

Author of the report:

Irene Mandl

Project Co-ordination:



Project funded by:



This project has been funded with support of the European Commission.

This publication reflects the views only of the authors, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.

This study has been elaborated with reasonable care. The authors and the project coordinator do not, however, accept responsibility for printing errors and/or other imperfections and potential (consequential) damage resulting thereof.

Gearing
Adult Education
Towards
Occupational
Mobility

European Assessment Report

Vienna, 2009

Contents

1	Introduction	1
2	Overview on available training and education measures suitable for supporting occupational change	7
2.1	General aspects	7
2.2	Construction sector/Plumbers	8
2.3	Tourism/Cooks	10
2.4	Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses	12
2.5	Implications	13
3	Requirements of training and education measures in the context of occupational change	15
3.1	General aspects	15
3.2	Construction/Plumbers	16
3.3	Tourism/Cooks	17
3.4	Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses	18
3.5	Implications	19
4	Conclusions and recommendations	22
4.1	Assessment on the suitability of the available VET/adult education measures for supporting occupational change	22
4.2	Recommendations	23
	Recommendations for the European Union and national governments	24
	Recommendations towards training providers	29
	Bibliography	32
	Appendix 1: GATOM Project Partners	33

List of figures and tables

Graph 1: Selection Criteria for the “Target Occupations” of the Mobile Workforce	3
Table 1: Enterprises and Employees in the Construction Sector by Country ¹ , 2006	3
Table 2: Enterprises and Employees in Tourism by Country ² , 2006	4
Table 3: Employers and Employees in the Field of Human Health and Social Work Activities by Country, 2007	4



Introduction

The typical professional career of the European workforce has traditionally been characterised by working in the initially learned occupation until the end of the professional life. During the last decades, however, the European labour markets have experienced dynamic developments, caused by economic, political, technological, social and demographic changes. These developments imply that a growing number of persons do not find an employment in their initial occupation and need to take on occupations that can be classified as a second career. Furthermore, today's rising skill shortages require companies to rely more on re-qualified workers. Hence, **occupational mobility** can increasingly be observed on labour markets (*Tárki Group, 2007*) and is also fostered to some extent by national governments and Public Employment Services. At European level, the European Commission designated the year 2006 as the European Year of Workers' Mobility, and Guideline No. 20 of the Integrated Guidelines for Growth and Employment (2005–2008) calls upon Member States to remove obstacles to mobility for workers.

As there does not exist, however, a standardised and/or commonly applied understanding of "**occupational mobility/change**," a working definition has been elaborated for the analyses of the study on hand. An occupational change is thereby characterised by the change into a new field of professional activity. This includes a substantial alteration of the work contents related to the job before and after the occupational change. In the context of an occupational change significantly different core competences are necessary to fulfil the new job-related tasks and it is not only an enlargement of activities/responsibility in terms of career development. The occupational change may be conducted with or without geographic mobility as well as within the same company or in conjunction with a new employer.

For successfully mastering an occupational change it will, among other issues, in most of the cases be necessary to **acquire new or at least update/strengthen existing knowledge**. Data for Germany, for example, show that about one fifth to one third of the workforce experiences an occupational change (*Seibert, 2007* or *Isaoglu, 2006*), and half of them cannot use their existing competences for their new job (*Hofbauer/König, 1973*). In Italy, the share of people (with apprenticeship training) changing occupation is estimated to be as high as 35–41%, and for Austria this percentage lies between 15% and 68% (depending on the time horizon considered) (*Klicpera et al., no date*).

So, the question arises whether the existing VET/adult education systems provide effective (re-)qualification opportunities geared towards persons intending to change to a job not strictly corresponding to the occupation they have initially been trained for. Research conducted at national level in the framework of the study on hand (see: <http://www.mobility-training.eu>) has shown that there exists a wide range of (re-)qualification instruments for qualifying the workforce for a second career. However, these are rather targeted at unemployed and hardly ever suitable for persons preparing their occupational change while being employed (e.g. inflexible time schedules, no public support for training costs, no advice from the Public Employment Service concerning the most appropriate

measures etc.). In terms of both, the intention to reduce unemployment/foster employment and increase the participation in lifelong learning – both pinpointed by the Lisbon strategy – actively supporting planned and strategic occupational changes to a higher extent would be advisable.

This form of occupational change is on average more successful than those conducted out of unemployment (*Mandl et al., 2006*).

So far, little is known, however, about the specific needs and requirements of persons strategically planning and preparing an occupational change while being in upright employment. Furthermore, no assessment has yet been made regarding the coherence of available (re-)training measures with the demand of the mobile workforce and their potential employers. Against this background, the project “**Gearing Adult Education Towards Occupational Mobility — GATOM**” which has been conducted with the support of the European Commission¹ follows the **objectives** to:

- identify the demand of employees and employers with regard to (re-)qualification measures in the context of an occupational change planned/prepared during an upright employment;
- investigate on the availability of VET/adult education measures being suitable for the (re-)qualification requirements of the mobile workforce;
- analyse in how far the available VET/adult education system corresponds to the needs of people changing occupation;
- eventually propose suggestions to gear the available education/training instruments towards occupational mobility.

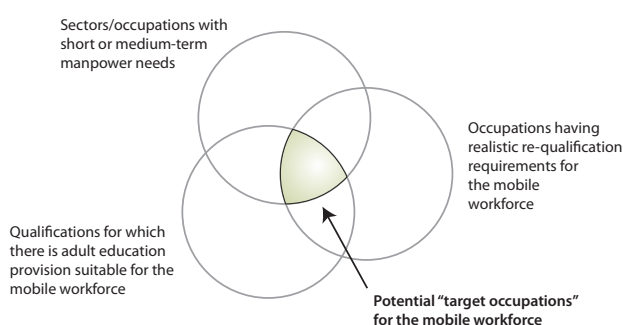
The project covers **eight European countries**. Research was conducted at national level under the co-ordination of the Austrian Institute for SME Research by the following partners:

- Austria: Austrian Institute for SME Research
- Finland: Turku School of Economics (TSE)
- Germany: Berufsbildungswerk Gemeinnützige Bildungseinrichtung des DGB GmbH (bfw) – Competence Center EUROPA
- Ireland: Tom Martin & Associates (TMA)
- Poland: EEDRI Institute
- Romania: Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania (CCIR)
- Spain: Ikei Research and Consultancy
- Switzerland: Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung (SVEB)

1. The Lifelong Learning Programme by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency

This report constitutes the **European Assessment Report** providing a cross-national comparison between demand (i.e. employees' and employers' requirements) and supply of VET/adult education dealing with (re-)qualification for occupational change in these eight European countries. Thereby, a focus has been set on **three professions** (plumbers, cooks, assistant nurses²) as target occupations for mobile workers. These jobs are deemed to be characterised by good job opportunities in the future as well as realistic qualification levels (see Graph 1).

Graph 1: Selection Criteria for the "Target Occupations" of the Mobile Workforce



Source: Austrian Institute for SME Research and Tom Martin & Associates/TMA

While the assessment of the re-qualification requirements as well as the availability of potentially suitable training instruments for the mobile workforce was based on the previous experiences of the project team, future manpower needs were assessed on the basis of secondary data available, describing the development of the number of enterprises and employees in the European economy.

It can, for example, be shown for the construction sector that it does not only constitute an important part of the economy (14% of the enterprises of the market oriented economy in the EU-27) but has also experienced a dynamic development between 2000 and 2006. The construction sector accounts for 7–21 % of private sector employment in the analysed countries, with an increasing tendency in most of the countries.³

Table 1: Enterprises and Employees in the Construction Sector by Country*, 2006

	Enterprises			Employees		
	Number of enterprises	Share of all enterprises NACE Rev. 1.1, C-K	% Change 2000–2006	Number of dependent employees	Share of Total NACE Rev. 1.1, C-K	% Change 2000–2006
Austria	25.646	9%	+39%	233.507	11%	+2%
Finland	36.863	18%	+26%	122.947	10%	+12%
Germany	202.535	11%	-28%	1.318.689	7%	-33%
Ireland	1.291**	1%	+136%***	71.420 ²	7%	+105%***
Poland	169.665	12%	-17%	496.042	8%	-14%
Romania	36.115	8%	+200%	421.579	10%	+21%
Spain	427.269	16%	+52%	2.384.513	21%	+67%

* No available data for Switzerland.

** Activity of private building and construction firms with 20 or more persons engaged.

*** Comparison 2001–2006.

Source: Eurostat

2. ISCO Codes (International Standard Classification of Occupations) of the selected professions: plumbers – 7136, cooks – 5122, for assistant nurses: institution-based personal care workers – 5132 or nursing associate professionals – 3231.

3. It has to be noted that the data on hand as well as the analyses stem from the time period before the economic crises starting with autumn 2008.

Similarly, the tourism sector accounts for about 8% of the private enterprises in the European Union, being of particular importance in Austria and Ireland among the analysed countries. In these countries, also about 10% of the employment can be attributed to this sector. In Poland, Romania and Finland, however, tourism is of less relevance in terms of the number of enterprises and employees. Nevertheless, particularly in the Eastern European countries (as well as in Ireland) a substantial increase in the number of employees can be observed during 2000 and 2006.

