

Ensuring Quality in VET Networks

TOI - 2009-1-PL1-LEO05-05050

Compilation of national background reports

Following new lifelong learning policies through the past years there's a rapid growing of VET networks throughout Europe, with a strong tendency to interlocking educational activities across organisations and sectors. Apparently this shift towards multilateral and transversal cooperation in VET calls for new and innovative approaches to joint decision making, shared planning, coordinated implementation and quality control of educational provision. However the vast majority of instruments and methods of quality assurance available for educational planning, monitoring and evaluation on provider level do not meet the new requirements. They are designed for managing the quality of either individual organisations or discrete training processes and structures, and this way are systematically counting out collaborative quality processes within newly emerging learning networks.

Through recent Leonardo da Vinci programme periods the European CERN partnership, with the help of evaluation, planning and management experts has developed a set of quality instruments in order to bridge this gap. Besides research papers, evaluation handbooks and training programmes the EVAL II project with SPEAK produced an strategic planning, monitoring and evaluation tool for VET networks, which in the course of the Leonardo da Vinci pilot project EVAL IV has been tested and validated in collaboration with VET institutes and stakeholders. The VETWORKS project will transfer the SPEAK instrument within a multi-stakeholder approach to national VET networks, and will advance their effectiveness and efficiency by using the European common quality assurance framework as a reference framework for implementation. In accordance with the Helsinki goals, the project will improve educational planning and training delivery within local, regional and sectoral VET networks in order to become a world quality reference and develop a common culture of quality improvement.

The VETWORK is promoted by the University of Economics, Cracow, whose transfer partner in Poland will be the foundation for the promotion and accreditation of economic education. The partnership falls into 7 highly professional partners from 7 different countries (PL,DE,HU,RO,ES, AT, IE), of which 6 will actively transfer the quality approach to regional / national VET networks while the Irish partner (developer of SPEAK) will be responsible for technically adapting the SPEAK tool, supporting implementation units and delivering multiplier training.

Main aim of the below report is to analyze the specific conditions for an utmost effective transfer of innovation. To this purpose an analytical framework was developed by P2, which should enable the partners to collecting data and analyse the specific requirements for innovation transfer within their respective VET networks. In this context also elements and methods of quality assurance in place should be surveyed in order to identify quality practices and routines the transfer units can build on. Furthermore the analytical framework should allow for the identification of networks with related features, in a way that similarities can be rendered visible. Based on the findings the partners should decide for the most promising transfer approaches and for each of them develop specific transfer scenarios.

The following chapters in a structured way describe the strategic and operational environment for the implementation of the VETWORKS transfer project.

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1. General information on VET network - facts and figures describing the VET networks

In **Poland** the VET system is not structured. There are quasi-formal Centers for Vocational Education (public-owned and private-owned) for adults, but they are not part of the official education system. The informal VET is completely unstructured and realized by different public & private actors – there are no platforms/official networks etc. There are some institutions, both public and private, that provide VET services, but they don't create formal cooperation. For the aim of the VETWORKS project, after the consultation process and many meetings with such institutions as Regional Labor Offices, that practically are responsible for informal VET services, the coordinative institution has found and choose ROPS as a partner for implementation of SPEAK tool. ROPS is a public organization, which was founded in 1999 by the Regional Parliament and is aimed for such issues as: social care, family policy, family violence prevention and coordination of European project in the area of social and family policy.

Since 2009 ROPS has been realizing a project “Academy of Social Economy Development” (short name: ARES), which is granted by the European Social Fund. According to the educational aspect of ARES project (in terms of VET), VETWORKS coordinator has decided to choose this action in order to implement trail version of SPEAK system. Furthermore, ARES is realized in cooperation within the Malopolska Pact for Social Economy (short name: MPES), that contains 34 different institutions from all over the region: associations, foundations, business organizations, cooperatives etc. Although it is not structured, official network (the single members are only signatories of the Pact), but in fact it might be considered as a network. The mission and tasks of ARES are a) cross-sectoral cooperation for development of social economy in the Malopolska Region, b) development of local partnerships / networks for social economy, c) development and professionalization of social enterprises, d) provision of detailed knowledge about social economy for all other stakeholders (e.g. institutions operating in the field of social inclusion), e) provision of trainings for direct beneficiaries who want to establish social enterprise/co-opt, f) promotion of social enterprises' products and services. At the moment there is no official VET policy, at least at the informal level. The VET network includes local communities, labour offices, associations and other institutions from the educational, social and cultural field, regional development agencies, social partners and universities.

