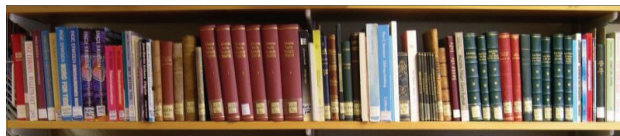


2009 NATIONAL REPORT FOR AUSTRIA
ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE EU
EDUCATION AND TRAINING 2010
WORK PROGRAMME



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GLOSSARY

AHS	Secondary academic school
AMS	Public Employment Service Austria (AMS Österreich)
APS	Compulsory schools
BAG	Vocational Training Act
BHS	VET colleges
BMHS	VET schools and colleges
BifEB	Federal Institute for Adult Education
BIFIE	Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian Schooling System
BMUKK	Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture, formerly BMBWK
BMVIT	Federal Ministry for Transport, Innovation and Technology
BMWFJ	Federal Ministry of Economy, Family and Youth
BMWF	Federal Ministry of Science and Research
BRP	Berufsreifeprüfung (exam and certificate providing university access for skilled workers)
DaZ	German as a second language
EE	Entrepreneurship Education
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EQF	European Qualifications Framework
ESF	European Social Fund
FH	Fachhochschule (University of Applied Sciences)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
HTL	College of engineering
ICT	Information and communications technology
KEBÖ	Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions
LBVO	Decree on Performance Appraisal
LLG	Lifelong Guidance
LLL	Lifelong Learning
NR 2007	2007 National Report on the implementation of the 2010 work programme
NRE	National Report on Education
NMS	New secondary school
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ÖZEPS	Austrian Centre for Personal Development and Social Learning
PH	University college of education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
QIBB	VET Quality Initiative
SBB	Educational and student counselling
SchOG	Schulorganisationsgesetz (School Organisation Act)
SchUG	Schulunterrichtsgesetz (School Instruction Act)
TIMSS	Third International Mathematics and Science Study

The 2009 Progress Report was drawn up jointly by the Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture and the Federal Ministry of Science and Research, with the social partners, University Conference, Fachhochschule Council and Accreditation Council being consulted and requested to issue statements.

Further links:

Federal Ministry for Education, the Arts and Culture: www.bmukk.gv.at

Federal Ministry of Science and Research: www.bmwf.gv.at

Reference documents:

2007 National Report on the implementation of the EU 2010 work programme:

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/15320/abb2010_zwb07_dt.pdf

2005 National Report on the implementation of the EU 2010 work programme:

http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/12626/abb2010_zwbdt.pdf

(Government Programme for the XXIV. Legislation Period (2008-2013)

<http://www.bka.gv.at/DocView.axd?CobId=32966>

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CHAPTER I: KEY COMPETENCES FOR LIFELONG LEARNING AS A PART OF COHERENT AND COMPREHENSIVE LIFELONG LEARNING STRATEGIES

I.1. Provision of key competences since 2006, linking to the lifelong learning strategy; application of the European reference framework, work of the key competence cluster

The European Union's recommendation on key competences for LLL has had an impact on ongoing developments since 2006 and has also met with positive response among stakeholders in the most different areas of the education system. Consequently the reference framework has also been integrated into all major educational policy reform measures and has established itself as a helpful tool in the stepwise further development from a knowledge- towards a competence-oriented concept of learning.

In this connection, in particular the following key development fields need to be mentioned where the European reference framework serves as an important aid for orientation:

- Development of education standards in general education and VET schools, connected with a wide-ranging development towards a competence-oriented provision of knowledge
- Measures aiming at the professionalisation of teaching staff
- Development of an LLL strategy with lifelong competence development as one of the key guiding principles
- Development of a Lifelong Guidance strategy
- Development of a National Qualifications Framework
- Redefinition of the so-called “educational principles” with reference to the 8 key competences
- Special focus on disadvantaged learners (particularly immigrants, socio-economically disadvantaged people, people with special needs)
- Expansion of supporting measures aiming at the provision of competence by setting up networks between educational establishments and cooperation ventures of educational institutions with business/art/culture organisations
- Initiative 25+ aiming at a nationwide reduction of the maximum number of students per class, accompanied by measures to individualise teaching and learning
- School pilot project “New secondary school” with individual accesses to learning, promotion and subsidisation measures, as well as coaching for learners at its core