Table 2: Enterprises and Employees in Tourism by Country*, 2006

	Enterprises			Employees		
	Number of enterprises	Share of all enterprises NACE Rev. 1.1, C-K	Change between 2000 and 2006	Number of dependent employees	Share of Total NACE Rev. 1.1, C-K	Change between 2000 and 2006
Austria	46.038	16%	+21%	194.557	9%	+16%
Finland	10.786	5%	+2%	49.492	4%	+1%
Germany	179.782	10%	0%	1.102.657	6%	+22%
Ireland	13.142	14%	+5%	135.586	13%	+48%
Poland	56.245	4%	-2%	148.795	3%	+30%
Romania	20.579	5%	+107%	117.837	3%	+62%
Spain	284.627	11%	+9%	970.448	8%	+24%

* No available data for Switzerland.

Source: Eurostat

Within the health care sectors, about 7% of the employers and nearly one tenth of the employees of the European Union are active. Furthermore, about 5% of all self-employed persons in the EU-27 belong to the health care sector. Among the analysed countries, a particularly high share of employers can be found in Germany, while employment is above average in Finland. The widely increasing number of employees can be attributed to the demographic shift towards an ageing society as well as an increasing awareness among the Europeans for health issues.

Table 3: Employers and Employees in the Field of Human Health and Social Work Activities by Country, 2007

	Employers			Employees		
	Number of employers	Share of all employers	Change between 2000 and 2007	Number of employees	Share of all employees	Change between 2000 and 2007
Austria	15.900	8%	-17%	313.200	9%	+18%
Finland	4.500	5%	+55%	357.600	16%	+13%
Germany	230.200	13%	+14%	3.913.100	12%	+19%
Ireland	4.900	4%	+9%	204.000	12%	+65%
Poland	17.900*	3%	+63%	806.300	7%	-11%
Romania**	–	–	–	363.300	6%	+17%
Spain	24.200	2%	+11%	1.149.500	7%	+52%
Switzerland	19.400	8%	-26%	455.200	13%	+16%
EU-27	650.100	7%	+11%	19.057.200	10%	+19%

* No reliable data for 2007.

** No available data of employers for Romania.

Source: Eurostat

However, in order to provide for the transferability of the research findings to other European countries and professions than those explicitly covered, the European Assessment report aims at compiling the information gathered at national and occupational level to draw a more general picture regarding the (re-)qualification “market” in Europe in the framework of occupational change.

In Chapter 2, an overview of existing **VET/adult education** measures suitable for (re) qualification in the framework of occupational change is given. The identification of respective education/training instruments in the investigated sectors was conducted at national level on the basis of the following criteria:

- Location: decentralised offer or e-learning;
- Duration: not more than approximately 1 year;
- Time schedule: evening/weekend classes, few blocked seminars;
- Costs: reasonable with respect to the average income in the target job;
- Teaching method and contents covered: focus on practical orientation and no particular specialisation within an occupation (broad, basic qualification);
- Eligibility criteria: no or little previous subject-oriented knowledge/skills required and accessible for adults;
- Status of the implementing organisation: private or public
- Preferably certification after the attendance of the training measure.

The necessary information was gathered in the form of **desk research** in Spring 2008, supplemented by **qualitative interviews** with representatives of the training providers.

To analyse whether the VET/adult education system is generally suitable for people changing occupation during an upright employment the requirements of the enterprises and the workforce have been investigated through **qualitative interviews with mobile workers and concerned enterprises**. On the basis of a semi-standardised questionnaire about 15 enterprise interviews per country were focussing on small and medium-sized enterprises in the construction sector, tourism and health/elderly care and analysed their point of view on the qualification needs of the employees and the most suitable ways to acquire them. Similarly, about 15 interviews per country with persons that have already experienced an occupational change (or were planning to do so in the near future) were conducted. These focussed on their experiences with (re-) qualification courses in terms of fostering and hindering factors, beneficial methods and support as well as potential improvement possibilities. The results of a cross-national comparison of these findings are summarised in Chapter 3 of the report on hand.⁴

4. Thereby, it is to be considered that the research on hand was conducted in summer 2008, i.e. before the economic and financial crises affecting demand and supply on the labour market.

Chapter 4 derives **conclusions** regarding the suitability of the existing VET/adult education measures in the analysed countries for strategically conducted occupational change. Corresponding **recommendations** for relevant stakeholders (particularly governments (including the European Commission) and training providers) are pinpointed to better gear adult education towards occupational mobility.

In addition to this European Assessment Report, eight individual **National Assessment Reports** (available in English) have been elaborated, providing more specific national analyses of the issues under consideration.

The main findings of both, the National and European Assessment Reports are summarised in **Policy Manuals** in the national languages of the countries covered by the project.

Furthermore, at national level **individual training inventories** for the three occupations under consideration have been elaborated in national language aiming to make the training markets more transparent for persons planning an occupational change.

All reports and outcomes of the GATOM project on hand may also be downloaded for free from <http://www.mobility-training.eu>



Overview on available training and education measures suitable for supporting occupational change

2.1 General aspects

This chapter provides a short overview about the available training and educational measures which are suitable for persons who plan to undergo an occupational change in the construction sector, in tourism as well as in the field of health and elderly care in Austria, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Spain and Switzerland.

Naturally, the further education market is **influenced by** the characteristics of the national education system in general and the ways and means of initial vocational education/training (IVET). So, it can be found, for example, that in countries/occupations for which the dual system is of high importance for occupational skill development (e.g. Austria or Germany), the (re-)qualification market is challenged by having to equip adults with similar holistic skills as employers are used to staff having such comprehensive know-how and would hardly ever accept mobile workers with a lower qualification level.

In general, the offered VET/adult education measures are provided by **numerous training entities**, both public and private. In some countries (e.g. Austria, Romania, Spain), private training providers may undergo a public authorisation procedure, resulting in their certificates being officially recognised. Furthermore, in these cases employers and employees have the possibility of approaching an official register of authorised training providers, making the selection of the appropriate education instrument easier. This is particularly advantageous for the mobile workforce as the training market can be observed to be rather heterogeneous, fragmented and lacking in transparency, and it is difficult for them to identify the most suitable educational offer. To overcome this challenge, a different approach has been chosen in Finland.



FINLAND

The selection of adult education measures in Finland is publicly supported through the elaboration of individual training plans for mature persons striving for (re-)qualification. As these also take into account competences that have been gained on an informal basis (e.g. learning on-the-job) these training plans may be assessed to be particularly suitable for uncovering competence development initiatives in the framework of an occupational change. The consideration of previously gained skills is realised by conducting competence-based exams that are jointly conducted by education providers, practitioners and the social partners.

While most of the identified and analysed (re-)qualification measures combine theoretical and practical teaching instruments (e.g. in Romania, practical training accounts for about 2/3 of the adult education measures) the duration/length of training varies considerably (from few weeks to several months). Some of the programmes provide the possibility of flexible time schedules and/or adapt the training contents individually to the particular group of participants.

2.2 Construction sector/Plumbers

For a **substantial and comprehensive qualification** in the profession of plumbers, apprenticeship training combining theory and practice (general as well as occupational know-how) and lasting for 3–5 years is the most prevalent in the analysed countries. Other — particularly shorter — ways of qualification are hardly accepted by the employers as they are used to the qualification standard provided by apprenticeship. They are convinced that the complexity of the plumbing occupation cannot be learned through short-term courses and that holistic training like the apprenticeship is necessary to provide job newcomers with the necessary background knowledge serving as a good starting base for the practical work.

As apprenticeship training is organised on a full-time basis and requires the support of a training enterprise willing to invest time/human resources in the education of the newcomer, this training form is in most of the cases not feasible for the mobile workforce intending to (re-)qualify for the occupation of plumber during an upright employment in another profession.

In Austria and Switzerland, there exists the possibility of an **abridged apprenticeship** training, if the trainee disposes of practical experience in plumbing before starting the educational measure. Furthermore, Austrian school-based IVET (VET schools and colleges) is partly organised as evening classes in order to arrange the (further) education activities with working obligations. In Finland, there exist introductory courses for plumbers. These provide job newcomers (targeted at unemployed, though) with very basic knowledge to fulfil simple plumbing tasks and offer them access to further education instruments. In Germany, a modular based pilot qualification for plumbers was funded by the European Social Fund.⁵ However, the status of the project is completed and the training is no longer offered.

While apprenticeship training in general is targeted at young persons striving for competence development for their initial career, holistic occupation training in the field of plumbers is also offered to **unemployed people**. In most of the cases these initiatives are not accessible for people in employment, either due to administrative restrictions or due to the characteristics of the training measure (particularly the time schedule of the training). However, there also exist Good Practice examples such as the plumbing training course offered by CONAIF in Spain.

5. <http://www.esf-hamburg.de/projekte20002006/p044.php>



SPAIN

CONAIF (Confederación Nacional de Asociaciones de Empresas de Fontanería, Gas, Calefacción, Protección contra Incendios, Electricidad y Afines), the national business representative organisation of plumbing companies, has 16 training centres located all through Spain that are accredited to provide vocational training courses for unemployed people. These courses combine theoretical and practical contents and are focused on teaching the most basic tasks to carry out elementary plumbing activities. In this sense, no special requirement is needed to attend these courses. The characteristics of these courses may be quite different but, in general, they are appropriate for employed persons in terms of length (6 months), time-schedules (i.e., from 18.00 to 22.00 hours) and duration (about 80–100 hours each module, 600–800 hours in total).

