

Strengthening Human Resources through Vocational Education Training

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Meeting of ASEM General Directors and experts in the field of vocational education and training Berlin 2006

Strengthening human resources through vocational education and training?

Introduction:

The quality of a nation's education and training system is a key factor not only for competitiveness in the global economy, but also for growth, prosperity and social cohesion.

Regardless of different economic and demographic situations a qualified and skilled labour force is necessary in all countries to cope with structural changes in economic systems, the rapid development of ICT and the increasing globalization of production and trade.

Therefore besides a solid school and university level education, a high-profile vocational training for the majority of young people is indispensable to meet the demands of labour markets and current developments in production. It is also a strong factor in the attractiveness for foreign investment.

To strengthen the importance of initial and further vocational training in different economic and social settings it is crucial to convince politicians, entrepreneurs, managers, parents and young people of its necessities and advantages.

In-service and practical work-place training, for example, is a solid basis for the acquisition of qualifications actually needed in the labour market. To gain the involvement of business, enterprises and social partners in training one has to raise their awareness of their own interest in a competitive skilled labour force. Countries with a strong commitment of companies in training tend to have less youth unemployment than those education and training systems based only on school education.

Vocational training may take place in very different forms and may reach different target groups. There is no single solution for all countries.

Some aspects, however, have proved to be crucial for success in terms of added value to the integration in the labour market and to social cohesion regarding the necessity to give a fast growing number of young people a decent perspective for their future.

Dialogue and exchange of information between governments and stakeholders in education and training may contribute to a wider perspective of possible answers to the challenges that our countries have to meet concerning training and qualification in the near future.

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