

A bridge to the future

European policy for vocational
education and training 2002-2010

National policy report - Cyprus

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This report is one of a set of European country reports on VET policy development prepared within Cedefop's ReferNet network. Refernet is a European network of national networks providing information and analysis on national VET to Cedefop and disseminating information on European VET and Cedefop work to stakeholders in the EU Member States, Norway and Iceland. The report has been produced by ReferNet Cyprus as a contribution to Cedefop's fourth policy report which reviews progress in VET towards the policy goals of the Copenhagen process. The opinions expressed in this national report are not necessarily those of Cedefop.

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FOREWORD

This report was initiated by Cedefop, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training, and has been prepared by the Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus, HRDA, which is the nominated National Coordinator of the European network ReferNet in Cyprus.

Cedefop established ReferNet as the European network of reference and expertise in vocational education and training. The aim of this network is to meet the growing demand for information on policies and developments in the area of vocational education and training in the European Union.

ReferNet is made up of national consortiums, each comprising organisations, which are representative of the interests of vocational education and training within each EU Member State, plus Norway and Iceland. ReferNet provides a forum for exchanging information through a decentralised approach based on the contribution of the national consortia.

This report provides information on national progress in VET towards EU policy goals within the framework of the Copenhagen process and according to the policy priorities defined in the Maastricht / Helsinki / Bordeaux Communiqués and related Council conclusions.

The National VET Policy Reports follow a common structure, which has been provided in the form of guidelines by Cedefop. It comprises of an introduction, a section on socio-economic challenges for future VET policy development, a section on VET policies as recovery measures for the economic crisis, six sections on policy measures in priority areas for national VET policy development and a section reflecting on progress in modernising European VET systems. The sections include information on the policy context, the progress from 2002 to beginning of 2010 and examples of policies / measures.

The HRDA, as the National Coordinator of ReferNet in Cyprus, wishes to acknowledge the invaluable contribution of the other members of the Cyprus ReferNet Consortium in the preparation of this report.

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INTRODUCTION

Cyprus' economy is small, open and flexible. It is characterised by conditions of near full employment with **high employment rate** (70,9% in 2008), relatively low unemployment rate (3,7% in 2008) and high economic growth (3,8% in 2008). Human resources are characterised by a **high level of educational attainment**. The percentage of people aged 25-64 with tertiary education was 34,5% in 2008. Since the early 1990s, the labour market has been confronted with **labour shortages mainly in low-skilled occupations**. The low fertility rate is gradually aggravating the problem. This has led to the need for employment of **foreign workers**. According to Social Insurance data, in 2008 foreign workers, including EU-27 nationals, represented 25,6% of total employment. Thus there is significant potential for attracting inactive women into the labour market, though the possibilities are somewhat limited for middle-aged and older women.

Cyprus does not possess any significant wealth producing natural resources and thus its human resources is the most significant factor of production in the economy and the only means of success in this era of globalisation, rapid technological developments and increased competitiveness. The continuous development of Cyprus' human resources is a basic priority pillar as outlined in the Strategic Development Plan, SDP (Stratigiko Schedio Anaptyksis, SSA). **Education and training of the human resources is considered to be a critical success factor for the enhancement of competitiveness, productivity and innovation**. Thus it is considered necessary to increase the investment in human capital and to improve the education and training systems ensuring that they deliver to the human resources the required knowledge, skills and abilities to adapt to a culture of lifelong learning. **Improvements in VET feature prominently in many national planning documents as VET must be able to effectively support human resources development**.

Policy framework decisions in the field of VET in Cyprus are taken by the Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío) following policy proposals by the responsible ministries or departments after a process of **consultation with the social partners and VET stakeholders**. The laws / acts regulating the provision of VET are passed by the House of Representatives (Vouli ton Antiprosopon).

The **key actors involved in policy development for education and training** are the Planning Bureau, PB (Grafeío Programmatismou, GP), the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeío Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeío Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD).

The PB is a coordinating and policy-making body, which in cooperation with all Governmental Services and the Social Partners, collects and analyses information on the economy and proposes measures for future action, including the overall planning of education. The MoEC has the overall responsibility for the development and implementation of educational policy. The MLSI has overall responsibility for labour and social policy and its functions cover social protection, employment and industrial training. The Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPa), a dedicated centre of the MLSI, provides assistance to private and public organisations in order to utilise their human and capital resources in the best possible manner, with a view to increasing their productivity. Finally, the HRDA, a semi-government organisation whose mission is to create the necessary

prerequisites for the planned and systematic training and development of the human resources of Cyprus, plays an important role in vocational training.

The **main policy priorities in the field of VET** include the implementation of the comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy, the promotion of the education reform in all grades of education, the continuous upgrading of skills to match labour market needs, increasing female participation, the upgrade of training, the development of a National Qualifications Framework and the implementation and operation of the System of Vocational Qualifications.

1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHALLENGES FOR FUTURE VET POLICY DEVELOPMENT

1.1. IMPACT OF GLOBALISATION ON VET

Globalisation, trade liberalisation and the reduction of protectionism, in combination with the constantly growing competitiveness both internationally and within the local market are factors which have a significant impact on economies and labour markets. Cyprus, following its accession to the EU, is an organic part of a wider economic entity and is facing **new challenges** for adhering to the **general targets of the EU and the guidelines and policies** that it formulates, while at the same time catering for the particular economic and political conditions of the country.

Cyprus became a full member state of the EU in May 2004 and since then **significant economic and structural reforms** have transformed the economic landscape of the country. Tariffs and quantitative restrictions have been eliminated for all products, trade and interest rates have been liberalised, while price controls and investment restrictions have been lifted. Full liberalisation of the foreign direct investment regime in Cyprus has also been implemented. Another significant development was the tax reform, which resulted to a shift from direct to indirect taxes.

A characteristic of the Cyprus economy is the absence of any significant wealth producing natural resources. This constitutes its human resources as the most significant factor of production in the economy and the only means of success in this era of globalisation, rapid technological developments and increased competitiveness. **Education and training of the human resources is considered to be a critical success factor for the enhancement of competitiveness, productivity and innovation.** Thus, it is considered necessary to increase the investment in human capital and to improve the education and training systems ensuring that they deliver to the human resources the required knowledge, skills and abilities to adapt to a culture of lifelong learning. VET is essential in providing the necessary knowledge and skills and abilities to increase the potential of Cypriots to compete in the EU labour market. **Improvements in VET feature prominently in many national planning documents as VET must be able to effectively support human resources development.**

The **main policy priorities in the field of VET** include the following:

- Implementation of the comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy.
- Promotion of the education reform in all grades of education
- Continuous upgrading of skills to match labour market needs
- Increasing female participation
- Improving the quality of training
- Upgrading teacher training
- Development of a National Qualifications Framework
- Implementation and operation of the System of Vocational Qualifications and EU tools

For the purpose of **increasing the productivity levels** in Cyprus, a National Productivity Strategy for 2007-2013 has been formulated, with the involvement of the social partners including VET stakeholders. The overarching strategic objective of the National Productivity Strategy is the acceleration of the productivity growth rate so that total labour productivity reaches the EU-27 average by 2013.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the impact of globalisation is the following:

- National Productivity Strategy for 2007-2013 (section 1.1)

Details of the policy measure entitled “National Productivity Strategy for 2007-2013” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: National Productivity Strategy for 2007-2013</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: Productivity levels in Cyprus are lower than the EU average (80,8% of the EU average in 2005) and productivity growth rate needs to accelerate. • Objectives / measurable targets: The overarching strategic objective of the National Productivity Strategy is the acceleration of the productivity growth rate so that total labour productivity reaches the EU-27 average by 2013. • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: All levels of economic activity, including Small and Medium Enterprises and the public sector. • Status of implementation: In May 2007 the Productivity Council approved the National Strategy and the National Productivity Program for the period 2007-2013 as well as the Action Plan for the period 2007-2009. The second Action Plan covers the period 2010-2012 and was approved in April 2009. <p>As part of the National Productivity Programme, a scheme was implemented during the period 2007-2009 and continued in 2010-2011 in order to facilitate the shift from low productivity jobs to high productivity jobs, co-financed with the ESF. The scheme provides for subsidies to enterprises to develop, design and implement a business plan for improving their productivity by replacing low with high productivity jobs.</p>
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: This is a national measure. • Key actors involved: The Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) and the Productivity Council.
<p>Evaluation: Two progress reports have been prepared, one covering the period May 2007-April 2008 and the second covering the period May 2008-March 2009.</p>

1.2. IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGICAL PROGRESS ON VET

The government has been promoting major reforms at all levels of education, including Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Mesi Techniki kai Epangelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, MTEE). One of the main priorities has been the **incorporation of new**

technologies in the education and training systems and the modernisation of infrastructure to respond to the technological progress.

In order to improve both the quality and attractiveness of STVE, the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) has continued to develop the infrastructure of technical schools and **introduce Modern Technology in the STVE curricula**. This action, implemented during the period 2005-2008, aimed at reforming the curricula of all subjects with activities using ICT, providing schools with suitable ICT equipment and completing the infrastructure installations. A **Learning Management System (LMS) Platform** has also been purchased where teachers will be able to find material or to communicate with other teachers, students and parents (more information is provided in section 7.2).

Another action was being implemented during the period 2005-2009, aiming at **ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate** and will acquire skills to implement the new, ICT oriented curricula (more information is provided in section 6.5).

The operation of the Open University of Cyprus, OUC (Anikto Panepistimio Kyprou, APKy) in 2006 has promoted lifelong learning and established **distance learning programmes** that are mainly based on **eLearning**. The OUC offers undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, including a postgraduate programme in information technology. It is expected that the OUC will have a great impact on the development of eLearning in the education system of Cyprus.

As far as training is concerned, the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) has **increased the number of training courses** in the field of ICT that receive a subsidy and has further promoted the adoption of eLearning methods and approaches. The HRDA prepares on an annual basis a document that contains the thematic priorities for multi-company programmes, which is communicated to all training providers. The HRDA examines various programmes submitted by public and private training providers, which follow the thematic priorities, and subsidises the provision of approved continuing training programmes. Amongst the thematic priorities information technology is prominently featured and thus a significant part of continuing training is on ICT related subjects.

Furthermore, a scheme for the enhancement of **computer literacy of the unemployed** (with priority attached to young unemployed, women unemployed as well as groups of unemployed threatened by social exclusion) was implemented during the period November 2006-December 2007.

Finally, the scheme entitled “**Training Infrastructure Support Scheme**” of the HRDA aims to strengthen the training infrastructure of companies, training institutions and organisations in order to provide training more effectively by the use of modern technologies (more information is provided in section 7.3).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the impact of technological progress on VET are the following:

- Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate (section 6.5)
- Introducing modern technology on education (section 7.2)
- Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” (section 7.3)

1.3. IMPACT OF DEMOGRAPHIC CHANGE AND INTERNATIONAL MIGRATION ON VET

Cyprus has experienced **strong economic growth** ever since independence in 1960. The GDP growth rate in real terms reached 3,8% in 2008. The importance of the tertiary sector has grown while the shares of the secondary and the primary sectors have declined.

However, since the early 1990s, the labour market has been confronted with **labour shortages and bottlenecks**. The population over 60 years of age is estimated to reach 25,8% in 2027 in comparison to 16,7% in 2008. The **low fertility rate** (1.46 in 2008) is expected to gradually aggravate the problem. This has led to the need for employment of foreign workers, particularly in unskilled or low-skilled occupations. In 2008 foreign workers, including EU-27 nationals, represented 25,6% of total employment.

The shortages in the labour market and the **gradual ageing of the population** increase the need for attracting inactive persons such as women and older people in the labour market, despite their relatively high participation rates, as compared to other EU countries. Moreover, there is a need to build employment pathways for the young people to reduce youth unemployment, which is much higher than the national unemployment average, indicating difficulties in the transition process from education to work. Furthermore, there is a need for strengthening the employability of the unemployed.

Concerning labour market shortages and the ageing of the population, the **Promotion of Active Ageing has been a policy priority**. Under this priority, a scheme was implemented as from 1/7/2005 in order to increase the retirement age of civil servants from 60 to 63 years. The measure was completed in 2008, except for the teachers in primary and secondary education, the police and the army. The increase of the retirement age in the broader public sector from 60 to 63 years is also promoted and most semi-government organisations completed the measure. Another measure included the conduct of a study for identifying new actions in promoting active ageing to be implemented during the programming period 2007-2013.

Furthermore, the Government of Cyprus established the **National Agency for Demography and Family Policy** with a decision of the Council of Ministers in 2009. Among the Agency’s responsibilities are the assessment of the current situation, the undertaking of studies on demographic and family issues, the preparation of action plans for the development of different strands of policy and the promotion of public debate. The Agency will also be responsible for conducting a study for the formulation of demographic policy and the identification of areas for intervention, with emphasis on family policies.

For the orderly and effective management of **foreign worker issues** to serve the economic and social needs of the country, a **new immigration law** has been prepared providing a comprehensive framework for immigration policy. Additionally, a **new strategy** was prepared. The previous strategy for the effective management of foreign workers, covering the period 2007-2008, was evaluated at the end of the period, early 2009. A revised policy paper was prepared, presented and approved by the social partners. The revised strategy involved the downward revision of the upper quotas for the number of foreign workers taking into consideration the increase in unemployment and in the availability of local labour force especially in the sectors of construction, manufacturing and trade. Furthermore, a measure in response to the crisis involved the setting up of an inspection **mechanism for fighting illegal employment**. This involved the creation of inspectors' teams in all districts consisting of inspectors from the Department of Labour, the Department of Industrial Relations and Social Security Services in order to combat illegal employment.

1.4. IMPACT OF GREENING OF ECONOMY ON VET

The elaboration of a **National Action Plan for Environmental Education and Sustainable Development** ensures that environmental issues are implemented in all educational levels. Environmental and Sustainable Development (SD) issues are key issues in the Cyprus Educational System. For that reason, in 2008 the National Action Plan for Environmental Education with a focus on Sustainable Development has been approved. This national action plan includes main actions in order to implement SD and environmental issues in all educational levels in a comprehensive and systematic way. Some of these actions regard the curriculum reform, teacher training, the links between formal and non-formal education, the educational tools and the organisation of a learning procedure according to the pedagogy of Education for Environment and Sustainable Development.

Specifically in VET, the curriculum includes many themes which are related with sustainable economy, consumption and production models, green energy and climate change. This is reflected in VET projects such as the creation of “clever” machines that can be used for protecting the environment (models of ecological house, green house with renewable resources of energy, ecological products etc).

Taking into consideration that SD and Environmental issues in the educational process are based on deliberate pedagogical methods and techniques focused on experimentation, investigation, experiential and outdoor learning concerning VET, great emphasis is given to learning outside the school, in organisations, centres and other places that provide the opportunity to gain experiences and interact with other groups and places that will enhance the students knowledge and attitudes for the protection of the environment. Specific Environmental Education Programmes for VET are organised through the **Environmental Education Centres** that operate under the auspices of the Pedagogical Institute, PI (Pedagogiko Institutouto, PI) and all Technical Schools are participating on one day or three days programs.

Additionally, specific **environmental training courses** in SD and Environmental Education (EE) are offered by the PI to the teachers and headmasters in Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE). For example three series of optional courses are offered in issues relating with the

pedagogical approaches and the techniques for EE that could be used by the teachers in school unit. Teachers in STVE can also attend courses for designing and implementing environmental education programmes in their school and local community. A new course has been introduced by the PI, which gives emphasis in organising a sustainable school. For the headmasters in STVE, special modules for SD and EE are offered that are included in their compulsory training courses. Specifically they attend a five hour module which relates to the leaders' role in organising and implementing an environmental education policy in their schools. Through the lifelong learning program many STVE teachers can attend specific courses on SD, especially through the Grundvig Action.

Finally STVE Schools are participating in various **European, bilateral and National Environmental Programmes**, for example the European Eco-School programme, the South-Eastern Mediterranean Programme, as well as in national competitions. During 2009, which was the year for Creativity and Innovation, most Technical Schools participated in activities with models and constructions inspired by the environment and sustainable development.

As far as vocational training is concerned, the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) prepares on an annual basis a document that contains the **thematic priorities for multi-company programmes**. This document is communicated to all training providers. The HRDA examines various programmes submitted by public and private training providers, which follow the thematic priorities, and subsidises the provision of continuing training. Amongst the **thematic priorities** “**environment, health and safety**” is prominently featured. In addition, a specific high-priority issue for the high priority programmes for the period 2010-2012, is the effective management of environmental sustainability and operational risk, which includes programmes focused on environment management (specialised approaches and methods of environment management and innovations on the ecological sector, especially in the economic sectors of transfers and energy), utilisation and management of energy sources and management of operational risk.

Finally, the HRDA conducts a new study in 2010 which will identify the **skills for green jobs in the Cyprus economy for the period 2010 - 2013**. In particular, this study will identify new jobs which will be created, jobs which may be substituted, jobs which may be eliminated and finally changes in the skills required in many existing jobs.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the impact of greening of economy on VET is the following:

- Environmental Education Programmes for VET organised at the Environmental Education Centres (section 1.4)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Environmental Education Programmes for VET organised at the Environmental Education Centres” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Environmental Education Programmes for VET organised at the Environmental Education Centres

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** Taking into consideration that Sustainable Development and Environmental issues in the educational process are based on deliberate pedagogical methods and techniques focused on experimentation, investigation, experiential and outdoor learning concerning VET, great emphasis is given to learning outside the school, in organisations, centres and other places that give them the opportunity to gain experiences and interact with other groups and places that will enhance their knowledge and attitudes for the protection of the environment.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The Environmental Education Programmes for VET give the opportunity to the students to examine in the field various environmental issues as biodiversity, water, forest fires, desertification etc. They connect their work through the Centres with their curriculum and they continue their work in their school unit.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** Students of Technical Schools, as well as tutors in VET.
- **Status of implementation:**
Environmental Education Programmes for VET are organised through the Environmental Education Centres that operate under the auspices of the Pedagogical Institute, PI (Pedagogiko Institutouto, PI) and all the Technical Schools are participating on one day or three days programs.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is measure of the National Action Plan for Environmental Education and Sustainable Development.
- **Key actors involved:** The PI of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), local communities and various institutions and organisations, as well as research centres in Cyprus and abroad.