Another aspect that often hinders employees to participate in comprehensive and long-term qualification measures for plumbers refers to the **costs** associated therewith. While training for the youth and the unemployed is widely publicly funded, employees are subsidised to a much lower extent, only, if at all. Nevertheless, also as to this regard there exist some exemptions. So, for example, in Austria, Finland or Spain public subventions for training costs are available for employees, too.

Next to apprenticeship training or comprehensive training courses for the unemployed, in all of the analysed countries there exists a comparatively wide range of short-term courses qualifying persons that already dispose of a certain level of plumbing skills in specific areas. These courses rather constitute **skill-upgrading or specialisation** measures (e.g. in the field of solar heat, air conditioning etc.) and are organised in a way to be compatible with an upright employment (i.e. short duration, limited number of training hours, classes offered in the evening or on weekends, modular training offers, rather low costs etc.), but are only seldom accessible to occupational changers not disposing of basic plumbing skills. Interestingly, in Spain there are some institutions that provide distance learning courses that combine theoretical and practical contents (via multimedia, CD-ROM etc.), and some of them have been officially accredited (official certificates).

A disadvantage of these specialist courses is that in some of the cases (e.g. in Austria or Germany) they are seen by employers not to correspond to current labour market trends and provide the trainees with obsolete product and/or process information due to a lack of practical experience/orientation of the teachers. The up-to-date market orientation of training courses may be achieved by **integrating plumbing companies or their suppliers** in the educational measures.



AUSTRIA



POLAND

In Austria and Poland, for example, training offered by producers of plumbing devices is very common. They are tailored towards the needs of the individual companies in terms of the information/contents provided on products and/or production processes for the enterprise's employees. Hence, it is not only safeguarded that relevant knowledge is imparted, but also a high degree of time efficiency is guaranteed (also, as these trainings in most of the cases take place in the plumbing company's premises so that there occurs no travelling time for the trainees). The training is free of charge for the plumbing company and its employees and can easily be arranged with working obligations.

Furthermore, with the exemption of officially authorised training providers (and in some cases even with them), there does not exist any standardised **recognition system** of the undergone training, i.e. no “*benchmark*” for employers informing them about the “*true value*” of the certificate attained in individual training courses. Consequently, training offers that are regulated nation-wide, providing the participants with standardised skills and ending with a well-established and well-known proof of qualification are deemed advantageous for the mobile workforce.



SPAIN

The Spanish certificate of professionalism for plumbers is regulated by the Royal Decree 2008/1996. According to this Decree, individuals that want to obtain this certificate have to hold general competences (e.g. to install, repair and maintain installations for cold and hot water, fittings and fixtures of drainage and toilet sanitary devices) as well as specific competences (e.g. to install pipelines for drainage and sewerage systems, to repair and maintain plumbing installations). In order to acquire these competences the decree establishes a training itinerary of 730 hours (550 hours for practical contents, 150 hours for theory and 30 hours for the assessment). Regional governments are allowed to partially modify the contents of this regulation. Trainees do not have to show any previous experience, and it is only recommended that they have a minimum educational attainment (certificado de escolaridad).

2.3 Tourism/Cooks

Similar to the occupation of plumbers, also for becoming a cook **apprenticeship** (in most cases lasting for about 3 years) is the prevalent holistic training form (i.e. theoretical and practical training, including general education like language training) in the analysed countries, and there also exist the above-mentioned abridged apprenticeships for persons with relevant previous working experience and school-based training forms in Austria, being more suitable for the mobile workforce than a full-time apprenticeship training.

Furthermore, in Austria and Germany **basic courses qualifying newcomers** for the occupation of cooks are offered. These are comparatively short in their duration, organised in a blocked form or held in evening classes and provided at low costs, so that they are generally well suitable for the mobile workforce. However, in Austria they do not end with a certificate making the skills and capabilities acquired transparent to potential employers.



AUSTRIA

In Austria, persons without a completed apprenticeship training as a cook have the opportunity to get into the new occupational field by attending courses for kitchen workers. These courses impart theoretical and practical knowledge which is necessary for a job as kitchen worker in a restaurant (e.g. prepare cold, warm and dessert cuisine, information about products/ingredients, quality, safety and hygienic aspects). The courses are comparatively short (35 up to 80 training lessons). The lessons are blocked and focus only on five or ten days or have a longer duration and are held in the evening. The costs of such basic training courses range between €250.- and €980.-. The participants receive a confirmation of participation.



GERMANY

In Germany, the Educational Center for Tourism and Gastronomy (Bildungszentrum für Tourismus und Gastronomie, BTG) of the Wirtschaftsakademie Schleswig-Holstein as well as the Akademie Überlingen Verwaltungs-GmbH offer modular-based kitchen qualifications. These short-term adult training measures are explicitly addressed to newcomers in the sector as well as to job returnees. Participants of the course offered by the Educational Center for Tourism and Gastronomy in Schleswig-Holstein can choose whether they would like to participate on a full-time basis or in part-time. The full-time course has a duration of 2 months, the part-time course takes 4 months. This qualification is a good example for validation in a wider context; the qualification will be recognised as part of a supplementary vocational education and training course taken later.

Also like for plumbers, other substantial qualification courses for the profession of cooks are offered to **unemployed people** and hardly accessible for persons in employment due to their duration, time scheduling and involved costs (see above).

In Germany, other courses accessible to a wider target group (i.e. also employed persons) are full-time based, too, but as they are arranged in modules, participants can theoretically combine them with a parallel employment as well. Generally, not all modules have to be

taken in a row and individual choices based on the time schedule of the participants can be made, thus, breaks can potentially be taken between modules.

In Ireland, there exist evening cooking courses suitable for the mobile workforce striving for (re-)qualification during an upright employment. These are offered on a modular basis. However, per year only 2 modules are held, resulting in a long total training duration. Furthermore, the offer is available in Dublin, only. An Irish Good Practice example, however, constitutes the 9 months intensive programme, combining theory and practice and offering the advantage of being not only certified, but also financially supported by public means.



IRELAND

The anticipated future demand for chefs led Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority, to develop a customised version of its National Apprenticeship in Professional Cookery to suit the needs of a wider variety of potential trainees including specifically career changers. The new Professional Cookery Nine Month Intensive Learning Programme is designed to be delivered as an intensive 9-month immersion programme, integrating theory and practice. Only candidates who demonstrate a level of maturity and a commitment to the field of professional cookery will be considered for entry into the programme. During the first 6 months the participants spend 3 days a week in college and 2 days working in industry with an employer of their choice. During the final 3 months, the participants receive intensive structured industry training with an employer of their choice. Fáilte Ireland pays the college tuition fees and a weekly training allowance (currently €97.70) to students while in college. The employers pay students a wage for the days they work. Participants who successfully complete the programme receive a FETAC Major Award Advanced Certificate Level 6.

Next to the comprehensive training instruments, also for cooks a wide range of **short-term courses** are available. These are, however, little beneficial for the mobile workforce as they either impart very basic knowledge (i.e. cooking skills for private use) or constitute skill-upgrading and/or specialisation instruments (e.g. soups, vegetables, sauces, roast, cold cuisine, egg and dough dishes, fish, sweets) for already qualified and experienced cooks. Particularly due to the first-mentioned aspect (i.e. cooking courses for private use) short-term courses rather have a negative image with employers (e.g. in Germany, Spain).

In Germany and Spain, qualification instruments for cooks are also offered in a distance learning form. While in Germany these offers are purely theoretical, in Spain they also comprise a practical part. However, in Germany these courses end with an exam that is taken by the Chamber of Commerce, hence a good acceptance of the business sector can be assumed.

At the same time — and in contrast to the situation for plumbers — for cooks it seems to be much easier to **start a professional career without any** (or at least comprehensive) **occupational training**. It is easier for cooks than for plumbers to acquire necessary basic skills in an informal way (e.g. cooking for private purposes), and this previously gained experience is widely accepted by employers. As a consequence, the relevance of disposing of formal adult education/training achievements is not as high as for plumbers. This is particularly true for restaurants specialising in convenience food (i.e. widely using pre-cooked food that has to be finalised only).

2.4 Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses

In contrast to the occupations of plumber and cook, the professional activity of assistant nurses is in most of the cases legally regulated and hence, requires a distinctive formal qualification — independently of the job being the first or the second career.⁶ For the mobile workforce this provides the advantage that the curricula are widely standardised and they do not have to investigate on differences among the diverse training offers as with the other two occupations considered above. Furthermore, training ends with a formal and standardised diploma that is recognised by any employer in this sector.

While the other two occupations under investigation are widely based on apprenticeship training, educational instruments in the health/elderly care sector are rather **school-based**, although the competence development instruments also involve a high share of practical training (e.g. within hospitals). The education measures are in most cases organised on a full-time basis (consequently, not being very suitable for the mobile workforce planning (re-)qualification during an upright employment), last for a long duration (often more than 1,200 training hours) and comprise both, theory and practice. Furthermore, due to the job characteristics a specific focus is set on imparting/developing soft skills (i.e. dealing with patients and their relatives, but also coping with personal stress).



SPAIN

For Spain, however, also alternative training schemes designed to obtain the Initial Vocational Training degree were identified. The duration of these alternative courses is shorter (from 600 to 1,000 hours), and their time schedules are flexible and quite adequate for employed individuals. Moreover, some of these courses are long-distance learning courses (also involving theoretical and practical parts), and therefore, trainees can study at home without any time restriction. These courses prepare students to take the official exams for passing the Medium-Level Vocational Training Degree.



