

INTRODUCTION

The texts included in this publication are the product of a transnational collaboration and processing carried out within the framework of the LEONARDO programme. The LEONARDO programme was launched by the European Union for a period of five years (1995-1999), with the aim of improving the quality of vocational training systems and the possibilities of them taking innovative initiatives. These initiatives are aimed at being the basic factors in the control of technological and industrial developments, as well as of the impact these have on enterprise competitiveness and on the organization of labour. The LEONARDO programme is instrumental to vocational training in preparing for the professions of tomorrow, in foreseeing changes, pursuing, preparing and experimenting on new directions and methods. It is clear that suitably orientated and systematic vocational training constitutes a basic tool against unemployment, putting to full use and promoting multidisciplinary Human Resources, and consequently is an important element in boosting the competitiveness of European businesses in today's world. The Hellenic Federation of Bank Employees' Organizations (OTOE), well aware of the problems which the rapid changes in the financial environment will bring to the labour regime and wanting to make the most of the opportunities offered by EU programmes towards a solution to this kind of problems, submitted a proposal during the first year of the operation of the LEONARDO programme. The project, a product of which is the material in this publication, was submitted by the Institute of Labour/OTOE as a pilot project, as part of Package I of the 1995 LEONARDO programme. It was of two-year duration (1996-1997), was entitled PREMEQ, and its object was the creation of "A mechanism for predicting new specialties in the banking sector", as well as the effective use of this mechanism in vocational training and collective bargaining.

Our proposal had the following aims:

- The creation and implementation of a reliable and systematic mechanism for predicting new specialties and skills in the banking sector, as well as its exploitation in vocational training, social dialogue and collective bargaining, on a sector and/or company level.
- By order of priority, the systematisation and qualitative upgrading of on-going training, by combining the acquisition of the knowledge and skills needed under the new conditions, with modern methods of Human Resource Programming, reliable assessment of educational needs, career planning, protection and creation of new opportunities in employment, enrichment, redesigning of jobs.

This proposal was accepted by the appropriate bodies and was implemented and completed, we believe, with total success. Indeed, in our opinion, there are many important fields where it can be implemented and many possibilities for making use of its results. Indicatively we should mention the bilateral Social Dialogue Committee in the banking sector, the sectorial Employment Observatory and naturally, the Vocational Training Departments/Divisions in every company. The wide range of the potential beneficiaries of the experience, results and methods which came out of this project must also be pointed out. More specifically, beneficiaries might be:

- Employees - Bank Officials
- Negotiators of all parties (and especially those who are involved in matters concerning vocational training, at company and sector level)
- Instructors
- Officials in charge of the vocational training sector in companies
- Social dialogue (employers - workers) and participants from other sectors of economic activity
- Scientific organizations, training agencies, company officials, researchers, etc.

Within the framework of and in accordance with the aims of the LEONARDO programme, the OTOE placed particular importance on the creation and coordinated action of partnership, both during planning, as well as - and mainly - during the implementation of the project.

At a national level, the following took part:

- The Hellenic Union of Banks
- The Mortgage Bank
- The Training Centre of the Mortgage Bank
- The Bank of Piraeus
- The General Bank
- The Hellenic Society of Computer and Information Science (EPY)

At a trans-European level, the following agencies took part:

- Union of Financial Sector for Employees - Sweden
- Financial Services Union - Denmark
- Federation Estatal de Banca Y Ahorro - Spain
- Unione Italiana Bancari - Italy
- Fidiration des employis et cadres - France
- C.F.P.B. (Centre de Formation de la Profession Bancaire) - France.

This partnership is of special importance to us. And this is not only because it was generated and functioned effectively within the framework of the realization of the project, but also because for the first time there was a collaboration (on the initiative of the OTOE and with particularly positive results) between the two social interlocutors, with experts, agencies, scientific personnel and advisors from both sides, toward a substantiated and systematic solution to the problems which jointly concern them, in today's crucial sector of diagnosing educational needs and of vocational training. In order for the project to be carried out, national and transnational work groups were created. The central coordination and supervision of the implementation of the project were undertaken by a special Steering Committee, which was set up and operated as part of the Institute of Labour/OTOE.

This Committee was made up of :

- Aristotelis Lakkas, President of the Institute of Labour/OTOE
- Vassiliki Georgakopoulou, PhD. in Labour Economics, Consultant on matters of Human Resources and Industrial Relations, special scientific Consultant with the Institute of Labour/OTOE and OTOE, Mediator with OMED
- Kostas Georgiou, Operation Manager, Bank of Pireaus
- Kerassia Xouri, Training Department Officer of National Bank of Greece
- Yiannis Sgourovassilakis, General Manager, Training Center of the National Mortgage Bank.