The Pécs Learning City-Region Forum in **Hungary** was initiated in the Fall of 2009 by the Faculty of Adult Education and HRD of the University of Pécs. The goal was to put quality learning of individuals and groups either in formal, non-formal or in informal environment on the agenda and to support organisational learning. Networking should be promoted amongst learning providers and stakeholders, and, joint activities should be created as well as innovative practices in the field. At its first stage the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum is based on the partnership of 14 institutions and organisations in the area of the City of Pécs and of Baranya County. The main tasks at the moment are to develop a Systemic Partnership Focusing on the Learning City-Region Initiative and Regional Learning; to develop a complex Research and Development Platform, to support the co-ordination and quality development of local and regional VET services and actions.

The Pécs Learning City-Region Forum is based on the partnership of the 14 institutions and organisations from public, private and non-governmental sector, such as local and regional planning agencies, employment centers, chambers, cultural associations and public institutions on both levels, municipal and regional. The City Council and the County Council are policy makers at local levels, however, they are to use national VET policy and legal rules in their own VET institutions' maintenance and operation. All other partners are stakeholders in education, training or in cultural fields. The rationale of the Forum is the partnership of key stakeholders in and around Pécs in the field of education, training and culture so as to promote dialogue and sharing experience in the development of learning and skills for lifelong learning. Partners in the network choose which of the networking tasks and duties they participate or can individually initiate new networking themes at the same time. National tendencies are apparent and strongly influence local and regional VET capacities as policy lines are centrally set by the national govt. VET policy, such as governance and funding, guidance and

counseling, teacher and trainer training, curriculum reform and innovative approaches to teaching and assessment.

As for **Spain** ASIMAG was selected for the application of SPEAK. ASIMAG is a VET network of training consultants which was established in 1989. Within the twenty years of experience ASIMAG has been providing for the customers various professional services, amongst them, the design, delivery, monitoring, verification, evaluation and justification of Training Plans as investigations and related studies. Throughout its trajectory, ASIMAG has been growing gradually concerning its activities, number of customers and offices. Today ASIMAG is based on a territorial structure and is able to carry out activities at a national level while managing a team of consultants, technicians, programme coordinators, curriculum designers, evaluation and monitoring specialists who are ready to respond to training challenges. ASIMAG is supported by a highly competent human resources team formed by more than 250 professionals including the delegations of Bilbao, Madrid, Valencia, Toledo, Pamplona, Palma de Mallorca, Seville, Santander, Barcelona and Murcia.

The portfolio of ASIMAG covers occupational and continuous training design, planning and management, development, delivering and justification of training programmes, monitoring, control and evaluation of training programmes, social, labour and training investigations, European studies of social, labour and training intervention, organization and development of professional events and conferences and professional orientation for the labour insertion. The selected network can be identified by the following main actors acting at the national level (centred in Bilbao and Madrid): *Training managers* (responding to the clients demand and offering a training options and modules according to the workers training needs), *Trainers* (implementing the training actions), *Projects department* (detection of the workers / sectors training needs, investigations and diagnosis, if requested by clients– social agents or training managers), *Support personnel* (administration department, monitoring and other technical support personnel), *Social agents* (trade union ordering and financing the training) and *Workers* in the training action.

In **Germany** the network Learning regions was evoked from the idea to make education more flexible in the regions in a bottom-up way. The network Learning Regions was authorized by the Federal Ministry and officially supported with EU money from the ESF funding. 200 million Euro in a mix of Federal and EU funds were given as a financial basis. Support came also from Departments of the individual states and other sources. The financing stopped after 8 years. The Learning Regions were founded as a transfer instrument to make the existing educational institutions and ways more flexible. The aim was to strike new paths in education and create modern, innovative structures making education accessible to everyone. The cooperation in education took place between all existing institutions and groups on-site. Common solutions were looked for to overcome educational obstacles and homogenize existing diversities. The Learning Region around the Lake of Constance Region is a striking example. The area is a very big region near Austria and Switzerland. The formal network was based on institutions that already existed. The goal was to spread their activities in the field of education, training, guidance and counseling. The intention was to build up all the key elements from the national side. Multiple educational paths were created where the inhabitants could participate in the educational processes. These were well used over the eight years. Formal and informal merged ever more. One of the most important activities was competence counseling which was integrated in the so called L-points (Learning-point).

