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**Transfer of innovation and new methods for identifying
vocational competence within vocational education in the metal
and electrical sector as illustrated by two vocations**

Project COMMET

Work Package II. Country: Spain

Influence of Social Partners on Vocational Training. Situation in Spain.

This document is a vision about the accordance of Vocational Training in Spain and the companies' needs. It also refers to the situation of changes that Spain is living in this field.

a) Introduction: Changes in Spain.

First Change: Vocational Training (VT) used to start at 14 years old but since a change in the law, in 1990, VT starts at 16 years old. This is the reason why in regular education it does not exist Basic Level (it only exists Vocational Training Middle Level and Upper Level). From 13 to 16 years all children go to ESO (which means, translated, Compulsory Secondary Education)

Second change: Since some years, Spanish government is working to introduce modifications that adapt Vocational Training to companies needs, introducing the concepts of competences. An example of this is the creation of INCUAL (National Institute for Qualifications) and the Catalog of Qualifications, published by INCUAL and the Ministry of Education and Science on 2006.

Nevertheless, the Education Programs adapted to the INCUAL Catalog are not still implemented all over the state.

For instance, in Barcelona, during the present academic year (08-09) there are some VT schools that are doing new curricula as a "beta user" of modified programs. If these experiences work all right, next year the rest of schools will implement the new curricula as well, for some diplomas.

b) Social Partners involved in the VT System

The Social Partners identified as taking part of VT are:

1. Ministry of Education, Social Politics and Sports: The old "Ministry of Education and Science" does not exist anymore in Spain, as from 2006, its competences has been transferred to:

- Ministry of Education, Social Politics and Sports, lead by Mercedes Cabrera Calvo-Sotelo
 - Ministry of Science and Innovation
2. Regional Governments: In the case of Barcelona, Education Management depends on Catalonia Government, that is *Generalitat de Catalunya*, www.gencat.net, and the Minister of Education , Ernest Maragall i Mira



Figure 1: Minister of Education, Social Politics and Sports (left) and Minister of Education in Catalonia (right)

- 3. Schools that offer Vocational Training, and teachers that work there
 - 4. Students and there families. Families are also important because, in some case, influence on the students selection and/or cover the cost of Vocational Training.
- c) Author Point of view about the situation in Spain:

Here there are some opinions about the situation of VT in Spain

1) The application of ESO (Compulsory Secondary Education) is very discussed from many parts.

From social point if view it is good to have the right and the obligation to be studying until 16. On the other hand it seems not appropriate to give the same kind of training to everybody.

ESO is delaying the beginning of Vocational Training until 17 year old teenagers. From 14 to 16, there are people that have very good skills to learn a profession and they are not motivated to go on most theoretical concepts.

In the words of Innovation Minister of Catalonia, the traditional concept of training as developed from Greek civilization (there is a teacher and the rest of pupils listen to him) is not the natural way of learning for many people. Many people prefer “learning by copying” or “learning by doing”, especially in the case of Vocational Training. For this reason, he admits the implementation of ESO was not as good as they preview. The opinion of several people consulted is that VT should be an option from early ages.

2) The situation of Vocational Training

From the point of view of companies, there is a lack of VT professionals. They would like more people available to be contracted and some times they have to supply this gap with internal training or with workers coming from other

countries, and also with university graduated. Companies also demand to recover the profile of apprentice. This profile used to exist many years ago, but since legal age to work is 16 it is not possible to have anybody inside the company before this age. Moreover, until the person is not 18 the security restrictions are so high that they see this possibility more as a risk than an opportunity.

From the point of view of teachers, the author of this paper has interviewed a teacher who is working in a VT School for Mechanical Manufacturing and Manufacturing Facilities. He considers the classrooms are well equipped and the preparation of pupils is good. The fact is that every year there is work for all students that finish the VT. There is much more demand of Vocational Trained people than the number of students. This information is in accordance to companies demands explained above.

Other advantages of VT in Spain is that there is no obligation to study it, so students are motivated and schools can reject students in the case they are not behaving properly. On the other hand, the preparation of students before to start VT is very different, as they can come from Primary Education but they can also be professionals without diploma that want to certificate their knowledge and become better positioned in the labor field. There is also the challenge to make training compatible to students from other cultures and languages.

Which is the reason of this low number of students? Why people are not choosing Technical VT if there is this high demand?

The opinion of this teacher is that Technicians have not enough social consideration. To put an example: people dressed with coveralls only appear on TV when there is a strike. In other words, it is not the dream of parents to have their children on a Mid Grade Technician School.

The influence of the students and the families: It's odd that engineers have the same problem (lack of social consideration). There is some industrial company managers that consider would be a great idea to introduce an engineer as a main character in a soap opera or a movie, just to make a social diffusion of the profession.

The final considerations of the author of this paper are:

- VT level in Spain is good
- VT should start at early ages, inside the compulsory period of education
- VT in industrial field should gain social consideration, in accordance to company's demands.

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