

# **New Perspectives for Learning - Briefing Paper 56**

# Challenges for education and training policies and research arising from European integration and enlargement

This is an Interim Briefing Paper of the project that started in September 2001

### **Context of the Research**

"European society" tends to mean a society where citizens will have "the feeling of belonging to the European Union" whilst still being rooted in regional traditions and cultures. The process of European integration thus includes the development of supranational structures and identities through common economic, financial and legal structures, whilst still preserving and developing regional and national cultural characteristics.

There is no historical precedent for this form of integration. It involves a dynamic and not always conflict-free interplay of factors that presents a particular challenge as well as creating new unique opportunities. At the same time European integration and enlargement are taking place in the context of larger trends:

- The globalisation of economies that is leading to the restructuring of learning related policies as an element of international competition.
- The implementation of a knowledge-based society that is accompanied by the institutional and contextual adaptation of learning related policies towards the needs of the emerging learning society.
- The Eastern European countries' move towards a market economy.

This further integration and enlargement of the European Union is expected to have an impact on learning related polices in both EU member states and Accession countries. Alongside this broadening of the EU, an expressed desire is to create a "Learning Society" and a "Knowledge Based Economy".

This project has established a thematic network that is investigating the impact of different national education and training cultures on integration and the effect of the process of integration and enlargement on the different national education and training cultures. This is being done by looking at the influence of politics, culture and history on learning related policies, as these are challenges for the transition countries and developments towards EU integration. It involves researchers from eleven European countries: Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany,

1

Latvia, Norway, Romania and the United Kingdom. In addition there are representatives from Italy, Spain, Hungary, Lithuania, Poland the Slovak Republic as well as from China, Japan and South Korea who are involved in the discussion about the concept of the Learning Society.

## **Key Issues**

The interplay between national and European policies in the fields of education and training, science and technology and labour market is being addressed from three different perspectives covering learning related policies:

- 1. In member states and regions between internationalised challenges and national systems –the perspective of member states and regions. Key issues involve:
  - "Europe" as a subject of learning in Education and Training
  - Creating and facilitating the European learning citizen
  - Shaping European learning related policies, the role of member states and the civil society
  - Member states responding to learning related policies of the European Commission
- 2. Challenges and opportunities of EU integration and enlargement –the perspective of candidate countries in the period of transition. Key issues involve:
  - Challenges of European integration.
  - Challenges of European enlargement.
  - Processes of change towards the 'learning society'.
  - Processes of economic transition in candidate countries, their challenges and impacts.
  - Challenges arising from European-level learning-related regulations. Policies and requirements for current and future member states.
  - Challenges for learning-related policies at national, regional and European levels and their impact.
- 3. Preparation for a broader European Union. European policies and research the European perspective. Key issues involve:
  - Employability
  - Exclusion
  - Mobility
  - Identity

#### **Further Information**

The full title of the project is: "Towards the European Society: Challenges for Education and Training Policies and Research Arising from the European Integration and Enlargement". The final report is due in April 2004.

The project website at: <a href="http://www.learningpolicies.net/">http://www.learningpolicies.net/</a>

### Partner details

## **Key Publications**

Publications are likely covering the following subjects.

## "The Learning Society in an international discourse"

"Learning related policies in EU member states and regions between internationalised challenges and national systems – the perspective of member states and regions".

"Learning related policies, challenges and opportunities of EU integration and enlargement –the perspective of candidate countries in the period of transition".

"Learning related policies preparing for a larger and deeper EU. European policies and research – the European perspective"

### **Research Institutions**

Academic Information Centre, National Observatory, Latvia
Université Louis Pasteur, France
Forum for European Regional Policies, University of Bremen, Germany
Fafo Institute of Applied Social Science, Norway
Human Resource Development Centre, Bulgarian National Observatory, Bulgaria
Institute for Educational Sciences, Romania
National Training Fund, Czech Republic
Navreme Knowledge Development, Austria
Tallin Technical University, Estonia
University of Stirling, United Kingdom
University of Tampere, Finland

#### **Contact Person**

Dr. Michael Kuhn BFER, University of Bremen Enrique-Schmidt Straße 7 (SFG) 28359 Bremen Germany

Tel. +49 421 218 42 80 Fax. +49 421 218 48 96

Email: mkuhn@uni-bremen.de

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