Each of the Learning regions covers all relevant representatives of the civic groups relevant for one region: a) general and vocational schools, institutions of higher education, b) funding agencies and institutions offering out-of school education and off-the-job or inter-firm training, c) trade union's and industry training organisations, d) adult education centres, e) education funding agencies of the churches, f) commercial providers and other educational institutions, g) companies (explicitly SME), g) chambers, trade unions, business development organisations, h) education guidance institutions, i) youth authorities, j) employment offices and other administrations, k) cultural and socio-cultural institutions such as libraries, museums, art and music schools as well as youth, senior citizens', womens', sports and environmental groups and projects, l) self-organised learner groups, m) representatives of consumer protection organisations, n) teachers and company training course tutors,

as well as o) developers of teaching and learning material, p) education and training advice centres, q) youth welfare offices, r) employment offices and r) other agencies, s) make-work companies.

The VET network in **Greece** is targeting at improving quality assurance in small and medium companies, and fostering sustainable development of business and management processes. The network is regionally based (Attica) and is lead on by the project partner IDEC. Members of the network are consultants in the area of quality assurance and improvement, customers (mainly from the SME sector), public actors and social partners. Main aim of the network is to guide and evaluate national and regional programs dedicated to the development of SMEs, and more specifically to counseling SMEs at the assurance of the quality of products and production processes.

The focus of the VET network in **Austria** especially is on people with low qualifications, who are disadvantaged in the Austrian labor market, such as persons with physical, mental or cognitive limitations, who tend to become long-term unemployed. The task of the Austrian network is to create offers that enable the target group to develop the skills and competencies to enter into the first labour market. The interweaving of professional training and educational support is characteristic for many social and economic facilities in Austria, who both have formed regional and national levels of networking. The network is working under the legal framework of both, national and regional legislation, which enables the linking of activities taking place on different levels. The relevant network for the speak-project is situated between the official vet-system and the support-system for people at risk. Members of the network are: a) People with disabilities, b) Employment service, c) Job Consulting, d) Head of the department (training course), e) Manager of the Söb, f) General management, Chance B, e) Local economy.

2. Management of network - Strategic and operational management

Due to the fact, that the network in **Poland** doesn't have official structure, the model of management has to be based on the voluntary actions of each MPES signatory. However, ROPS as a coordinator of ARES project is responsible both for strategic and operational management. As for strategic management there are no specific management tools in use; the only method is the MPES signatories annual meeting, based on annual reports prepared by each stakeholder and quarterly reports prepared by the coordinator. As for operational management there is monthly project's staff meetings and on-line consulting. A quality management dedicated to the needs and requirements of the network has not been established so far.

The **Hungarian** Forum is managed by the Forum's secretariat from the Faculty of Adult Education and HRD of the University of Pécs and a Presidency Board. The Presidency, comprised by the members of the Forum, is represented by the Rector of the University of Pécs. The most relevant management task is to plan, achieve and maintain the Forum and ballancing interests as a local and regional tool for developing local and regional partnerships in the area of education, training/VET and culture. There is no peculiar management tool in use and there is only one task and that is to follow quality orientation to practice and work-experience.

The management of the **Spanish** network is based on the continuous collaboration of the main actors mentioned earlier. The training demand is being defined directly the "social agents" or prepared by the projects department through the training needs detection and diagnosis (if requested by the social agents). Based on the training needs demand, the training managers are responsible for preparing the training plans (design, planning and training management: development and evaluations), "Support personnel" includes the participation of the following departments: administration, monitoring (control) and technical support. The strategic planning of the courses usually are defined annually by the social agents and transmitted to ASIMAG for the management. The definition of the concrete training actions (contents, length, etc) is fruit of a collaborative work among the different departments of Asimag and social agents. The workers (students) are involved in the management through the

evaluation of the courses process and also might be involved through the detection and analysis of the training needs. Specific diagnosis or investigation is requested on behalf of social agents or training managers). Evaluation of the courses by the students is one of quality management tools aiming to ensure the quality of the provided courses and to measure students' satisfaction besides the formal approval of courses by the respective public institutions.