GERMANY

Also in Germany there are various short-term training courses for the care sector available. Most courses can be combined with a parallel employment and are open for newcomers in the field. The courses have an average duration of 6 weeks to 3 months. They are part-time-based and/or arranged as evening seminars or in weekend blocks. The courses combine theoretical education (e.g. basic care, body care, hygiene, prophylaxis, medication, medical terminology) with 2 to 3 weeks internships in which trainees gain hands-on practical experience working with patients in a real care setting. These are usually full-time based and taken in a care institution, an elderly home or a hospital. In some training measures the educational providers will organise the internships for the trainee and will connect the participant with a contact person from the care institution, in other measures the participants themselves select and organise the internship.

Due to the high importance of practical training in “*real work situations*,” the assistant nurse’s training is characterised by a good **cooperation between training providers and hospitals/health care institutions**. Often, teachers/trainers are practitioners, safeguarding that the imparted know-how not only is up-to-date and of practical relevance, but also that trainees receive background information and practical hints about working procedures.

Regarding **prices/costs** for participants, considerable differences are prevalent across the analysed countries. While, for example, in Austria training costs are very high, educational measures are for free in Poland as they are provided by public institutions.

6. An exemption to this constitutes Ireland where in spite of a growing orientation on the health care sector healthcare assistants do not have standardised, multi-faceted job descriptions.

Next to comprehensive training for becoming assistant nurse, there exists the possibility of **qualifying for specialised caring activities**. These provide access to a more restricted professional field, but have the advantage of a shorter educational measure that can also be combined with an upright employment. Hence, such qualification instruments may be assessed as a good alternative for the mobile workforce striving for a position in the health care sector without having to undergo substantial training. A respective example constitutes the Austrian training course for home assistants.



AUSTRIA

The Austrian training for home assistants (Heimhilfe) qualifies people to manage the household and the primary health care for old and ill persons at their home. Interested people may attend the training after the successful completion of compulsory school and with a respective health status (and they need a stable personality, social competences, mental resilience etc.). It comprises a theoretical and practical part. The theoretical courses last for at least 200 hours and focus on documentation, ethics and occupational knowledge, first aid, hygiene, basic care, basics in pharmacology, basic nutrition and diet science, basics in ergonomics and mobilisation, gerontology, care of old and ill people, basics in communication, conflict resolution, social and development psychology, housekeeping, environmental protection, safety. The practical part includes 120 hours of practical training in ambulant working fields and 80 hours in (partly) stationary departments. The theoretical courses mainly concentrate on the evening or the weekend and the practical training may be blocked. The expenses vary between about €600.- and nearly €1,500.-. After the participants have successfully passed the majority of the theoretical lessons and the practical training they have to take a final oral exam held by a commission of the training institute (composed of the (vice)director of this educational path, a representative of the supervisory body and three teachers). For this commission examination the candidates have to prepare a case study from their practical training which is presented in the framework of the oral exam.

Next to these basic qualifications there — like with plumbers and cooks — exists a wide range of **skill-upgrading/specialisation courses** for already qualified and experienced nurses. In Austria, nurses are even obliged to participate in skill enhancement courses on a bi-annual basis.

2.5 Implications

The analysis of the available training measures in the three professions and eight countries under consideration has shown that all of the identified VET/adult education instruments are characterised by a **combination of theory and practice**. Thereby, in many cases the theoretical part not only covers occupational background information necessary to impart the practical know-how, but also general knowledge such as languages, mathematics or commercial skills (in non-commercial professions). Furthermore, in some of the analysed training measures a specific focus is also laid on developing participant's **soft skills**. This seems to be particularly prevalent in education measures of the health care sector in which personal skills naturally are of particular importance.

In general, across countries and occupations, two major types of VET/adult education instruments have been identified:

- **Comprehensive occupational training** is in most cases available in the framework of the initial vocational training system and hence, rather targeted at younger persons intending to qualify for their first career or at unemployed persons having no possibility

to further continue their initial profession and seeking for a second career. Those instruments are widely organised on a full-time basis and, therefore, hardly suitable for the mobile workforce looking for (re-)qualification while being in an upright employment.

- **Specialised occupational training**, i.e. educational measures not serving the purposes of providing the participants with holistic occupational skills but rather with specific parts of qualifications, are in most of the cases targeted at persons having undergone a basic qualification in the occupation under consideration and striving for skill upgrading. The courses are organised in a modular way and/or for a short-term period and are held in the evening, on weekends or in a blocked form so that they are comparatively easily combined with an upright employment. While the organisational features can be deemed favourable for mobile workers seeking (re-)qualification instruments, the offered contents and eligibility criteria (i.e. there often needs to be a minimum of basic qualification and/or working experience) hamper the instruments' suitability for occupational changers. Furthermore, among the available training measures of this kind, there exists a wide heterogeneity regarding providers, contents and prices, making it often rather difficult for the target group to identify appropriate measures.

Depending on the general prevalent VET/education system it might happen that **short-term courses** do not have a good image as they are assessed to be not able to impart sufficient know-how necessary to fully fulfil the tasks related to the professions. In some cases it is also experienced that the provided knowledge is obsolete and/or not oriented on practical requirements, which is also attributed to a certain lack of practical experience of the trainers/teachers.

Certification of the course participation is available in few cases only, and even then — with the exemption of the apprenticeship leave exam and the qualification measures for assistant nurses that are widely legally regulated — there is no standardised recognition system guaranteeing that future employers will accept the certificate as a proof of occupational expertise.

In some cases, employees and/or employers are entitled for **public financial support** for the attendance of (re-)qualification instruments.



Requirements of training and education measures in the context of occupational change

3.1 General aspects

This chapter analyses the requirements of enterprises and employees with regard to training and education measures in the framework of an occupational change.

Having in mind the specific situation of the mobile workforce preparing an occupational change during an upright employment (i.e. restricted time and financial resources) the most important claim towards (re-)qualification instruments across all analysed professions and countries is that it **needs to be possible for a labour market participant to combine attendance at training with his or her current (full-time) employment**. This refers to the duration of the training (i.e. not lasting for several years, possibility to select specific training modules), the time schedule of the individual training sessions (e.g. rather evening/weekend classes, blocked seminars), the covered contents and training methods (practical orientation rather than a theoretical focus and recent know-how of trainers/teachers) and the price of the educational measure (being in reasonable relation to the future income potential).

Another important aspect refers to the recognition of the gained skills. Consequently, standardised and/or well-established **certificates**, i.e. being equally recognised as certificates of IVET, should prove the trainees' acquired skills and competences towards their potential employers, and these should be familiar with the requirements related to the certification. Consequently, the Polish interview partners particularly pinpointed that such certificates should not only be valid at national level, but also standardised across the European Union in order to also facilitate geographic mobility.

Another general requirement independent of occupation and country refers to **public financial support** of the (re-)qualification measure. As both, employees as well as employers have to invest in the competence development initiative particularly the latter are often not willing to become engaged. Hence, financial backing as it is widely provided for skill enhancement of the unemployed is also wished for qualifying occupational changers. This is particularly true for qualification measures for cooks in Austria and Spain as here the course costs are rather high and hardly any financial support from the public side or the enterprise sector can be benefitted of by the employees.

3.2 Construction/Plumbers

To start with, the Finnish and German interview partners pinpointed that before starting the (re-)qualification measure potential trainees should have the opportunity to undergo an individual **assessment** whether or not the plumbing profession really is a **suitable occupation** for them. In many cases, occupational changers do not have detailed insight into the job characteristics and only experience later on that in practice the job is different from what they had envisaged (e.g. concerning the extent of physical activities related to the job). Hence, a prior profiling and/or “*test working*” is required in order not to have the mobile workforce invest time and money in training for a job they will not be happy in on the long-run.

The most important requirement of the mobile workforce and employers in the construction sector towards (re-)qualification instruments for the profession of plumbing refers to providing the trainees with **practice-oriented skills and experience** so that they can immediately start working in the company without much intervention of the employer and/or co-workers. This implies an important share of exchange with the enterprise sector (i.e. to design the curricula according to the businesses’ needs). Such is, for example, realised in Germany where plumbing courses are offered by the Chamber of Handicraft and the Guilds with the result of a good match between supply and demand of training contents and a good transferability of the gained knowledge into practice.



GERMANY

According to some of the German interviewees the courses of the Chamber of Handicraft and Guilds are innovative in respect to the contents and methods chosen and the information provided corresponds to the requirements of the labour market and a transfer into practice is possible. Some of the courses are organised in blocks (e.g. weekend or evening courses) and the advantage then is also that they are compatible with the job. Some of these training measures do not require prior knowledge in the field and the participation is thus also open to newcomers in the sector.

Training should involve the following **fields of expertise** that should be developed:

- Up-to-date handicraft skills/techniques, i.e. ability to develop technical solutions, know-how about plumbing and installation procedures, e.g. in the fields of unwinding, metal work, tiling and roofing, welding, electronics, renewable energy
- Up-to-date know-how about products and tools and their application; as to this regard the training provider has to safeguard that there are sufficient and recent machines/ tools available to provide all participants with the chance to familiarise with them
- General knowledge, e.g. mathematics, basic computer skills, writing technical reports, basic commercial skills, labour safety, fire extinction rules
- Soft skills, e.g. dealing with clients, but also team work and coping with stress

Thereby, the educational instrument should be a combination of theoretical and practical training. The practical training should not only take place in “*sheltered training situations*”, but also in real workplace situations in order to familiarise the trainees also with the framework of the plumbing activities (e.g. contacts to clients, arranging workloads with co-workers etc.). As to this regard, the interviewed mobile workers from Austria, for example, suggest at least one day of practical training in a company for the whole duration of the plumbing education

(12–18 months). Furthermore, from the experience of the mobile workforce and the plumbing companies it is beneficial, if the practical part in the companies includes coaching activities by an experienced staff member.

