Thessaloniki, 21 November 2003

TTNET ANNUAL CONFERENCE

"TAKING STOCK OF TTNET ACHIEVEMENTS AND FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS"

Background paper

INTRODUCTION

After 5 years of existence of TTnet, and in view of the recent developments of the Community policy framework for teachers and trainers, it is important to take stock of TTnet activities and results, and to define the role of TTnet within this new policy framework as well as its specific contribution to the Community objectives.

In this connection, Cedefop's Management Board (Thessaloniki, 23 and 24 October 2003) has devoted a specific session to discussing TTnet's achievements and its future development.

This background paper presents, for each strand of activity of TTnet, the progress and issues to be raised. It also includes the orientations given by the Management Board.

1. STRAND OF ACTIVITY 1: THE NATIONAL NETWORKS

1.1. Progress

Since the creation of the TTnet network in 1998, 14 national networks have been set up. The national networks have the following three main missions, which are fulfilled at different degrees by the networks:

- to constitute a forum for discussion between key actors and policy-makers at national level;

- to make a contribution to the identification, analysis and dissemination of innovative practices in key priority areas for the training of teachers and trainers;

- to serve as an interface between the national, transnational and Community levels.

The Management Board has validated the "network approach" and confirmed that Cedefop should continue encouraging the establishment of partnerships in the Member States based on the pooling of resources and competences. This is the distinctive feature of the network approach which should be maintained and optimised.

1.2. Issues to be raised / actions required:

(a)   strengthen the existing network's national representativeness, namely the active involvement of public authorities and the private sector;

(b)   encourage the co-funding of networks by the national level as a sign of common interest;

(c)   optimise the flows of information and communication within each national network and between networks.

(d)   develop partnerships and synergies with existing networks at national and/or international levels.

2. STRAND OF ACTIVITY 2: THE TRANSNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF THE TTNET NETWORK: THEMATIC PROJECTS

2.1. Progress

At the annual conference of the TTnet network in December 2001, thematic projects were set up on key priority themes that had been identified as transversal issues by the TTnet national networks.

There are currently three thematic projects:

Project 1: eLearning for teachers and trainers: innovative practices, skills and competences;

Project 2: Professional development of VET teachers;

Project 3: Validation of non-formal learning for trainers.

The thematic projects have made it possible for TTnet to become a community for the analysis of relevant innovative practices, for experience sharing, and collaborative and mutual learning about key themes. This is an important achievement of the network and it should be safeguarded and optimised.

The main outcomes of the thematic projects are the innovative practices analysed using a methodology devised at transnational level (75 practices analysed in 12 countries, 38 already online in the TTnet website at: http://www.trainingvillage.gr/etv/projects_networks/TTNET/documents/d_search.asp).

2.2. Issues to be raised / actions required:

(a) how to harmonise the results of the analysis of good examples of practice and to capitalise upon these so as to bring out common transnational issues in training professions across and beyond the network;

(b) how to improve the working method to ensure that the results we achieve are shared within the network;

(c) at the same time, project outcomes should be analysed and formulated so as to bring out recommendations and conclusions to be addressed to policy makers.

In this connection, the Management Board has validated the proposal to set up a small working party which should guarantee that results are exploited in this way and to valorise the scientific dimension of the project outcomes and their relevance to the network's target groups.

2.3. Working tools of the network

The Management Board confirmed that the TTnet community should be given the tools it needs for its existence, its social utility and its development.

In this connection:

- Cedefop, in cooperation with the Commission and other actors, is implementing a database of good examples of practice in education and VET-related issues;

- the TTnet virtual community should be enlarged to as many actors and practitioners as possible (http://cedefop.communityzero.com/ttnet).

3. EXPANDING THE NETWORK TO INCLUDE THE NEW MEMBER STATES

3.1. Progress

The process of integrating new Member States (NMSs) with TTnet activities is gradual and on a case-by-case basis, reflecting their needs, priorities, demands and proposals.

(a) "Frameworks" for each country are being set up, in close cooperation with the ETF, to help the NMSs defining more concretely their priorities, needs and expectations vis-à-vis TTnet.

(b) Once the "country frameworks" have been agreed with the countries concerned, the decision on the launching of national networks will be taken.

3.2. Issues to be raised / actions required:

- how to integrate the NMSs in TTnet activities;

- how to promote active partnership between existing TTnet networks and newly created networks.

4. THE TTNET CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY OBJECTIVES

4.1. Progress

The political framework for cooperation at European level in the field of teachers and trainers is defined by the "Copenhagen process" and the Council's report on "Concrete future objectives of education and training systems" ("Objectives process").

In this connection, TTnet contribution is the following:

- "Objectives process": TTnet is involved in the group of experts set up by the Commission on Objective 1.1. 'Improving the Education of Teachers and Trainers' (Group A).

- "Copenhagen process": Quality assurance and the training needs of VET teachers and trainers. In this connection, the TTnet network has launched two activities:

  - a thematic workshop on the new skills required by VET teachers and trainers as part of quality approaches;

  - an exploratory study on the role of teachers and trainers in quality approaches in the EU – analysis of examples of good practice.

- eLearning Action Plan – the 'teachers and trainers' strand. TTnet began its work on the three main objectives of the action plan (analysis of practices, analysis of competences, assessment of existing resources) in July 2001 and continued it as part of the TTnet thematic project 'e-learning' (2002-03) and the eTTnet project (2003-04), co-funded under the eLearning Action Plan;

4.2. Issues to be raised / actions required:

- "Copenhagen process" – How to build upon the results of the abovementioned exploratory study on quality with a view to setting up a TTnet thematic project in 2004 in close cooperation with the technical working group on quality in VET.

- eLearning Action Plan – How to disseminate the achievements of TTnet in the field of eLearning across and beyond the network.