As for the implementation and management of the **German** Learning Regions programme the German Aerospace-Center (dlr) is formally assigned. As the overall framework of the thematic networks, the dlr organised parallel to the developments in the single regions nation-wide conferences and conventions in order to open the opportunity to compare individual projects, identify success factors, present models of good practice and process them in a general form. These initiatives were accompanied by important media for the nation-wide transfer of results included "inform" - The Learning Regions Magazine and the internet platform www.lernende-regionen.info set up by the DLR project management agency.

Within the networks, support had been given to one main project which concentrated on developing and coordinating the network. This usually occurred through a professional administrative office which simultaneously developed central educational programmes and took care of marketing. Usually linked to the main project are several sub-projects, which offered services relating to specific subjects and business fields that promote Lifelong Learning. An average of four to six persons per network were usually responsible for carrying out the necessary expert and organisational work; other persons were also involved on a temporary basis. In order to ensure lasting co-operation, most networks operate, according to their objective, in the form of registered associations (incorporated society, registered association), non-profit limited liability company (limited liability company) or foundations. All networks were open to additional members. With this decentralised promotion approach, each network could adapt perfectly to the regional point of departure and develop their own best strategy.

The **Greek** network is defined through a decentral management approach. The partners are loosely coupled and meet occasionally face-to-face in meetings. However the work and process of the network is guided by IDEC, who has the role of a facilitator and coordinator, including continuous tracing of the network progress (through evaluation). The aim of the management is to ensure a proper financial management and implementation of QM-techniques, collaboration with stakeholders and access to support.

In case of the **Austria** network, the management gives clear guidance on the objectives, procedures, roles and responsibilities within the network. These are documented in written form and are reflected among others in the respective job descriptions. In discussions between the manager and the staff of professionals working meeting, the action that is necessary for the achievement of targets is matched and if necessary adjusted. The management follows the design of the measure to the guidelines of "transplacement" concept to ensure all the required social and economic establishments. "Transplacement" includes all the objectives, services and methods, including the promotion of personal and professional skills to ensure self-organizing capacity and allow for starting a job. All meetings are recorded and compiled into detailed documentation. The objectives and results of last year are reflected during an annual meeting. This review, which is conducted by the GF jointly with the manager forms the basis for the plannings of the following year.

3. Quality in VET networks

The QA in the ARES project in **Poland** is not developed at this stage. Although the coordinator at ROPS, is an experienced evaluator, according to the application form (ESF project) there is no obligation to put over a project evaluation. Nevertheless, ROPS is going to introduce regular surveys among the stakeholders. Moreover, there are plans to introduce an external evaluation. Besides that, by the end of 2010 SPEAK is to be implemented as a tool for self-evaluation. Any other evaluation tools

are not prescribed. Moreover, the only QA measures within the project are the internal quality standards of ROPS.

For **Hungary** so far as quality criteria and efforts are concerned, the network has to follow national quality dimensions in VET. In addition to the quality assurance mechanisms developed within the framework of International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and within various state programmes a vocational school self-assessment model (*Szakiskolai Önértékelési Modell, SZÖM*) has been currently developed in 120 vocational schools in SZFP based on Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF). In 2006 the VET Quality Assurance Framework (*Szakképzési Minőségbiztosítási Keretrendszer, SZMBK*) was elaborated as a national adaptation of the CQAF and launched into the area of VET. The biggest obstacle to introducing the system in its entirety is the lack of professional and material help. Hence one of the TÁMOP 2.2.1 sub-projects assigns 353 million HUF (nearly 1, 4 million EUR) for the development of a unitary quality assurance system that can be used by every VET schools. It is developed on the basis of previously applied systems such as SZMBK and SZÖM.

The **Spanish** ASIMAG network runs training centres which meet all the required conditions by the current legislation, with the municipal opening licence and at the same time meet all the legal established requirements as far as hygienic conditions, acoustics, empowerment and security are concerned in order to carry out the training actions. As far as internal quality management of ASIMAG is concerned, ASIMAG and its team are committed to quality which is its permanent concern. ASIMAG works with quality parameters and counts on the recognition that its customers emit. At present, ASIMAG has a certificate of Quality and Environment according to *NORMA UNE EN ISO 9001:2000* and *UNE EN ISO 14.001* respectively. Moreover, as ASIMAG works with the personal data, it meets the requirements established by *Ley Orgánica 15/1999 de Protección de Datos de Carácter Personal* (Protection of Personal Data) under the Agency of Data Protection.

