commission Report**

**REPORT SUBMITTED BY SPAIN - 2005**

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

### **1.1. Extent to which 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.**

In September 2004, the Spanish Minister of Education and Science presented the document "*A quality education for all and shared by all*" to the education community and the general public. The publication aimed at promoting thinking and debate about the current situation of the education system and its main problems. The document contained proposals based on the basic principles of a "*quality education for everyone, a firm commitment with the educational European goals and the necessity of making a collective effort towards an education for all shared by all*".

The Spanish Ministry of Education and Science is committed to informing both the education agents and the society in general about the priority these European goals have in our national educational policy. A good example of this information strategy is the International Conference "*Objectives for the 2010 European Education Systems. National Policies*", held in Madrid in October 2004 with the participation of EU countries and the Commission.

Some conclusion drawn after an extensive national debate proposed on that issue reveal the necessity of a social and political agreement for achieving the stability of the education system, and initiating the necessary reforms. The Autonomous Regions and the representatives of teachers, educational institutions, students and parents have taken part in this debate. A report summarizing the views of the 300 documents received from the institutions represented in the State School Board [*Consejo Escolar del Estado*], as well as the views of the 21.000 people participating in Internet forums, has been drafted. Contributions in writing submitted by some Autonomous Regions are likewise worth mentioning.

The result of these contributions has been gathered in the *Anteproyecto de Ley Orgánica para la Educación (LOE)* [Education Organic Bill], submitted on March 30<sup>th</sup>, 2005.

The Bill is based on the three main European objectives: improve the quality and efficiency of the education system, widen the access to education and training, and open the education system to the outside world, and includes actions aimed at improving the results in the European benchmarks:

- reducing the number of early school leavers,
- increasing upper secondary graduation rates,
- improving the students' basic skills performance, especially on reading, mathematical and scientific literacy performance,
- increasing the participation of adult population in lifelong learning activities,
- increasing the investment in education.

The Ministry of Education and Science wants, by means of the new Education Law, to ensure that quality and equity are two inseparable objectives, leading to facilitate equal opportunities and social cohesion. The Ministry also intends to meet the new challenges embedded in the construction of the new European Union, and to make its educational actions converge with those of the rest of the countries.

Higher investment in education is a priority for the Government, and the increment of the 2005 National Budget allocated to Education is a clear proof of that.

Both, the Education and Training Plan 2010 and the detailed programme for monitoring the concrete objectives of education and training systems in Europe have been a base to guide the national reforms, as well as the agreements of the Bologna - Sorbonne Declaration for university education. Comparative studies, especially those of the OECD (PISA), have significantly influenced the national policies regarding specific objectives and benchmarks.

Quantitative objectives (benchmarks), closely linked to those of the Lisbon agenda, have been established for the areas mentioned before.

With regards to the setting up of inter-ministerial structures of coordination and participation, there are already in Spain several bodies of this kind through which the reforms will be promoted. Some examples of these bodies are:

- The Autonomous Regions meet at the *Conferencia Sectorial de Educacion* [Sectorial Conference of Education] to coordinate national policies.
- Regarding lifelong learning strategies, policies are coordinated on the Vocational Training General Council [*Consejo General de la Formación Profesional*] (Ministry of Education and Science, Autonomous Regions, Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, and social agents).
- The University Coordination Council [Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria] for university policies.

## **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.**

The difficulties in implementing the Education and Training Programme 2010 are related to the decentralization of the Spanish Education system. The structure of the Spanish system makes it difficult to establishing specific quantitative objectives for the whole national context. However, general priorities both for the State and the Regions, are fighting against early school leaving and the improvement of key competences, including languages and information and communication technologies, as well as the general improvement of school performance.

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

### **2.1. Identification of national priorities for reform and investment.**

As mentioned before, investing more in education is a priority for the Government, guaranteeing at the same time equality of opportunities.

Under the General Budget Act [*Ley General Presupuestaria*], passed by the Parliament for the fiscal year 2005, the amount allocated to the Ministry of Education and Science rises by a 10%. In this year, a period of transition marked by the commencement of reforms, this global increase is the consequence of the development of some programmes which are considered a top priority<sup>1</sup>. In 2006 there will be an increase of 19,5% in the investment in education.

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<sup>1</sup> The expenditure on education which appears in this document does not include the contributions of the Autonomous Regions.

Grants for students from low-income families have been considered a priority. An extraordinary budget of 36 million € has been approved to increase funds assigned to grants for students from low-income families. This budget increases 10,5% from 2004 to 2005, with a total amount of 903 million €. In the budget for 2006 the total amount for grants will rise a 9,5% which means an increase of 85.846.

With the aim of meeting the more immediate needs of the above-mentioned areas, the Government has planned the implementation of complementary and reinforcement programmes. To finance these programmes, taking into account the decentralized nature of the Spanish Education system, the Ministry of Education and Science has proposed the Autonomous Regions to finance 50% of the cost of these programmes and to provide technical support to carry out their monitoring and evaluation. The total cost of these programmes is estimated to be between 8 and 9 million € for 2005 and four times as much in 2006.