Particularly the interviewed employees opt for a modular organisation of the training offer, so that each individual participant may choose upon the contents he/she requires and is not forced to attend lectures for skills they already possess (i.e. recognition of prior knowledge) or will not be able to use in their future job. The lack of systems for recognising prior knowledge posed a number of difficulties, e.g. for some of the Irish plumbing interviewees.

The mobile workforce has experienced that a heterogeneous group of participants makes the acquisition of skills and competences rather difficult (i.e. different base levels regarding general education, prior experiences) and therefore opts for a limited number of participants within the courses (e.g. 20 trainees). Then, the teacher/trainer is better able to consider the individual participants' requirements and training can be better oriented on the group's characteristics.

In order to make the offered training courses more accessible the interviewed mobile workforce striving for becoming a plumber (particularly in Ireland and Spain) emphasised the need for regional/local offers of VET/adult education instruments.

3.3 Tourism/Cooks

Similar to the qualification of plumbers, also for the training of cooks the acquisition of practical skills/experience is highlighted as the most important requirement for educational measures. Again, the importance of training in real work situations is pinpointed as otherwise it is hardly possible to familiarise future cooks with the general framework conditions (e.g. the stress related to having to prepare a huge number of menus in a short period of time). Consequently, the German interview partners, for example, suggest long-term internships in restaurants to form a major part of the training. This shows the importance of establishing continuous cooperations between training providers and restaurants.



At the same time (and particularly in Austria) it is deemed very relevant that the trainees have the possibility to develop cooking skills in a training environment where they are allowed to make mistakes and develop their cooking creativity without severe consequences. This is important as cooks should dispose of a creative potential to develop innovative menus instead of just (re-)cooking existing recipes.

Also the fields of expertise to be covered by training measures are comparable to those identified for plumbers:

- Handicraft skills, i.e. preparing and cooking meals

- Occupation related theoretical knowledge, e.g. hygiene standards, purchase of ingredients, service orientation/good conduct towards guests
- General theoretical knowledge, e.g. commercial skills, staff matters, organisational competences
- Soft skills, with a particular focus on team work, bilateral support and division of tasks in busy working situations

Other aspects that were suggested as important elements of a cook's training refer to the quality of the teachers/trainers (i.e. they have to dispose of a sufficient level of practical experience, be familiar with recent trends in products, nutrition and cooking processes as well as be able to impart their knowledge to the trainees in a form that they can easily transfer the gained information into practice; with regard to the latter, a specific focus should be set on trainers/coaches in companies) and the flexibility of the training programme in terms of time schedule.

The occupation of cooks is characterised by shift work, and hence even if the qualification instrument is offered in the evening or on weekends it cannot be guaranteed that the trainees are able to attend each and every training unit. Therefore, the training needs to be organised in a way enabling the participants to catch up training sessions they cannot attend due to working obligations within a short period of time.

In contrast to the qualification measures for plumbers, for cooks the requirement of a modular training in which participants can individually select the competences they want to acquire is only mentioned by the Irish interview partners. Rather, in Austria, Germany and Spain, for example, the importance of imparting a substantial level of cooking skills in the framework of a long-term qualification measure is highlighted.

Even more important than for the occupation of plumbers is a regional offer of qualification measures for the occupation of cooks (mentioned by Austrian and Spanish interview partners).

3.4 Health and elderly care/Assistant nurses

Having in mind the specific characteristics of occupations in the health/elderly care sector and the therewith connected physical and psychological challenges of the workforce the interviewed employees and employers suggest that before starting (re-)qualification activities for the profession of an assistant nurse candidates should be required to undergo an **aptitude test**. Moreover, while having to work in the target occupation for a certain period of time (“**pre-training internship**” in a hospital/care facility for several weeks) the mobile workforce should be provided with the possibility of getting practical insight into the occupation, the therewith related tasks as well as the working conditions. After this internship, the employee, the employer and the training provider should jointly assess the candidate's suitability for the profession in question.

Due to the fact that the occupational requirements of assistant nurses are widely legally regulated, there is little scope for employers' and employees' claims towards the contents to be covered in respective (re-)qualification measures. An important pre-condition of a suitable training measure in this context, therefore, certainly is an **officially recognised certification/recognition** of the attended qualification instrument.

However, almost all interview partners emphasise the importance of the integration of **internships in hospitals/caring facilities**. These are assessed to be most beneficial, if they alternate with theoretical courses during the whole training duration instead of having two separate blocks of theory and practice. To financially support the training participants, they should have access to a “*public wage*” for their work in the hospital/training facility.



SPAIN

In a previous scheme of the Spanish Institute for Employment (INEM) trainees attended classes for nurses' qualification every day during 12 months, and each day trainees had some time for theoretical contents at class (4 hours) and some time for practical experience in companies (4 hours). The INEM paid these individuals a part-time salary, and the experience was very positive for participants and for the company.

Furthermore, **soft skills training** should be a part of the educational curricula. Thereby, not only communicating/dealing with patients and their relatives is mentioned, but also personal coping strategies for the future assistant nurse (i.e. dealing with stress and psychological pressures, e.g. when dealing with handicapped, sick or terminally ill persons).

Even more than for the occupations of plumber and cooks the interviewed employees and employers pinpoint that the **teacher/trainers** need to dispose of a sound theoretical and practical knowledge as well as the ability to impart this know-how to the trainees. Furthermore, it is emphasised that the best training results can be achieved, if the group of participants in each course is very homogeneous in terms of their age and previous experience.



Finally, as most of the trainees for the occupation of assistant nurses are female, the availability of (financially supported or even free of charge) **childcare facilities** during the training hours is required by the mobile workforce. This aspect was particularly emphasised by the Austrian interview partners.

3.5 Implications

First of all, the interviews with employers and employees pinpointed that the market for training measures is lacking in transparency, making it difficult for interested individuals to identify and compare suitable training offers. Hence, there is a demand for **career counselling** for employed persons, similar to the services widely offered to the youth or to unemployed persons.

Similarly, particularly for the profession of assistant nurses it was deemed favourable if there was an **assessment of the suitability** of the specific occupation for the individual candidate

before starting the (re-)qualification procedure. This is to be explained by the fact that in practice people do not have detailed information about the tasks related to individual occupations and often decide upon the target job only upon “feelings”. Later on — after having undergone a part of the (re-)qualification measure and/or practical training they learn that they are not suited for this job. In order to avoid this experience such a pre-assessment is recommended. Additionally, it may be possible to arrange that the potential career changer is given an opportunity to “job sample”, i.e. to gain work experience in their desired occupation. This facility would have particular relevance for people considering a change of occupation to e.g. become a chef as most are unlikely to fully appreciate the time pressures most chefs operate under.

The **training offer** needs to be **organised** in a way that it can comparatively easily be combined with an upright employment. This refers, among others, to the following aspects:

- The time schedule needs to be arranged in a way that it can be combined with working hours (e.g. evening classes, weekend classes, blocked seminars that can be taken during holidays). This is particularly important for occupations being characterised by flexible working hours (i.e. rotating working shifts) such as cooks or assistant nurses. Too inflexible training schedules would result in a situation in which specific parts of the training cannot be attended.
- In this context, it is also required that the training instruments take into account the individual participants’ prior skills and experiences. For this purpose, employers and employees prefer a modular offer of training contents so that it can be chosen individually which modules are necessary to attend and which may be omitted. Another possibility is to establish classes that are homogeneous in terms of the participants’ characteristics as well as limit the number of participants in order to have the opportunity of adjusting the training contents to the attendees’ specific needs.
- The training offer needs to be available at regional/local level, i.e. not only in large cities/main urban agglomerations.
- In order to safeguard the recognition of the skills and competencies gained during the educational measure, certification is required. Thereby, employers and employees express the claim that this certification is linked to a standardised system of educational achievements so that it is widely accepted on the labour market.

Regarding the **contents** of the training measures, employers and employees require that not only occupational skills but also soft skills (e.g. dealing with clients, but also e.g. coping with stress) are covered. While these seem to be already well addressed for the profession of assistant nurses (see above), additional treatment was mentioned particularly for the occupation of plumbers.

The inclusion of **practical training** is of considerable importance in (re-)qualification schemes. Thereby, it is preferred by both, employers and employees that there is a continuous alternation between theoretical instruction and practical training instead of having two independent blocks of theoretical and practical education. Furthermore, the gathering of practical experience is required to take place not only in “sheltered surroundings” of the training provider but should include an element of “real working environment.”

For this purpose it is advantageous, if there is established a good **cooperation** between the training provider and the (regional/local) **enterprises**. Next to providing internships as part of the qualification instruments companies could be involved in the development of the training curricula in order to guarantee that the imparted knowledge is in line with the needs and requirements of the business sector. Furthermore, companies could contribute to the training by providing practical information and latest know-how concerning products and processes so that the gained knowledge can be immediately applied by the occupational changers.

The interviewed employers and employees pinpoint that for the purpose of (re-)qualification for an occupational change it is of utmost importance that **teachers'/trainers'** qualifications comprise practical experience and up-to-date knowledge about products and procedures.