In **Germany** „The methodical monitoring“ of processes by means of figures will strongly gain importance as an instrument for planning and coordination within the field of education. In areas where important innovations across the areas of education are promoted a methodical, continuous monitoring of education the indicators of which comprehends all areas of education mirrors its effects and development trends. A regional monitoring of education – locally steered – is therefore a necessity for the evaluation of innovations and the political control afterwards. Moreover monitoring combined with descriptive media can commune developments in the area of education to various target groups and raise the public awareness for education in general. The Learning Regions understand itself as a service provider for more transparency in the educational system and for the coordination and presentation of innovations in the area of lifelong learning. In some educational networks basic steps were already taken to introduce a regular local reporting in education. These education reports still mainly concentrate on the locally easily accessible field of the schools, but are important milestones for the introduction of the education reports as an attractive instrument for the local politics. Within the programme Bequal, a European project of Leonardo which tackled as „Learning Regions“ for the database-driven benchmarking. It was tested, which since then is being used by the Learning Regions for self evaluation. In the planned program “Learning on place” the local education monitoring will be an integral part. The gist of this instrument is a catalogue of indicators, in which all areas of education are included. In a further step an appliance will be developed, the purpose of which is to support the communes by carrying through local education monitoring thereby with a locally specific preemphasis.

In **Greece** there is great number of training institutions, both public and private ones, it became necessary to set up a national body that would supervise and coordinate all agencies that are involved in CVT. The National Accreditation Centre for Vocational Training (Ethniko Kentro Pistopoiisis Synexizomenis Epangelmatikis Katartisis, EKEPIS) is supervised by the Ministry of Employment and Social Protection (Ypourgeio Apascholisias kai Koinonikis Prostasias, YPAKP) and it has administrative and financial autonomy. The Centre's mission is to develop and implement the National Accreditation System for Continuing Vocational Training. This system aims to achieve quality assurance in vocational training, linkage between initial and continuing vocational qualifications and

recognition of vocational qualifications provided via continuing vocational training. The following criteria are generally employed in designating a training institution as a KEK: experience in organising adult training courses, teaching personnel, facilities.

The accreditation and function of the Vocational Training Centres (u) is done exclusively by the National Accreditation Centre for Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) according to criteria that can be included into four axes: Organisation and function, training provided, Accompanying Services; Managerial, scientific and administrative personnel; Premises, Equipment; Interview with the Head of Training. 265 private and public KEKs have been accredited by EKEPIS together with 545 structures (separate buildings) throughout the country. Moreover, 22 KEK AmeA (Vocational Training Centre for people with disabilities) together with 26 accredited structures have been accredited. EKEPIS has also accredited 4 Specialised Centres for the Social and Vocational Integration of Former Drug Users and Drug Users in Treatment (Exeidikevmena Kentra Koinonikis kai Epangelmatikis Entaxis Apexartimenon Atomon) along with 12 structures. The above specialised centres are primarily run by welfare organisations. In order to assure the quality of non-formal vocational training courses EKEPIS uses evaluation criteria and has implemented systems for: Accreditation of vocational training centres (Kentra Epangelmatikis Katartisis, KEK); Accreditation of continuing vocational trainers' training via the establishment of a register; Accreditation of continuing vocational training courses that result in the acquisition of accredited knowledge, skills and qualifications related to the needs of the labour market; Accreditation of staff providing support services via the establishment of a register; Development of the system for the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the work of accreditation centres.

The quality criteria applied to the **Austrian** network (internally within the company Chance B group and in the extended network) are essentially: Good leadership / management, Accountability and transparency, - Annual planning, Obtaining feedback, Systematic quality improvement, Confidentiality, Working in Partnership. As for the outcome orientation of overall importance is the profit for the customers, evaluation and documentation of the effects of SSGI on quality of life of customers, documentation of results, accessible and understandable documentation of results, review of results, ongoing review of the organization and processes by independent bodies, transparency of results, financial reports, responsibilities etc.

4. Role of EU policies

ROPS is not a pure VET institution, but even at the formal, as well as informal level, the official QA measures in VET sector in **Poland** are not yet implemented. Currently the Ministry of Education is working on EQF – according to last press information they should be ready by 2012-2013; then the National and Regional Certification Committees might be transformed into Centers for Quality and Evaluation. Finally, since that both the formal and informal VET services will have been managed at the national level by the Ministry of Education (at this moment the responsibility is divided between the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor and Social Policy). In case of the QA measures (e.g. EQARF), on-going adaption work is done by the National Support Centre of VET (KOWEZiU).