The Government, in the budgets for the financial year 2005, pledges its firm commitment to education and research as driving forces of social and economic development.

With regard to higher education and research, the Government proposes to cover all the stages of the process of education-employment, from the education of researchers to their placement in the various I+D+i institutions of the system; from the financing of basic projects to encouraging enterprises to researching, including the support to various intermediary agents; from the planning of the large scientific institutions to the study of their technological and industrial implications. In this process, there is a strong coordination with the Ministry of Industry. Our commitment with research leads to a rise ranging between 15% and 24%, depending on the different sections (year 2005).

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

European Social Funding has been crucial for the modernisation of schools and the introduction of technologies into the education system. Also, it has been very important for the development of human capital.

However, there is uncertainty about the contribution of the structural funds from 2007 to 2013, to reach the Lisbon objectives in Education and Vocational Education and Training (*FSE and FEDER*). To face the proposed reforms sufficient financing will be necessary. The European Union and the State members must encourage and promote the application of funds, especially *FSE* and *FEDER*, to national strategies for Education and Vocational Training, from now to 2010, as well as to the Territorial Cooperation Programme [*Programa de Cooperación Territorial*] for implementing the National Lifelong Learning strategy and the actions and measures to improve national indicators, in order to achieve the Lisbon objectives of Education and Training, from now to 2010.

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

The European objectives, which are a priority for the Ministry, are the following:

- **Increasing enrolment rates in infant education, especially in the lower cycle of this stage.**

Enrolment rates for children 3 to 5 years of age exceeds at present 93%, being a top priority reaching 100% in the coming years. Schooling at early ages is considered a determining factor to benefit equity and prevent school failure.

- **Accomplishment of compulsory education certification by all students.**

The Bill drafted by the Spanish Government establishes specific measures to prevent learning problems from the stage of primary education and take reinforcement and support measures as soon as the problems are detected. The enhancement of the quality of the education system must result in a better performance of the students in the key competences. The outcomes of the studies drawn by the OCDE, the European Union and the Spanish Ministry of Education and Science show the necessity of improving the students' acquisition of these competences.

- **Enhancing the attractiveness of learning and increasing upper secondary graduation rates.**

It has been proposed an organization of the education system at the end of the compulsory secondary education (16 years old and over) and at the non-compulsory post-secondary education (18 years old and over) which would enable to meet the students' interests and expectations, whether they decide to go on further education, tertiary or vocational training, or enter the labour market.

- **Increasing advanced vocational training graduation rates.**

Increasing the number of young people who graduate in advanced vocational education and training is a complementary objective to increasing enrolment rates in post-secondary non-compulsory education. This is , however, especially intended to equal the existing imbalance between advanced vocational training and university studies, being the latest still more popular.

- **Improving the learning of foreign languages and information and communication technologies.**

Learning foreign languages and information and communication technologies allows a wider and more effective communication with other people. The knowledge of other languages also contributes to improving the understanding of what other individuals want to convey and to get to know other realities. Starting from the assumption that the main aim of education is developing the skills which will enable students to learn along all their living and use what they know to live their own life, and to live with others, the proficiency in foreign languages and ICT skills are considered key learning tools.

Teaching a foreign language is compulsory in primary education and offering a second foreign language as an option is mandatory in secondary education. The LOE introduces the learning of a first foreign language in infant education. The second foreign language will be introduced at the end of primary education.

For the development of ICT in education the programme "Internet en el Aula" (Internet in the Classroom") has been established. A budget of 453,5 million € has been assigned to this action plan for the period 2005-2008. This programme includes a wide range of actions addressed to the whole educational community: students , teachers, parents.

- **Placing the concern for education for citizenship as a main objective of the education system.**

The Ministry aims at providing a kind of education for citizenship that contributes to develop personal values which will contribute to the students' maturing process as upright persons in their relationships with others. This education for citizenship will also promote social values which allow young people to play their role as citizens of a friendly and democratic society. In order to achieve this, actions are proposed in three different areas: the educational project within educational institutions, the teaching practice of each subject, and the inclusion of a new subject in the curriculum.

- **Increasing the participation of the adult population in lifelong education.**

Spain has rates below the European average for the participation of adult population in education and training activities, therefore to reach this objective will require an extra effort both in the orientation and offer of these activities that allow adult citizens efficiently benefit from it.

- **Assessment and training of teaching staff.**

Improving the conditions in which teachers do their work is probably one of the most urgent challenges Spain must face at present. Education Authorities with competences on the training and education of teachers must provide them with the support and the resources needed to ensure that society recognizes the difficult tasks they have to undertake, the importance of education, and the effort requested to the teachers. The Bill includes sections that regulate the teaching profession.

