

## 4. STRATEGIES AND AXES FOR COLLECTIVE BARGAINING IN TRAINING IN THE BANKING SECTOR

### 4.1. A general picture on vocational training in the Banking Sector - The Greek experience

As we have seen in Chapter 2, the modern trends in evolution and readjustment of the Banking System bring out its importance and set new ways for incorporating training into the overall strategy of the sector and the particular enterprises.

A correct and successful application of the modern models in training presupposes:

- development of specific institutional arrangements and frameworks at a sectoral level; these will be a lever for the promotion of social dialogue on issues of Human Resources education and training, in the sector and in its particular enterprises;
- support for a documented social dialogue on the same issues; this will be carried out through suitable structures making possible any information and forecast on the needs in knowledge-skills and, therefore, in training employees in the sector according to the needs and requirements in each specific skill.

In the Greek banking sector, training and continuing training are based mainly on business systems and infrastructures. The sectoral infrastructures (which are particularly developed in European countries like Britain and France, e.g. with inter-banking Institutes for integrated vocational training and continuing training of bank employees), still play a particularly limited role.

Although, since 1986 and until now, the training activity and the Educational-Research Centre of the Hellenic Banks Association have functioned in a complementary way in relation to the training programmes of its member-Banks they have filled significant gaps.

The transformation of this Centre into an Inter-bank Institute for integrated vocational training and education, something which is also a standing demand of the trade unions in the sector, still remains in abeyance.

The main aim of the education provided by enterprises is to secure an introductory vocational training for new employees. Most Banks do not have an integrated course which will lead to a professional degree.

Despite the long-standing and generally developed application of programmes and training infrastructures, most Banks lack a systematic and rational educational programming. A programming which will be based on:

- systems leading to a diagnosis of educational needs (on the basis of the needs in specific jobs, in skills, on the basis of performance data and qualifications of employees);
- a systematic evaluation of the results of the education and training provided in terms of performance and professional development of employees.

Thus, education functions usually unconnected to the other functions of Human Resources Management (professional evaluation, promotions, elevation-placement of cadres, enrichment-change in the subject of work etc.); this results in a serious limitation of its efficiency with regard to the enterprises and employees.

### 4.2. Axes for negotiation on issues of vocational

education and training

The international experience in collective bargaining on issues of vocational education and training brings out the following axes for developing a collective arrangement on these issues:

- determination of the means and the subjects of training on the basis of modern methods and systems for effecting a diagnosis-assessment-planning of the needs and an assessment-development of the results;
- protection of employment - re-training and education of employees in order to adapt themselves to the new requirements of the particular works and skills as well as to the more general developments in the sector;
- general and equal access for all employees to an education and training which is suitable for their needs, on the basis of reliable systems for diagnosis of educational needs, information on education opportunities and continuing training;
- recognition-certification and development of the knowledge/studies provided in the professional development of employees;

- establishment of institutions and infrastructures for initial vocational education and for integrated courses pertaining to the professional development and evolution of employees in the sector.

With the exception of the issues pertaining to recognition-certification of the knowledge provided in the framework of the training programmes, a series of issues included in the above axes have been the object of sectoral and/or enterprise negotiations in our country, from time to time.

More specifically, from time to time, the Collective Agreements in the sector have handled issues of:

- a) Protection of employment - avoidance of marginalisation of employees due to lack of correspondence between their knowledge and skills, and the new requirements arising out of technological changes and restructuring, out of abolition of jobs or change of their subject of work (1989 Collective Agreement, Clause 10, 1994-95 Collective Agreement);
- b) Directions on educational policy and a systematic planning on educational needs: development of vocational skills; broadening of the cultural level of employees; a need for promptly predicting and planning educational needs; a suitable Human Resources development (on the basis of the Banks' needs, transfer of technology, modern requirements in banking business); universality of education as a right and an obligation for both parties (1994-95 Collective Agreement, 1997-98 Collective Agreement);
- c) Rationalistic elaboration of the enterprise training systems, with:
  - equal opportunities, specific and jointly acceptable criteria for access to education;
  - modern methods and infrastructures;
  - a systematic evaluation of results;
  - information and participation of trade union representatives in the relevant enterprise bodies.
- d) Linking education with the performance evaluation and the general professional development of employees;
- e) Backing inter-banking education by means of the formation of a special body (1990 Collective Agreement, special survey prepared by a two-party committee) which will co-operate with third level education institutions and will provide integrated introductory education to the banking profession (first course); education for new cadres (second course); and education of medium cadres (third course); this body will provide relevant diplomas, so that education will be linked with the professional development of employees in the sector.

It is self-evident that this body (Institute for Banking Studies) would have a different-complementary role to play in relation with the education provided by enterprises the main aim of which is to deal with the immediate, specialised or particular practices and functional needs. The negotiations on the formation of an inter-banking educational body, as it was specified in the study of the two-party committee of experts in the 1990 Collective Agreement, have not as yet ended in any results.

So, the inter-banking educational-research centre of the Hellenic Banks Association continues to cover needs mainly for:

- specialised education on particular banking issues;
- short time training on issues of the moment or on basic practical issues;
- education of the instructors.

At enterprise level, the activities of the corresponding OTOE member-trade unions cover similar axes placing the emphasis on issues regarding:

- participation and information to the employees and to their collective representation regarding the education opportunities provided;
- possibilities for the trade union to intervene in the planning and evaluation of the enterprise training programmes;
- a rational elaboration-systematic planning of the training programmes through the application of methods enabling a prompt diagnosis of educational needs, modern educational methods and infrastructures;
- linking the educational function with the other functions of Human Resources management-development (specifications of jobs, hiring, performance evaluation, promotions - elevation - selection of cadres, Human Resources

programming, enrichment of work tasks, planning of systems for incentives etc.).

On the basis of the aforementioned, it is presumed that the parties (Banks, collective representation)

- already have a considerable experience in handling and negotiating issues on education and training;
- have become aware of the significance of these issues under modern conditions;
- have already developed considerable initiatives and collective arrangements in this field.

However, the extent of the changes required under modern conditions, combined with the volume of the challenges and the deficiencies in planning-applying modern infrastructures and educational systems at enterprise and sectoral levels, place both sides (Banks and employees' unions) before new, complex and multi-dimensional problems.

The dissemination and application of PREMEQ can positively contribute in the promotion of collective bargaining and in the adoption of innovative arrangements which will cover almost the entirety of the theme axes we examined above. We leave it to the parties themselves to probe into the possibilities of also other applications, and we will mention two which we consider major fields in developing PREMEQ; fields which pertain to collective bargaining at sectoral and enterprise levels respectively.