As the investigations have shown that unlike for unemployed people there is hardly any public **financial support** available for (re-)qualification measures taken during an upright employment, both employees and employers express the need for such.



Conclusions and recommendations

4.1 Assessment on the suitability of the available VET/adult education measures for supporting occupational change

Comparing the available VET/adult education system for qualifying plumbers, cooks and assistant nurses in the eight analysed countries with the claims and requirements of employers and the mobile workforce in general shows a **certain mismatch between the offers of training and the demand for training**. Particularly for the target occupation of plumbers and cooks it turned out that occupational changers are hardly provided with suitable (re-)qualification instruments. Due to the substantial IVET system, comprehensive occupational courses cannot be brought in line with an upright employment as they are organised on a full-time basis with the target group being young persons striving for their initial vocational qualification and/or unemployed disposing of enough time for a full-time training, while modular and evening/weekend courses impart skill-upgrading for already qualified persons rather than basic occupational knowledge. As a consequence, the mobile workforce is often forced to start their second career in low qualified/assistant positions, giving them the opportunity to access the skill-upgrading courses after they have gained a certain amount of practical experience. This is problematic as it results in some years of low income jobs and the risk of segregation on the labour market (i.e. a situation in which the mobile workforce is confronted with a “*glass ceiling*” hindering career enhancement as they are classified as low skilled by potential employers independently of additional training they attend and/or they need to find an employer that is willing to support competence development activities of job starters).

Furthermore, for some occupations (e.g. assistant nurses whose tasks and required educational background is legally regulated) as well as in some countries (e.g. Finland) such an entry into a new occupation is not possible as either the legal framework/occupational standards and/or employers do not accept (even low skilled) employees not disposing of respective certificates. Hence, the often observed fact that adult education courses do not end with a standardised/generally recognised **certification** is an important problem of the adult education/training market, particularly for occupational changers who do not dispose of previous practical experience in the target occupation. Such a certification (particularly if comparable across countries) would enable employers to easily recognise a job applicant’s prior experience/skills. This is especially pinpointed for Switzerland and Poland.

Switzerland seems to constitute an exception to the general situation of mismatch between training provision and demand. There, employees and employers evaluate the existing (re-) qualification measures as well suitable for the purposes of the mobile workforce. This is attributed to a **good cooperation by the training providers with the enterprise sector**, safeguarding that the imparted knowledge suits the needs of the economy/labour market.

However, and in spite of this general good assessment, in some cases entry requirements for the courses are deemed to be too high as the basic skills/knowledge (e.g. languages, mathematics, soft skills) that are a pre-condition for eligibility are often not attained by the interested persons. Hence, more attention should be attributed to those skills in primary education in order to sufficiently prepare the individual for any professional career and (further) competence development.

Another challenge for employers and employees is to identify the most appropriate training courses as the **market for adult education is very heterogeneous** (numerous providers, diverse offers with regard to contents, prices, time schedule, lack of standardised certification etc.) and **lack of transparency**. In the eight European countries covered by the study there exist **career counselling** services to assist persons looking for qualification measures to identify the most appropriate ones for their specific situation. However, in most of the cases these are eligible to youth or unemployed only, and are hardly ever specialised towards individual occupations.



SWITZERLAND

A Good Practice example in this respect can be found in Switzerland where there exists career advice that is available every day and covers all sectors of the economy (i.e. there are specialists counselling the clients for individual occupations). The services are free of charge for persons aged 20 or younger, but also older clients pay a small fee, only.

In Finland, career counselling is provided via telephone or internet. These services are accessible for everyone and free of charge.

In most of the countries (re-)qualification measures are provided for free to the unemployed while persons in an upright employment are themselves responsible for **covering training costs**, sometimes partly subsidised by public financial means. An exemption is, for example, the occupational qualification for assistant nurses in Poland (as it is public) or the training measures offered in Finland (which are also publicly funded and the participant only has to cover examination costs). Covering costs for the qualification instruments might particularly be a problem in cases in which practical training/internships in companies over a longer period of time form an important part of the educational measure. In these cases, on-the-job training cannot be combined with another employment, often necessitating the trainee to quit his job. As many internships are not paid (or only at a low wage level) trainees depend on money saved earlier during this period. Particularly for persons being responsible for earning the family income this is a heavy burden.

4.2 Recommendations

In the analysed countries as well as at European level, no official/standardised data is available giving insight into the extent of occupational change and the characteristics of the mobile workforce. Consequently, this phenomenon is rather “invisible”, resulting in a lack of awareness by politicians, education providers, social partners and support service providers that there is a need for support for the mobile workforce, particularly if the preparation of the occupational change is to be conducted during an upright employment.

The analyses of the education/training system for plumbers, cooks and assistant nurses in Austria, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Romania, Spain and Switzerland show that initial vocational education imparts substantial theoretical and practical knowledge and skills preparing the workforce for the tasks to be fulfilled. However, initial vocational education is oriented on rather young people striving for occupational qualification for the first time. Education/training measures for adults mainly provide skill-upgrading and do hardly take into account the possibility of persons wishing to attain comprehensive re-qualification in the framework of an occupational change or a second career. Consequently, basic vocational education is generally provided on a full-time basis, making it difficult to be combined with an upright employment.

Against the background of an increasing observable trend towards occupational mobility, improvement potential regarding the provision of training measures suitable for the mobile workforce intending to re-qualify strategically during an upright employment can be pinpointed. The main respective findings are summarised on the following pages whereby a differentiation is made between recommendations targeted at policy makers at European and national levels and those oriented on training providers.

Recommendations for the European Union and national governments

First of all, a comprehensive information basis on the extent and the characteristics of the mobile workforce is needed to serve as an argumentation of why this target group is of importance and should be publicly supported. Hence, it is recommended to establish a **monitoring tool** — preferably standardised across Europe in order to provide for cross-nationally comparable data — tracking the number of occupational changers and their characteristics in a systematic way. Thereby, already existing sets of employment data could be taken advantage of. So, for example, the data of the national social security register or of the labour force survey already providing the possibility of in-depth analysis of the actual situation and development of individual employees could be slightly adapted to not only tracking the employment status and the sector employees are active in, but also distinctive occupations. In this way it would be possible—without much additional (administrative) effort—to produce reliable, recent and continuously updated data on occupational change.

The lack of substantial vocational training targeted at adults' qualification during an upright employment is to be attributed to a large extent to the lacking awareness of training providers that such a target group has different needs and that specific ways of education provision need to be established. Consequently, the European and national governments should initiate **awareness raising campaigns**, informing training providers on the exigencies of the mobile workforce in the framework of re-qualification and pinpoint some examples of Good Practice as identified in the framework of this study how suitable training measures could be designed. These should, for example, also pinpoint the duration (in terms of total length of qualification measures) and extent (in terms of number of training hours and contents covered) of re-qualification measures suitable for the mobile workforce preparing an occupational change during an upright employment while at the same time taking into account the requirements of the labour market/the enterprise sector. For this purpose,

occupation specific investigations would be necessary in a first step to identify the “**ideal characteristics of training instruments**” (as it has been done for the three pilot occupations in the framework of the study on hand). When designing training curricula, the governments could set activities to ensure that the businesses’ and employees’ requirements are taken into account, e.g. by establishing a tri-partite governing body for the training providers.



ROMANIA

In Romania, the National Adult Training Board has been established by law no. 132/1999 (published in the Romanian Official Journal no. 348 of 23 July 1999) as an autonomous administrative authority. It is composed of representatives of the central public administration, the trade unions and those employers’ organisations that are representative at national level. Among others, the Board coordinates and controls the authorisation of vocational training providers, the elaboration of occupational standards and the assessment and certification of professional competencies acquired by adults through continuous vocational training.

With regard to designing training offers suitable for the mobile workforce, also **trans-national exchange of information and experience** is valuable as synergy and learning effects (within the framework of transferability) may be realised beyond borders. Hence, the European Commission could organise platforms or events providing room for presenting Good Practices and disseminating practical experiences and know-how across Europe.

In order to safeguard a high quality of the adult education system across Europe, and to enhance employers’ acceptance of qualification achievements as well as the geographic mobility of workers across Europe, common **standards** with regard to the (minimum) contents covered, the qualification of the trainers and similar could be established at European level and implemented at national level. In this way it could be avoided that different training providers offer programmes of different quality, resulting in a lack of transparency of the provided offers for the employees and employers.

An alternative to this approach would be to enhance the system of ECTS⁷ to be also widely applied in further education courses of private providers qualifying the participants for specific fields while at the same time familiarising employers and employees with the concept of such systems, so that employers get a better impression of the quality and coverage of the training undergone by applicants.

Such would also improve the **transparency on the training market** and make it easier for employees and employers to select training courses and could, for example, be realised at national level by co-operating with employers’ organisations, trade associations, chambers of commerce or similar. In this context, also the provision of registers of training providers (as already realised in some of the analysed countries) and of a systematic overview over the available training measures may contribute to the facilitation of selecting the appropriate training measures in each individual case.⁸

7. European Credit Transfer System.

8. This has exemplarily been conducted in the framework of this study by compiling the individual training inventories for the three occupations under consideration.