- **Modernisation of the university system according to the European Space of Higher Education.**

The reform of Higher Education is a priority. A budget of 6,6 million € for 2005 and 13,2 million € has been assigned to enable reforms and their adaptation to the European Space of Higher Education.

University mobility and links between University and Research are also priorities of our education system.

### **2.2.2. The development of incentives to invest in education and training.**

Regarding higher education, the Ministry has created a Commission of research and study to promote private investment in universities. Results are not still available.

With the purpose of promoting continuing training in enterprises, there is a system of incentives by means of discounts on their contribution to the National tax system.

### **2.3. Monitoring and evaluation of educational policies**

The Ministry of Education and Science, through the National Institute of Evaluation and Quality of the Education System [*Instituto Nacional de Evaluación y Calidad del Sistema Educativo (INECSE)*] carries out the general evaluation of the education system in Spain, without affecting the evaluations that could be carried out done by the Education Authorities of the Autonomous Regions within the scope of their competences.

The *INECSE* is in charge of the evaluation of the Spanish education system as a whole, covering areas such as the research on students' learning processes, educational processes, teachers' activity, educational institutions, the education inspection and the Educational Authority itself. Some of the functions of this department are:

- Within its competence in the framework of the general evaluation of the education system, it carries out general diagnostic evaluations of areas and subjects, in collaboration with the Autonomous Regions.
- In collaboration with the Autonomous Regions it takes part in general diagnostic evaluations of the education system and international evaluations involving Spain.
- In collaboration with the local Authorities, it draws up periodically the National System of Education Indicators, which helps the decision-making on education, both the decisions taken by educational institutions and the Authorities, or by students and their families. In the process of drawing up this system of indicators, the Regional Educational Authorities collaborate with the Ministry of Education and Science by providing the information that may be requested from them.
- The Ministry of Education and Science, after consultation with the Autonomous Regions, will draw up periodically a plan of evaluation of the system.
- The Ministry publishes periodically the findings of general interest of the evaluations of the education system carried out by the *INECSE* and makes available to the public the results of the Indicators of the National System of Education.
- Regional Authorities draw up and set up evaluation plans, by which educational institutions financed by public funds will be periodically evaluated.

Likewise, the Government has undertaken to inform annually the Parliament about the situation of the Education System.

### **3. PUTTING IN PLACE TRULY COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES**

#### **3.1. Main policy/measures**

The Education Organic Bill highlights the importance of lifelong learning as the basis for achieving the stated objectives, especially with regards to the following aspects:

- Education is conceived within the framework of lifelong learning, in accordance with the principles on which the law is based.
- The law puts such an importance to lifelong learning as to dedicate to it, together with the structure of education, a specific chapter of the Preliminary Title, which lays down the ambitious objectives that a knowledge-based society must face.
- Paying special attention to adult education, with the aim of guaranteeing to every citizen the possibility of acquiring, updating, finishing or widening their knowledge and skills for their personal and professional development.

- An adequate financing plan, a sound management scheme and the social commitment will be necessary for setting up this plan.

The Ministry of Education and Science has proposed the other members within the *Consejo General de la Formación Profesional* [Vocational Training Council] - the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Autonomous Regions and the social agents - the development of state-controlled a lifelong learning strategic plan.

Likewise, the necessity of crating a catalogue of life long learning activities whose aim is the acquisition of knowledge, skills and abilities related to the personal, civic, social and working life.

The Plan will include formal and non-formal learning.

The 2004 National Plan for the Employment includes a Declaration for the social dialogue 2004 considering: competitiveness, stable employment and social cohesion with 13 specific fields for negotiation between social agents. This negotiation is aimed at reaching an agreement to improve competitiveness, stable employment and social cohesion. The Economy of Knowledge is one of these 13 fields, whose purpose is to encourage lifelong education and ensure professional qualifications to guarantee employment for the entire working age population. Some of the concrete actions are:

- Increasing upper secondary graduation rates. To this end, examinations targeted at young people up to 18 years old leading to obtain the Compulsory Secondary Education Certificate will be implemented. This, in turn, would increase the permanence in Upper Secondary Education up to the age of 22. Likewise, baccalaureate, intermediate and advanced vocational education and training programmes, with a wide range of availability in terms of timing-time table, for non-enrolled young people from the age of 18 will be provided.
- Increasing the participation, especially of low qualified people, in education and training activities.
- Development of the C-TEST programme, on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) aimed at the access of low qualified women to education and training, as well as training programmes on Telecommunication (*FORINTEL*) designed to improve the workers' abilities, qualification and adaptation to changes.
- New regulation of the Subsystem of Continuous Vocational Training (in enterprises).
- Laying the foundations of lifelong learning, defining (or redefining) the objectives of education systems and curricula from the earliest possible stage to upper secondary education in terms of the attainment of key competences.
- Development of widely accessible lifelong guidance policies and systems.
- Development of diverse learning pathways and open learning environments. The Education Organic Bill, in section 5 (*Lifelong Learning*) proposes flexible learning activities leading to acquire basic competences and their respective qualifications.
- Investing in teacher and trainers education to enable them to play their new role in the knowledge-based society.
- Integrated use of ICT in education and training systems.
- Focussing on disadvantaged groups, etc.