The output of the project, that is the development of the method and mechanism for predicting the evolution of banking specialties, was developed by the partners of the project, with the scientific contribution of the C.F.P.B., one of the most reliable agencies providing research and educational services in the banking sector in France, with a wide variety of activities all over Europe. The development of the methodology which is set out in brief in this publication, is the outcome of the following steps and processes that were put into effect as part of the project;

- Definition of aims - method of approach
- Drawing up questionnaires
- Questionnaires processing / results analysis in meetings between partners and in collaboration with experts and bank officials
- Pilot implementations
- Development of a supporting algorithm
- Development of a manual on the use of methodology
- Development of a manual to be implemented in collective bargaining
- Project evaluations at different phases and on completion
- Development of resources for negotiators' seminars
- Results diffusion activities
- Designing a supporting CD-ROM
- Further actions to be taken in order to make the most of results at a European level. Beyond the systematic monitoring of the project by the Steering Committee, which was in continuous contact with the partners and the CFPB, five transnational proved necessary, with the participation of all partners.

Two meetings were held during the first year (Athens and Stockholm) and three meetings during the second year (Barcelona - Paris - Athens). On the agenda at the meetings was the processing and validation of the results by all the participating agencies-partners of the project, the evaluation of activities carried out and the planning of a future course. This way of working proved particularly effective, to the extent that all sides made a substantial contribution to the elaboration of the final product. For this precise reason, the method which resulted can easily be applied in all the countries participating in the project, regardless of their particularities (institutional, structural, particularities of positions and business object). The working language for the project and for the elaboration of its resources was English. However, the OTOE, in appreciation of the positive opportunities for the implementation and full use of the project in Greece, proceeded with translating the resources into Greek, in the aim of facilitating diffusion, with the help of this publication. The Method that was developed is analytically set out in the corresponding sections of this publication. Its basic points are:

- The elaboration of a vade mecum of cognitive skills, which are linked to particular fields of knowledge,
- Definition of the degree of cognitive skills which are required today for every specialty/position and for every field of knowledge linked to this position,
- Identification and analysis of the basic factors which affect or are expected to affect the corresponding positions in the immediate future,
- Examination of the degree of impact of these factors on the required cognitive skills for each distinct position,
- Evaluation of changes in the cognitive requirements of each specialty (extent, type of change),
- Design of individualized training programmes for the timely and smooth adaptation of the holders of particular positions to the new cognitive requirements of the same position/specialty and/or their transferal to a position with proportionate or similar cognitive requirements,
- Design of an algorithm to support the methodology. Apart from the presentation of the method and the basic technical instructions for its implementation, this publication also includes an analytical guide – a manual for negotiators of all parties. This guide aims at stressing the advisability of making the most of this useful method both at a sectorial as well as at a business level, pinpointing its necessary connections and extensions in terms of Human Resources Management and promotion of substantiated collective bargaining on matters of training and the protection of employment.

As can be easily understood, there are many significant benefits from this project. Allowing readers of this work to judge for themselves, according to the needs of their environment and their own research-management experience, we limit ourselves simply to pointing out that as a result of the important work carried out within the framework of the project:

- * A useful tool for predicting positions at risk was created,
- * Important supportive material was produced in order for the predicting mechanism to be used in collective bargaining concerning matters of protecting employment and training,
- * Common concern in all the countries involved was ascertained,
- * A reliable network of agencies and collaborators was created,
- * Positive experience was drawn from collaboration of social interlocutors.

The result-outcomes of the project are equally significant in our opinion and more specifically:

- The Method of predicting new careers in banking,
- The Technical Manual on implementing the methodology,
- The Good Practice Manual for negotiators of all parties, which deals with the usefulness and the ways of putting into effect the methodology, at a sectorial and business level,
- The rich material collected which is directly exploitable for negotiations seminars concerning matters of training,
- The Algorithm for computerized support of the methodology,
- The CD-ROM which includes the basic material and the results of the project and which further facilitates the dissemination of the method.

On 15 December 1997, a meeting – attended by transnational partners - was held in Athens to present the results. Already activities for further diffusing and exploiting results are being scheduled through a transnational negotiators' seminar in the immediate future. Prospects also include submitting a new proposal to continue the project, with the aim of attracting new partners and enriching it with relevant experience regarding:

- the possibilities of implementing the mechanism of predicting developments in banking specialties,
- full support of its implementation with special software,
- its diffusion and transfer to other bodies, in order for it to become part of integrated systems and vocational training mechanisms, at sector and company level.

In conclusion, we must thank, all those who have participated in this project, the transnational and national partners, the members of the Programme Coordination Committee, our advisors and associates, as well as all the colleagues who helped with their knowledge and experience, in the completion of this endeavor. Also the EU officials and those of national bodies who gave us their unreserved support and trust, encouraging and allowing us, with their financial as well as their moral support, to carry out such a difficult venture. We believe that this publication will receive attention and be favorably received by all parties involved and that it will spark off further improvements, extensions and implementations in the training sector which is crucial in our field, both today and in the future.

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