In Austria it is customary that relevant stakeholder groups are involved in all major educational policy developments (social partners, University Conference, Fachhochschule Council, university colleges of education, school partners, staff representatives, experts, NGOs, etc.). The integration of the concept of key competences into all major strategic developments is therefore also made in close consultation with these stakeholders.

With a view to developing and implementing an Austrian LLL strategy, the content and strategic objectives of the recommendation on key competences form an important reference framework. Concrete references to the key competences are made in the individual sections about the five guidelines of the Austrian LLL strategy¹. Of major importance in this connection is “Guideline 4: Competence orientation”. There it reads: “The transition to promote lifelong competence development is necessary, among other reasons, because the acquisition of knowledge in advance is less successful than ever before. The special challenge consists in translating qualifications to competences – a process that is becoming particularly important in the conception of the national and European Qualifications frameworks.”

The work by the Cluster on Key Competence is continually integrated into the various development areas and is also presented every year within the framework of the “National Debates E&T2010”. Interdisciplinary competences, which were at the centre of the Cluster's activities in recent years, constitute a major theme in the implementation and evaluation of the new secondary school scheme (NMS, cf. Chapter I.6). In in-service and further teacher training, seminars about these interdisciplinary competences

¹ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/medienpool/17475/III_konsultationspapier.pdf

are offered. Upon the initiative of Austria, with a view to the current European Year of Creativity and Innovation, a peer learning activity about measures to promote transversal key competences was held in Vienna in November 2008.² In addition, within the framework of the peer reviews of existing NMSs, the method of peer learning activities was adopted and teachers were trained in the whole of Austria enabling them to apply the peer review method themselves.

Within the framework of Austria's activities related to the European Year of Creativity and Innovation 2009, another focus is on the provision of transversal key competences. As well as a discourse about the contents of innovative competence provision methods, awareness-raising measures aim to highlight the significance of the key competences and to increase participation in relevant programmes and projects (www.kreativinnovativ09.at).

I.2. Integration of the eight key competences into the national framework curriculum and comparable documents in basic education, VET and CET

Major **educational objectives for the entire school system** resulting from the 8 key competences are integrated into the Austrian school legislation with constitutional status, in order to emphasise wide consensus among educational policy-makers. The 8 key competences are also taken into consideration in all curricula, some however with differing special focuses related to the respective school form (particularly interdisciplinary competences).

To ensure a more pronounced integration of the key competences into teaching, a development project on a wide strategic basis was launched in October 2008, which aims at “bundling” the 14 **“educational principles”**³ combined with an effective focus on the eight key competences. The **key competences will merge with the general educational objectives / educational areas**. Already the educational principles valid to date have been ideally suited to support the acquisition of key competences and strengthen the students' judgemental skills, methodological competence and capacity with a view to complex connections of issues.

In the curriculum architecture, this encouragement of the key competences is planned to be effected via the **“educational areas”** already existing in the curricula of the lower cycle of AHS and lower secondary school. The five currently defined educational areas are the following: “language and communication”; “humans and society”; “nature and technology”; and “health and physical exercise”. These educational areas would have to be extended with a view to complete inclusion of all key competences by adding the area “business and the world of work” (working title). With the involvement of all relevant actors, i.e. professional and specialist groups, experts, etc., the aim of this project is to provide concrete results that are relevant for teaching and can be implemented in a practice-oriented manner by late 2010.

In the following, special focuses related to the provision of the 8 key competences will be presented:

1) Communication in the mother tongue

Educational standards in the subject of German have been defined for the 4th and 8th school years and legally anchored effective from 1.1.2009, with the first regular testing conducted in 2012/2013. At present, work is also being carried out on the legal introduction of the partly standardised, competence-oriented upper secondary school leaving exam taken at AHS, which also includes the subject of German (launch expected for 2014). In VET, educational standards for German (13th school year) have been piloted since autumn 2007.