- Encouraging the habit of learning throughout life and increasing learning access and opportunities for older citizens and workers.

The programme “*Universidades de Mayores*” (University for Older Citizens) is aimed at older citizens and is developed in several Spanish universities to promote lifelong learning. It comprises a wide range of actions, from the development of cognitive, psychic and social skills until improvements in health conditions and the integration of older citizens into the knowledge-based society.

- Developing flexibility within and between all sectors of education and training.
- Enhancing innovation in curricula and learning tools and methods.
- Promotion of lifelong learning activities through national, regional and local partnerships and networks, providing different kinds of incentives.

#### **4. REFORMING HIGHER EDUCATION**

##### **4.1. Main policies / measures**

The adaptation of the Spanish University System to the regulations derived from the European Space of Higher Education constitutes one of the priorities of Spanish educational policy regarding higher education.

In this sense a regulatory legal scheme is being progressively implemented to adjust to the main regulations as proposed in statements and communications of the Higher Education Ministers in Bologna (1999), Prague (2001), Berlin (2003) and Bergen (2005).

In this process of convergence the *Reales Decretos* 55/2005 and 56/2005 [Royal Decrees 55/2005 and 56/2005], of January 21, are to be highlighted. The first one establishes the structure of the University system and regulates the official degrees. The second one regulates official postgraduate studies. With them Spain aims at the adoption of a flexible system of qualifications, comparable and compatible, which is one of the main objectives established in the Bologna Declaration.

With these Decrees a normative framework in the European Space of Higher Education is consolidated in our country, as regulations relative to the European accreditation and qualifications system as well as the issuing on the part of the universities of the European Diploma Supplement are already in force.

The *Consejo de Coordinación Universitaria* [University Coordination Board] is currently working on the process of renovating the catalogue of official university degrees. According to what has been established in the Additional Disposition to the Royal Decree 55/2005, of January 21<sup>st</sup>, mentioned before, has to be completed before October 1st, 2007.

Related to the preceding, different working groups, formed in sub-commissions (humanities, technical sciences, experimental and health sciences, social sciences and the law), have proposed a first scheme for the modification of the current qualification system in the process of harmonisation with the European Framework. This proposal is being review by an external commission designated by the University Coordination Board.

As a result of the initial meetings of the external commission, a calendar for the renovation process has been established. This calendar will be implemented at its different stages until February 2007. During the course of renovation the general curricular regulations for the attainment of the new degrees will be approved.

The catalogue of Official University Degrees is constituted by those areas of knowledge for which the Government has established the corresponding regulations by Royal Decree. During the month of January 2006 the first set of regulations for the accommodation to the directions of the European Space of Higher Education will be presented for debate. In subsequent steps, until February 2007, the remaining proposals will be completed.

On the other hand the Draft of the *Anteproyecto de Ley Orgánica* [Draft Education Organic Bill] is being currently debated, this will modify the Ley Orgánica 6/2001 for Universities [Education Organic Bill 6/2001], of December 21<sup>st</sup>. The draft of the new Bill, which was presented in October 2005 to the University Coordination Board, modifies different aspects of the current Bill, specially those issues related to the set of governing rules concerning the teaching staff and the national system of entitlement, which will be substituted by a national accreditation system.

Financed by the European Commission and the Ministry, through the group of promoters of Bologna, the spreading and support of the European Space of Higher Education (*EEES* in its Spanish abbreviation) is being promoted in Spanish universities. A group of 12 promoters of the Bologna process were appointed in June 2004 in Spain. Members of the Rectors Conference working group for the *EEES* [*Conferencia de Rectores para el EEES*], students, national experts and personnel in charge of the National Quality Agency [*Agencia Nacional para la Calidad*] take part in this group. Its tasks are focussed on organizing seminars, providing information and technical support to universities and generate documents of good practices.

Over the last few years, the Ministry of Education and Science has made official announcements with the purpose of awarding "Quality Mentions" for doctoral programmes through an evaluation of their technical and scientific level, as well as of their contents, structure and objectives. Those doctorate programmes obtaining the Quality Mention, are included in a public list with the purpose of contributing to their dissemination at national and international level. Furthermore, obtaining this quality mention facilitates getting other aids for the mobility of teachers and students, the assignment of resources for research, the cooperation with the business sector, etc.