FINLAND

Opintoluotsi⁹ is a Finnish service portal providing information on education, courses and studies in various institutes. It is run by the Ministry of Education. Opintoluotsi has been a development project in 2000–2006, supported by the European Social Fund. The purpose of the service is to support people in finding education possibilities suitable for their individual situation. The services of Opintoluotsi are offered to all potential users of education and training regardless of their age or background. The services are offered in Finnish, Swedish and English. However, the content of the English language site is different to the Finnish and Swedish. The English site are mostly targeted at foreigners studying or aiming to study in Finland. The Finnish and Swedish services include information on all education and training available, on the diplomas and degrees and the courses leading to them, on the various forms of additional and further training and on courses related to hobbies and other interests. Opintoluotsi also offers information on schools and universities, their locations, the terms of admission, financing of the studies and the arrangements related to the education and training provided. There are also case studies/articles about different occupations and people working in them. The portal gives the user also an opportunity to ask for more detailed information or career counselling from the counsellors. The questions will be answered mostly within five days.

Similarly, Koulutusnetti¹⁰ is a Finnish portal which helps to find suitable studying routes, information about applying to the courses and education, up-to-date knowledge about the supply of the education, contact information of the educational institutions and descriptions of different degrees and occupations. It is run by the Finnish National Board of Education. The Ministry of Employment and the Economy has also launched a portal for career planning for adults. It provides information about work, occupations and education and training opportunities. Primarily, it offers a platform where an adult can plan his/her career and different opportunities in the current life situation. There are different exercises available which help the user to choose a suitable occupation. The portal is called A-URA (A stands for 'aikuisen'='adult', URA for 'ura'='career') and it is located in <http://www.avosto.net/a-ura/>.

Another important issue for the (further) support of occupational change is related to the **recognition of informally gained skills/competences and prior experience**. The mobile workforce should not be forced to attend educational modules they are already familiar with due to long-standing working experience, but lack of formal certification for. Consequently, individual training plans, prior profiling or modular training offers should be enforced by the European and national governments so that occupational changers are not disadvantaged by having to complete the entire training programme.



SPAIN

The Spanish government has recently (January 18, 2008) passed the Royal Decree 43/2008 to regulate the so-called certificates of professionalism (certificados de profesionalidad). These certificates certify the availability of competences and skills required for fulfilling a specific profession. They can be obtained through two main ways, i.e. either via an ad-hoc training activity or via the official validation of professional experience acquired on-the-job.



SWITZERLAND

In Switzerland, a new vocational education and training law has been passed in 2004, allowing the recognition and validation of prior vocational or general skills and practical experiences and thereby opening the opportunity for adults to gain federally recognised education and training certificates without having to attend formal education and training programmes. For this purpose, a validation system determining the minimum standards for the validation system has been developed at federal level, acting as a guideline for the cantonal validation system to assure quality and comparability across Switzerland. After an information and counselling phase candidates have to do a self-assessment regarding their competences that is evaluated by experts. Afterwards, the validating body decides upon the recognition of prior skills and/or the necessity of (further) competence development initiatives. At the end, the candidate receives a certificate that is equal to the ones attained in formal education.

The available literature dealing with the issue of occupational mobility as well as some of the interviews conducted in the framework of this study pinpoint that the occupational change is particularly successful, if the mobile worker already has a clear impression of the job and his/

9. <http://www.opintoluotsi.fi>

10. <http://www.koulutusnetti.fi>

her future tasks. As such a detailed insight can hardly be imparted by written information or reports of employees in the profession under consideration it is recommended that the national or regional governments **support short-term internships** (e.g. two weeks), giving prospective occupational changers the possibility of testing their aptitudes and skills in a real work situation before deciding to spend time, money and personal efforts in re-qualification activities. This is particularly important in professions involving physically strenuous work or a high degree of personal interaction (e.g. with clients, patients, etc.).

In this context, the public sector could financially compensate companies that are willing to grant such internships (i.e. the staff costs of the persons supporting the trainees during these internships) and establish instruments to facilitate the matching between companies willing to accept internships and individuals seeking for such a chance.

In a similar way, national and regional governments should establish specific/specialised advice and consultancy services for employees looking for re-qualification measures in the framework of an occupational change during an upright employment. With a few exemptions across the analysed countries such services are widely accessible to unemployed but only hardly available for employees.



SPAIN

The Support Plan for the Textiles Industry (Plan de Apoyo al Sector Textil y de la Confección) was implemented in 2006 by the Spanish Government to foster competitiveness in the sector and to alleviate the negative consequences on employment and workers.¹¹ In this sense, even if the plan includes measures to keep as many workers as possible working in the sector, it also pays attention to initiatives intended to re-train and relocate surplus workers, and it also contains special measures to provide special help for older workers that can not be relocated. The specific initiatives to retrain workers include a previous “ad-hoc” research of the professional profile of the workers of the sector, followed by counselling activities to orientate the professional career of these workers, and specific support initiatives in order to provide training to these workers in growing activity sectors with a deficit of workers. To this purpose, the plan also includes special incentives (reductions in payments to social security), addressed to those companies that hire workers coming from the textiles industry.

In addition, and to provide interested persons (including potential occupational changers) with more information about specific jobs and the therewith related tasks and working conditions, occupation specific online platforms could be established by the national governments. These platforms could summarise the eligibility criteria to the distinctive job, give information about (further) education instruments and provide experience reports for workers active in this job in order to give a clearer picture of what individual occupations are like in practice. Such has, for example, partly already been realised for the occupation of cooks in Germany.



GERMANY

Persons who are interested in the cooking profession in Germany but are lacking relevant network contacts to inquire with experienced cooks among their relatives or friends can currently contact experienced staff and find out more about individual course offers through online forums (“Köchetreff”, “Das Köcheforum”¹²). Ongoing discussions in these internet-based cook forums give authentic testimony of the current processes and of the acknowledgement of labour experiences and training outcomes. However, an overview of training measures and conditions for occupational changers is not available.

11. The agreement reached by social partners (the Spanish government, the main two trade unions and the Intertextile Council), includes several measures to adapt the industry to the structural changes of the sector in world trade, and to limit the negative effects of this liberalisation. It is important to stress that the 12,000 companies of the sector employ about 140,000 workers.
12. <http://www.koecheforum.de>

Also, financial support of adult education instruments (targeted at employees and employers) is mostly focused on unemployed and only seldom available for the employed. Having in mind the sometimes considerable pecuniary burden of course costs for the participants and the enterprises' costs for providing practical training in the firm, the national government (possibly backed by European funds) should appreciate these efforts by at least guaranteeing for the same extent of compensation unemployed persons benefit from.



FINLAND

In Finland, persons having a working history of at least 5 years and being in a valid public or private employment relationship which has lasted for at least one year are eligible for the adult education allowance if they have been accepted for a diploma, degree or a separate study course under the Finnish education system lasting at least 2 months during which the applicant must be on study leave.¹³ The length of the allowance is determined according to the employment history accumulated (0.8 days of grant for each full working month). The allowance comprises a basis part of €500.- financed from the State budget and an earnings-related part based on the applicant's salary financed from the unemployment insurance contributions paid by employers and employees. In addition, the applicants can also be given a government guarantee for a student loan (€300.- per month).

Financial support does not necessarily have to take the form of a direct subsidy, but may also be realised by allowing for tax credits.



AUSTRIA

Since 2000, Austrian employers, irrespective of the legal form of their company, can claim an extra tax allowance for training expenses (Bildungsfreibetrag). The training incentive has the form of an extra deduction from taxable profits. This means that not only the actual expense for training is deducted from taxable income, but also an extra "virtual expense" (of 20% of the actual expense). In 2002, the training tax credit (Bildungsprämie) has been introduced as an alternative. It is a tax credit of 6% of the actual expense. Companies that do not make enough profit to benefit from the 120% tax allowance can alternatively claim a tax credit of 6% of the actual expense. Employers can only receive the training credit, if they have not already claimed the tax allowance.

The tax incentive is applicable for business expenses which directly refer to training measures taken for employees and which are in the interest of the business. For external trainings, relevant costs refer to e.g. course fees, fees of trainers, renting training space or learning material. Accommodation and travel costs are not eligible.

Regarding in-house-training measures/facilities there are special requirements: The measures have to be comparable to an independent division of a business, and must not provide training services for non-employees (externals). The training facility has to feature a certain degree of independence and organisational closeness/isolation. The training measures have to have a formalised content and have to be organised. Eligible are the direct expenses assignable to the respective training measure (like remunerations, rent charges) and indirectly assignable expenses (like fixed costs, depreciations). The expenses per internal measure must not exceed €2,000.- per day. For in-house trainings there is no tax credit applicable (only the tax allowance).

Employees are able to realise tax benefits for their training costs, too. According to § 16 Income Tax Act training costs can be deducted from the tax base as income-related expenses (Werbungskosten), reducing taxable income. Expenses for educational and training measures may be claimed as income-related expenses, if they are costs for further training, basic training in a related occupation, or comprehensive re-training. Recent amendments to the Income Tax Act (2000 and 2002) take into consideration all expenses for training related to the individual's professional field, as well as expenses for long-term training measures leading to a broad vocational re-qualification (i.e. leading to completely new qualifications), referred to as re-training.

Basically, all training measures with some degree of vocational orientation are eligible in this context. Typical examples would be IT courses, business-related courses, language courses, and vocational evening schools (second chance schools). The eligible costs are e.g. the actual costs of courses (e.g. course fee), course material, "working tools" (e.g. pro-rata costs of a PC), travel costs, possible per-diem allowances (for the first five days, if the course is held away from one's domicile or work place) and the cost of overnight accommodation. Not deductible are expenses for initial general and academic education and for training which is primarily intended for private purposes, such as sports courses or training for a regular driver's licence.