² <http://www.kreativinnovativ09.at/fileadmin/EuDocs/Vienna%20PLA%20final%20version%20Jan%2026th.pdf>

³ A clear definition of the educational principles' function can be found in “Framework ordinance on literacy” (Circular No. 18/1999): “Educational principles contribute to implementing the educational and learning missions that are not assigned to one or a few school subjects but become effective in a cross-curricular way in a combined action of many or all school subjects. The implementation of the educational principles in day-to-day school work requires a coordination of the individual subjects by using all cross-connections.”

In the **area of reading literacy** it is mainly necessary, building on the detailed results of *PIRLS 2006*⁴, to further increase the teachers' diagnostic competence. Related measures are implemented in the field of in-service and further training. A central role is taken by the consideration of personal performance and existing competences. To meet the individual's speed of learning, libraries are to be increasingly involved in the teaching work. Also the extension of the concept of reading to more modern technologies (computers, mobile phones) allows to increasingly integrate the students' real lifestyles. Therefore it is planned to develop and test a comprehensive literacy concept from the school year 2009/10 onwards.

Ordinances regarding curricula for mother tongue instruction have been passed for general compulsory schools and AHSs. These curricula are not language-specific so apply to all languages on offer, and allow the number of languages to be expanded at any time. The objective of mother-tongue instruction is to develop and strengthen bilingualism and enhance the bilingual pupils' identity (for more details please refer to NR2007, Chapter 1.3.1).

2) Communication in foreign languages / second language⁵

Measures for pupils with first languages other than German: Ordinances regarding curricula for "*German as a second language*" (DaZ) have been adopted for primary and special needs schools under the term: "*Curriculum extension for students with non-German mother tongue*", for prevocational schools and AHS there are "*Special didactical principles if German is the second language*" and at schools and colleges of business administration it is possible to offer, building on a diagnostic procedure (reading, logic of language, spelling, correctness of language), a 2-hour optional exercise "*Supporting language training German*" (cf. also NR2007, Chapter 3.1.3).

Depending on local conditions, schools have the option to organise the special support classes in German parallel to instruction, in addition to instruction, or in an integrated approach. The latter form means that a team consisting of two teachers (class teacher or subject teacher plus support teacher) works with the entire class. In the **school year 2006/07, in addition to the existing offers at primary schools, so-called "language support classes" for irregular students were introduced and extended in the school year 2008/09 to lower secondary schools and prevocational schools. Instruction is held on the basis of the framework curricula for the respective school type; the staff resources required for that purpose are made available by the BMUKK.**

Basic competences for foreign languages at the end of primary level: The specification of basic competences constitutes a major step of quality assurance in foreign language instruction at primary level. This specification, made against the background of the competence model *CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)* and of the applicable curriculum, aims to demonstrate which language skills should be reached in a sustainable manner by the end of primary level. Additional material in the form of task-oriented teaching sequences aims to make learning targets concrete. The overall objective is a linking in terms of content and methodology to the European language portfolio for elementary school, which also builds on the CEFR competence model.

Educational standards for English have been defined for the 8th school year and legally anchored effective from 1.1.2009, with the first testing conducted in 2012/2013. The partly standardised, competence-oriented upper secondary school leaving exam taken at AHS is planned to comprise one modern foreign language (see above). In the field of VET, as well as the introduction of educational standards for foreign languages in the 13th school year (currently in the piloting phase), mainly *CLIL (content and language integrated learning)* is being continued and further developed in the period under observation. A diagnostic check for the 9th school year is currently being prepared, is scheduled to be piloted starting in the coming school year, and will be applied at BMHSs from 2010/2011 onwards on a nationwide basis.

For early language promotion of the language of instruction German for children with a first language other than German, cf. the key competence "Communication in the mother tongue".