The EU policy on VET is mainly focusing on access and quality in VET. Accordingly, the **Hungarian** VET policy is to enable equal opportunity and to promote quality through NQF and other quality assurance tools, through the strengthened role of the chambers of commerce and industry in the field of examinations and ISO as a tool for monitoring services and organisation of education and training services in VET. European tools having impact: IMPLEMENTATION OF A NATIONAL QUALIFICATIONS FRAMEWORK (NQF): The conception of NQF has been elaborated in the course of an extensive professional consultation process. The Government decree on the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) has been issued in 2008. Pursuant to it the NQF must be compatible with the European Qualifications Framework System (EQF), and unitarily introduced

from 2013. The related developments are financed and organized in the frames of TÁMOP programme.

The technical and professional work related to the elaboration of NQF takes place in the professional workshops of the background institutes of the ministries responsible for public education and VET, such as the Institute for Educational Research and Development (Oktatáskutató és Fejlesztő Intézet (OFI) and National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education (Nemzeti Szakképzési és Felnőttképzési Intézet, NSZFI), respectively. The proposal with respect to the legal, policy and budget conditions of joining EQF is to be expected in 2010, thus the possible impacts of the NQF on VET will become visible only in the course of the preparatory process. Stakeholders nevertheless consider the development process of NQF as a tool which may enhance the acceleration and harmonization of the internal reforms being implemented within the different areas of education and training.

In **Spain** the EU normative and policies in vocational training are shaping the training demand, as well as contents that are transmitted by the social agents. As a reference could be taken a White Paper on “Life Long Learning: The Basque country: a learning region” spread by the Basque Government providing the framework for the development of a coherent strategy and help towards the larger goal of a European life long learning space. The social agents are encouraged and provided with the guidelines to promote the training actions designed to update and specialise the knowledge of the human resources.

The basic idea of the **German** LR networks was to realize the Lisbon strategy 2000 for Germany in a National wide initiative. This should realise the main idea that “the European Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. This idea should be realised in a bottom-up initiative across selected German regions. This German wide model integrated the CEDEFOP-position “Regional networking on the basis of trans-sectoral partnerships, particularly in education and labour policy must become a new focus in learning and employability strategies all over Europe” by focussing on the factor education. At the mid-term-conference in Berlin 2004 Viviane Reding, the officer for adult learning in the European Commission, was stressing the fact that it can tailor solutions to the needs identified by those familiar with the situation at the different levels and in different regions. And by focusing on the individual learner and stressing the learner’s need to be able to direct his or her own learning processes, it allows for a comprehensive lifelong and life-wide approach that recognizes the fact that learning takes place in many situations, both formal and informal, in learning institutions, in the workplace and even in the individual citizen’s private living environment. Therefore greatly to be welcomed is the program “Learning regions – providing support for networks” announced by the German authorities. Again, while this program focuses on the individual, it brings together the various organisational structures, both public and private, with whom the individual learner interacts. This is appropriate, because when the individual learns, he or she is not the only one to benefit: the current or – in the case of unemployed people, the prospective – employer benefits, but so also does wider society.

The **Greek** network is aware of the EU policies. IDEC as well as the partner organisations are responsible for collecting and documenting relevant documents of EU policies. Also the network is in close contact with local authorities, in order to mutually exchange about policy developments in Europe and its impact on SMEs in Greece.

The strategic manager of **Austrian** Chance B group acts in his capacity as President of the European umbrella association of providers for the disabled (EASPD European Association of Service Providers for Persons with a Disability) at European level in the project to establish a European Quality Framework (CQF) to create a voluntary quality framework for Social Services of General Interest (SSGI). Objectives of this development are to provide a contribution to a common understanding of quality in SSGI, to influence national legislation and practice and include the role of legislation and issue of SSGI same as those of service organizations. The CQF model involves aspects that affect the context, the organization, the provision of services and the effects. The interest in the project

VetWorks is in trying the instrument SPEAK, to obtain a finding on the current state of our practice in this Q-criteria.

5. How the network actors consider SPEAK to improve the quality of the network

Due to the fact, that there are no evaluation tools in the project, the **Polish** coordination team is strongly interested in implementing SPEAK as a tool for self-evaluation, especially because of the professional experience of the staff members. Moreover, in the project's application form there were no funds prescribed for evaluation, thus SPEAK as a gratuitous evaluation system seems to be a good solution. The network actors will not be directly involved into SPEAK – the system will be used only by the project staff. By this time, the signatories of MPES have not been being consulted.