13. Source: Education Fund/Koulutusrahasto

Last, but not least, the national and regional/local governments should provide for possibilities to arrange for childcare while participating in re-qualification measures during an upright employment (e.g. financial support of privately organised childcare or cross-financing of childcare facilities that are run by training providers). This is particularly important for trainings for “*traditional female occupations*” such as in the healthcare sector and may considerably contribute to improving women’s (qualified) employment opportunities.

In Finland, communal childcare is available to all children under the age of compulsory education (7 years) (Act 19.1.1973/36, Laki lasten päivähoidosta (Childcare Act)). The Act obligates the municipalities to organise childcare for all children in an appropriate scope and by appropriate methods defined by the demands of the inhabitants of the municipality. The day care services are mostly available only workdays between 6.30 a.m. and 5 p.m. However, there is also round-the-clock day care organised by every municipality for nights, evenings and weekends. This is targeted at the children whose parents or single parent need childcare services outside the “*normal*” hours due to shift work or occupational studies. The implementation of these principles varies, however, among the municipalities. The legislation gives relatively free hands to the municipalities to organise the supply of these services and to assess who is eligible to the service.

Recommendations towards training providers

At the level of training providers, several recommendations regarding the design of education/training measures suitable for the mobile workforce intending to undergo re-qualification during an upright employment can be given:

- For the mobile workforce that wishes to combine re-qualification measures with a regular employment it is important that the training instruments are easily accessible in terms of the location of the courses. Hence, measures that are only offered in large city centres are not suitable for the large parts of the workforce. Training providers should also arrange for education activities at regional/local level.



FINLAND

In Finland, there is a good geographic dispersion of VET institutions. As training centres are in most cases owned by municipalities or the federation of municipalities they are available all around the country.

- In order to efficiently use the available resources (of both, the training providers as well as the trainees), training providers should offer aptitude tests to candidates before they start the envisaged educational measure. Thereby, it should be investigated whether or not the individual is really suited for the profession under consideration.
- Having in mind the demographic change towards an ageing society it seems necessary that training providers also specifically focus on the training requirements of the ageing workforce. In future it can be supposed that it will happen more and more often that also older persons will have to re-qualify for a second career, and the respective educational offers should take into account their specific characteristics as learners (e.g. small and homogeneous groups, speed of learning, age of the teachers/trainers).

- In order to ensure that the imparted know-how corresponds to the needs of the future employers it is recommended to involve enterprises in the design of the curricula - particularly if the training is provided at local level and hence, giving the possibility of taking into account specific companies' skill needs.
- It is of utmost importance that the training finds a good balance between theoretical knowledge and practical skills, allowing for an immediate translation of the learnt know-how into the working environment. For this purpose it is not only necessary that the imparted know-how is always up to date (e.g. with regard to the machinery and materials and techniques used) but also provided by trainers that themselves dispose of long-standing practical experience and can give hints about how to do things in the companies.



AUSTRIA

The Public Employment Service in Austria offers unemployed adults the possibility to acquire an apprenticeship-leave exam by attending a training course with a duration of up to 18 months (in a full-time form). During the participation in the "skilled workers' intensive training" the attendants receive financial support from the Public Employment Service. Such courses are e.g. offered by the Vocational Training Institute (Berufsförderungsinstitut, bfi) in Vienna. There, the training activities focus on occupations in the construction sector, in metal and electro industries and information technologies, also including the education of plumbers. The first part of the qualification of plumbers — which takes about one year — focuses on water and gas installations. Interested participants have the opportunity to continue their training activities for another half a year and become specialised in heating systems, too.

The education at the Vocational Training Institute orientates on the working hours of plumbers and already starts at 7 a.m. and lasts until 4 p.m. (from Monday to Thursday, including one hour lunch break) and until 1 p.m. on Fridays. The courses include a broad, practice-oriented training in the garages of the Institute where the participants learn to use the typical working materials and make exercises in the different working procedures. The practical training elements are accompanied by theoretical lessons imparting necessary knowledge of the industry. Each training day is split into a practical and a theoretical part. Furthermore, the participants have to attend a practical training in sanitary enterprises for one month.

The qualification of plumbers in the framework of the "skilled workers' intensive training" at the Vocational Training Institute has a modular education system. The training course is divided into a variety of modules which last for two weeks each and end with an exam. The participants are able to participate in the apprenticeship-leave examination after the successful attendance of the training course and the practical training in an enterprise.

- Regarding the theoretical part of the training measure it turned out that this should not only focus on providing background information for the practical work (e.g. technical procedures, material science etc.) but also involve a certain degree of general know-how (particularly foreign languages, basic computer skills, but for example also commercial skills (like calculations) in technical occupations). At the same time this part of general education must not be too broad as this would increase the total training duration.
- The practical training should be divided into two parts: Some of the practical training should be done in "sheltered" environments in which participants learn "how to work". The other part should be conducted in real working environments in the enterprises in order to familiarise the trainees also with the framework conditions (e.g. deadlines, teamwork etc.). These two kinds of practical training should alternate in order to realise mutually reinforcing effects. Similarly, alternate sessions of practical and theoretical

training blocks have proven to be beneficial (instead of conducting all theoretical education first and then attend practical training). Furthermore, it has been proven beneficial, if the practical training in the companies is organised in a way that the trainees are accompanied by a coach/mentor during the whole training duration, so that they always have a specific person to approach with questions.

- Next to theoretical and practical training directly related to the profession under consideration at least in some occupations re-qualification instruments should also deal with the enhancement of soft skills (e.g. in the health care sector, in tourism or retail trade) and with skills fostering the sustainable workability of the employees (e.g. familiarising them with ways to deal with stress, burn-out, etc.).
- The education/training instruments should be organised in a modular way. This, on the one hand, provides the opportunity of choosing relevant modules on an individual basis, taking into account previous knowledge and experiences. This is of particular importance for the mobile workforce being characterised by a wide heterogeneity regarding previous educational and occupational backgrounds as well as their prior experience (in contrast to the youth having undergone rather similar educational paths before entering IVET). On the other hand, it makes the training more flexible in terms of the scheduling of individual training sessions (i.e. if a special module cannot be attended due to work or other obligations it can be caught up at a later point of time). This is of considerable importance in professions that are characterised by shift work or non-regular working times.



GERMANY

The “Modular Further Training Cook” offered by the DEKRA Academy in Germany is organised in a modular form. It offers individuals a flexible way to gain experience and competencies as a cook. Based on the particular occupational background and training needs of the participants they are free to decide on the starting date and overall duration of the qualification. The course qualifies them for various roles and areas as a cook (e.g. saucier, rotisseur, poissonier, entremetier, pâtisserie, catering, haute cuisine) and also encompasses an internship. The overall duration depends on the modules taken which usually last one month.

- It is generally necessary to orientate the duration and time schedule of the education/training measure on the needs of the mobile workforce (e.g. blocked or evening classes instead of day-long courses over a long period of time);
- Another possibility of individualising the education/training and provide for the opportunity of considering the individual participants’ professional and educational background is to limit the number of participants (e.g. max. 20);
- Training providers should offer certified (re-)qualification courses that are officially/formally recognised or well accepted by employers in order to foster the image of short-term courses. With regard to “non-official” diploma, co-operation with employers’ organisations, trade associations, chambers of commerce or similar or individual companies (market leaders, key players, opinion leaders) is recommended to strengthen the reputation of the course.

Bibliography

Hofbauer, H./König, P., *Berufswechsel bei männlichen Erwerbspersonen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Mitteilungen aus der Arbeitsmarkt- und Berufsforschung, Nürnberg, IAB, 1973.

Isaoglu, A., *Occupational Mobility in Germany*, Florence, European University Institute, 2006.

Klicpera, C./Klicpera, B./Beggiato, M., *Berufswechsel von Lehrabsolvent/innen in Südtirol*, Bozen, Berufsbildung Südtirol. (ohne Jahresangabe).

Mandl, I./Dorr, A./Egger, A./Leuprecht, E., *BerufswechslerInnen am österreichischen Arbeitsmarkt: Perspektiven und Chancen in Klein- und Mittelunternehmen*, Wien, KMU FORSCHUNG AUSTRIA, abif, AMS Österreich, 2006.

Seibert, H., *Berufswechsel in Deutschland: Wenn der Schuster nicht bei seinem Leisten bleibt*, Nürnberg, IAB, 2007.

Tárki Group, *Occupational Mobility in Europe*, European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions, 2007.

Appendix 1: GATOM Project Partners

Austria	Austrian Institute for SME Research (KMU FORSCHUNG Austria) http://www.kmuforschung.ac.at/
Finland	Small Business Institute, Turku School of Economics and Business Administration http://www.tse.fi
Germany	Berufsbildungswerk Gemeinnützige Bildungseinrichtung des DGB GmbH (bfw) – Competence Center EUROPA http://www.bfw.de/
Ireland	Tom Martin & Associates/TMA http://www.tma.ie
Poland	Entrepreneurship and Economic Development Research Institute (EEDRI) at the Academy of Management (Społeczna Wyższa Szkoła Przedsiębiorczości i Zarządzania w Łodzi) http://www.eedri.pl
Romania	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Romania CCIR http://www.ccir.ro
Spain	ikei research & consultancy http://www.ikei.es
Switzerland (silent partner)	Schweizerischer Verband für Weiterbildung SVEB http://www.alice.ch