2. ECONOMIC CRISIS – VET POLICIES AS RECOVERY MEASURES

2.1. INITIATIVES FOR RECOVERY

Cyprus economy has been affected by the world economic crisis but at a lesser degree compared to other European economies. There is no evidence yet that the current economic crisis has affected the willingness of companies to provide work-based training for VET-learners. However, the measures taken, apart from preventing unemployment also stimulate work-based training opportunities for employees and thus help towards improving the level of VET provided in Cyprus.

VET in Cyprus is having a significant role in dealing with the effects of the economic crisis on the labour market. Towards that purpose it has been **redirected in order to respond in a flexible and effective way to the crisis** with specific measures.

In view of the intensifying world economic recession and with the aim of minimising its effects on the local labour market, the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) put forward a number of measures. A brief account of these measures is given below:

- Measure 1: In-company / On-the-job training programmes

Under this measure the HRDA helps employers **to retain their employees instead of laying them off**, by utilising their idle time through training. In particular, the HRDA helps employers to design and implement training programmes that meet their specialised needs and subsidises their eligible costs, including the wages of the participants for the duration of the training.

The promotion of these in-house training programmes has been suitably adjusted to **focus on the sectors of the economy which are mostly affected by the economic recession** and where the possibility of employee lay-offs is imminent. Such sectors are Hotel and Catering, Retail Trade and Construction. The HRDA has organised **information seminars for employers in all districts** and visited numerous individual employers to explain how they could benefit from the training schemes. Furthermore, the HRDA explained to employers how they can **link training programmes to the achievement of vocational qualifications** through the System of Vocational Qualifications, which the HRDA is implementing.

As a result of these efforts, many employers who are facing difficulties related to the effects of the world economic recession, have organised In-company / On-the-job training programmes, which were submitted to the HRDA for approval and subsidisation.

- Measure 2: Training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons

The HRDA, in partnership with the Public Employment Service, PES (Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholis), the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) and the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus, HHIC (Anotero Xenodocheiako Institutouto Kyprou, AXIK), organised upgrading training programmes for unemployed persons which are being implemented as from May 2009. These programmes cover important **horizontal skills**, which will help people to return to productive employment. They are

offered free of charge to unemployed persons. Such skills are for example information technology skills, languages and health and safety issues. In addition, under this scheme, a **variety of technical training programmes** are offered to unemployed persons, giving them the opportunity to enrich their existing skills or be retrained and qualify for jobs which demand these skills (examples are training programmes in the maintenance of hotel electromechanical equipment, specialised welding and specialised cuisine). For the duration of these programmes participants are entitled to training allowances from the HRDA.

The partnership will continue to implement programmes, using the regular information supplied by the PES and taking into consideration the market needs and the unemployed persons' interest for the programmes.

- Measure 3: Accelerated initial training of newcomers and other unemployed persons

Under this measure, HRDA organises **accelerated initial training courses** that are implemented by the CPC and the HHIC, which aim at providing **theoretical and practical training in occupations which are currently in demand**. These courses are offered free of charge to persons who want to embark on a career in such occupations. The participants on the programmes receive training allowances from HRDA.

Examples of such programmes: Plumbers, Builders, Refrigeration and Air conditioning Technicians, Electricians for buildings, Aluminium Technicians and Cooks. These programmes have duration 16 to 24 weeks.

- Measure 4: Job placement and training of unemployed tertiary education graduates

This measure aims at strengthening the management capacity of enterprises and organisations through the employment and training of young university and other tertiary education graduates. The measure provides **incentives to enterprises to provide employment, practical training and work experience to graduates**. The HRDA provides subsidies to employers for the delivery of in-house training programmes to young graduates (6 or 12 months duration). The in-house training of graduates is enhanced by the participation in other training courses, aiming at specialising and upgrading their knowledge.

Emphasis is given on the publicity of the measure by providing information to unemployed tertiary education graduates as well as employers in order to improve the employment prospects of the unemployed young graduates. The results show satisfactory interest among employers and young graduates in participating in the measure.

- Measure 5: Projects co-financed by the European Social Fund (ESF) and the HRDA

In parallel with the above measures, the HRDA is currently preparing the **implementation of the planned projects to be co-financed by the ESF and the HRDA** in the programming period 2007-2013. The projects for the **improvement of the employability of the unemployed and economically inactive women** are expected to have an important contribution towards the efforts against the effects of economic recession on unemployment. The procedures for administering and monitoring these projects have been prepared and work is continuing on tendering for the implementation of training programmes, work experience programmes and other promotional activities and support.

- Measure 6: Job placement and training of unemployed Cypriots and EU nationals to fill vacancies and / or replace labour from third countries

This new measure was introduced in October 2009. It provides incentives to employers in the form of **subsidy and guidance for the employment and individualised training of unemployed persons**, in order to fill vacancies or to replace labour from non-EU countries with Cypriot or other EU nationals. The Scheme also promotes the job placement of persons who previously participated in other training programmes. For each unemployed person who is recruited, a practical on-the-job training programme is designed, with duration 3 or 6 months. The subsidy reaches up to 80% of the cost of training including wages and contributions.

- Measure 7: Additional Subsidies to Employers towards the Wages of Participants and the Salary of In-company Trainers in the Apprenticeship System

The HRDA in cooperation with the MLSI decided in December 2009 to introduce this new temporary measure as an incentive to employers in an effort to alleviate the problem of securing employment for apprentices, which became severe under the conditions of economic recession. Through this measure **subsidies will be provided to employers towards the wages paid to apprentices while being employed (3 days per week)** in addition to the subsidies provided while apprentices attend classes at technical schools (2 days per week). This additional subsidy will be provided for the period February – May 2010.

The CPC, under a new policy measure, promotes a **subsidy scheme** which aims to promote the employment and in company training in the private sector of Apprenticeship System Students. The scheme is designed to improve the quality of in-company training by subsidising companies for part of the **salary of the in-company trainer** who is responsible for training the Apprentice. The subsidy also covers social insurance contributions for the Apprentice.

- Measure 8: Training of persons employed in hotels

The **training of persons employed in hotels** which interrupt their operation during the winter period has been promoted by the HHIC. Under this new scheme, implemented during the period 2009-2013, companies in the hotel industry that have temporarily suspended their operation (partially or wholly) have the opportunity to place their employees in training programmes and while the employee is under training the employers receive government grants to cover the salary cost. This scheme operates within the framework of the scheme which provides incentives to employers in the hotel industry to temporarily **suspend the employment of their employees instead of laying them off** (subsidising 55% of the monthly salary from the Social Insurance Unemployment Fund). The scheme will be co-financed by the ESF and national funds.

- Measure 9: Intensification of Support Provided by the Public Employment Service

This measure concerns **intensification of support provided by the PES**. It has been implemented since October 2008 due to the gradual increase in the number of registered unemployed at the PES, as a result of the economic crisis. The PES actions focused on speeding referrals of unemployed to vacant posts and on providing special support to unemployed persons from the sectors which have been affected by the crisis (mainly

construction, tourism and trade), in the form of counselling and referrals to training programmes, with the aim of facilitating job positions. The modernisation of the PES in the period 2005-2008 with ESF funding proved most beneficial in managing the increase in demand (more information is provided in section 5.2).

- Measure 10: Inspection mechanism for fighting illegal employment

An **inspection mechanism has been set up for fighting illegal employment** by creating inspection teams in all districts consisting of inspectors from the Department of Industrial Relations and Social Security Services in order to combat illegal employment.

- Measure 11: Vocational training to public assistance recipients

The Social Welfare Services, SWS (Ypiresies Koinonikis Evimerias) of the MLSI have submitted a proposal for co-financing under the programming period 2007-2013 of the EU structural funds, aiming at providing **vocational training to public assistance recipients** and their reintegration in the labour market. This project aims at training a wide group of vulnerable persons (e.g. public assistance recipients, ex-prisoners, young persons under the care of the Director of SWS, families facing psycho-social difficulties, substance users etc). The SWS will promote training in social skills while the PES will undertake their work placements and / or further vocational training if necessary. The aim is to facilitate the employability of people threatened by conditions of poverty and social exclusion, through active employment measures. Within this framework, the target group will be offered counselling and other supportive services to help them overcome any difficulties and adjust to the new training / working environment.

- Measure 12: Incentives for the employment of unemployed people

The Department of Labour of the MLSI implements a scheme to provide **incentives to private sector employers**, co-financed by the ESF, **for the employment of unemployed people**. The scheme's purpose is to mitigate the impact of the economic crisis in the labour market, to stimulate demand and economic activity, to create new jobs, to promote the social rehabilitation of the unemployed and to support with greater intense several economic sectors.

- Measure 13: Incentives for the employment of people who belong in disadvantaged groups

The Department of Labour of the MLSI implements a scheme providing **incentives to private sector employers and local authorities for the employment of people who belong in disadvantaged groups**. The scheme's purpose is the social rehabilitation of people facing social exclusion and the creation of new jobs and is co-financed by the ESF.

- Measure 14: Incentives for the employment of people with disabilities

The Department of Labour of the MLSI implements a scheme providing **incentives** to private sector employers and local authorities **for the employment of people with disabilities**. The scheme's purpose is integration of people with disabilities in the labour market, the social rehabilitation of people facing social exclusion and the creation of new jobs.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to initiatives for recovery is the following:

- Training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons (section 2.1)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: In view of the intensifying world economic recession and with the aim of minimising its effects on the local labour market, a special Prevention-Action Plan was put forward, including training programmes for upgrading the skills of unemployed persons.• Objectives / measurable targets: To give the opportunity to unemployed persons to return to productive employment through the acquisition of horizontal and special skills.• Target groups / educational level / educational sector: The unemployed persons.• Status of implementation: The programmes are being implemented as from May 2009. These programmes cover important horizontal skills, which will help people to return to productive employment. They are offered free of charge to unemployed persons. Such skills are for example information technology skills, languages and health and safety issues. <p>In addition, under this scheme, a variety of technical training programmes are offered to unemployed persons, giving them the opportunity to enrich their existing skills or be retrained and qualify for jobs which demand these skills (examples are training programmes in the maintenance of hotel electromechanical equipment, specialised welding and specialised cuisine).</p> <p>For the duration of these programmes participants are entitled to training allowances from the HRDA.</p> <p>The programmes will continue to be implemented, using the regular information supplied by the PES and taking into consideration the market needs and the unemployed persons' interest for the programmes.</p>
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Level of operation: This is a national measure.• Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach: It is part of a policy approach to minimise the effects of the crisis.• Key actors involved: The Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), in partnership with the Public Employment Service, PES (Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholis), the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPa) and the Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus, HHIC (Anotero Xenodocheiako Institutou Kyprou, AXIK).

3. IMPACT AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE JOINT WORK ON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS

3.1. IMPACT OF JOINT WORK ON EUROPEAN PRINCIPLES AND TOOLS ON NATIONAL LLL POLICIES AND PRACTICES AND VET DEVELOPMENTS

In Cyprus until recently there has been **relatively limited implementation of frameworks and mechanisms regarding the transparency of qualifications and systems for the recognition of competences and qualifications**. Cyprus however is committed towards introducing relevant EU tools in the national scene. A description of the progress on implementing EU tools and their possible impact on national policies is described below.

National Qualifications Framework

The **European Qualifications Framework (EQF)** is envisaged as a general overall framework that will enable qualifications frameworks at national and sectoral level to relate and correspond to each other thus developing transparency at the European level. Following discussions amongst government departments in October 2005, Cyprus initiated a debate amongst numerous public and private stakeholders in the field of learning, including the social partners. The EQF initiative was presented, analysed and discussed in early January 2006 and the participants were then asked to prepare and submit their proposals, on the basis of which, Cyprus developed and submitted its position to the EU, thus contributing to the shaping and introduction of the EQF.

At the same time, the stakeholders have started discussing and debating about the development of a **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)**. The development of a NQF for promoting the recognition of academic and vocational qualifications that have been acquired in Cyprus is a priority of the government. As a result, the Council of Ministers has set up a high level national committee comprising of the Director Generals of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), to formulate the general framework and the policies for the design and implementation of a NQF. In February 2009, the National Committee appointed a Technical Committee in order to facilitate and coordinate the process. The Technical Committee, after studying the examples and good practices of other European countries, prepared an Interim Report on the State of the Development of a NQF in Cyprus. The Report, named “Establishment of a NQF in Cyprus and its relation with the EQF” was submitted in January 2010 to the members of the National Committee for comments and feedback and will form the basis for further consultation with stakeholders and other parties involved. The project for the establishment of a NQF in Cyprus is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

The **System of Vocational Qualifications** in Cyprus whose implementation has begun by the HRDA will constitute an integral part of a future NQF (more information is provided in section 6.4).

The dissemination of information and the promotion of EQF at all levels and its transparency are necessary prerequisites for creating national trust in this framework. This will take some time and will entail changes in the prevailing attitudes. Furthermore, the establishment of the

NQF includes many prerequisites such as legislative changes, influencing the working and social life in Cyprus.

Recognition of Professional Qualifications

The EU, in order to overcome the obstacles in the free access and pursuit of professions, which are regulated by a specific law in member states, adopted a series of Directives. For the harmonisation with the three Directives on the **General System for the Recognition of Professional Qualifications** (Directives 89/48/EEC, 92/51/EEC and 99/42/EC), Cyprus has **introduced relevant national legislation** in order to apply the General System. This system grants the citizens of the EU and the countries of the European Economic Area, who can pursue a regulated profession in their country of origin, or the country they come from, the freedom to pursue, in a self-employed capacity or as employed persons, the same regulated profession in Cyprus. This freedom and this system exist for Cypriot nationals as well who wish to pursue a regulated profession in any of the countries mentioned above.

Seven other **Sectoral Directives** were adopted by the EU and **transposed to the Cyprus law** by the relevant competent bodies. These sectoral directives refer to the professions of nurse responsible for general care, dental practitioner, veterinary surgeon, midwife, architect, pharmacist and doctor.

Furthermore, Directive 2005/36/EC, adopted on 7 September 2005, consolidates and modernises the rules regulating the recognition of professional qualifications. On 20 October 2007, at the end of the transposition period, this Directive replaced fifteen existing Directives in the field of the recognition of professional qualifications. It constitutes the first comprehensive modernisation of the Community system since it was conceived forty years ago. A number of changes have been introduced compared with the existing rules, including greater liberalisation of the provision of services, more automatic recognition of qualifications and increased flexibility in the procedures for updating the Directive. The Commission also proposes to develop its cooperation with the Member States in order to keep citizens better informed about their rights and give them more help in getting their qualifications recognised. Cyprus **has fully implemented the New Directive 2005/36/EC** into the national law.

European Credit Transfer System

The **European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)** is designed to facilitate the transfer, accumulation and recognition of people's learning outcomes. ECVET is part of the overall project for developing European cooperation in the field of vocational education and training and constitutes one of its operational tools. In this regard, ECVET complements the EQF.

The European Commission has prepared a document to serve as a basis for consultation, which involves, in particular the policy-makers, the social partners, the stakeholders and experts in qualifications systems and vocational education and training in Europe. As decided by the European Commission, the MoEC in Cyprus **initiated a process of national consultation** with all VET stakeholders and has submitted to the EU the outcome of this national consultation.

At tertiary education level, the **European Credit Transfer System (ECTS)** has already **been applied to all programmes of study** at the University of Cyprus. The two new public

universities have adopted the use of ECTS right from the beginning. Some public and private institutions have started using the ECTS for their programmes and they have been consulting the Bologna Promoters Group in this respect.

The validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning, which is an element of ECVET, is not considered to be a main priority in Cyprus. Nevertheless, Cyprus will continue to follow developments concerning ECVET both at the European and national level.

Europass

Following a decision of the Cyprus Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío), the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) an institution of the MLSI was appointed in 2005 as the **National Europass Centre**, NEC (Ethniko Kentro Europass) in Cyprus.

Europass is a **single European framework for the transparency of vocational qualifications and skills**. It consists of five documents that help potential employers, educational establishments and training providers to understand which subjects have been studied, what training has been completed or how much working experience has been gained.

Europass is free and enables individuals to highlight their abilities in an effective way. It can help remove barriers to working, studying or training in Europe. The future **use of Europass will have to take into account the EQF** and make specific reference to its corresponding level.

The Cyprus NEC in cooperation with the Foundation for the Implementation of the European Lifelong Learning Programme in Cyprus encourages all organisations participating in mobility programmes to issue the Europass Mobility document. From the establishment of the Cyprus NEC and up to December 2009, a number of Europass Mobility were issued and in 2009, the Cyprus NEC managed to contact almost all interested organisations both private and public, in order to promote the Europass Documents and make them accessible to all citizens. Around 80% of the Higher Educational Institutes automatically issue the Europass Diploma Supplement to their graduates. Furthermore, the Europass Certificate Supplement has been given to all the 2008 and 2009 Technical Schools' graduates.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the impact of joint work on European principles and tools on national LLL policies and practices and VET developments are the following:

- Development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (section 3.1)
- Establishment of the Cyprus National Europass Centre (NEC) (section 3.1)
- Establishment and operation of a System of Vocational Qualifications (section 6.4)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Development of a National Qualifications Framework” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF)

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is envisaged as a general overall framework that will enable qualifications frameworks at national and sectoral level to relate and correspond to each other thus developing transparency and promoting mobility at the European level.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The establishment and introduction of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** All levels of education.
- **Status of implementation:** Following discussions amongst government departments in October 2005, Cyprus initiated a debate amongst numerous public and private stakeholders in the field of learning, including the social partners for contributing towards the development of Cyprus' position on the EQF initiative. The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeoio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) coordinated the consultation process. The EQF initiative was presented, analysed and discussed in early January 2006 and the participants were then asked to prepare and submit their proposals. On the basis of these proposals and further consultations and discussions, Cyprus has developed and submitted its view to the European Union, thus contributing to the shaping and introduction of the EQF.