The Ministry of Education and Science has also developed the programmes "*Ramón y Cajal*" and "*Juan de la Cierva*" with the aim of supporting the new incorporation of PhD researchers in the Spanish system of Science-Technology-Enterprise. By these programmes, subsidies are granted to research centres, universities and enterprises for the recruitment of new doctors. The doctors hired must meet some requirements, such as having obtained their doctoral degree within the previous 10 years and having carried out post-doctoral practices for a period of at least 24 months in a place different from the institution which is hiring them.

The Government has allocated a budget item of 6,6 million € of the 2005 budget for stimulating the strategic planning and other university actions for the development of the Bologna process. This amount will be distributed among all the Spanish universities by means of public competition. Universities will submit the specific actions they want to carry out, basically aimed, at this first stage, to encourage teachers in the correct implementation of the criteria that underlie the new credit system. These actions also aim to facilitate the mobility of teachers and academic managers for their training in the new procedures, to widen the international scope of our universities, to encourage the participation of students, to design the postgraduate management, and to improve the coordination with pre-

university education. Autonomous Regions have also allocated specific budget items to encourage the process of adaptation to the new legal framework. In the budget for 2006 the amount allocated to this objective has increased up to 13.2 million Euro.

*La Agencia Nacional de Evaluación de la Calidad y Acreditación (ANECA)* [National Agency for the Quality Evaluation and Accreditation], was established in 2002 as a Foundation of the then named Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport, today Ministry of Education and Science. This Agency strongly promotes the institutional relations with international agencies and bodies with the aim of contrasting experiences related to quality evaluation practices in other countries and of participating in trans-national initiatives for the establishment of networks and associations. The ANECA has already included foreign evaluators in some of its programmes.

Several measures have contributed to make this sector more flexible and to develop specific actions:

- qualifications freely established by universities,
- programmes designed for the adult population and non working adult population (University for older citizens),
- open university programmes through the Open University [UNED - Universidad Nacional de Educación a Distancia] (exclusively devoted to this type of education) and other universities,
- on line teaching programmes.

Universities have regulations regarding the validation of prior qualifications and degrees with a wide range of autonomy in their application.

At the present time there are not specific rules for the validation of prior learning acquired by means of non-conventional ways or by professional experience.

Apart from what it has been previously said about *Ramón y Cajal* and *Juan de la Cierva* programmes, the new rules governing postgraduate university education enable universities to reach collaboration agreements with other institutions, public or private bodies as well as with enterprises in order to develop postgraduate programmes. They also make possible the collaboration of professionals or researchers other than university teachers.

We would also like to point out that once the procedure of endorsement of the new regulations has been completed, the 1997 Lisbon Agreement, related to the recognition of Higher Education qualifications in the European Space, will be signed and ratified by Spain.

#### **4.2. Obstacles for areas for further progress.**

Once the legal framework for the qualifications structure has been established, it starts the reform of Higher Education Institutions. At this stage, the education authorities as a whole, at national and regional level, as well as the universities must get involved in the process of change, as objectives will be attained only through the active participation of all people and groups integrated in them.

## 5. INCREASING THE QUALITY AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

### 5.1. Main policies /measures

#### 5.1.1. The implementation at national level of the tools developed under the Copenhagen process (Europass, common quality assurance framework, common principles for validation of non-formal learning, guidance resolution and handbook, etc).

Within the framework of the common objectives and indicators set up in the "Education and Training 2010" report, and taking into account the necessity of urgent reforms to improve and correct the insufficient advances pointed out in the Kok Report, as well as the agreement reached by the Ministries of Education at the proposal of the Vocational Training General Managers of the Maastricht Communiqué, Spain has established national priorities for Vocational Education and Training to accelerate the process and contribute to reach the Lisbon objectives, from now to 2010.

With regard to Vocational Training, the Ministry of Education and Science, the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, the Education and Labour Authorities of the Regions in collaboration with Social Agents are working in the development of the Act 5/2002 of Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training, with the purpose of creating a National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training. This national system is intended to inform people about the education system and its convergence with the individual educational needs and the requirements of the productive system.

**Quality of Vocational Education and Training:** The Education Organic Bill and the development of the Act 5/2002 of Qualifications and Vocational Education Training lay the foundations for quality assurance of Vocational Education and Training, and the implementation at national level of the common quality assurance framework of Education and Vocational Training. It also sets the foundations for common agreements for lifelong guidance, common principles for validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning, the quality evaluation systems of Vocational Education and Training and the unique framework Europass for the transparency of qualifications.

It is important to point out that the *Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal* [State Employment Public Service] within its competence in the field of managing training within the labour market, has directed its policies towards the improvement of quality in job and continuing training as well as towards a greater decentralization of management, with the participation of social partners of the process of reform and the Regional Authorities. Likewise, the reforms have met the requirements of the Council of Europe regarding the needs of people at risk of exclusion in the social and working spheres. It is also worth mentioning that aids from the European Social Funding has been used to support and promote the reform of the Vocational and Continuing Training.