The actors of the **Hungarian** network at the time of this report only know the overall aims of SPEAK and will need further discussion and the change of SPEAK references/indicators referring to VET in order to make it able for adaption and use in VET environment. The added value of SPEAK is thought to be the direct impact on strenghtening networking discussion, and decision-making amongst the partners of the Forum.

A potential support (added value) that the implementation of SPEAK could provide for the development of the **Spanish** network could be considered as follows: strengthening the collaborative spirit among the main actors working on the common objective, an additional support tool to monitor and evaluate progress in order to ensure the quality, creating a well structured database with all the resources and facilitating an easy access to review the progress, issue the reports (when necessary) that can also serve as a reference source for the design and development of new training actions as well as the analysis of training needs, encouraging the self –evaluation mindset of the involved actors.

Learning Regions can and should create the wider societal-economic context defined by creating European social frameworks (EU policies), social and civil dialogue, inter-organisational cooperation/learning regions, learning networks. Lifelong learning is here the driver for local and regional regeneration. In that respect we speak about “learning society” which means the learning society marks the social capital in Europe. This will be made up by strengthening the learners' personal responsibility and self-management, motivating disadvantaged groups that are currently less involved in education, strengthening relations between all educational sectors, co-operating between educational providers and users. Thus improves the quality, quantity, and structure of offers, in order to promote user-orientation in particular. By embedding now the SPEAK results into the **German** community-networks means to give them sustainability and a long-term-stability.

As for **Greece** the SPEAK tool is considered a method to allow for a structured overview of everyday tasks, strategic and operational goals. Furthermore SPEAK is expected an instrument for measuring the quality of services and improvement of the network outcomes.

Cooperation within the **Austrian** network is primarily influenced by the daily business. The issues of cooperation covers very practical things like processes, coordination, etc., and educational topics such as performance, motivation, self-esteem and stabilize the transit employees inside. Since all members of the network have to act within organisational and institutional work and time frames there is only limited space for the implementation of additional tasks. Very rarely all network members will meet together to discuss the basic criteria. A big advantage can be seen in the integration of AMS and a representative of the business, ensuring that critical perspectives from outside can be incorporated into the considerations of quality. The network members appreciate the challenge to jointly discuss, identify and decide upon key criteria for achieving the overall objectives of the network and how the joint work method is related to its objectives.

6. Transfer strategy

As for **Poland** the stages of transfer are: a) presentation of the SPEAK tool to the ROPS staff, b) ongoing pre-design workshop (filling the basic SPEAK template, describing main categories such as working partners, target groups, working methods, etc.), c) design workshop, c) software adjustment and translation, d) training session (how to use SPEAK properly), e) initial implementation, f) stakeholder meeting at the end of the SPEAK working cycle. Constraints might appear with language difference and lack of language skills (SPEAK as an Irish tool has to be implemented in the Polish conditions), small willingness of MPES signatories to take any additional administrative burdens (SPEAK might be seen as a burden), reluctance to the idea of evaluation in the ROPS management board (they will not let the ROPS staff to work with SPEAK during the official working hours). Risks might evolve from the following issues: a) The tool will not suit to the Polish environment and the staff will lose their time, b) the MPES signatories will not participate in the project (although they will be involved only indirectly), c) failure of cooperation between transferring company (NEXUS) and implementing institution (ROPS) and d) dismissal of staff employed by the ARES project, that are key for the SPEAK implementation.

As for **Hungary** current constraints are indicators with a lack of applicability in international network-development environment as VETWORKS. Partners of the Learning City-Region Forum should not be constrained to use such tool at all! Also, good practice example of the application of SPEAK in connection with the Bavarian Learning Regions ought to be discussed and distributed. At the time of this report it is too early to consider such dimension, however the indicators of SPEAK must be changed and reconstructed for obvious application of the system in partial VET environment such as the Pécs Learning City-Region Forum demonstrates to raise quality learning in such frames and to generate more interest in learning regardless of age of learners. The Munich meeting of VETWORKS on SPEAK may help understanding the implications of SPEAK in concrete VET environment in accordance with the above-mentioned issues having been raised so as to support the formulation of a „transfer strategy”.

As far as the transference of SPEAK in **Spain** is concerned, at the time of this report, the following constraints and difficulties can be identified: a) one of the possible constraints and difficulties might be the logistics and organization of the foreseen 4 training sessions: bringing all the involved actors together in one place & time coming from different organizations and two different cities (Bilbao - Madrid), b) “Impact” (detecting and measuring the impact as far as the training for workers is concerned), c) motivating the main actors. The training sessions and the participation in SPEAK implementation could be considered as an extra work (an additional task apart their daily work tasks) for the main actors even though they are aware and willing to learn and be involved. The chosen network was carefully defined while selecting the main two delegations (Madrid - Bilbao) providing the majority of the training actions for the transport sector workers, as well as identifying the main social agents. A successful implementation of SPEAK for transport sector could be an opportunity to consider applying and transferring SPEAK for other training sectors including other delegations at the national level. As far as the transfer strategy is concerned, we aim to organize personal meetings with the main network actors in order to carry out an in-depth analysis of the main expectations and possible constraints before defining a transference strategy and planning the next stages. At the current stage, we have managed initial discussions considering SPEAK application.

As for **Germany** very effective was the horizontal cooperation between each other and the executive board. We came into direct contact with the ministries and they had to accelerate decision-processes besides the normal ways of proceeding decisions. Due to our direct access to other transfer-projects and interregional cooperations with important partners and bodies we could build-up networks between different actors. Finally we were able to define and implement new structures across existing systems – e.g. new job-creations which were officially accepted by the ministries of the “Länder” and on the federal level. Finally we identified that the best way for sustainability was to combine bottom up with top-down. All these successes were good reputations for EU- and international projects. The administrative duties were very high and complicated. Within the executive board, dlr, we had to cope

with numerous changes of contact persons and administrative ways we had to go. We started with a distrust of official bodies with their top-down-policy against Learning Regions with their bottom-up-initiative. Very often we had to work without any pre-experience. Therefore we worked alongside “try and error” with failure-components. The Learning Region movement strengthened the regional development, enforced the horizontal and vertical level. It created in nearly all supported regions new flexible systems against “antediluvian” educational structures. The main success consisted of the growing interest of other European countries and moreover worldwide in systems and ruling of the German form of Learning communities.

In **Greece** the transfer process is applied as agreed on the first transnational workshop in Poland. However it showed that the SPEAK working method is not easy to transfer, in particular due to the huge workload of the network, with a risk to refusing from extra obligations. A more every day effort has to be made.

A strength of the **Austrian** network might be seen in the fact, that the members know each other well and are in an active working relationship with each other. Since all working in a firm identification with the overarching theme is given. All members have a keen interest in the quality of their work on the one hand and on the quality of cooperation on the other and are willing to provide basic considerations. The fact that quality criteria were applied so far never been on the interaction of a network makes the project for the members interesting and exciting. The Chance B network operates through its representatives actively involved in several regional, national and international umbrella organizations: the "umbrella organization bbs" is the regional association of all qualification projects in Styria, which are acting on behalf of the AMS.

The Employment Pact Oststeiermark is the regional network in which we participate as a training operation and meet representatives of the AMS, industry, educational institutions of adult education and agency representatives as well as policy twice a year to discuss the working conditions of the regional target groups. If the first test show significant benefit it seems possible to jointly spread the instrument with the national umbrella organizations. Noteworthy since October 2007, ARQA-VET in Vienna operates the Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education. This site is a service facility for actors in vocational training in Austria with services and know-how in the field of quality assurance and - development. The department releases interesting articles on "Quality in Education" with practical examples and videos of relevant lectures on different aspects of the quality in VET. This forms the larger context in which to move the project and to participate in the debate and practical implementation of the partners' plannings. Another resource is "Quality Austria", founded in 2004 as Training, Certification and Evaluation Ltd. "Quality Austria" established itself as a competent partner in the area of quality, environmental and safety management in Austria. The VETWORKS process coincides with the Austrian quality award, which will take place all over Austria and which can be helpful in order to gain synergies. Difficulties could arise from the fact that the time spent on the project is difficult to reconcile with the high work demands. Another problem might be that all skilled workers of establishments in the workshops must be present, which means that companies have to cope with timing problems. This in times of high workload could lead to difficulties. Another uncertainty is that it is not clear yet whether the project will end up with a real benefit for the network members. However, the members rely on the project staff, which in turn can draw on any experience with the usefulness of the instrument.