At the same time, the stakeholders have started discussing and debating about the development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF). As a result, the Council of Ministers has set up in July 2008 a high level national committee comprising of the Director Generals of the MoEC (chairman of the committee), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeoio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), to formulate the general framework and the policies for the design and implementation of a NQF. In February 2009, the National Committee appointed a Technical Committee in order to facilitate and coordinate the process. The Technical Committee, after studying the examples and good practices of other European countries, prepared an Interim Report on the State of the Development of an NQF in Cyprus. The Report, named "Establishment of a NQF in Cyprus and its relation with the EQF" was submitted in January 2010 to the members of the National Committee for comments and feedback and will form the basis for further consultation with stakeholders and other parties involved. The project for the establishment of a NQF in Cyprus is expected to be completed by the end of 2011.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** The System of Vocational Qualifications in Cyprus whose implementation has begun at the initiative of the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) will constitute an integral part of a future NQF.
- **Key actors involved:** The MoEC with the participation of numerous public and private stakeholders in the field of learning, including the social partners.

Details of the policy measure entitled "Establishment of the Cyprus National Europass Centre" are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Establishment of the Cyprus National Europass Centre, NEC (Ethniko Kentro Europass)

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** In every European country there is a National Europass Centre. Europass records the skills and competences in a clear and easy to understand way, to help in finding a job, getting experience abroad or enrolling in an education or training program.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** To help individuals find a job, get experience abroad or enrol in an education or training program.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** Individuals, education and training providers, guidance operators, employers and anybody requiring information and guidance.
- **Status of implementation:** Following a decision of the Cyprus Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío) on the 27th April 2005, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) was set as the National Europass Center. The CPC as the National Europass Centre:
 - o Is responsible for the coordination, management and promotion of all the activities related to Europass and its documents.
 - o Provides information to individuals, education and training providers, guidance operators, employers and anybody requiring information and guidance on Europass and any of its documents.
 - o Assures cooperation with other related organisations that operate in the same field of mobility and qualification transparency and also background information relating to the Europass initiative.

The CPC has also set up the Europass website. The website of the Cyprus NEC is available since February 2008 (www.kepa.gov.cy/Europass) and is hosted in a dedicated Web Server on which the newly developed Online Mobility Tool will be also hosted. The website provides more information on both the Europass Documents and the role of the Cyprus NEC. The website is constantly updated with relevant articles, links, events, publications and announcements.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Key actors involved:** The CPC.

Evaluation:

Europass can help remove barriers to working, studying or training in Europe. It enables people to present their competencies, skills and qualifications in a clear way. The future use of Europass will have to take into account the European Qualifications Framework and make specific reference to its corresponding level.

Conclusions:

In order to increase the usage of Europass tools, the Cyprus NEC promotes the implementation of the CV by the Human Resource Departments of private companies and Higher Education Institutions.

In 2010 the Cyprus NEC will be organising a series of seminars titled “Create your own European CV”, addressed to people who would like to learn how to create their Europass CV, especially young people or unemployed. The Cyprus NEC arranged the preparation and development of a DVD which will be presenting instructions on how to create a good CV, how to write a cover letter and tips for interview skills, in order to help people to present their skills and qualifications in a more understandable way.

3.2. PROMOTING GEOGRAPHICAL MOBILITY OF LEARNERS / APPRENTICES AND TEACHERS / TRAINERS IN VET

The introduction of EU tools is expected to **facilitate geographic mobility** within VET whereas the participation of Cyprus in the European Programme for Lifelong Learning helps towards creating a culture of transnational mobility.

Mobility in Cyprus, including the exchange of students, teachers and trainers, is **promoted within the framework of the European Lifelong Learning (LLL) Programmes**. For promoting the participation of the citizens of Cyprus in these Programmes, a Foundation for the Management of the European LLL Programmes has been established. The Foundation is the Body through which the management of educational programmes and the goals and policies of the European Union in the fields of education and training are promoted in Cyprus. The Foundation subsidises, through funds obtained from the national budget and the European Commission, educational institutions and organisations active in this field, as well as teachers, students, educators, trainers and trainees.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme in the context of LLP, which is managed by the foundation is especially designed to promote and implement VET actions and programme activities and so far proved to be very successful. In addition, the Erasmus programme mainly through the student placement (internship) mobility activity contributes towards VET mobility.

As a result, from the above there is an **increase in geographical mobility applications and beneficiaries every year**. Indicatively, in the 2009 Leonardo da Vinci mobility programme 188 learners were approved for VET mobility grant (compared with 121 in 2008), whereas 91 teachers and trainers (compared with 44 in 2008) and 24 enterprises/organisations (compared with 20 in 2008) participated in VET mobility schemes. In the 2008 Erasmus mobility programme, out of 157 students that participated in mobility programmes 13 were placed in VET institutions and out of 122 teachers and other staff that participated, 53 received training. The Erasmus mobility in 2009 is still ongoing, however, an increase it is expected. Indicatively out of 227 students that are expected to participate in mobility programmes 44 are expected to be placed in VET institutions and out of 71 teachers and other staff that are expected to participate, 46 are expected to receive training.

In addition to the above, the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), as well as other governmental services, **facilitate the participation in mobility activities** by providing paid leave of absences to beneficiaries. Furthermore, mobility activities are often co-financed by local organisations.

The **teaching of seven foreign languages** is also a measure for reinforcing transnational mobility. Several innovations with respect to language teaching, such as the use of Language Rooms, the restructuring of the national curriculum for languages based on the Common European Reference for Languages (CERF) and the preparation of the first National (European) Portfolio of Languages for teenagers will contribute to the effective language learning and facilitate mobility.

The **EURES network**, the European job mobility portal is the easy way to find information on jobs and learning opportunities throughout Europe. It provides information on job vacancies in 31 European countries, CVs from interested candidates and living and working abroad. It provides information, advice and recruitment / placement (job-matching) services

for the benefit of workers and employers as well as any citizen wishing to benefit from the principle of the free movement of persons.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to promoting geographical mobility of learners within VET is the following:

- Establishment of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (section 3.2)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Establishment of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Establishment of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The European Programmes were managed by two different institutions: The Socrates National Coordination Unit of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) for the Socrates Programme and the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) for the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The need for a central managing institution has resulted in the establishment of the Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The Foundation is the body through which the management of the EU programmes in the fields of education and training (Comenius, Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci, Grundvig, Jean Monet and Transversal Programmes) is promoted. The objective of the programmes is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. They aim to foster interaction, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, so that they become a world quality reference. The same objectives are promoted by the Foundation in Cyprus. Transnational mobility is an essential means of achieving the objectives of the programme.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The Programme comprises sectoral programmes on school education (Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational education and training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig), and is completed by transversal measures, which are promoted through all sectoral programmes and the Jean Monnet programme, focusing on European integration in Higher Education. Therefore the Foundation targets the participation of the whole spectrum of the Education and Training community in Lifelong Learning Programmes.
- **Status of implementation:** The Foundation has already been established and it is in full operation in implementing the European Lifelong Learning Programme in Cyprus as of the summer of 2007.

The various activities implemented for the Erasmus and all Leonardo da Vinci programmes include the following:

- o Information: During this activity, the Foundation uses printed material such as leaflets

and booklets, personal contact, and information through email (mailing lists), through the media (radio / TV) and the Foundation's website and organises events for information in all big cities in the country.

- o Dissemination: The Foundation participates in dissemination activities, which the various beneficiaries organise in all the cities of Cyprus and so undertakes the opportunity to promote and further support the geographical mobility issue. Furthermore, the organisation by the Foundation of the Thematic Monitoring and Valorisation Conference, which is organised for all LLP programmes every year provides the opportunity for further promotion of the geographical mobility. During this big Conference, beneficiaries from all cities in Cyprus meet in order to share experiences and best practices as well as to make new contacts and learn more from the experiences of success story projects.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure and it addresses the full education and training sector of Cyprus.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** The establishment of the Foundation falls into the Lifelong Learning Strategic Planning of Cyprus.
- **Key actors involved:** The Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes. The Planning Bureau, PB (Γραφείο Προγραμματισμού, GP) has been nominated by the Council of Ministers (Υπουργικό Συμβούλιο) as the National Authority responsible for the Foundation. The Foundation is governed by a tripartite Governing Board comprising of nine members, who serve a four year-term, appointed by the Council of Ministers. The Director of the Foundation was also recruited.

Evaluation:

Due to the short life of the Foundation no evaluation has been performed yet. The only indication about the success of the operations of the foundation is the fact that there is very high demand for participation in the programmes, higher than the available funds can satisfy.

4. STRENGTHENING THE LINKS BETWEEN VET AND THE LABOUR MARKET

4.1. IDENTIFYING AND ANTICIPATING SKILL NEEDS

The **ongoing assessment of the economy's labour market needs is a policy issue** which features prominently in various national programming documents and is considered to be a priority in Cyprus. Policies include mainly the provision of employment forecasts in occupations and sectors of economic activity, as well as the identification of educational, training and special skill needs.

The main formal mechanism in place for the assessment of skill needs is operated by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), which examines and analyses developments in the labour market. The **employment forecasts cover a period of 10 years** and refer to the whole spectrum of the Cyprus labour market. Employment forecasts cover a very detailed level of analysis, providing forecasts for 43 economic sectors and around 200 occupations. The next set of research studies which are expected to be completed in 2010 will cover the period 2010-2020 and will incorporate the effects of the current economic crisis. Furthermore, the HRDA participates actively in initiatives and actions that are promoted at European level in the framework of the European network Skillsnet for skill needs forecasting.

Additionally, a study is carried out every year by the HRDA for the **identification of initial training needs** with the involvement of the Social Partners. It provides annual estimates for the number of persons required for specific occupations by district. The findings of the annual investigations are utilised by the HRDA every year in order to arrive at policy decisions for the promotion of appropriate initial training programmes for the next year.

A new study is being conducted in 2010 which will identify the **skills for green jobs in the Cyprus economy for the period 2010 – 2013** and will further strengthen the existing research on the anticipation of skill needs.

All these **studies are widely disseminated** and policy makers use these forecasts in order to develop appropriate policy responses for adapting to the forecasted situation in the labour market.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) is, on the other hand, responsible for the **identification of educational and special skill needs**. The Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Diefthinsi Deftrovathmias Technikis kai Epaggelmatikis Ekpaidefsis, DTEE), in order to be able re-examine and adapt the content of its curricula according to the needs of the Cyprus economy and industry, and taking into account the latest scientific and technological advances, has developed close cooperation with all major stakeholders, such as Ministries and the PB, the Social Partners (Employers' and Employees' Organisations), teachers and their associations, the University of Cyprus, UCY (Panepistimio Kyprou, PK), the Pedagogical Institute, PI (Pedagogiko Instituto) and the HRDA.

Strengths of the national policy on the anticipation of skill needs include the long experience in the field of employment forecasting, the detailed level of analysis used in the forecasts and

the sound methodology which is similar to methodologies of other European countries, taking into account both expansion and replacement demand.

A **weakness** of the national policy on the anticipation of skill needs is the fact that employment forecasts do not take into account the supply of human resources in the labour market, which is important in identifying skill shortages and mismatches.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to identifying and anticipating skill needs are the following:

- Providing long-term employment forecasts in the Cyprus economy (section 4.1)
- Conducting annual studies for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of social partners (section 4.2)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Providing long-term employment forecasts in the Cyprus economy” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Providing long-term employment forecasts in the Cyprus economy</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: A better anticipation of skill needs, labour market shortages and bottlenecks contributes positively towards achieving a better matching of the demand and supply of labour and the better utilisation of the labour force. • Objectives / measurable targets: The measure was introduced to provide long-term employment forecasts, which contributes to a better anticipation of skill needs. • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: The forecasts constitute a useful guide for the formulation of appropriate policy responses by the HRDA, government ministries as well as social partners. Moreover, they serve as a useful tool for the provision of vocational guidance in schools and for informing parents and students on the future employment situation in Cyprus. • Status of implementation: Two sets of forecasts have been carried out: Employment forecasts for 2005-2015 and Employment forecasts for 2008-2018. In these studies, employment forecasts are provided for around 200 occupations and 43 economic sectors. The studies were disseminated to a wide audience of prominent stakeholders in a variety of ways, utilising both traditional and electronic channels of communication.
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: The forecasts of employment needs covering sectors and occupations are provided nationally. • Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach: They are part of the policy measure for the ongoing assessment of labour market needs. • Key actors involved: The HRDA produced these forecasts whereas the Statistical Service of Cyprus (Statistiki Ypiresia Kyprou) provided the necessary data.
<p>Evaluation: Employment forecasts in economic sectors and occupations are provided at a detailed level of analysis, including both expansion and replacement demand. However, employment forecasts</p>

do not take into account the supply of human resources in the labour market, an issue that is important in identifying skill shortages and mismatches. This is a research issue that should be examined for further enhancing the provision of forecasts for the situation in the labour market. Furthermore, the promotion of specific research on important emerging issues such as the skills for green jobs will further strengthen the existing research on the anticipation of skill needs.

The long term employment forecasts methodologies used in Cyprus are similar to methodologies of other European countries. These methodologies are presented in the Skillsnet publication “Towards European skill needs forecasting”, which includes the proceedings of the Skillsnet workshop held in Cyprus in 2005. The HRDA participates actively in initiatives and actions that are promoted at European level in the framework of the European network Skillsnet for skill needs forecasting.

Conclusions:

The 10-year employment forecasts are being carried out on a regular basis every 3 years. The next set of research studies which are expected to be completed in 2010 will cover the period 2010-2020.

A new study is being conducted in 2010 which will identify the skills for green jobs in the Cyprus economy for the period 2010 – 2013 and will further strengthen the existing research on the anticipation of skill needs.

4.2. INTEGRATING SKILL NEEDS OF THE LABOUR MARKET INTO VET PROVISION

The Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA, (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) **employment forecasts studies are utilised** by policy makers in order to develop appropriate policy responses for adapting to the forecasted situation in the labour market, public and private organisations involved in human resource planning, people involved in counselling such as secondary education vocational guidance teachers and employment counsellors and by the public (more specifically parents and students wishing to choose an occupation or to pursue further studies). For this purpose, research studies, upon completion are disseminated to a wide audience of prominent stakeholders. Special lectures are organised for secondary school guidance counsellors and employment counsellors, parents, as well as to students during the “Annual Careers Fair”. Additionally, the HRDA maintains a website (www.hrdauth.org.cy) with information on approved training opportunities. The HRDA also displays its research studies in a downloadable form. A special section in the website contains the latest available occupational employment forecasts for all the occupations of the labour market in Cyprus.

The **findings of the research studies** are also taken into account by the HRDA for choosing the **Standards of Vocational Qualifications** to be developed in the System which is being established and implemented and will be incorporated into the National Qualifications Framework. The System of Vocational Qualifications, which is the responsibility of the HRDA, is based on Standards of Vocational Qualifications, which are developed by technical Sectoral Committees of Vocational Qualifications. These consist of representatives of the social partners (government, employers’ and employees’ organisations) and other professionals. The Standard is finally approved by the Board of Governors of the HRDA, which has a tripartite character where representatives of the Government, the Employers’ organisations and the Trade Unions participate. The System is being established and

implemented in 2 phases (1st phase: 2006 – 2008 during which 5 standards were developed and 2nd phase: 2007-2013 during which 72 new standards are being developed).

The study for the **identification of initial training needs** puts forward suggestions for the implementation of Multi-company Initial Training Programmes of the HRDA. The study is an ongoing activity which will continue in the future, as the results are important for the planning of HRDA activities.

Additionally, the HRDA prepares on an annual basis a document that contains the **thematic priorities for multi-company programmes**. This document is communicated to all training providers, which on the basis of these thematic priorities submit multi-company continuing training programmes to the HRDA every six months. The HRDA examines various programmes submitted by public and private training providers, which follow the thematic priorities, approves or rejects the submitted programmes and subsidises the provision of continuing training.

The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) is, on the other hand, responsible for the **identification of educational and special skill needs**. The Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Diefthinsi Defterovathmias Technikis kai Epaggelmatikis Ekpaidefsis, DTEE), is responsible for the introduction of new branches and specialisations, the determination of the numbers of students who will be enrolled in each branch and specialisation, the design of curricula and the identification of special skills needed with the participation of the social partners.

In order to carry out these tasks, it has developed **close cooperation with all major stakeholders**. The curriculum is revised whenever such a need is identified. The findings of the research studies of the HRDA are also taken into account for the design of curricula. For the introduction of new branches and specialisations, the views of all major stakeholders are taken into account and the teachers of STVE provide their suggestions every year. Furthermore, the desires of lower secondary education graduates to follow a branch and specialisation are also taken into consideration when determining the number of available places at each branch and specialisation.

In an effort to integrate skill needs to VET provision, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) **conducted two studies**. The first study, entitled “Identification of the technical vocational training needs of Cypriot enterprises”, is in accordance with the EU priority for the **anticipation of training needs among enterprises**. It aimed to investigate and identify the training needs of Cypriot enterprises for technical and vocational training. The CPC, taking into account the findings of the study, will proceed with the upgrading of its training services according to the needs of the enterprises. The second study, entitled “The attractiveness of VET in Cyprus”, covered young students in their last compulsory year and aimed to investigate the factors causing the low participation in VET in Cyprus and to explore measures and policies that may alleviate this problem and thus tackle the shortages of skilled workers and technicians in Cyprus.

Amongst the **strengths** of the process of integrating skill needs of the labour market into VET provision is the fact that employment forecasts and other labour market studies are widely disseminated and can be used by policy makers in order to develop appropriate policy responses. Furthermore, the involvement of the social partners and all VET stakeholders in the process of identifying educational and training needs helps to integrate the labour market

needs into VET provision. A **weakness** is the long and arduous process of incorporating these findings in VET provision such as in formal education.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to integrating skill needs of the labour market into VET provision are the following:

- Providing long-term employment forecasts in the Cyprus economy (section 4.1)
- Conducting annual studies for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of social partners (section 4.2)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Conducting annual studies for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of social partners” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Conducting annual studies for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of social partners</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: A study is carried out every year since 2002 for the identification of initial training needs with the involvement of the Social Partners. The Social Partners and other stakeholders provide annual estimates for the number of persons required for specific occupations by district. On the basis of these estimates, the forecasts of employment needs for those specialisations, which are provided by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) and other relevant information and data, suggestions are put forward for the implementation of Multicompany Initial Training Programmes. • Objectives / measurable targets: The findings of the annual study are utilised by the HRDA in order to arrive at policy decisions for the promotion of appropriate initial training programmes for next year. • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: Participants in initial training programmes are usually general secondary education graduates. • Status of implementation: The study is carried out every year. The estimates of the needs in specialisations for the implementation of the Multi-company Initial Training Programmes are collected by the HRDA by sending a specially designed questionnaire to employers’ organisations, employees’ organisations, District Labour Offices, DLO (Eparchiaka Grafeia Ergasias, EGE) of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) and the Cyprus Tourism Organisation, CTO (Kypriakos Organismos Tourismou, KOT). All these estimates were recorded and analysed and suggestions are put forward for the implementation of Multicompany Initial Training Programmes.
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: This is a national measure. • Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach: This is part of the measure for the ongoing assessment of labour market needs. • Key actors involved: The HRDA with the involvement of the Social Partners.

Evaluation:

This measure is linked to the assessment of the labour market needs, which takes the form of long term and short term employment forecasts.

Conclusions:

The social partners that are consulted every year contribute to policy decisions for the promotion of appropriate initial training programmes.

4.3. INVOLVING LABOUR MARKET ACTORS IN VET

In Cyprus there has been a **long-standing tradition of tripartite consultation** (government, trade unions and employers' organisations) and social dialogue. This approach has been further enhanced and strengthened since Cyprus' accession to the EU in 2004, as tripartite consultation is envisaged in many EU processes and tools.

The social partners are **active in an advisory and consultative capacity in the planning process**, by participating in various committees and working groups for the formulation of various national documents and the formulation of Cyprus' position on EU issues.

Furthermore, the social partners as key VET stakeholders **participate in the Board of Governors** of institutions dealing with human resources issues and thus are actively involved in the formulation of strategic plans and targets and the development of policies.

Additionally, all major stakeholders were **represented in a number of working groups** formulated for the public dialogue initiated in 2005 in the context of the **Education Reform** (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) promoted by the government (more information is provided in section 7.1). Teacher organisations and other stakeholders have also participated in the consultations for the formulation of a strategic plan for education, which contains major reforms in upper secondary education including technical and vocational education.

The Apprenticeship Board (Symvoulío Mathiteias), which is responsible for supervising the operation of the **Apprenticeship System, has a tripartite character** whereas the design of the New Apprenticeship is the outcome of long and detailed deliberations with the social partners through social dialogue.

Social partners and other VET stakeholders are **involved in the identification of educational and training needs** and the setting of priorities in education and training for meeting these needs. An example of such involvement is the annual study conducted by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) since 2002, which identifies initial training needs with the involvement of social partners. Another example is the involvement of social partners in the determination on an annual basis of the thematic priorities for the multi-company continuing training programmes subsidised by the HRDA. These priorities are communicated to all training institutions / providers, which submit multi-company continuing training programmes to the HRDA every six months. The HRDA then examines, approves or rejects the submitted programmes and subsidises the implemented programmes. The training institutions and consulting firms play a substantial role towards the design and implementation of suitable training programmes in response to the thematic priorities.

Companies are actively involved in VET provision and in particular in continuing training activities. By law, companies pay 0.5% of their payroll to the Human Resource Development Fund and may receive subsidy from the HRDA for approved training activities. Thus companies prepare and submit training programmes to the HRDA on a continuous basis.

The involvement of companies in VET provision is further enhanced by the **Consultancy Services and Training Scheme to Microenterprises (MEs)**, employing 1-4 persons, which is implemented by the HRDA. Through this Scheme, which is co-financed by the ESF, MEs receive substantial assistance in the form of appropriate consultancy services and training by competent consultants.

Furthermore, **trade unions and employers' organisations frequently organise seminars** for their members, mostly subsidised by the HRDA, so that they are kept informed on recent developments in various issues.

Finally, there is active involvement of all major stakeholders including the Social Partners in the development of **Standards of Vocational Qualifications** in the form of **tripartite technical Sectoral Committees** of Vocational Qualifications (more information is provided in section 6.4).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to involving labour market actors in VET are the following:

- Conducting annual studies for the identification of initial training needs, with the involvement of social partners (section 4.2)
- Involvement of social partners in the planning process at national level (section 4.3)
- Establishment and operation of a System of Vocational Qualifications (section 6.4)
- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Involvement of social partners in the planning process at national level” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:
Involvement of social partners in the planning process at national level
Outline of the policy / measure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: To involve the social partners and all relevant stakeholders in the planning process by participating in various committees and working groups, having an advisory and consultative capacity in the formulation of various national documents.• Objectives / measurable targets: The objective is to formulate the following national documents and strategies with the involvement of social partners and relevant stakeholders:<ul style="list-style-type: none">o Strategic Development Plan, SDP 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 (Stratigiko Schedio Anaptyxis, SSA),o National Action Plan for Employment 2004-2006 (Ethniko Schedio Drasis gia tin Apascholisi),

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> o Single Programming Document for Objective 3 - Human Resources (Eniaio Eggrafo Programmismou gia to Stochos 3 – Anthropino Dynamiko), o Single Programming Document for the Community Initiative EQUAL, o National Report on the Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion (Ekthesi gia tis Stratigikes Koinonikis Prostatias kai Koinonikis Ensomatosis), o National Lisbon Programme 2005-2008 and 2008-2010 (Ethniko Schedio Drasis gia ti Stratigiki tis Lissavonas), o National Strategic Reference Framework for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013, NSRF (Ethniko Stratigiko Plaisio Anaforas gia tin Politiki Synoxis, ESPA), o Operational Programme “Employment, Human Capital and Social Cohesion” 2007-2013” (Epichirisiako Programma “Apascholisi, Anthropino Kefalaio kai Koinoniki Sinochi”), o National Strategy for Lifelong Learning 2007-2013 (Ethniki Stratigiki Dia Viou Mathisis), o National Strategy for Productivity 2007-2013 (Ethniki Stratigiki Paragogikotitas), o Education and Training 2010. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: The planning documents are utilised by various VET stakeholders, government ministries as well as social partners. • Status of implementation: The national documents for the planning period 2004-2006 and 2007-2013 have been prepared. The national documents and strategies prepared are used for planning, utilising European funds and achieving real convergence with the EU. The social partners participate in various committees and working groups. Additionally, progress reports are being prepared by coordinating committees that involve the social partners and all relevant stakeholders.
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: This is a national measure. • Key actors involved: Government departments and the social partners.
<p>Evaluation:</p> <p>The progress reports of various documents and the resulting EU assessment show that Cyprus has made a good progress in the implementation of the programmes and verify the role of the social partners in the consultation and implementation process.</p>
<p>Conclusions:</p> <p>The involvement of the social partners and all VET stakeholders in the planning process helps to make VET provision more responsive to labour market needs.</p>

4.4. PROMOTING WORKPLACE LEARNING

In an effort to integrate learning with working, the third year of studies in the Practical Direction (Praktiki Katefthinsi) of the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) combines a school-based environment with a real workplace as **final-year students are placed in industry** for one day per week (seven teaching periods per week) where they follow a practical training programme. The programmes of practical training in industry aim to provide students of the Practical Direction with specialised knowledge and skills, under actual working conditions and in accordance with approved curricula.

The Apprenticeship System (Systema Mathiteias, SM) is a two-year initial training programme, which is mainly directed to those students who do not wish to continue their studies within the formal upper secondary education system when they complete the lower secondary education level. The **Apprenticeship System study programmes provide practical training alternately**. Practical training takes place in industry, where apprentices are remunerated for their work, for three days per week. Theoretical training is provided at Technical Schools for two days per week. The Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) subsidises apprentices during the two days per week when they attend classes at Technical Schools. Enrichment of the existing scheme, as a measure in response to the economic crisis, is the provision of additional subsidy to employers towards the wages of participants in the Apprenticeship System. This temporary measure ends in May 2010.

Additionally, under a new policy measure, a **subsidy scheme** aims to promote the employment and in company training of Apprenticeship System Students in the private sector. The scheme is designed to improve the quality of in-company training by subsidising companies for part of the **salary of the in-company trainer** who is responsible for training the Apprentice. The subsidy also covers social insurance contributions for the Apprentice.

The **major weaknesses** of the System are:

- Steady reduction in the number of trainees.
- Low completion rates of about 60%.
- Limited number of specialisations.
- Lack of interest of teachers / instructors as well as employers.

It is worth noting that participation in the Apprenticeship System is low, reaching 0,9% of the total upper secondary education population in 2007/2008. Furthermore, it has been associated with low educational attainment and with failure at school. In addition, no girls have participated in the system during the last few years, although girls constitute about 25% of dropouts.

The **upgrading of the Apprenticeship System** has been a policy priority since 2004. Short term improvements of the System include reviewing the analytical programmes, training the teaching staff, and acquiring software and other support material, undertaken by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), and improving the administration and management of the system, including the monitoring and the supervision of both the in-class and the in-company training process, undertaken by the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) following a decision of the Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío) in May 2005.

Long term radical improvements, include the introduction of the **New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA)** with significant changes in the philosophy, the structures, systems and processes. The proposal for the establishment of the NMA was approved by the Council of Ministers in November 2007. The implementation of the proposal has not started yet. When implementation starts there will be a transitional period of two years during which parts of the current apprenticeship scheme will coexist with parts of the new apprenticeship. The NMA will become fully operational in 2014. The NMA will embrace young people between 14 and 25 at three levels (preparatory, core and post-secondary), will be supported by an

internal research and development centre, and will be linked to the national System of Vocational Qualifications established and implemented by the HRDA.

The **Enterprise-Based Initial and Continuing Training Schemes** subsidised by the HRDA also promote workplace learning. Companies may submit to the HRDA single-company training programmes, which are designed, organised and implemented by the enterprises themselves for meeting their own training needs at all levels. These training programmes can be conducted by trainers that are company employees or by external trainers.

Furthermore, the scheme entitled “**Training Infrastructure Support Scheme**” of the HRDA aims to strengthen the training infrastructure of companies, training institutions and organisations in order to provide training more effectively by the use of modern technologies (more information is provided in section 7.3).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to promoting workplace learning are the following:

- Establishment and operation of a New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA) (section 4.4)
- Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” (section 7.3)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Establishment and operation of a New Modern Apprenticeship” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Establishment and operation of a New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA)
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Outline of the policy / measure:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: Due to the low participation and attractiveness of the System, long-term radical improvements are needed. There is a need for a New Modern Apprenticeship to constitute a viable, alternative form of training and development for young persons as well as to meet the needs of the labour market.• Objectives / measurable targets: The main strategic objectives of the NMA are, firstly, to provide a learning pathway for young persons who withdraw from the education system early, so that they are able to learn how to learn, acquire and / or upgrade their skills, and become more employable and more able to progress in their career; and, secondly, to increase the supply of labour with persons qualified to meet the needs of the economy, to ensure mobility between education, apprenticeship and employment, and to minimise the risk of social exclusion.• Target groups / educational level / educational sector: Young people between the age of 14 and 25 at three levels (preparatory apprenticeship, core apprenticeship and post-secondary apprenticeship).• Status of implementation: The proposal for the establishment of the NMA was approved by the Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío) in November 2007 and the project fiche was submitted for approval to be co-financed by the ESF in the Programming Period 2007-2013. |
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Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy priority for the continuous upgrading of skills to match labour market needs.
- **Key actors involved:** The Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) and is co-financed by the CPC and the ESF.

Evaluation:

The NMA will be supported by an internal research and development centre and will be linked to the national System of Vocational Qualifications established and implemented by the HRDA.

Conclusions:

The establishment and operation of the NMA is foreseen to overcome the weaknesses of the existing Apprenticeship System and increase participation rates.

5. ADDRESSING EQUITY, SOCIAL INCLUSION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

5.1. ADDRESSING EQUITY IN VET

There has been considerable progress in developing schemes and programmes geared towards the unemployed, the inactive women and other **groups vulnerable to exclusion from the labour market** since 2002 and more specifically since Cyprus' accession in the EU. The development and implementation of such programmes is seen as a priority in various national documents.

An effort to **upgrade the Apprenticeship System** (Systima Mathiteias, SM) is currently underway through the establishment of the New Modern Apprenticeship (NMA), in order to increase attractiveness of the system and provide an alternative learning pathway for young persons of ages 14-25 and especially early school leavers (more information is provided in section 4.4).

The main policies for **improving equity** include the development of schemes which aim at the **promotion of training and employability for selected target groups** (young secondary education school leavers, unemployed, inactive women, vulnerable groups of the population and the disabled) and the enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services, PES (Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholis, DYA).

A scheme has been developed and put in operation since 2002 for the **reinforcement of female and youth entrepreneurship**. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, MCIT (Ypourgeio Emporiou, Viomichanias kai Tourismou, YEVT) selects candidates for grants given to start up new businesses, while the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) organises and subsidises training programmes provided by private training institutions.

The Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) has developed and launched in 2007 a scheme in order to **encourage enterprises to create posts for flexible employment** to be occupied by previously unemployed or economically inactive women. The project was evaluated to determine the degree of achievement of the objectives originally set, as well as the effectiveness of the initial recommendations made regarding the implementation of flexible forms of employment in Cyprus. This evaluation initiated the development of the statutory framework regulating their actual implementation in the future.

During the programming period 2007-2013, two schemes will be implemented for the promotion of flexible forms of employment, which will be co-financed from the ESF. One scheme will provide **subsidies for the promotion of flexible forms of employment**, for attracting and assisting economically inactive persons and persons who need flexibility for family reasons to remain in the labour market. The scheme is expected to be launched in 2010. The second scheme, expected to be launched in 2011, will provide subsidies and support to companies / organisations in order to develop and **implement integrated flexicurity policies**.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to addressing equity in VET are the following:

- Establishing and operation of the New Modern Apprenticeship (section 4.4)
- Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women (section 5.1)
- Enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services (PES) (section 5.2)
- Scheme for the reinforcement of female and youth entrepreneurship (section 7.4)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: The measure was introduced to increase participation of women in the labour market as well as build employment pathways for young people and the unemployed. • Objectives / measurable targets: The aim of these schemes was to effectively meet the training needs of selected target groups of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women in order to improve their employability through the acquisition of specialised complementary skills and knowledge. • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: The young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women. • Status of implementation: The measure was implemented over the period 2006-2008. The implementation of a personalised approach to the recipients of the target group was considered to be a crucial part for the successful and comprehensive implementation of these actions. The personalised approach, which was provided through the Public Employment Services PES (Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholis, DYA), included the identification and recording of skills, talents and interests of the beneficiary persons, as well as the design of a personal action plan along with the continuous provision of information on the available opportunities for training and employment.
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: This was a national measure. • Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach: It was part of a policy approach to increase participation in the labour market. • Key actors involved: The schemes have been developed by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) and were co-financed by the HRDA and the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT).
<p>Evaluation: The schemes are connected to the measure for the enhancement and modernisation of the PES.</p> <p>For evaluating the impact of the Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women on the human resources and enterprises of Cyprus, the HRDA will conduct an evaluation study in 2010.</p> <p>During the programming period 2007-2013, schemes are being promoted for improving the employability of the unemployed and the economically inactive women.</p>

5.2. SUPPORT SERVICES FOR GROUPS AT RISK

The **promotion of social inclusion** is a priority outlined in various national planning documents. The **National Report on Strategies for Social Protection and Social Inclusion 2008-2010** was completed in 2008, following the previous one for the period 2006-2008. The report contained a national action plan on social inclusion, a strategy report for pensions and a strategy report for healthcare and long-term care.

The **Public Employment Services**, PES (Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholis, DYA) have been **enhanced and modernised**, new Local Labour Offices have been developed and qualified personnel has been recruited and trained as counsellors in order to provide better support to the unemployed, the employed, the inactive and other vulnerable groups. The personalised approach includes the identification and recording of skills, talents and interests, as well as the design of a personal action plan along with the continuous provision of information on the available opportunities for training and employment. In addition, the upgrading of the existing Candidate Placement System (CPS) was implemented over the period 2005-2008 with the introduction of new software and statistical system. New measures have been designed for implementation during the programming period 2007-2013, aiming at the further enhancement of PES.

Under the Community Initiative EQUAL, a measure is being implemented aiming at **facilitating access to the labour market** for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated. The measure included the promotion of approaches that combine guidance, training, placement and individualised services and usage of all information systems and development of the skills of target groups.

The Social Welfare Services, SWS (Ypiresies Koinonikis Evimerias) during the period 2005-2008, implemented a project aiming at providing **vocational training to public assistance recipients** and their reintegration in the labour market. Within the same policy scope, the SWS have submitted a proposal for co-financing under the programming period 2007-2013 of the EU structural funds. This project aims at training a wider group of vulnerable persons (e.g. public assistance recipients, ex-prisoners, young persons under the care of the Director of SWS, families facing psycho-social difficulties, substance users etc). The SWS will promote training in social skills while the PES will undertake their work placements and / or further vocational training if necessary. The aim is to facilitate the employability of people threatened by conditions of poverty and social exclusion, through active employment measures. Within this framework, the target group will be offered counselling and other supportive services to help them overcome any difficulties and adjust to the new training / working environment.

Two new schemes are implemented by the Department of Labour of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) which provide **incentives** to private sector employers and local authorities **for the employment of people who belong to the disadvantaged groups and of people with disabilities**. The schemes' purpose is the social rehabilitation of people facing social exclusion and the creation of new jobs and have been implemented to address the effects of the current crisis.

Vocational guidance and training for persons with disabilities is provided by the Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled (Kentro Epagelmatikis Apokatastasis Anapiron, KEAA) in accordance with the needs of the labour market and taking into account the employability prospects of each person. A scheme of the National Strategy for Social Inclusion NAP/Incl. 2006-2008 concerns Training Persons with Disabilities in occupations

for which training is not available at the Centre. The scheme provided for a grant for fees paid by people with disabilities attending a course of vocational training that would facilitate their employment and improve their career prospects and was fully implemented in July 2009.

Another new measure concerns the **re-organisation of the sector for vocational training and rehabilitation of persons with disabilities** through the modernisation of training programmes, the employment schemes and the procedures followed. In February 2009, the Council of Ministers approved a proposal for the re-organisation of the sector involving the establishment of a new semi-government Organisation for Vocational Training and Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities.

One of the present main goals of the Counselling and Career Education Services, CCES (Ypiresia Symvouleftikis kai Epaggelmatikis Agogis, YSEA) of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) concerns the promotion of Lifelong Guidance. Lifelong Guidance is also promoted at European level through the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), where Cyprus participates as a member. Specifically, the CCES is planning to **widen access to Guidance to all citizens** irrespective of age, gender, religion, race, ethnicity and physical and intellectual capabilities. Special programs will be developed to meet the needs of early schools leavers, persons with special needs, immigrants, etc.

Furthermore, the MoEC proposed to the Council of the Ministers the **establishment of a National Forum on Lifelong Guidance**, which is considered as a basic immediate goal for the upgrading of all Guidance and Counselling services in Cyprus.

A **weakness** is the fact that training opportunities for people at risk were **somewhat limited** in Cyprus. However, since 2002 and more specifically since Cyprus' accession in the EU, there has been **considerable progress**. Recent policies pay particular attention to the need to enhance the conditions of social cohesion and facilitate access to the labour market for all.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving equity for specific target groups are the following:

- Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women (section 5.1)
- Enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services (PES) (section 5.2)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:
Enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services (PES)
Outline of the policy / measure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: The enhancement and modernisation of the PES to benefit vulnerable groups such as persons with disabilities, long-term unemployed, women and older persons.• Objectives / measurable targets: The measure aims to upgrade the existing district labour offices, develop ten new Local Employment Offices, recruit and train qualified personnel as counsellors and upgrade the Candidate Placement System (CPS).

- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The target groups to benefit are the vulnerable groups including the young unemployed, women wishing to enter the labour market, public assistance recipients and persons with disabilities.
- **Status of implementation:** The development of the PES network was implemented during the period 2005-2008. Ten new Local Employment Offices have been developed and four existing district labour offices have been upgraded. In addition, since the beginning of 2006, qualified personnel was recruited and trained as counsellors to provide active support to vulnerable groups including young unemployed, women wishing to enter the labour market, public assistance recipients and persons with disabilities through an individualised approach. Furthermore, within the framework of this measure a “Guide for Employment” was being published and distributed to the public. Four supporting studies relevant to the PES functions are being carried out. One of the studies aims at identifying new actions for promoting active ageing and its findings will be used for promoting appropriate measures in the 2007-2013 programming period. The second study aims at the modernisation of services provided by PES to employers and it includes an evaluation of the current services provided and suggestions for new ones. The third study aims at setting up an operational plan for the development and integration of private employment agencies into the employment model of Cyprus. The fourth study aims at providing suggestions for the development of targeted programmes for promoting the employment of young persons. In addition, the upgrading of the existing CPS has been completed with the introduction of new software and statistical system.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy approach to increase flexibility in the labour market. The upgraded CPS and the new software and statistical system for the monitoring of flows will serve, inter alia, for implementing the EU target of giving a new start to each young unemployed within 6 months.
- **Key actors involved:** The Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA). The measure was co-financed by the ESF.

Evaluation:

- **Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies:** The measure is connected with the Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women as the PES provide individualised guidance to these groups.

New measures have been designed for implementation during the programming period 2007-2013, aiming at the further enhancement of PES, through the development, accreditation and implementation of a quality system regarding the services provided by the PES, the design of a proper code of practices regarding the operation of the Private Employment Agencies and the training of the people involved, the strengthening and reinforcement of the Employment Observatory of the PES, the training of the staff, the creation of two additional offices and the strengthening of the ability of PES to deliver its services to the most vulnerable by buying services from the private sector.

Conclusions:

It is expected that the enhancement and modernisation of the PES will pave the way for a preventive deal towards unemployment and better utilisation of the labour force as well as increasing access to training through an individualised approach. This provision of individualised supportive and monitoring services consists of counselling, identification of skills, training, adaptation and integration into the working environment.

5.3. ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

Active citizenship and the European dimension in education are two of the basic aims of the Cyprus Educational System. They are **promoted interdisciplinary, through the curricula of various subjects and other school activities**. Schools participate in various activities, programmes and competitions and students are encouraged to organise and participate in European Clubs, undertake various projects, make links and exchanges with other European schools and use the Internet to contact other students in Europe. These **Educational programmes** promote active citizenship among students and are described below.

The **Europe at School Competition** is conducted within the framework of the general policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) to promote the European cultural dimension at schools. The activities of the competition include the following:

- Competition in the form of Essay Writing
- Competition on the Internet – the “Internet Award Scheme” aiming at the production of a common website designed by students of three European countries
- Meetings of the prize-winners in several European countries (European Youth Gatherings).

The Pedagogical Institute, PI (Paidagogiko Institutouto, PI) environmental education team coordinates the **environmental education projects** for the MoEC and has developed various actions. These focused on the Pedoulas Environmental Education Centre and the in-service training of teachers both on the theoretical as well as the practical aspect of their work. The Pedoulas Environmental Education Centre offers educational programmes which cover the thematic areas of “Water, Forest, Culture, Nature trails and Geology”. During the 2007-2008 school year 3850 students from all levels of education participated in the educational programmes offered and 250 teachers took part in training seminars and workshops.

The **Youth Parliament Programme** is an educational programme in which students attending the second grade of Upper Secondary General and Technical Education participate. During the first phase of the programme, the work of students participating is assessed and a number of them are selected according to certain criteria set by the Foundation of the Greek Parliament. Twenty students are then chosen to represent Cyprus at the session which takes place in Athens every January. There, students have the opportunity to address such issues as terrorism, racism, national problems, the European Union and also to get in touch with Greek students from all over the world.

UNESCO Associated Schools have been working on projects for 37 years. They aim at promoting the ideals of UNESCO, such as friendship, peace, cooperation etc among students. Their basic activity is the organisation of an annual Symposium. UNESCO Associated Schools in Cyprus cooperate with UNESCO Schools in other countries.

The MoEC, in collaboration with the European Institute of Cyprus, coordinated the **European Year of Intercultural Dialogue 2008**, aiming at making people in Cyprus, and especially the young ones, aware of the importance of intercultural dialogue in everyday life. Therefore, it was set as one of the educational goals for the school year 2008 and all schools engaged in various activities such as exhibitions, researches, competitions, conferences.

6. QUALITY, EXCELLENCE AND ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET

6.1. IMPROVING THE QUALITY OF VET

The **continuous improvement of the quality and flexibility of the Education System** is a policy priority in Cyprus. For **public education, an internal system of quality assurance** is being applied, through **large scale evaluation projects** of the programmes implemented by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), especially within the reform measures already taken. The strategic plan for education that was prepared within the context of the Education Reform process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (more information is provided in section 7.1) includes measures for improving the quality of education at all levels and sectors, enhancing teacher training and revising the curriculum up to upper secondary education.

In order to **improve the quality and attractiveness of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education**, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) in Cyprus, the MoEC has conducted an external evaluation of the STVE curricula. Furthermore, the MoEC continues its policy of developing the infrastructure of Technical Schools and also of **introducing modern technology in the STVE curricula** (more information is provided in section 7.2). This action, implemented during the period 2005-2008, aimed at reforming the curricula of all subjects with activities using ICT, providing schools with suitable ICT equipment and completing the infrastructure installations. A Learning Management System (LMS) Platform has also been purchased where teachers will be able to find material or to communicate with other teachers, students and parents.

The **restructuring of the Pedagogical Institute (PI) and the establishment of a new Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE)** is a policy priority which was promoted by the Education Reform outlined in the National Lisbon Programme. The aim is to further upgrade the quality of the in-service training of teachers and to carry out more and deeper applied research into educational issues and practices as well as objective evaluation of education programmes, to be used as a basis for the formulation and implementation of evidence-based education policy.

A proposal has been put forward regarding the **establishment of the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CQAA) Board** which will be responsible for the external evaluation of all tertiary education institutions. The CQAA Board is going to replace the existing separate evaluation and accreditation bodies by integrating their responsibilities into one sole body. The aim is to eliminate the weaknesses of the existing system such as duplication and contradictory decisions and to extend its responsibilities to cover, in addition to private tertiary education institutions, the state ones. Furthermore, it will cover institutional and internal evaluation and accreditation, in addition to programme quality assurance conducted under the present system. The CQAA Board is expected to absorb the functions that are performed by the Council for the Education-Accreditation of Programmes of Study, SEKAP and the Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications, KYSATS (Kypriako Symvoulío Anagnorisis Titlon Spoudon) and carry out the evaluation of all public and private higher education institutions operating in Cyprus.

Cyprus has an **active participation in the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET)** and is being kept informed about relevant policies, measures and practices. Workshops on Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) were organised

with participation of stakeholders in Cyprus and further actions are envisaged in order to promote the principles of **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework Network (EQARF)** and develop specific measures towards this aim.

The Government of Cyprus has been invited to and is planning to appoint two official representatives to the EQARF. The network will help develop common principles, reference criteria and indicators, guidelines and tools for quality improvement in VET at national, regional and local levels. The first meeting of the network is planned for April 2010.

In an effort to **upgrade its training and development schemes**, the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) completed in 2006 a special study aiming at evaluating the impact of the existing HRDA schemes on the labour market. In the light of the findings of the study, policy decisions have been taken to modify / enrich the spectrum of schemes promoted by the HRDA. This will lead to further upgrading / enhancement of human capital development in Cyprus. Additionally, a study has been conducted by external consultants for the design of a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA on the economy of Cyprus. All these actions will improve the quality of training that is provided.

The **provision of further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises** is another measure currently planned by the HRDA. The process for enriching the existing scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” started in June 2006 and is planned to be completed by 2012 (more information is provided in section 7.3).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving quality of VET are the following:

- Strengthening the quality and attractiveness of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) and improving the organisation of STVE (section 6.1)
- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)
- Introducing modern technology in education (section 7.2)
- Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” (section 7.3)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Strengthening the quality and attractiveness of STVE and improving the organisation of STVE” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:
Strengthening the quality and attractiveness of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) and improving the organisation of STVE
Outline of the policy / measure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: The attractiveness of STVE is relatively low, hence the need to improve the organisation of STVE and increase its attractiveness based on the findings of a study.

- **Objectives / measurable targets:** To increase participation in STVE.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The Lower Secondary School Graduates.
- **Status of implementation:** The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) launched in May 2006 a tender procedure for a study focusing on the re-organisation of STVE. The study was submitted to the MoEC in August 2007. In addition, the MoEC is in the process of revising the curriculum of the STVE within the context of the Education Reform.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure concerning STVE.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy approach for the continuous upgrading of skills to match labour market needs.
- **Key actors involved:** The MoEC and co-financed by the MoEC and the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT).

Evaluation:

- **Integration of outcomes into (a) larger (national, sectoral, regional, local) policy/ies:** Within the context of the Education Reform and based on the findings of the study, the MoEC formed various Working Groups that have already revised the Technological and Laboratory Curricula of the Practical Direction of Technical Schools. The revised curricula of the Practical Direction are expected to be implemented in 2010. Their implementation will be evaluated and will form the basis for the revision of the curricula of the Theoretical Direction.

6.2. PROMOTING EXCELLENCE IN VET

The government is promoting **major reforms at all levels of education**, including Secondary Technical and Vocational Education STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epangelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) through the Education Reform process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) in order to promote excellence in VET. The improvement of the quality of the education system and the **modernisation of the curricula and teaching methods is a policy priority**.

Within the context of the Education Reform (more information is provided in section 6.3), the Technological and Laboratory Curricula of the **Practical Direction of Technical Schools** was revised in 2009. The objective of the curricula revision was to reduce the number of the specialties offered by the STVE, thus providing the students with the opportunity to acquire the key competences needed to make them more competitive when they enter the labour market. The revised curricula of the Practical Direction are expected to be implemented in 2010. Their implementation will be evaluated and will form the basis for the revision of the curricula of the Theoretical Direction.

6.3. HIGHER LEVEL QUALIFICATIONS IN VET

At present, there are **no vocational qualifications / programmes in Cyprus in higher education / tertiary education** (ISCED 5B). This is a major **weakness** in this area. **However**, the establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning, promoted by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), will

offer all types of initial or continuing technical and vocational education and training to Graduates of General Secondary Education, of Technical and Vocational Schools, of the Apprenticeship System (Systima Mathiteias) and employed persons.

Furthermore, the **New Modern Apprenticeship** (NMA), which is expected to become fully operational in 2014, will embrace young people between 14 and 25 at three apprenticeship levels (preparatory, core and post-secondary) (more information is provided in section 4.4).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to higher level qualifications in VET are the following:

- Establishment and operation of a New Modern Apprenticeship (section 4.4)
- Establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning (section 6.3)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning
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Outline of the policy / measure:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: Absence of VET opportunities at the post-secondary level.• Objectives / measurable targets: The objective of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning is to offer all types of initial or continuing technical and vocational education and training and provide students with the necessary qualifications by imparting academic, technical, professional and practical knowledge and by offering them the possibility to develop those skills that will facilitate their integration into society and secure their ability to adapt to the changing needs of industry.• Target groups / educational level / educational sector: Graduates of General Secondary Education, of Technical and Vocational Schools, of the Apprenticeship System (Systima Mathiteias) and employed persons.• Status of implementation: The establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning is currently being planned by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP). Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning will operate at existing Secondary General and Technical Schools and also at existing private schools of secondary and tertiary education. They will operate as institutions of public education, within the scope of competence and under the supervision of the MoEC. |
|---|

<p>The programmes will last from one to four semesters, depending on the educational background and practical skills of the individuals interested in attending them. General Secondary Education graduates will be offered initial technical and vocational education and training, which will give them the opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills required for their integration into the labour market, while employed persons, as well as graduates of Technical and Vocational Schools and the Apprenticeship System, will be offered continuing technical knowledge and practical vocational skills.</p>
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<p>After completing these post-secondary programmes, students will take examinations in order to obtain a formal certification, which will be awarded by a Public Intersectional</p>
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Body, constituted by representatives of the MoEC, the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), the employers' organisations and trade unions.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Key actors involved:** The MoEC with the involvement of VET stakeholders and the social partners. Apart from Public Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning, Private Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning may also be established and operate under the supervision of the MoEC.

6.4. IMPROVING HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL PERMEABILITY OF EDUCATION AND TRAINING SYSTEMS

The **Lifelong Learning Strategy**, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) for 2007-2013, which was approved in November 2007, contains many policy priorities for VET. The priorities of the LLL Strategy include amongst others lifelong guidance and counselling services, the development of National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the promotion of actions outlined in the Education Reform (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi), which have specific impact on VET such as improving and facilitating horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems.

In the context of the Education Reform (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) it is **planned to integrate Secondary General with Secondary Technical and Vocational Education** which will enhance the links, improve attractiveness and further facilitate mobility (more information is provided in section 7.1). At present, Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) graduates have the same rights and privileges as Secondary General Education graduates regarding access to Tertiary Education.

The Leaving Certificate (Apolyterion) awarded by Technical and Vocational Schools, as well as by the Evening Technical School, is equivalent to the Leaving Certificate awarded by Secondary General Education. This entitles STVE graduates to compete for a place in the Universities of Cyprus and Greece, in any field of studies they wish to pursue, provided they succeed in the examinations. STVE graduates can also be accepted in universities abroad, provided they satisfy the conditions and requirements for admission in the educational institution of their choice.

General education subjects constitute a substantial part of the STVE study programmes. A considerable number of secondary general education teachers, teaching general education subjects, are employed at Technical Schools. Respectively, some technological subjects are integrated in the general education curriculum and are taught by Technical School teachers.

One of the most **significant innovations** already introduced in the National Education System is the **facilitation of horizontal and vertical movement** across the upper secondary level of education. This means that, during the first semester of their studies, students have the opportunity of transferring from Secondary General Education to STVE or vice versa automatically, i.e. without taking any exams. After the first semester, or even after the first year of studies has been completed, students of Secondary General or STVE are still allowed to transfer, provided that they succeed in special exams.

Students of STVE have the **opportunity of changing direction** (from theoretical to practical and vice versa), branch of studies or specialty during the first semester without taking any exams, provided that there are vacant places. After the first semester has been completed, students wishing to enroll in another direction, branch or specialty have to take special exams.

In addition, students of upper Secondary Education **can transfer to the Apprenticeship System** (Systima Mathiteias) during the entire school year, without taking any exams.

Moreover, **foreign students** who have difficulty in following the STVE programmes due to language problems may attend classes as mere observers if they wish and be entitled to enroll in the next class as regular students, provided that they succeed in the special entrance exams.

The **establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning** is currently being planned by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP). The objective of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning is to offer all types of initial or continuing technical and vocational education and training and provide students with the necessary knowledge and skills that will facilitate their integration into society (more information is provided in section 6.3).

As far as validation of skills and competences acquired through non-formal and informal learning is concerned, at present, there are no procedures or national guidelines. However, Cyprus supports the initiative for establishing a European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and work is in progress regarding the development of a NQF. Furthermore, Cyprus is proceeding with the establishment and operation of a **Competence-Based System of Vocational Qualifications**.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving horizontal and vertical permeability of education and training systems are the following:

- Establishment of Vocational Schools of Lifelong Learning (section 6.3)
- Establishment and operation of a System of Vocational Qualifications (section 6.4)
- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Establishment and operation of a System of Vocational Qualifications” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:
Establishment and operation of a System of Vocational Qualifications
Outline of the policy / measure:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Rationale: Cyprus has committed itself towards the European Commission for the development of a Competence-Based System of Vocational Qualifications. This is a high priority objective, which is stated in national planning documents.• Objectives / measurable targets: The System of Vocational Qualifications is designed

for the assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences of a person to perform competently in a working environment or under simulated conditions.

- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** During the 1st phase, access to the system is provided to employees. During the 2nd phase, opportunities for access will be provided to employees, unemployed and inactive persons.
- **Status of implementation:** The Board of Governors of the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) in May 2005 and subsequently the Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulio) in November 2005 approved a detailed proposal, for the gradual establishment and implementation of a System of Vocational Qualifications in 2 phases (1st phase: 2006 - 2008 and 2nd phase: 2007-2013).

During the 1st phase, which was implemented in the period 2006-2008, 5 Standards of Vocational Qualifications at level 2 have been developed (waiter, cook, receptionist, construction mason, sales person-retail). During the 2nd phase, which covers the period 2007 – 2013 and is co-financed by the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tameio, EKT), the development of around 72 new standards in priority occupations at various levels is envisaged. The standards to be developed will cover a broader range of occupations in the sectors of retail and wholesale trade, repairs of motor vehicles, hotels and restaurants, construction, manufacturing, systems and networks of communication and computers, hairdressing and in the occupation of trainer of vocational training. The development of the new Standards has already begun with the invitation for tenders from qualified developers. It is expected that during the second phase, opportunities for access will be provided to 6.000 persons (employees, self-employed, unemployed and economically inactive persons).

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** The System of Vocational Qualifications will be incorporated into the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).
- **Key actors involved:** The HRDA has the responsibility for the establishment and operation of the System whereas all major stakeholders are actively involved.

Evaluation:

The future development of a NQF that will incorporate the System of Vocational Qualifications is expected to contribute to the further improvement of knowledge, skills and competences through lifelong learning.

For evaluating the impact of the System of Vocational Qualifications during the 1st phase on the human resources and enterprises of Cyprus, the HRDA will conduct an evaluation study in 2010.

Conclusions:

An issue during the 1st phase has been the limited participation to the System. This is connected with the limited access to the system, which will be overcome during the 2nd phase, where opportunities for access will be provided to employees, unemployed and inactive persons and the standards to be developed will cover a much broader range of occupations. Additionally, the fact that the 2nd phase is co-financed by the ESF, will increase the human and financial resources available.

6.5. TEACHERS AND TRAINERS

Cyprus places a high priority in **improving the status and skills of teachers and trainers**. The continuous development of educators is considered imperative for implementing the Education Reform and in particular for improving the attractiveness of education and for supporting the knowledge society by introducing ICTs.

The Pedagogical Institute, PI (Paidagogiko Institutouto, PI) implements an **organised policy for the training of teachers** in Cyprus, including teachers and trainers in vocational education. It organises a series of courses and seminars that are either compulsory or optional. The compulsory courses comprise a pre-service training course for secondary school teachers as well as in-service training courses for newly appointed heads of secondary schools and deputy heads of secondary schools. In an effort to upgrade the pre-service training previously offered to secondary education teachers by the PI, the course has been undertaken by the University of Cyprus UCY (Panepistimio Kyprou, PK) in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeoio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) as of the academic year 2007-2008.

All these series of courses include sessions dealing with EU priority issues as, for example, new technologies in education, intercultural education, the European dimension in education and action research.

A **comprehensive strategy for in-service training of teachers**, including VET teachers and trainers, has been adopted. This strategy provides for the systematic identification of training needs and planning of specific programmes to address these needs for upgrading the skills of teachers at various stages of their career, keeping them at the forefront of technological and educational developments and compensating for any weakness they may exhibit.

In addition to the in-service training programmes carried out by the PI, in the context of the new strategy, a novel programme has been introduced for on-the job training, mentoring and assistance of newly appointed teachers.

Under the policy measure for the continuous improvement of education at all levels, an action is being implemented during the period 2005-2009, aiming at **ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate** and will acquire skills to implement the new, ICT oriented curricula.

Additionally, for the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE) staff, a special programme provides **industrial placement for trainers**. This programme allows trainers to become attached to industry on a full or part-time basis, with their salary being paid by the state. The aim is to offer trainers of STVE the opportunity to update their knowledge and keep in abreast of technological changes. They also act as links between STVE and industry and therefore enhance cooperation between them.

Another opportunity for in-service training for teachers is offered to them through the **European Lifelong Learning (LLL) Programme**, which subsidises their participation to training seminars in other European countries. According to data provided by the Foundation for the Management of the European LLL Programmes, there is great interest among teachers for participation in these seminars.

The **establishment of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers**, which is promoted by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), is a policy priority, which will upgrade and improve the quality and effectiveness of training provision. The implementation of the project started in October 2006 and is expected to be completed in 5 stages. Progress has been made towards that direction and the system is expected to be implemented in 2012.

In November 2006 the HRDA, as the National Coordinator of **Training of Trainers Network** (TTnet) Cyprus, organised the Launching Conference of the Network. The Conference was held in Nicosia in the presence of the Coordinator of TTnet / Cedefop and representatives of other National Networks. TTnet is a network of national networks that allows key players and decision-makers in the field of training of teachers and trainers to share practices, knowledge and expertise on key issues in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers. TTnet operates at three levels of activities, the national level, the transnational level and the community level. The four priority themes that have been set by the National Network are as follows:

- Recognition, validation and certification of non-formal and informal learning for VET teachers and trainers.
- Participation of the National Coordinator in EU programmes for the development of a European framework of qualifications for VET teachers and trainers.
- Development of model programmes for training of VET teachers and trainers.
- Introduction of a suitable system of validation and certification of the training providers.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to VET teachers and trainers are the following:

- Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate (section 6.5)
- Introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers (section 6.5)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: The measure was introduced in order to ensure that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate and will acquire skills to implement the new, ICT oriented curricula. • Objectives / measurable targets: The objective of this initiative is to ensure that Secondary General and STVE teachers will become digitally literate, as it includes the organisation of short training courses on core IT skills, as well as long term training

courses on the implementation of new, IT oriented, analytical programmes in Secondary Education. More specifically, the programme aims at:

- o The improvement of the quality of the rendered education through the utilisation of new technologies.
 - o The preparation of teachers and consequently students, for a smooth entry into the knowledge society that is constantly being influenced by modern technology, computers and information technology.
 - o The development of infrastructure for the continuous education and training of the teaching staff, within the context of lifelong learning.
 - o The development of human resources, which will contribute to the efforts for strengthening the provision of services, as well as the growth of the economy based on high technology sectors.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The programme covered the entire population of teachers in Primary and Secondary Education, including STVE.
 - **Status of implementation:** The Ministry of Education and Culture (MoEC) implemented during the period 2005-2009 teacher training programmes based on ECDL (European Computer Driving Licence) standards. At the same time an e-learning management environment was developed on which teachers attended online seminars providing both synchronous and asynchronous training.

A portal was also developed, incorporating web tools such as discussion forums, so as to support the teachers on their continuous professional development. The portal also incorporates a database with educational training material on ICT implementation in the learning process in the form of education scenarios, material that was developed by working groups and which is also provided in printed form.

The training on the use of ICT in the learning process continues, offering seminars on electronic tools and environments and their pedagogical use.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy approach for the continuous improvement of the quality and flexibility of the educational system.
- **Key actors involved:** The MoEC and it is partly co-financed by the MoEC and the ESF.

Evaluation:

The measure is connected with the implementation of an action aiming at introducing modern technology in education. The training programmes and the impact of the introduction of ICT in schools were evaluated.

Conclusions:

The acquisition of new skills, mainly IT related, the introduction of new tools, such as interactive boards and ICTs and the development of new learning approaches and methodologies will enhance their ability to deliver learning in an effective way. The teaching environment and methods will become more flexible and thus teachers and trainers will be better able to respond to the rapidly changing needs of society and economy.

Details of the policy measure entitled “Introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Introduction of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The development of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of training subsidised by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD).
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The main aim of the system is to set minimum quality standards and improve the quality of training for any relevant activity undertaken or funded by the HRDA. Applications will be made on-line and training providers will be assessed including trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure. It is expected that by the end of 2012, around 1000 trainers, 250 training institutions and 200 training infrastructures will be certified.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** Training providers including trainers of vocational training, vocational training institutions and vocational training infrastructure.
- **Status of implementation:** In September 2005, the Board of Governors of the HRDA approved the development and introduction of the system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers. To this end, the HRDA launched in January 2006 a tender procedure for selecting external consultants. The project was assigned to the consortium of the National Accreditation Centre of Continuing Vocational Training (EKEPIS) and the ICAP Business Information and Consulting Firm that are located in Athens. The implementation of the project started in October 2006. The project is expected to be completed in 5 stages. A draft paper of the system was prepared in June 2007 and was extensively discussed with key stakeholders in Vocational Education and Training and interested bodies, in an effort to have the highest possible level of consensus. In July 2008, the Board of Governors of the HRDA decided to accept the proposed system and proceed with the next stage of the project, which is the preparation of a specification for the computerisation of the system. Through a new tender procedure, which started in June 2009, the HRDA proceeds to the fourth stage of the project at the end of which the system will be fully computerised and ready to start operation. It is expected that the system will be gradually introduced by the second half of 2012.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy approach to upgrade and improve training provision.
- **Key actors involved:** The HRDA, the training providers and trainers.

Conclusions:

The system is envisaged to require the attainment of specific standards for trainers and in case these are not fulfilled then the trainers will be required to attend specially designed training programmes.

7. ENHANCING CREATIVITY AND INNOVATION

7.1. CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN VET

The ongoing Education Reform represents the main educational policy of the Government. It is an effort for a comprehensive **introduction of reforms and innovations at all levels and aspects of the educational system**, including the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) and the Apprenticeship System (Systema Mathiteias).

The main aims of the **Education Reform** include the improvement of the quality of the education system and the **modernisation of the curricula and teaching methods**. For the development of the new curricula, the government has appointed a committee of experts. Twenty different Working Groups were set up in February 2009 to prepare the new curricula. Academics as well as teachers participate in this process. The Working Groups have already revised the Technological and Laboratory Curricula of the Practical Direction of Technical Schools. The revised curricula of the Practical Direction are expected to be implemented in 2010. Their implementation will be evaluated and will form the basis for the revision of the curricula of the Theoretical Direction.

Since the last decade Cyprus has **promoted entrepreneurship** in its educational system. Many positive elements have been created by introducing new modules and programmes. The impact on the students of the various relevant programmes (Entrepreneurship Day, Career Week, simulation samples of enterprises etc.) was very positive. Furthermore, teachers were supported by attending relevant in-service training seminars, lectures and experiential learning laboratories within schools offered by experts. Both students and teachers developed innovative ideas and projects, which were displayed at creativity exhibitions organised locally by individual schools and centrally by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) in an effort to disseminate ideas and develop a culture of initiative taking and entrepreneurship.

In the STVE, as in Secondary General Education, the idea of **entrepreneurship has been promoted through a number of the subjects that are offered**. The Technological and Workshop Practice subjects of some branches promote to a great extent the idea of entrepreneurship, since a great number of issues related to this idea constitute an integral part of the teaching material. Such issues are the following:

- Legal aspects concerning the operation of enterprises.
- Studies and researches about the labour market.
- Costing and pricing of products.
- Establishment of enterprises.
- Contraction of loans.
- Cyprus legislation concerning the operation of enterprises.
- Organisation and administration of personnel.

The idea of entrepreneurship is also put forward through the **practical training in industry of the students** of the Practical Direction. Through the programmes of industrial placement,

the students of the Practical Direction are given the opportunity to familiarize themselves both with the workplace and also with the scope of activities and the objectives of an enterprise. Finally, the idea of entrepreneurship is promoted through extra-curricular activities such as participating in various competitions.

The establishment and operation of the Open University of Cyprus, OUC (Anikto Panepistimio Kyprou, APKy), which is a new form of higher education institution, offers undergraduate and graduate courses through open and distance learning in order to satisfy the demand for lifelong learning and continuing education. The OUC is expected to have a great **impact on the development of eLearning** in Cyprus and in the education system in general.

The implementation of the **New Modern Apprenticeship**, which will provide an alternative pathway for education, training and development for young persons who withdraw from the formal education system, is geared towards the development of key competences and towards meeting the needs of the market.

Finally, as far as vocational training is concerned, the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) prepares on an annual basis a document that contains the **thematic priorities for multi-company programmes**. This document is communicated to all training providers. The HRDA examines various programmes submitted by public and private training providers, which follow the thematic priorities, and subsidises the provision of continuing training. A specific high-priority issue for the period 2010-2012, concerns **innovative and / or specialised categories** of actions, which include programmes focused on productivity in enterprises, enhancement of competitiveness, promotion of entrepreneurship and development of enterprises, promotion of employability of employees and effective management of environmental sustainability operational risks.

Strengths of national policy on creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET include the major reforms of the education system that are being promoted in the framework of the Education Reform process, including changes in the curricula, the introduction of innovative methods and the incorporation of new technologies. The major stakeholders in VET have recognised the need to introduce innovative pedagogies and the social partners and all major stakeholders are actively involved in the design of the curricula. Furthermore, the HRDA promotes these issues in the training market. A **weakness** of the Cyprus policy on introducing innovative pedagogies is the lack of criteria, in the system of teachers' evaluation, which would determine the extent of the implementation of innovative pedagogies in their teaching methodology.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET is the following:

- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)

Details of the policy measure entitled "Education Reform Process" are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi)

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The need for major reforms at upper secondary education, including technical and vocational education.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The main aims of the Education Reform include the improvement of the quality of the education system and the modernisation of the curricula and teaching methods. The main priorities identified for the structured nationwide consultation to promote the Education Reform are the following:
 - o Resetting the aims of the education systems and programmes of study from pre-primary education through to upper secondary education.
 - o Differentiation of the teaching in class, in order to give emphasis to cooperative, team, experiential and exploratory teaching methods.
 - o Incorporation of new technologies in the education and training systems.
 - o Creation of modern infrastructure through upgrading the building facilities and modernisation of their equipment.
 - o Confrontation of school failure, which is a basic prerequisite for decreasing the number of students that drop out of school.
 - o Improving and restructuring the system of the pre-service and the in-service education and training of educators.
 - o Further reinforcement of special education in order to limit the danger of exclusion of socially vulnerable students.
 - o Reform of the structure of the education system from pre-primary education through to tertiary education.
 - o Further development of higher education for exploitation of its capacity and reinforcement of its role towards achieving the Lisbon objectives.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** All levels of education.
- **Status of implementation:** The efforts for restructuring and modernising the educational system culminated in 2003 with the appointment, by the Minister of Education and Culture, of an Education Reform Committee (Epitropi Ekpaideftikis Metarithmisis, EEM) consisting of seven academics, in order to study the Cyprus Education System and make suggestions for its improvement. The Committee submitted, in August 2004, a report indicating the main priority areas of reform with suggestions for the restructuring and the modernisation of the Cyprus Education System. A public dialogue was initiated in 2005 and a number of working groups, where all major stakeholders were represented, have prepared suggestions on concrete measures to be implemented. The Council of Ministers approved the formation of committees that deal with various issues relevant to the Educational System.

For the development of the new curriculum, the government has appointed a committee of experts which has prepared its recommendations bearing in mind the stakeholder's contributions who participated in the dialogue. Twenty different Working Groups were set up in February 2009 to prepare the new curricula. Academics as well as teachers participate in this process. The Working Groups have already revised the Technological and Laboratory Curricula of the Practical Direction of Technical Schools. The objective of the curricula revision was to reduce the number of the specialties offered by the

Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE), thus providing the students with the opportunity to acquire the key competences needed to make them more competitive when they enter the labour market. The revised curricula of the Practical Direction are expected to be implemented in 2010. Their implementation will be evaluated and will form the basis for the revision of the curricula of the Theoretical Direction.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national process.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** They are part of the policy measure for the continuous improvement of the quality and flexibility of the education system.
- **Key actors involved:** The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) is responsible for the Education Reform (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi). The Education Reform Committee, appointed by the Minister, prepared the first report and committees and working groups deal with various issues relevant to the Educational System.

Evaluation:

The establishment of the Centre of Educational Research and Evaluation (CERE) is a policy priority which was promoted by the Education Reform. The CERE carries out more and deeper applied research into educational issues and practices as well as objective evaluation of education programmes, to be used as a basis for the formulation and implementation of evidence-based education policy.

7.2. IMPROVING QUALITY OF TEACHING

The main aims of the **Education Reform** include the improvement of the quality of the education system and the modernisation of the curricula and teaching methods (more information is provided in section 7.1). Within the context of the Education Reform, the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) implemented, during the period 2005-2008, an action aiming at **introducing modern technology in the STVE** curricula (more information is provided in section 7.2). This action aimed at reforming the curricula of all subjects with activities using ICT, providing schools with suitable ICT equipment and completing the infrastructure installations. A Learning Management System (LMS) Platform has also been purchased where teachers will be able to find material or to communicate with other teachers, students and parents.

The radical improvement of the **quality of teaching through teacher training** is one of the key objectives of the Education Reform. Under the policy measure for the continuous improvement of education at all levels, an action was being implemented during the period 2005-2009, aiming at **ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate** and will acquire skills to implement the new, ICT oriented curricula (more information is provided in section 6.5).

In an effort to **upgrade the pre-service training previously offered to secondary education teachers** by the Pedagogical Institute, PI (Paidagogiko Institouto, PI), the course has been undertaken by the University of Cyprus UCY (Panepistimio Kyprou, PK) in collaboration with the MoEC, as of the academic year 2007-2008.

As of October 2008, an **induction programme for novice teachers** is offered, aiming at facilitating their smooth integration into the education system. The content of the programme is closely related to key competences such as implementing new technologies within instructional methodology. A platform and a portal have been established for the provision of distance learning. Teaching materials for the use of ICT in the teaching-learning process have been developed. In-service training has been offered to teachers who act as multipliers in schools for implementing the use of ICT in the learning process.

A **comprehensive strategy for the in-service training of teachers**, including VET teachers and trainers, has been adopted. This strategy provides for the systematic identification of training needs and planning of specific programmes to address these needs for upgrading the skills of teachers at various stages of their career, keeping them at the forefront of technological and educational developments.

Furthermore, the creation of the **Training of Trainers Network (TTnet)** Cyprus, allows key players and decision-makers in the field of training of teachers and trainers to share practices, knowledge and expertise on key issues in the training and professional development of vocational teachers and trainers.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving quality of teaching are the following:

- Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate (section 6.5)
- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)
- Introducing modern technology in education (section 7.2)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Introducing modern technology in education” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Introducing modern technology in education

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The measure was introduced as part of the policy priority for the continuous improvement of the quality and flexibility of the educational system.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The measure aims at reforming the curricula of all subjects with activities using ICT, providing schools with suitable ICT equipment and completing the infrastructure installations.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The measure covers both General and Secondary Technical and Vocational Education (STVE).
- **Status of implementation:** The Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP) has obtained ready-made software for the needs of some of the subjects taught at the Technical/Vocational level and began the procedure of obtaining e-learning software for these subjects. Tenders for ICT consultancy services are under evaluation. A Learning Management System (LMS) Platform has been bought where teachers are able to find material or to communicate with other teachers, students and their parents. The LMS was launched on a pilot basis in seven schools in April 2009, whilst its installation is expected to be completed in 2014.

The software is a huge database in which about 300.000 users are inserted and the system controls the services that each user receives. The parents receive a login password with which they have access through the Internet to specific data that concern solely their own children, such as absences, grades in tests, semester grades, educators and so on. The students also have access to their own personal e-mail and are able to input relevant data. They also have access to lessons in different forms, homework, telecommunication with teachers, data concerning their studies, electronic libraries and the Internet. The educators also have access to pre-prepared lessons, libraries, videos and presentations in different forms that respond to the needs of each student as well as a system for the evaluation of students. The educators are responsible for the creation and running of a virtual classroom.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Key actors involved:** The MoEC and is co-financed by the MoEC and the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tameio, EKT).

7.3. INNOVATION-FRIENDLY INSTITUTIONS

The **provision of further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises** through the enrichment of the existing scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” of the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) is another measure in progress. The process for enriching the scheme started in June 2006 and is planned to be completed by 2010. The scheme aims to strengthen the training infrastructure of enterprises, training institutions and organisations in order to **provide training more effectively by the use of modern technologies** and thus meet human resources training needs in sectors, occupations and areas of priority. Enterprises and training institutions can **receive financial assistance** from HRDA to create new or to improve the existing **training infrastructure**, which may include equipment and audio-visual aids, **development of training specifications** and **training of trainers**.

Furthermore, the continuing training programmes that are approved and subsidised by the HRDA should be designed on the basis of the HRDA’s annual thematic priority setting, which is communicated to all training institutions / providers. On the basis of these thematic priorities the training institutions / providers submit multi-company continuing training programmes to the HRDA every six months. Amongst the thematic priorities information technology is prominently featured. In fact, the HRDA in the last few years has increased the number of training courses in the field of ICT that receive a subsidy and has further **promoted the adoption of eLearning methods and techniques**.

Finally, the measure for **introducing modern technologies** in education is an innovation of the education system that aimed at reforming the curricula of all subjects with activities using ICT, providing schools with suitable ICT equipment and completing the infrastructure installations, including a **Learning Management System (LMS)** (more information is provided in section 7.2).

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to innovation-friendly institutions are the following:

- Introducing modern technology in education (section 7.2)
- Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” (section 7.3)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme”” are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Further support to the training infrastructure of institutions and enterprises through enrichment of the scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme”

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The existence of the necessary training infrastructure acts positively for the creation of additional supply of training activities. The enrichment of the scheme “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” will enhance the quality of training provided.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The existing scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” aims to strengthen the training infrastructure of enterprises, training institutions and organisations in order to provide training more effectively by the use of modern technologies and thus meet human resources training needs in sectors, occupations and areas of priority. Enterprises and training institutions can receive financial assistance from Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) to create new or to improve the existing training infrastructure, which may include equipment and audio-visual aids, development of training specifications and training of trainers. Enterprises and training institutions wishing to benefit from the scheme submit a proposal to HRDA for approval before its implementation.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** Enterprises, training institutions and organisations.
- **Status of implementation:** The design for the enrichment of the existing scheme entitled “Training Infrastructure Support Scheme” started in June 2006. The design for the enrichment of the scheme will be completed after the examination of all pertinent findings / proposals from the:
 - o Evaluation study entitled “Ex-post evaluation of the existing schemes of the HRDA”
 - o Design and implementation of a system for the assessment and certification of training providers including trainers

The enriched scheme is expected to become accessible and be utilised by the training providers and enterprises from 2010. So far the scheme has been revised and approved as from 1/7/07 in order to correspond to the revised de-minimis regulation (1998/2006/EC).

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** It is part of a policy approach for upgrading the HRDA training activities.
- **Key actors involved:** The HRDA.

Evaluation:

The existing scheme has been evaluated in the study undertaken for the ex-post evaluation of the HRDA schemes and their impact on the labour market.

7.4. ENCOURAGING PARTNERSHIP

In Cyprus there has been a long-standing tradition of tripartite consultation (government, trade unions and employers' organisations) and social dialogue. Participation in EU programmes has further promoted partnerships in Cyprus as well as between social partners, major VET stakeholders and other organisations in Cyprus with similar entities in other EU countries. Furthermore, the social partners, as key VET stakeholders, **participate in the Board of Governors** of institutions dealing with human resources issues and are thus actively involved in the formulation of the strategic planning, targets and the development of policies of these institutions.

For the elaboration of **national planning documents** and the development of Cyprus' position on various EU emanating measures and tools there is active **involvement of the social partners** and other major stakeholders in an advisory and consultative capacity. Additionally, the social partners have been involved in the **elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy**, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis), approved by the Council of Ministers in November 2007.

All major stakeholders were represented in a **number of working groups** formulated for the public dialogue initiated in 2005 in the context of the **Education Reform** (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) promoted by the government. These groups have prepared suggestions on concrete measures to be implemented (more information is provided in section 7.1).

Additionally, schemes have been developed and put in operation since 2002 for the **reinforcement of female and youth entrepreneurship**. The Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism, MCIT (Ypourgeio Emporiou, Viomichanias kai Tourismou, YEVT) selects candidates for grants given to start up new businesses, while the HRDA organises and subsidises training programmes provided by private training institutions.

The **long-standing tradition of tripartite consultation** in policy making, the active participation of social partners in the various bodies and committees and the promotion of partnerships between VET stakeholders is a **strength** of the system. The involvement of social partners and other major stakeholders is a result of administrative arrangements that are envisaged to continue in the future and it significantly improves the responsiveness of VET policy.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to encouraging partnerships in VET policy making are the following:

- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)
- Elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) with the involvement of the social partners (section 7.4)

Details of the policy measure entitled "Elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy with the involvement of the social partners" are given herebelow.

Title of policy / measure:

Elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) with the involvement of the social partners

Outline of the policy / measure:

- **Rationale:** The elaboration of a comprehensive LLL Strategy for Cyprus has been one of the main policy priorities as specified in various national documents.
- **Objectives / measurable targets:** The main objectives of the strategy were to empower citizens to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based society, moving between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries in pursuit of learning, and to contribute to a more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic society.
- **Target groups / educational level / educational sector:** The strategy promotes lifelong learning for all.
- **Status of implementation:** For the formulation of the strategy, a Coordination Committee was set up. A drafting team had been assigned with the preparation of the first draft of the strategy. Consultations on the strategy were carried out in June 2007, with the key social partners and stakeholders (teachers' unions, trade unions, employers organisations, representatives of tertiary education public and private institutions and the Cyprus Youth Organisation). The LLL strategy was submitted and approved by the Council of Ministers (Ypourgiko Symvoulío) on 7th November 2007.

Policy / measure operation and delivery:

- **Level of operation:** This is a national measure.
- **Is it an isolated measure or part of a larger (education/training/employment/social) policy approach:** The elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning (LLL) Strategy for Cyprus is one of the four main policy priorities, as specified in the National Lisbon Programme (Ethniko Schedio Drasis gia ti Stratigiki tis Lissavonas).
- **Key actors involved:** The Planning Bureau, PB (Grafeio Programmatismou, GP) had the overall responsibility for the strategy, while the drafting team comprised representatives from the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA), the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPA) and the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD). Key social partners and stakeholders were also consulted.

Evaluation:

The National Committee for Lifelong Learning, consisting of representatives from all competent authorities and key social partners, are responsible for following up the implementation of the strategy and making suggestions for its future adjustments.

8. FINANCING VET

8.1. IMPROVING EFFICIENCY, EQUITY, LEVELS OF VET FUNDING

In Cyprus, vocational education and training is **primarily financed through public funds**, administered mainly by the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeoio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP), the funds of the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptixis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD), as well as directly from employers. The **main change to VET financing** concerns the financing provided by the **European Social Fund**, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT), which complements the above (more information is provided in section 8.3). Public investment in VET has increased and efforts have been made to increase even further private investment in education from enterprises, households and individuals.

The HRDA approves and subsidises training programmes implemented by public and private institutions. The HRDA's main source of income comes from the **Human Resource Development Fund into which a levy is paid by all companies** in the private sector and semi-government organisations. The levy corresponds to **0,5% of the payroll** of each contributing company. Civil servants and the self-employed are excluded from the HRDA's sphere of competence. The HRDA as from 2003 has reviewed and updated all its training schemes to comply with the State Aid Law of 2001. The law was enacted in harmonisation of the Cyprus legislation with the Acquis Communautaire (Regulation 68/2001/EC). This changed the level of funding, depending on the size of the enterprises.

The financing provided by the ESF increased the level of funds available and at the same time improved the efficiency and equity of the funding arrangements through the required introduction of appropriate mechanisms and tools emanating from the EU. **Public investment in VET has increased** and efforts have been made to increase private investment in education.

Specifically, there have been **efforts to stimulate private investment** from enterprises, households and individuals. A collaboration programme has been implemented between the University of Cyprus, UCY (Panepistimio Kyprou) and the Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation. Through this framework, the UCY provides the opportunity to local companies to contribute to the development of a knowledge-based society. The agreement stipulates the provision of specialised counselling services, the organisation of international conferences, specialised seminars and events and the organisation of fundraising campaigns. In addition to the collaboration programme, an increasing number of companies and individuals support the UCY through various donations and at school education level, parents and teachers associations provide financial support for several school activities or help schools with soliciting sponsors for various school events.

In terms of **tax incentives**, all expenditure on human resource development is tax deductible in the same way that other production expenses are treated. In this way, therefore, it is estimated that about 20-25% of total human resources development expenditure is borne by the state and the rest by private funds.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving efficiency, equity, levels of VET funding is the following:

- Co-financing by the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT) (section 8.3)

8.2. USE OF LIFELONG LEARNING PROGRAMME FUNDS

For promoting the participation of the citizens of Cyprus in the European Programme for Lifelong Learning, a **Foundation for the Management of the European LLL Programmes** has been established in 2007. The Foundation is a non-profit organisation and it is the Body through which the management of educational programmes and the goals and policies of the EU in the fields of education and training are promoted in Cyprus (more information is provided in field 3.2). The Foundation subsidises, through national and EU funds, educational institutions and organisations active in this field, as well as teachers, students, educators, trainers and trainees.

The Foundation **supports VET development** in many ways, like facilitating the partner finding procedure, the completion of the on line application procedure and advice on the best way for managing the approved projects. Furthermore, the funding support provided by the EU and the LLP programme (Leonardo da Vinci programme) as well as the local co-financing by organisations, enterprises and institutions, contribute to VET development.

The **VET beneficiaries that particularly benefited** by the LLP during 2009 were teachers and students from institutions of technical and vocational secondary education, higher education institution graduates, persons working in the sectors of health and social services, forestry, tourist industry and construction and persons involved in managerial and consultancy work.

During the 2009 Leonardo da Vinci Mobility Programme the amount of €160.000 was allocated to VET teachers and trainers from vocational schools and other organisations / enterprises, while the amount for 2008 was €76.588. In Initial Vocational Training (IVT), of the same programme, the amount of €99.290 was allocated to apprentices in the IVT and the amount of €371.774 was allocated to People in the Labour Market (PLM) from various VET organisations / enterprises, while for 2008 the amounts were €380.470 and €164.798 respectively.

The Erasmus 2008 budget absorbed €708.463 for student mobility and €128.687 for teacher and staff mobility. Also an amount of €28.481 was allocated to the Universities and other higher education institutions in Cyprus for the organisation of mobility.

One of the important **strengths** of the VET development is the fact that especially the private institutions / organisations / enterprises realised the significant role of VET mobility and its benefits and have therefore proceeded to VET mobility activities at European level by the existing mobility programmes. Furthermore, there is a will to co-finance this mobility.

In VET development, a **weakness** experienced is the fact that individuals who are not employed cannot submit their application and get subsidisation through the Leonardo da Vinci mobility programme. In addition, individual employees who find no support by their employers / company are looking for other means of support (intermediary) in order to submit their application. So far, there are only few intermediary organisations assisting individuals in VET mobility and there is a need for similar organisations in order to develop VET mobility further.

Another weakness concerns the student mobility activity for placement within the Erasmus programme. The weakness in this aspect concerns the difficulty which Universities and Higher education institutions have, to find host institutions / organisations / enterprises for the internship period of their students in Europe.

Examples of policy measures

An example of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the use of lifelong learning programme funds is the following:

- Establishment of the Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes (section 3.2)

8.3. USE OF OTHER EU FUNDS

Financing provided by the **European Social Fund**, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT), has supported the implementation of the main VET reforms in Cyprus. The ESF funding interventions for the programming period 2004-2006 were implemented within the framework of the Single Programming Document for Objective 3 2004-2006, which was prepared in 2003. For the new programming period, the proposals for measures to be co-financed were included in the Cyprus National Strategic Reference Framework for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 (NSRF), completed in March 2007. The thematic priority “Human Resources and Social Cohesion” features prominently in the NSRF and contains interventions for attracting and keeping more people in the labour market, promoting and improving lifelong learning, improving social cohesion and integration and improving the administrative capacity of the public sector.

During the **programming period 2004-2006**, the ESF has funded some of the most important VET reforms. It has funded the **Enhancement and Modernisation of the Public Employment Services** and the upgrading of the existing Candidate Placement System (more information is provided in section 5.2), the Schemes for the Promotion of Training and **Employability of Selected Target-Groups** (more information is provided in section 5.1) and the **Promotion of Modern and Flexible Forms of Employment** (more information is provided in section 5.1).

Furthermore, it has funded a **study to improve both the quality and attractiveness of STVE** (more information is provided in section 6.1), a measure to **introduce Modern Technology in the STVE curricula** (more information is provided in section 7.2) and an action aiming at **ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate** (more information is provided in section 6.5).

In addition to the above, a project was co-financed aiming at **providing vocational training to public assistance recipients** and their reintegration in the labour market (more information is provided in section 5.2), a **training scheme for the disabled** and a **scheme providing incentives for the employment of people with disabilities**.

An **ex-post assessment** of the interventions implemented in Cyprus within the framework of the Single Programming Document for Objective 3 2004-2006 was completed in 2009.

For the current programming period 2007-2013, **schemes have been approved for improving the employability of the unemployed** (budget €8m) and **economically inactive women** (budget €4m), for the establishment of a **system of vocational qualifications** in Cyprus (budget €6m) a special scheme **providing incentives** to private sector employers for the **employment of unemployed people** (budget €6m) and a scheme providing **incentives for the employment of people with disabilities** (budget €1m).

Other schemes that have been proposed for ESF funding but have not yet approved include **further enhancement and modernisation of the PES** through the upgrading of IT tools for monitoring labour market developments, subsidy schemes for attracting people in the labour market through **flexible forms of employment**, schemes for **vocational training and employment of vulnerable groups** of the population and the establishment and operation of a **New Modern Apprenticeship**.

It is noted that during the current programming period 2007-2013, the EU funding ranges from 70-85%, while for the previous programming period 2004-2006 it was 50%.

The financing provided by the ESF **increased the level of funds available** and at the same time **improved the efficiency of the funding arrangements** through the required introduction of appropriate mechanisms and tools emanating from the EU.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the use of other EU funds are the following:

- Schemes for the promotion of training and employability of young secondary school-leavers, the unemployed and the inactive women (section 5.1)
- Enhancement and modernisation of the Public Employment Services (PES) (section 5.2)
- Strengthening the quality and attractiveness of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education, STVE (Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) and improving the organisation of STVE (section 6.1)
- Action aiming at ensuring that secondary education teachers will become digitally literate (section 6.5)
- Introducing modern technology in education (section 7.2)
- Co-financing by the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT) (section 8.3)

Details of the policy measure entitled “Co-financing by the European Social Fund” are given herebelow.

<p>Title of policy / measure: Co-financing by the European Social Fund, ESF (Evropaiko Koinoniko Tamio, EKT)</p>
<p>Outline of the policy / measure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationale: The ESF is one of the EU’s Structural Funds, set up to reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions, and therefore promoting economic and social cohesion. Funding is spread across the Member States and regions, in particular those where economic development is less advanced. • Objectives / measurable targets: To reduce differences in prosperity and living standards across EU Member States and regions. • Target groups / educational level / educational sector: All levels of education and training. • Status of implementation: The Single Programming Document for 2004-2006 has been prepared in 2003, containing the basic strategic objectives and general targets after negotiations with the European Commission. The Cyprus National Strategic Reference Framework for Cohesion Policy 2007-2013 (NSRF), completed in March 2007, presents the development strategy framework for the utilisation of the resources of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the period 2007-2013. The formulation of the NSRF was effected via a new process launched for the first time during the 2007-2013 programming period, which entails the adoption of a more strategic character to programming for the utilisation of Cohesion Policy resources. The implementation of policy measures for the utilisation of the Structural Funds and the Cohesion Fund for the period 2004-2006 has been completed, while for the period 2007-2013 it is underway.
<p>Policy / measure operation and delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Level of operation: This is a national measure. • Key actors involved: The Planning Bureau, PB (Grafio Programmatismou, GP) was responsible for the preparation of the SPD and the NSRF as well as for the follow-up of the implementation of the measures.
<p>Evaluation: Based on EU guidelines, evaluation activities will be carried out for all ESF co-financed actions.</p> <p>An ex-post evaluation (assessment) of the interventions which were funded by the ESF and implemented in Cyprus during the programming period 2004-2006 was completed in 2009.</p> <p>As far as the schemes co-financed by the ESF and the HRDA are concerned, a study has been conducted by external consultants for the design of a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA’s schemes on the economy of Cyprus.</p>
<p>Conclusions: The financing provided by the ESF increased the level of funds available and at the same time improved the efficiency of the funding arrangements through the necessary introduction of mechanisms and tools emanating from the EU.</p>

8.4. IMPROVING VET GOVERNANCE

The **development of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy**, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) for Cyprus has been a policy priority mentioned in various national planning documents. Following a process involving the social partners, a LLL strategy was approved in November 2007 and this has been one of the main developments towards implementing changes in VET. One of the challenges included in the LLL strategy refers to efficiency improvements in governance of LLL systems, with the active participation of all social partners (more information is provided in section 7.1).

In the context of the Education Reform (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi), changes are envisaged in a number of issues (more information is provided in section 7.1). One issue is the fact that the educational system remains a centrally directed system regarding the curricula and the content of education delivered by public schools. There is an on-going process for changes in the framework of the Education Reform and a **debate is under way regarding school autonomy**.

As far as tertiary education is concerned, there has been an **increase in the opportunities offered for university education** over the last few years. More VET courses on offer have resulted due to the operation of the Open University of Cyprus, OUC (Anikto Panepistimio Kyprou, APKy) and the Cyprus University of Technology, TEPAK (Technologiko Panepistimio Kyprou) in which existing public institutions of tertiary education are being integrated, as well as the operation of three private universities.

Studies have been completed evaluating various aspects of education and training leading to their modification and enrichment. Specifically, a **study** has been completed in August 2007, **focusing on the re-organisation of the Secondary Technical and Vocational Education**, STVE (Deferovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi, DTEE) (more information is provided in section 6.1). The findings of the study will be used to revise the curricula of the STVE in the context of the Education Reform process.

Additionally, the **Human Resource Development Authority**, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) is making an effort to upgrade all the existing HRDA training schemes, following a **study undertaken for the evaluation of its schemes** and their impact on the labour market. Furthermore, a study has been completed by external consultants for the design of a comprehensive system evaluating the impact of HRDA in the economy of Cyprus. All these actions will improve the effectiveness and efficiency of VET in Cyprus.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to improving VET governance are the following:

- Strengthening the quality and attractiveness of STVE (section 6.1)
- Education Reform Process (Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi) (section 7.1)
- Elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) with the involvement of the social partners (section 7.4)

9. PROGRESS IN MODERNISING EUROPEAN VET SYSTEMS IN THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS AND PRIORITIES FOR FUTURE COOPERATION

9.1. IMPACT OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN VET ON DEVELOPMENT OF NATIONAL VET POLICIES

Since accession in the European Union (EU) in May 2004, Cyprus has made significant progress in developing VET policies. The **Copenhagen process has been successful in promoting cooperation in VET** at European level and at instigating necessary **changes and reforms at national level**.

Cyprus prepared in 2005 the **National Lisbon Programme** (Ethniko Schedio Drasis gia ti Stratigiki tis Lissavonas) for the period 2005-2008, as envisaged by the European Council in order to advance the targets set out in the Lisbon strategy. The revised strategy for the period 2008-2010 was prepared in 2008 and the EU2020 is being designed as the successor to the Lisbon Strategy. Cyprus submitted to the EU in January 2010, its comments and views on the development of the strategy.

The “**Education and Training 2010 Coordination Group**”, ETCG (Syntonistiki Omada gia tin Ekpaidefsi kai Katartisi, SOEK), set up by the European Commission with the participating countries and the European Social Partners, has established the priority fields of action to enable the education and training sectors to contribute to the success of the Lisbon Strategy by 2010.

The Lifelong Learning Strategy, **LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) for 2007-2013** (more information is provided in section 7.4) was elaborated to promote lifelong learning for all and aimed to empower citizens to meet the challenges of the knowledge-based society, moving between learning settings, jobs, regions and countries in pursuit of learning, and to contribute to a more prosperous, inclusive, tolerant and democratic society.

Within the framework of the above strategies, Cyprus has initiated **major reforms to the educational system** including VET through the Education Reform Process, in line with the objective to improve the quality and attractiveness of VET.

Cyprus has also taken steps towards implementing the **common European tools and principles** while adhering to the long standing tradition of cooperation and consultation with the social partners and relevant stakeholders. All EU developments in the field of validation of non-formal and informal learning are being closely observed and Cyprus is in the process of creating a **National Qualifications Framework (NQF)** and has started the implementation of a **System of Vocational Qualifications**, which will constitute an integral part of the NQF (more information is provided in section 3.1).

Following the decision of the Council of Ministers of the 27th April 2005, the Cyprus Productivity Centre, CPC (Kentro Paragogikotitas, KEPa), a dedicated centre of the Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, MLSI (Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon, YEKA) was set as the **National Europass Centre (NEC)** (more information is provided in section 3.1).

Furthermore, for the participation of the citizens of Cyprus in the European Programme for Lifelong Learning for the period 2007-2013, an institution was established in 2007, the

Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (more information is provided in section 3.2).

Finally, a proposal has also been put forward regarding the **establishment of the Cyprus Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CQAA) Board** which will be responsible for the external evaluation of all tertiary education institutions. The CQAA Board is going to replace the existing separate evaluation and accreditation bodies by integrating their responsibilities into one sole body.

Examples of policy measures

Examples of policy measures presented in the VET Policy Report pertinent to the impact of European cooperation in VET on development of national VET policies are the following:

- Development of a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) (section 3.1)
- Establishment of the Cyprus National Europass Centre (NEC) (section 3.1)
- Establishment of the Foundation for the Management of the European Lifelong Learning Programmes (section 3.2)
- Elaboration of a comprehensive Lifelong Learning Strategy, LLL Strategy (Ethniki Stratigiki dia Viou Mathisis) with the involvement of the social partners (section 7.4)

9.2. GOVERNANCE, COOPERATION AND OWNERSHIP OF THE DIFFERENT ACTORS IN THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS AT EUROPEAN LEVEL

Participation of Cyprus in European programmes promotes the European dimension in education and training. The “Education and Training 2010 Coordination Group”, ETCG (Syntonistiki Omada gia tin Ekpaidefsi kai Katartisi, SOEK) has established the priority fields of action to enable the education and training sectors to contribute to the success of the Lisbon Strategy by 2010. Cyprus is represented by the Human Resource Development Authority, HRDA (Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou, AnAD) and the Ministry of Education and Culture, MoEC (Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou, YPP).

Cyprus has **participated in peer learning activities** organised under the peer learning clusters of the Education and Training 2010 work programme. These mainly concern the issues: Information and Communication Technology (ICT); Key Competences; Math, Science and Technology (MST); Teachers and Trainers.

European cooperation in the field of education and training is also promoted by the **representation of Cyprus in various working groups** and by participating in European programmes. Cyprus is represented in the **Objectives Process Technical Working groups** mainly by the MoEC. The objective of this process is to strengthen political cooperation between Member States in the field of education and training through the open method of coordination.

Cyprus has **participated in the consultation process** for the development of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) and for the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

Cyprus has an **active participation in the European Network for Quality Assurance in VET (ENQA-VET)** and is being kept informed about relevant policies, measures and practices. Workshops on Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) were organised with participation of stakeholders in Cyprus and further actions are envisaged in order to promote the principles of **European Quality Assurance Reference Framework (EQARF)** and develop specific measures towards this aim.

9.3. EXTERNAL DIMENSION OF EUROPEAN COOPERATION IN VET

There is limited cooperation in VET with countries / regions outside the EU.

10. AUTHORS, BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES AND SOURCES

10.1. AUTHORS

Dr. George Oxinos, *General Director*

Mr. Yiannis Mourouzides, *Senior Human Resource Officer*

Ms. Yianna Korelli, *Human Resource Officer*

10.2. SOURCES, REFERENCES AND WEBSITES

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Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation, www.oeb.org.cy

Cyprus Productivity Centre, www.kepa.gov.cy

Cyprus Workers Confederation, www.sek.org.cy

Education Reform, www.paideia.org.cy

EU Structural Funds Cyprus, www.structuralfunds.org.cy

Europa, www.ec.europa.eu

Eurydice, CEDEFOP www.eurydice.org

Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (www.llp.org.cy)

Higher Education in Cyprus, www.highereducation.ac.cy

Higher Hotel Institute – Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, www.mlsi.gov.cy/mlsi/hhic

Higher Technical Institute, www.hti.ac.cy
 Human Resource Development Authority, www.hrdauth.org.cy
 Ministry of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Environment, www.moa.gov.cy
 Ministry of Education and Culture of Cyprus, www.moec.gov.cy
 Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance, www.mlsi.gov.cy
 National Resource Centre for Guidance Cyprus, www.mlsi.gov.cy/dl/nrcg
 Open University of Cyprus, www.ouc.ac.cy
 Pancyprian Federation of Labour, www.peo.org.cy
 Pedagogical Institute, www.pi.ac.cy
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 Statistical Service of Cyprus, www.mof.gov.cy/mof/cystat
 ReferNet Cyprus, www.refernet.org.cy
 University of Cyprus, www.ucy.ac.cy

10.3. LIST OF ACRONYMS

NAME	ACRONYMS	EN TRANSLATION	EN ACRONYM	COUNTRY
APKy	Anikto Panepistimio Kyprou	Open University of Cyprus	OUC	Cyprus
ATI	Anotero Technologiko Institouto	Higher Technical Institute	HTI	Cyprus
AXIK	Anotero Xenodocheiako Institouto Kyprou	Higher Hotel Institute of Cyprus	HHIC	Cyprus
	Apolytirio	School Leaving Certificate		Cyprus
AnAD	Archi Anaptyxis Anthropinou Dynamikou	Human Resource Development Authority	HRDA	Cyprus
DTEE	Defterovathmia Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi	Secondary Technical and Vocational Education	STVE	Cyprus
DTEE	Diefthinsi Defterovathmias Technikis kai Epaggelmatikis Ekpaidefsis	Directorate of Secondary Technical and Vocational Education	Directorate of STVE	Cyprus

NAME	ACRONYMS	EN TRANSLATION	EN ACRONYM	COUNTRY
DYA	Dimosies Ypiresies Apascholisis	Public Employment Services	PES	Cyprus
	Ekpaideftiki Metarithmisi	Education Reform		Cyprus
	Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi kai Katartisi	Vocational Education and Training	VET	Cyprus
EGE	Eparchiaka Grafeia Ergasias	District Labour Offices	DLO	Cyprus
EEM	Epitropi Ekpaideftikis Metarithmisis	Education Reform Committee		Cyprus
EED	Erevna Ergatikou Dynamikou	Labour Force Survey	LFS	Cyprus
	Ethniki Stratigiki Dia Viou Mathisis	Lifelong Learning Strategy	LLL Strategy	Cyprus
	Ethniko Schedio Drasis gia ti Stratigiki tis Lissavonas	National Lisbon Programme		Cyprus
ESPA	Ethniko Stratigiko Plaisio Anaforas gia tin Politiki Synoxis	National Strategic Reference Framework for Cohesion Policy	NSRF	Cyprus
EKT	Evropaiko Koinoniko Tameio	European Social Fund	ESF	
GP	Grafeio Programmatismou	Planning Bureau	PB	Cyprus
KEAA	Kentro Epaggelmatikis Apokatastasis Anapiron	Centre for the Vocational Rehabilitation of the Disabled		Cyprus
KEPA	Kentro Paragogikotitas	Cyprus Productivity Centre	CPC	Cyprus
KYSATS	Kypriako Symvoulío Anagnorisis Titlon Spoudon	Cyprus Council for the Recognition of Higher Education Qualifications		Cyprus
KOT	Kypriakos Organismos Tourismou	Cyprus Tourism Organisation	CTO	Cyprus
PI	Paidagogiko Institutouto	Pedagogical Institute	PI	Cyprus
PK	Panepistimio Kyprou	University of Cyprus	UCY	Cyprus
	Programma Proypiresiakis Katartisis	Pre-service Training Programme	PTP	Cyprus

NAME	ACRONYMS	EN TRANSLATION	EN ACRONYM	COUNTRY
	Statistiki Ypiresia Kyprou	Statistical Service of Cyprus		Cyprus
SSA	Stratigiko Schedio Anaptyksis	Strategic Development Plan	SDP	Cyprus
SM	Systima Mathiteias	Apprenticeship System		Cyprus
	Symvoulío Mathiteias	Apprenticeship Board		Cyprus
TEE	Techniki kai Epaggelmatiki Ekpaidefsi	Technical and Vocational Education	TVE	Cyprus
	Tmina Ergasias	Department of Labour		
	Vouli ton Antiprosopon	House of Representatives		Cyprus
	Ypiresia Koinonikis Evimerias	Social Welfare Services	SWS	Cyprus
YSEA	Ypiresia Symvouleftikis kai Epaggelmatikis Agogis	Counselling and Career Education Service	CCES	Cyprus
YEVT	Ypourgeio Emporiou, Viomichanias kai Tourismou	Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism	MCIT	
YEKA	Ypourgeio Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon	Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance	MLSI	Cyprus
YPP	Ypourgeio Paideias kai Politismou	Ministry of Education and Culture	MoEC	Cyprus
	Ypourgiko Symvoulío	Council of Ministers		Cyprus
	Ypourgos Ergasias kai Koinonikon Asfaliseon	Minister of Labour and Social Insurance		Cyprus
	Ypourgos Paideias kai Politismou	Minister of Education and Culture		Cyprus
		Continuing Vocational Training Survey	CVTS	
		Common European Reference for Languages	CERF	
		European Computer Driving Licence	ECDL	

NAME	ACRONYMS	EN TRANSLATION	EN ACRONYM	COUNTRY
		European Credit Transfer System	ECVET	
		European Diploma Supplement	EDS	
		European Guidance Policy Network	ELGPN	
		European Network of Quality Association	ENQA	
		European Qualifications Framework	EQF	
		Learning Management System	LMS	
		National Europass Centre	NEC	
		National Qualifications Framework	NQF	
		National Resource Centre for Guidance Cyprus	NRCG-CY	Cyprus
		Training of Trainers Network	TTnet	

ANNEX 1: MEMBERS OF THE CYPRUS CONSORTIUM

1. NATIONAL COORDINATOR

1.1. Human Resource Development Authority of Cyprus (www.hrdauth.org.cy)

2. MINISTRIES/GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS

2.1. Planning Bureau (www.planning.gov.cy)

2.2. Ministry of Labour and Social Insurance/Department of Labour (www.mlsi.gov.cy/dl)

2.3. Ministry of Education and Culture (www.moec.gov.cy)

2.4. Statistical Service of Cyprus (www.mof.gov.cy/cystat)

2.5. Cyprus Academy of Public Administration (CAPA) (www.mof.gov.cy)

2.6. Pedagogical Institute (www.pi.ac.cy)

2.7. Cyprus Productivity Centre (www.mlsi.gov.cy/kepa)

3. SOCIAL PARTNERS: EMPLOYER AND TRADE UNION ORGANISATIONS

3.1. Cyprus Employers and Industrialists Federation (www.oeb-eif.org)

3.2. Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry (www.ccci.org.cy)

3.3. Cyprus Workers' Confederation (www.sek.org.cy)

3.4. Pancyprian Federation of Labour (www.peo.org.cy)

3.5. Democratic Labour Federation of Cyprus (www.deok.org.cy)

3.6. Cyprus Union of Bank Employees (www.etyk.org)

4. OTHER ORGANISATIONS/NON-PROFIT MAKING ORGANISATIONS

4.1. University of Cyprus (www.ucy.ac.cy)

4.2. Research Promotion Foundation (www.research.org.cy)

5. NATIONAL AGENCIES/UNITS FOR MANAGING EUROPEAN PROGRAMMES/INITIATIVES

5.1. Foundation for the Management of European Lifelong Learning Programmes (www.llp.org.cy)

5.2. National Eurydice Unit (www.eurydice.org)