**Ensure the transfer of credits for Vocational Training:** A National System of Credits for Vocational Training within the European framework is in the process of creation. This aims at facilitating the transfer of qualifications and encourage mobility. Similarly, Decrees of the Qualifications and Vocational Training Act [*Ley de las Cualificaciones y de la Formación Profesional*] are being developed to include the European principles for the validation of formal, non-formal and informal learning in the Spanish Vocational Education and Training System.

**Promoting and encouraging the participation of those involved in Vocational Training, especially social agents:** The Government promotes the participation and joint responsibility of all agents and people involved, including social agents, in the principles governing the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training. These agents will take part as well in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the Territorial Cooperation Programmes, provided in the Education Organic Bill.

Regarding continuing vocational training, the *Fundación Tripartita para la Formación de Empleo* [Tripartite Foundation for Job Creation] is a managing body, which integrates the more representative business and union organizations at national level and the Government Administration. The State Foundation, which will include the Autonomous Regions, is in the process of being created.

**Development of Professional Guidance in the concept of lifelong learning:** The Ministry of Education and Science, the Department of Labour and Social Affairs and Education and Labour Authorities of the Autonomous Regions, in collaboration with Social Agents, supported by the National Centre of Resources for Professional Guidance [*Centro Nacional de Recursos para la Orientación Profesional*] and the remaining national and European portals and networks, will implement a common reference framework at national level, for guidance and professional information which would improve guidance services in the various fields.

The Ministry of Education and Science, the Department of Labour and Social Affairs and Education and Labour Authorities of the Communities Regions promote and encourage carrying out practices or training periods in training centres or enterprises at national, regional and local level, as well as in enterprises or training centres of other state members for students, young workers, tutors, vocational training teachers and trainers.

Data about the trans-national mobility in Vocational Training is only available for the *Leonardo* programmes.

In 2005, the Ministry of Education and Science, in collaboration with the Department of Labour and Social Affairs, Education and Labour Authorities of the Regions, and Social Agents have started the implementation of the common framework Europass. This action has been complemented by the establishment of the National Centre Europass, whose working programme has been set up to promote trans-national mobility and transparency of professional qualifications.

### **5.1.2. The needs of low-skilled and disadvantaged groups**

Vocational Training contributes to meet the needs of groups with learning difficulty, and of disadvantaged and low-skilled groups by means of the development of Programmes, which include professional initiation subjects. They are Curricular Adaptation Programmes, Curricular Diversification Programmes and Social Guarantee Programmes. The latest are intended for the re-incorporating into the Education System through Vocational Training, and/or into the working life of young people under 21 at high risk of abandonment.

In the same line, the Education Organic Bill, by means of Act 5/2002 of professional Qualifications and Vocational Training, provides a wide offer of Vocational Training on the part of the Education and Labour Authorities, Social Agents and non-governmental organizations such as NGOs, etc. This offer is intended for disadvantaged groups who, at any age, are in disadvantage or with special working

and social inclusion difficulties. These offers will contribute to the acquisition of lifelong learning abilities and will include modules associated to the *Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones Profesionales* [National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications], with validation, evaluation, accreditation and registration effects (Section 8 of the Act).

Moreover, the *Ley 56/2003 de Empleo* [Employment Act 56/2002] establishes the preventive approach of active employment policies, among which there are in-service training programmes designed for the unemployed and, according to the commitments undertaken within the European Union, young people, women, long-term unemployed people aged 45 and over, disadvantaged groups and immigrants are considered priority groups. To that effect, the *Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal* [Public Service of State Employment] has planned a Job Training Programme for immigrants in their native country, for their later inclusion in Spain, which would make immigration easier.

Regarding continuous training, workers of Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (*PYMES* in its Spanish abbreviation) and low-qualified workers are considered priority groups (Royal Decree 1046 of 1<sup>st</sup> August 2003).

### **5.1.3. The image and attractiveness of the vocational route (in order to increase participation in VET)**

The main policies that are being developed and reinforced in order to reach this objective refer to the following:

- flexibility of access,
- effectiveness,
- transition from Secondary Education Post-compulsory or Higher Education.

Specific Vocational Training has been diversified into 23 professional families and 64 Intermediate Training Cycles, which prepare students to enter the labour market with qualifications. Advanced Vocational Training has also diversified its offer in 78 Training Cycles.

The Act 5/2002 determined the preparation of a National Catalogue of Qualifications [*Catálogo Nacional de Cualificaciones*], which will act as a reference to the various training options. It will facilitate access to training and make it more flexible. It will also enable the election of different routes. The creation of Integrated Vocational Training Centres will also widen the access to initial, continuous and in service vocational training offers.

The Act also contemplates the inclusion of key subjects relating to Information and Communication Technology, languages of the European Union, teamwork and prevention of work risks in all Vocational Training offers financed by public funds.

For the purposes of the above mentioned objective, the Education Organic Law Bill puts special emphasis on educational and professional guidance, tutorials, the development of an entrepreneurship spirit, training periods in enterprises and the possibilities offered by current regulations for the access and transition between the various options (compulsory attendance, open education, adult education, etc).

Finally, the new Law makes more feasible the access to higher education, either university or Vocational Training, from Secondary Education, as well as the possibility to obtain Upper Secondary and Vocational Training Certificates by means of specific examinations. The Law also encourages the autonomy of educational institutions to adapt their offers and training routes to the needs and

interests of their social, economic and productive environment as well as to their future prospects and economic and social development.

The State Employment Public Service plans, through the Employment Law, the setting up of several programmes. As examples we could mention:

- "On line" training for the unemployed.
- Training and Labour Force Inclusion Programme, of information and communication technologies and other activities for job seekers.

With regard to in-service training, a number of measures have been proposed aimed at facilitating individual alternatives for the participation of the labour force in training activities, such as:

- Individual training permits, which would enable worker to participate in regular institutional training.
- Training requested by enterprises that can be incorporated to their own educational projects.
- Training offered to workers that can be linked to the acquisition of training credits of the national system of qualifications.

Training incentives by means of the discount of training costs on the enterprises' contributions to Social Security is the most important change carried out in the management of continuing training.

The Employment National Plan and the Declaration for the Social Dialogue 2004 pursue the objective of improving competitiveness, stable employment and social cohesion. The Social Dialogue contains 13 specific business fields. The Knowledge Economy is one of these 13 fields, which seeks to encourage lifelong learning and ensure professional qualifications to guarantee employment for the entire working age population.

#### **5.1.4. Linking VET with the requirements of the labour market**

The Act 5/2002 of Professional Qualifications and Vocational Training draws up the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, and promotes a network of national reference centres specialized in the various productive sectors, with the purpose of linking vocational training with the requirements of the labour market.

Both, union and employers' associations take part in the preparation of the National Catalogue of Qualifications. Experts from these organizations define the qualifications and afterwards check the administration's proposals from the point of view of the labour market.

National centres of reference, for their part, are intended for improving the observation of changes occurred in the different sectors, which would modify the content of work and affect training and employment needs.

The Government promotes links between Vocational Training and Enterprises by means of nationwide binding laws, and in accordance with the recommendations made by the European Union (*Carta de Feira*, Council of Education Ministers of February 2001).

A political commitment has been undertaken to promoting the enterprising spirit in the education system from early ages, and encouraging the links of Vocational Education and Training with enterprises in order to train VET students and

teachers, tutors, trainers and *PYMES* workers, especially to meet the needs of low-qualified groups and those of small and medium sized companies.

Likewise, collaboration agreements are promoted between Education and Labour Authorities and Business organizations, private firms and Social Agents that contemplate the collaboration of experts to develop professional guidance on self-employment and creation of new businesses. To this end, rules governing the National Plan of Training and Insertion [*Plan Nacional de Formación e Inserción*] that regulates vocational training within the work sphere establishes close links with the business environment. Following are outlined the most significant measures:

- Non-labour practical training. These practices are drawn up on the basis of the Collaboration Agreements signed between the labour Authority in charge of managing the *Plan de Formación e Inserción Profesional - FIP* [Professional Training and Work Placement Plan] and the relevant enterprise or business organization.
- Collaboration agreements with contract of employment. These agreements establish a commitment to contracting the students trained within the Collaboration Agreement.

Within the sphere of In-service Vocational Training, a range of Training Complementary and Supporting Actions are developed whose objectives are, among others, carrying out studies to detect the needs of the different sectors and adjust the demand for labour and the educational offer accordingly. Regarding the educational offer, the *Planes de Oferta Intersectoriales* [Plan for offers in the various sectors] which are covered by collective negotiation and designed to meet the specific training needs of the productive sectors, are worth mentioning.

#### **5.1.5. The competence development of older workers (given the need to promote active ageing).**

With the aim of making lifelong learning to become a reality for all citizens, there is an adult educational offer, which tends to be increasingly flexible.

Regulations governing training for employed workers (continuing training) define workers aged 45 and over as the priority group, establishing participation rates in the training activities.

The Government, through the Department of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Science, is actively working in collaboration with Public Administrations of the Regions and with the Social Agents to establish a procedure to permit recognition and validation of non-formal and informal education, as provided in section 8 of Act 5/2002 of Qualifications and Vocational Training.

#### **5.1.6. The reduction of barriers between VET and general education and increased progression into higher education.**

Barriers between Vocational Training and general education will be reduced by means of the National System of Qualifications and Vocational Training and the National Catalogue of Professional Qualifications, as well as through option, access and transition flexibility provided by the Education Bill, making easier the transition into higher education, at any age and with a any former educational background.