⁴ Progress in International Reading Literacy Study

⁵ This corresponds to the official language of German for people with a migration background, see: Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on key competences for lifelong learning

In the area of schools and colleges of business administration, an ESF-funded project to reduce the dropout rate in the 9th school year has been ongoing since the school year 2008/2009, aiming to improve the knowledge of the language of instruction German among pupils, particularly those with a first language other than German and showing language deficits. This project foresees a diagnosis of entry requirements (linguistic strength-weakness analysis) at the beginning of the 9th year, an elective exercise with tailored promotion, as well as an external language evaluation of learning progress by taking a valid language certificate (according to CEFR). This project also comprises an intensive methodological and didactical as well as specialist further training in DaZ for teachers of German.

3) Mathematical competence and competences in science and technology

Educational standards have been defined for mathematics for the 4th school year, and for mathematics and science for the 8th year and legally anchored, with the first testing conducted in 2012/2013. The partly standardised, competence-oriented upper secondary school leaving exam taken at AHS is planned to comprise the subject of mathematics as well (see above).

Practice-oriented application of the subjects within the framework of VET takes place at training workshops, practice lab, in so-called engineers'/technicians' projects, and diploma projects in the final year of VET college, etc. In all school levels, full access to IT equipment has been safeguarded.

IMST Initiative⁶: In the mid-1990s Austria took part in the TIMSS study for the first time. The analytical project IMST (1998-1999) aimed to explore the causes of the poor results of Austrian pupils at upper secondary level. To start sustainable improvement processes – building on the results of IMST – the development initiative IMST² (2000-2004) was launched with the aim of improving teaching in mathematics, science and informatics as well as related subjects. Meanwhile the project *IMST³ Plus* has been kicked off (for more details, cf. the Annex).

With the programmes *Jugend Innovativ* (a joint project of BMUKK and BMWFJ), *Sparkling Science* (BMUKK and BMWF) and *Generation Innovation* (BMUKK and BMVIT), pupils are given the opportunity to implement creative ideas into reality and/or do research in concrete projects (see Annex). As well as scientific and technological competences, other transversal competences such as social skills, learning to learn and sense of initiative are supported.

4) Digital competence

The use of PCs and the Internet has become a nationwide phenomenon among more than 90% of the 16-to-24-year-olds. In Austrian schools, PCs and the Internet have developed into a routine tool for learning, professional and private purposes. Education and training options are broadly diversified over all school forms and are applied in the whole of Austria. Via initiatives of the BMUKK, the regional education boards, or the schools themselves, the pupils' acquisition/development of competences is promoted through options provided due to school autonomy, networks (such as *eLSA schools*, see Annex), etc.

With its initiative *FutureLearningII* the BMUKK set targeted priorities in the concrete application of new forms of teaching and learning and the didactics of the new media. The expansion of central services for schools is one priority objective: Learning platforms and subject portals provide the basis for individual learning paths. Collaborative learning environments and interactive learning arrangements support creative ideas and solutions. E-content and e-learning projects support the individualisation of the learning process.

The continuation of professionalisation in teacher training represents one major focus: Concepts for e-learning didactics and online teacher training colleges are planned to be renewed and extended and the e-government component increasingly integrated (for details see Annex).

5) Learning to learn

In Austria, the promotion of learning to learn constitutes an element of the general section of the curricula, in particular under the aspect of **independent knowledge acquisition**: Pupils are to acquire relevant

⁶ Innovations in Mathematics, Science and Technology Teaching

learning techniques to be able to develop learning activities independently. More information is provided by subject-specific curricula. Tests to determine the acquisition of the learning-to-learn competence are not yet applied, but Austria did take part in the pre-pilot study of the European learning-to-learn project.

In practice, almost all schools at lower secondary level promote this basic competence mainly within the framework of options provided due to school autonomy (training workshops, elective exercises, workshops, methodological training, etc.).

The development of the pupils' **career planning and decision-making competence** at the interface between lower and upper secondary level by improved implementation of the compulsory subject "career guidance" (preparation of a package of measures with the social partners: process-oriented access, more commitment in implementation, collaboration with the offers of the social partners).

6) Social and civic competences

Due to the "*democracy initiative*" taken within the framework of reducing the voting age to 16 years, in 2008 the school subject "History and social studies" was extended by the area "**Political education**" at lower secondary level. At the level of curricula, competence-oriented objectives and themes have been anchored in a form derived from a scientifically prepared competence model for political education. This model was then anchored in the 8th grade curricula for the new school subject "History and political education". In this way, in the future it will be possible to ensure that all pupils elaborate fundamental content of political education in competence-oriented learning before they make their first election decision. Social and civic competences are thus strengthened as an integrated part in the curriculum of compulsory schooling. These innovations were accompanied by the provision of material for learning⁷ and measures in teacher training. In BMHSs the area "Political education" has already for a long time been integrated into curricula.

The **educational principle "intercultural learning"** was introduced at general compulsory schools and AHSs in the early 1990s. In nursery teacher training colleges, colleges of social pedagogy and their forms for people in employment, "intercultural learning" is both an educational principle and an elective exercise. Also in the other types of BMHS intercultural learning constitutes an integrated part of curricula. This field is complemented and enhanced in foreign language classes. Intercultural learning aims to contribute to improved mutual understanding, mutual appreciation, the recognition of common features and the end of prejudice, the objective being that it is integrated into all subjects as a cross-curricular theme.

In the **curricula** of general-education⁸ and VET⁹ schools and colleges, the prerequisites for **imparting social competences** in classes have been created. In addition, project-oriented teaching and above all the school subject "Project management and project work" in VET schools and colleges ensure acquisition of social competences such as the ability to work in teams, creative and logical thinking, joy of communication and capacity for conflict (cf. also Chapter I.6.). At schools and colleges of business administration there has been a specific subject "Personality development and social competence" since 2003. Also in the final exams, increasing importance is attached to the pupils' personal and social competences. In addition, educational standards for social competences have been elaborated for all school types, which all BHS graduates have to prove.

The Austrian **education strategy for sustainable development** was adopted in November 2008 and serves as orientation for implementing the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development (DESD). The strategy addresses all areas of learning (formal, non-formal and informal). DESD should provide suggestions and opportunities to question own standpoints and attitudes and contribute to individual capacity building. In educational work, the ecological, economic and social dimensions need to be jointly taken into consideration in terms of sustainable developments, and democratic and participatory elements need to be integrated.¹⁰

⁷ e.g. <http://www.politischebildung.com/?Sel=461>, www.politik-lernen.at or www.demokratiezentrum.org, www.politische-bildung.at

⁸ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/lp_abs.xml

⁹ http://www.bmukk.gv.at/schulen/unterricht/lp/lp_bbs.xml

¹⁰ <http://www.bildungsdekade.at/>

7) Sense of initiative and entrepreneurship:

Acquisition of this key competence is mainly encouraged by parts of the curriculum of VET schools and colleges, the possibility at colleges of engineering (HTLs) and colleges of agriculture and forestry to prepare diploma projects as part of the diploma exam, as well as the subject “Project management and project work”. The curriculum of colleges of business administration shows the anchoring of a specialisation in “**entrepreneurship and management**”. In a large number of other subjects (training firm, project and quality management, controlling, etc.) taught at VET schools and colleges as well as in dual training, not only entrepreneurial specialist knowledge but also entrepreneurial thinking and acting plus the related attitudes are imparted. In addition, the **educational principle “entrepreneurship education” (EE)** was implemented as a cross-curricular core competence in many curricula of VET schools and colleges at upper secondary level (college of business administration, colleges of agriculture and forestry, colleges of tourism) as well as in part-time vocational schools for apprentices (dual system).

The state entrepreneurial examination has, on the one hand, been replaced with final certificates of all VET schools and colleges, on the other hand, the **licence for entrepreneurs** has experienced a pronounced boom among students of secondary academic schools.

The ***Impulse Centre of Entrepreneurship Education (EESI)*** and a group of multipliers in all provinces were entrusted with the task by BMUKK of promoting and supporting EE in all schools at secondary level.

8) Cultural awareness and expression

With regard to basic education it must be stated that, based on a legal requirement, a fundamental development of understanding, access, dealing with variety and diversity is a topic treated in all lessons with content structured by subjects. At primary level, curricula are relatively stable (decades), in the timetables of lower secondary school, however, culturally differentiated areas are possible within the framework of school autonomy, but subject to a certain competitive pressure (“school profiles”).

Wide access to cultural expression and cultural awareness is foreseen by curricula in some subjects such as “arts, music, drama” and mother-tongue instruction and history at basic level and lower secondary level. Output checks and competence catalogues are gradually developed in the course of accompanying measures (such as on educational standards) and mainly aim to support comparability and independent control at school level.

In the curricula adjustments at upper secondary level, this field is hardly anchored, with the exception of relevant subjects (art, music), the related competences are supported by voluntary additional offers. The developing trend towards full-time schools opens up opportunities in the area where these competences can be found, but the quality of offers and the cost dynamic (contribution dependence of attractive segments) are currently still not sufficiently identified and controlled.

In many BMHSs the artistic-creative field represents a major aspect of general education and VET curricula. In colleges of business administration, the mandatory segment “cultural portfolio” has been anchored since 2004 in the subject of German in the basic curricula of the 1st to the 5th school year.

I.3. Support measures to ensure that *all* young people develop the key competences required for adult life

As part of the “*school textbook scheme*”, **textbooks** for all school grades are made available **free of charge**, and in all key competence areas various materials and support measures are available for teachers and learners (in printed form, as networks, learning platforms, web-based media pools, etc.)

Special-focus measures for learners with educational disadvantage:

School pilot project “New secondary school” (NMS): With the aim of preventing a too early career decision and with it the “inheritance” of the parents’ educational status in the long term, the NMS was introduced in 2008 in the form of a broad-based nationwide school pilot project. The NMS builds on the principle of joint learning of all 10-to-14-year-olds (currently, at the lower secondary level, they either attend lower secondary school or secondary academic school).

Early language promotion at nursery school: Since the autumn of 2008, all children who do not have sufficient command of the language of instruction German have the possibility to take advantage of

language promotion at nursery school and thus have the best possible prerequisites for their beginning of school life. In addition, an educational plan chapter for the area of “early childhood language promotion for children between 3 and 6 years of age” was developed with connection points for all educational areas and age groups, so that an orientation framework for developing the individual promotion concept is available.

For **measures for learners with a first language other than German** see Chapter I.3.

Educational guidance and counselling: Within the framework of the *Lifelong Guidance Strategy* information, counselling and guidance projects on learning and occupations have been promoted in cooperation with schools; from these projects, particularly those young people are intended to benefit who require support in their decision about education and VET paths. (Cf. Chapter III)

Area of special pedagogy

- Decree of new curricula for general special needs school, the special needs school for children with hearing impairments, and the special needs school for children with visual impairments (far-reaching correspondence with “regular school curricula”, disability-specific focuses, application of individual promotion schemes) with the aim of reducing barriers and thus improving the pupils’ opportunities – also by increasingly imparting subject-related, staff and social competences – for an as high as possible degree of participation in school and working life, society and independent life organisation.
- Regular central and regional in-service and further training events and expert conferences within the framework of university colleges of education on current disability-specific and inclusive-pedagogical themes (e.g. *ESNE – English in Special Needs Education*, further training days for teachers of blind or visually impaired pupils, sign language courses, pedagogical diagnostics, autism, etc.)
- Guidelines for the implementation of quality standards for integrative/inclusive classes, and guidelines for the implementation of individual support schemes, provision of an information and material pool in particular for teachers and other specialist staff from the special pedagogical / inclusive-pedagogical field at the website www.cisonline.at.

I.4. Creation of possibilities for all adults regarding continuing vocational education and training and updating of their key competences

Effective from 2007, the **budget of adult learning** was increased by about one third. In addition, for the ESF programming period 2007-2013, a total of EUR 49.9m (ESF and national funds) were made available particularly to promote the special focuses of basic education and acquisition of educational qualifications by adults. With this budget, relevant educational offers can be extended across Austria.

A longer-term securing of the nationwide, not-for-profit associations of adult learning (KEBÖ) is achieved by **service and performance agreements** with a validity of several years, while increasing structural funding at the same time. Within the framework of these service-level and performance agreements, agreements on objectives safeguard the implementation of joint educational policy priorities. Open access, transparent offers incl. educational guidance / counselling and continuous nationwide offers guarantee to adults that they can take part in CET measures in the field of the key competences. In concrete terms, measures in the fields of basic education (incl. ICT), acquisition of educational qualification by adults, political education, cultural education, social competences, personality development have been agreed on. For the agreed objectives, indicators have been developed and target values fixed.

One focus of support measures in adult learning is the further **expansion of new forms of teaching and learning** and accompanying offers. The paradigm shift process from *teaching* to *learning* is in full swing and therefore the acquisition of learning-to-learn competences is at the centre of measures. Another key aspect in this context is the introduction of e-learning, which e.g. by now is also applied successfully in German and literacy course offers for immigrants.

Competence assessment procedures are being developed in various projects and are already being applied in some measures, such as easily accessible educational offers for women.

Access to educational options for illiterate, “difficult-to-reach” and educationally disadvantaged people has been extended by a wide range of basic educational courses and offers preparing for the acquisition of the lower secondary level qualification. In related measures, special importance is attached to developing language competence, both in German as first and German as second language. In many cases, immigrants can take advantage of accompanying offers in their respective first language. Social competences, civic

competence/political education, ICT and learning-to-learn represent transversal themes aiming at securing the sustainable impact of these offers. In the development of an Austria-wide, provider-independent educational counselling network in the adult learning sector, the extension of competence assessment procedures plays a major role (competence portfolio, competence profile, competence balance, etc.). The Vienna adult education centres are planning to orient their courses to the 8 key competences.

The **educational leave scheme** is considered a major instrument for the acquisition of CET qualifications and since 2008 has been designed in a more attractive way by enabling time-flexible forms and raising the CET benefit to the amount of the notional unemployment benefit. The educational leave still needs to be agreed on between the parties to the employment contract; the prerequisite minimum employment duration has been reduced from 3 years to 1 year; in addition, seasonal workers also have the possibility to agree on educational leave for the duration of 3 months to 1 year.

I.4.a. Special adult target groups and specific measures

Target groups include the following: low-skilled people; people without any VET qualification or with lacking or inadequate basic education; socially and regionally disadvantaged people; immigrants; women; disadvantaged youth; older workers.

Measures relate to basic education, the acquisition of educational qualifications (lower secondary level qualification, *Berufsreifeprüfung*, *Studienberechtigungsprüfung*), educational guidance and educational counselling.

Example # 1 – Measures for women who are less likely to access education (“difficult to reach”): Women who are not used to learning and difficult to reach, and who due to their age, educational and qualification level and lack of ICT knowledge experience particular discrimination, are addressed in a targeted manner in rural and urban regions and receive guidance and counselling on site about special educational offers. In mobile so-called *ICT learning workshops* or in the educational scheme termed *Learning arrangement*, these women acquire digital competence, they learn to learn, they learn to organise themselves, develop the willingness to cooperate, and a sense of initiative. As an accompanying measure, they are offered educational counselling with analyses of potential and coaching. The educational schemes for this target group are currently being transferred to other regions, adjusted to the needs on site and, at the same time, further developed. It is the longer-term goal to anchor, with the support of the ESF programme, LLL for women who are not used to learning, in the structures and educational policies of the adult learning sector¹¹.

Example # 2 – