



EUROPEAN TRADE UNION COMMITTEE FOR EDUCATION
COMITE SYNDICAL EUROPEEN DE L'EDUCATION
EUROPÄISCHES GEWERKSCHAFTSKOMITEE FÜR BILDUNG UND WISSENSCHAFT
DEN EUROPÆISKE FAGLIGE SAMARBEJDSORGANISATION FOR UNDERVISNING

CSEE / ETUCE

Boulevard E. Jacqmain 155 - 8ème étage - 1210 Bruxelles - Tél. 32 2 224 06 91/92 - Fax 32 2 224 06 94

General synopsis

ETUCE colloquium on vocational education

28-29 April 1997

Y. Baunay

- 1 -

VOC. EDUC. Appendix 2

General synopsis

Y. Baunay

I) **This synopsis of the colloquium is part of an ongoing process in the preparation of our proposals.**

The opening session attended by our guests highlighted the effectiveness of our methods of internal preparation and discussion with the European institutions and the various partners.

Through regional seminars, colloquia, and consultations with ETUCE affiliates, our proposals can be democratically prepared.

Although the national situations vary, they nevertheless reveal common or converging claims.

These proposals place in the ETUCE in a forceful position from which to draw attention to the analyses and demands of teachers in Europe.

They enable the committee to react to initiatives taken by the European institutions, such as the White Paper.

Through the intervention of Ms GAMEIRO-PINTO, you were able to observe first hand that our criticisms and proposals were listened to and taken into account, but only partially.

The ETUCE has managed to ensure that the discussions on the White Paper will not be closed prematurely.

The Commission is to prepare a synopsis of the debate on the White Paper, take stock of the projects launched in this context and continue its initiatives together with the national governments.

For our part, we will continue to follow this dossier and the Commission's initiatives.

We will consider our analyses of and our proposals regarding the issues in abeyance in still greater depth. As part of this process, the affiliated organisations are contributing towards the joint preparation of proposals and are assisted with their actions in their own countries by the information and analyses they receive from the ETUCE.

At this stage we have four proposals to put forward which constitute the initial lessons learnt from this colloquium.

- 1) The ETUCE must continue to intervene with the institutions of the EU to ensure that they take into account in their initiatives the principles and proposals which it puts forward in the field of vocational training.
- 2) The ETUCE will carefully follow the initiatives and discussions which have already been launched and which specifically concern vocational training:
 - the follow-up to be given to the White Paper: personal skills card and European knowledge project, European apprentice status, second opportunity schools, language experiments, etc.;
 - academic recognition and professional recognition of diplomas;
 - obstacles to transnational mobility;
 - follow-up to be given to the Green Paper: living and working in the cognitive society;
 - developments in the Leonardo programme and its financing;
 - elements concerning vocational training included in the EU structural funds programmes;
 - developments in the PHARE programme which concerns the countries of central and eastern Europe more specifically.
- 3) The ETUCE will continue to develop exchanges between its members and associate members to follow up developments in the vocational training policies implemented in each country in order to bring out the main trends in these policies and meet the needs and appeals of its affiliates, in particular to coordinate their actions in the field of vocational training if they so require.
- 4) In order to carry out this follow-up and exchange work in the field of vocational training, the ETUCE must establish an appropriate structure such as a committee, the form and composition of which will be examined.

II. Our colloquium highlighted the need for close cooperation within the ETUC and for dialogue with UNICE and the experts

Given its purpose, vocational training is of interest not only to the educational community (teachers and other staff, young people, students and parents), but also to the representatives of the professional world, employees and workers.

As Ms AGUDO clearly explained, the ETUC is developing considerable activity in the field of initial and ongoing vocational education and training:

A specific training and education group has been set up as part of the social dialogue; the ETUC is reacting and preparing its own responses to the initiatives of the European institutions, the ETUC is establishing its own claims policy at European level based the

various national situations.

- 5) The ETUCE, as a federation of the ETUC and on the basis of its own analyses, must play its full part in this work of preparing ETUC proposals in the field of vocational training.

UNICE, as the employers' representative in Europe, is also developing proposals in the field of vocational training.

Our colloquium showed that we are in a position to uphold our view of vocational training before employers.

Hence my sixth proposal.

- 6) The ETUCE will continue its discussions with UNICE on issues involving the commitment and development of the public education and training service, the content of vocational training courses, recognition of diplomas and qualifications, etc.

We regretted that the OECD expert who was to have spoken on the problem of skills and qualifications was prevented from attending.

However, the ETUCE must continue to use and request the advice of experts in different fields.

III. Our colloquium confirmed and consolidated a number of strong principles which constitute the basis of our proposals.

A reminder of these strong principles will constitute the 7th lesson of this colloquium.

- 7) Basic principles of the ETUCE in the field of vocational training
 - 1) initial vocational training for young people is a fully fledged element in the educational process. This is how the technological and vocational sectors and the training and education provided in these areas must benefit from "equal appreciation" compared with other forms of education. The right of all young people to vocational training and the fight against all types of discrimination in access to high quality vocational training must be seen in this context. Finally, vocational training, like all educational processes, aims to train the individual, the citizen and the worker.
 - 2) the public authorities and the public services have a basic responsibility to guarantee the actual right of every individual to high quality initial vocational

training, to ensure adequate and lasting financing, to develop a direction and a broad range of vocational training opportunities, and to guarantee recognition of diplomas and qualifications.

- 3) the vocational training system necessarily brings together, under the responsibility of the public authorities and in the context of the autonomy of operation of the public training service, representatives of teachers, employers and employees in various sectors of activity, each of whom has to assume his specific responsibilities.
- 4) initial vocational training, like initial education in general, is part of the lifelong learning process. It prepares the individual not only for their first job, but for all subsequent developments, most of which are unforeseeable. The development towards a society of lifelong education, with the necessary reduction in working time, must promote training which enriches vocational qualifications while at the same time enabling individuals to reach their full potential, as well as developing a sense of citizenship.
- 5) initial vocational training, vocational training for adults, and the validation of rights acquired as a result of professional activities must enable access to diplomas and qualifications which are recognised by the educational system and in the professional environment. The creation of a European area of qualifications is strongly to be advocated. This should confirm the collective guarantees obtained in each country and make it possible to obtain further guarantees at European level.
- 6) initial and ongoing vocational training is by its very essence evolutive and needs to be constantly updated with anticipation and creativity. On this condition it can play an active and dynamic part in the development of the economy and society.
- 7) the principles put forward by the ETUCE as regards the training, the status and the remuneration of teachers in vocational training, their initial training and their ongoing training and education must enable them to include experiences in the professional environment and to update their qualifications.

IV. Our colloquium gave us the opportunity to define specific aspects of technological and vocational training.

The concept of technological and vocational training covers a very wide field whose borders are often blurred, within both initial and ongoing training and education, not to mention so-called integration training which covers the period during which young people have left the educational system but have not yet been integrated into a stable job. This period, which is also known as a transition period, is tending to lengthen and is often a time of great insecurity in the individual's situation as regards employment, income, housing, family life, etc.

Vocational and technological training also covers a wide range of qualification levels, from the basic levels leading to employment as manual and skilled labour to the higher levels of technician, engineer, management executive, etc.

However, we can point to a number of specific points which are characteristic of technological and vocational training.

1) Specific nature of the content of technological and vocational training

- Content taken from the world of trades, the production and provision of goods and services, technology;
- The logic of education and the logic of preparation for employment must always be treated as complementary
- Constant development and creation: the content must develop in line with the content of production and work activities.

2) Specific nature of learning methods

- Theoretical and practical methods must remain closely intertwined in the process of acquiring knowledge and skills;
- Role of equipment and creation, experimentation activities - new technologies must be integrated even more rapidly into vocational training;
- Role of experience gained in companies, in the working environment, in various forms.

3) Specific nature of social role of vocational training diplomas

- Access to vocational diplomas by various paths:
 - initial training - vocational training -> overall process
 - education and training - vocational training -> breakdown into units or modules.

- Essential twofold recognition of vocational diplomas
 - within the educational system -> access to higher training
 - within the production system -> access to employment, qualifications, classifications.

4) Specific nature of the training-employment link

- In principle technological and vocational training should result in skilled work within in a very short period of time.
- In fact, the facility and length of the transition between training and employment varies significantly. Unemployment makes integration more difficult.
- The employers' requirement for initial professional experience makes it more difficult for young people to find employment, particularly those having followed vocational training.
- The transition often involves a period of insecure employment and status.

5) Specific nature of the situation and needs of teachers in the field of technological and vocational training

- For initial training --> need to combine theory and practice
 --> knowledge of professional
 environment
- For ongoing education --> faster development makes it essential to
and training have a permanent contract with the
 professional environment, technological
 developments.

Hence my 8th proposal:

- 8) The ETUCE will continue to consider the specific nature of technological or vocational training courses and will examine ways of developing these specifically within the public service, together with other training options.

V. **Our colloquium also revealed new areas for consideration on difficult questions which were not settled in our debates. The quest for solutions and proposals regarding these points must continue.**

- 1) Trade union strategies and proposals in each country take into account the diversity of the existing situations, training and systems, trends or the withdrawal of public authorities and companies.

Sometimes there are coherent systems which need to be consolidated and improved, sometimes there are elements which differ to varying degrees and which have to be brought into line with one another (and not be put into competition with one another as the public authorities often wish to do). Sometimes a real system of technological and vocational training needs to be built up.

Our colleagues in the countries of central and eastern Europe have warned us of the extremely worrying situation in their countries, a situation which calls for emergency measures. However, at the same time they express their willingness to establish a vocational training system which will enable their countries to take their full place in the European Union.

Our colleagues spoke of a “gap” or more ironically of “Alice in Wonderland” to express their impression that their colleagues in the west do not understand the real situation in their country.

My task as rapporteur is impossible and distressing:

Our colleagues have expressed, often in moving terms, their conviction that we are unable to understand and imagine their situation.

Hence my 9th proposal:

- 9) The ETUCE together with the EI and the WCT will continue to follow up development in the countries of central and eastern Europe to prepare better proposals to be put to the European institutions concerning vocational training in these countries and the students and teachers involved in this training.