### **5.1.7. The specific learning needs and changing role of vocational teachers and trainers.**

The Government, by means of the Education Organic Bill, guarantees training for VET teachers, tries to improve working conditions and enhances the recognition of the teaching profession in order to make it more attractive. In addition, vocational training regulated by Law, might be taught by qualified professionals of the working world.

The Public Service of State Employment [*Servicio Público de Empleo Estatal*] carries out annually a Plan of training for trainers. The annual Plan is made up of:

- Plan of Technical Improvement.
- Plan of initial Training (Courses in Methodology and Didactics conveyed by the Public Service of State Employment).

This Plan seeks to meet improvement and technical updating needs of the groups involved in training tasks and it supposes a key strategy for improving the quality of vocational training.

The network of national reference centres, provided by the Act 5/2002, will be a basic tool for the VET teachers' training, specialized by productive sectors which will develop innovation and experimentation actions regarding Vocational Training, and to this end it will include educational activities aimed at students, employed and unemployed workers as well as businessmen and trainers.

### **5.1.8. Early identification of skills needs and planning of VET provision.**

A "Survey of the Education-Training Transition and Labour Market 2005" [*La Encuesta de Transición Educativa-Formativa e Inserción Laboral 2005*] has been set up in 2005. This is a statistical action carried out by the National Institute of Statistics [*Instituto Nacional de Estadística (INE)*], in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Department of Labour and Social Affairs. The survey seeks to know how the qualifications requested by the labour market match the education received by the students.

Research is targeted at people who have finished Compulsory Secondary Education, Baccalaureate, and Intermediate and Advanced Training Cycles. It is targeted as well at students who have followed courses within the Plan of Training Programmes, Programmes for joining the labour market or other Vocational Training Programmes. It is also meant for those individuals who left school before finishing Compulsory Secondary Education in the academic year 2000/2001. The purpose is to know the education pathway they followed and their situation regarding participation in the labour market, from the moment they left their educational track until now.

## **5.2. Obstacles and areas for further progress**

As it has been already mentioned there is uncertainty about the future of the contribution of the structural funds from 2007 to 2013, to reach the Lisbon objectives in Education and Vocational Training. The UE contribution is necessary for the financing of National lifelong learning VET strategies.

## **6. CONSOLIDATING THE EUROPEAN DIMENSION OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING**

### **6.1. Increase mobility through removing obstacles and active promotion.**

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

With regard to higher education, the main obstacle was, up to now, the existence of very strict rules for establishing official qualifications in Spain. In particular, the Government laid down wide and detailed compulsory common contents (core curriculum), which often were very difficult to coordinate with the programmes in other countries.

The Government has started the procedure for the signing and ratification of the Lisbon Agreement about the recognition of foreign qualifications.

Moreover, the newly approved decrees of the structure of university education include sections to facilitate enrolment of foreign students, simplify procedures for the recognition of prior education and promote mobility from and towards other countries.

#### **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?**

A large number of school programmes and projects related to virtual mobility, associated or not to the UE programmes. There is not, however, a general organizational framework except for the one provided by *Socrates*, *Leonardo* and *Erasmus* Agencies.

#### **6.1.3. The promotion of mobility in vocational education and training**

The mobility in vocational education and training is made effective mainly through the *Leonardo* and *Socrates* programmes.

### **6.2. Consolidate the European dimension of education**

The process of European integration, the recent rise in immigration, and the introduction of new habits and values in our society have produced important social changes, which have also affected educational approaches, educational expectations of students and households, teachers' work and the expectations of the Spanish population regarding what education might and must offer.

Besides, the Spanish education system must respond appropriately to the new challenges involved in the construction of the European Union, the emergence of new multicultural societies and the necessary increase of competitiveness at European and international level. Education must contribute as well to strengthen social cohesion, especially under present circumstances of globalisation and integration into supranational authorities on the one hand, and development of self-governments and the Europe of the regions, on the other.

One of the measures to be highlighted is the promotion of the European dimension in primary and secondary education, both in the objectives of each area or subject, and in the contents. This contents refers to the knowledge of the European Union and its social, economic, political, cultural, artistic and linguistic aspects, as well as in those that refer to respect for others, the value of individual differences and opposition to all kinds of discrimination.

Furthermore, a new subject about education for citizenship will be included in the curriculum of secondary education to encourage the acquisition of coexistence and mutual respect habits, these habits form the basis for cooperation between people and cultures, as well as the recognition of linguistic diversity and intercultural dialogue.

The teaching of languages will be promoted as a key element to facilitate the coexistence and communication between European citizens. To this end, one of the most important measures will be, as it has been already mentioned, the inclusion of a foreign language in lower primary education and offer a second foreign language from the first year of compulsory secondary education, in all educational institutions.

Within the framework of the European Dimension of Education, Spain also proposes measures to encourage the international mobility of teachers by means of teacher exchanges "post to post" and training periods for teachers in foreign countries. In addition Spain will promote the harmonization of the EU educational policies in the training of teachers, both during their initial and in-service education.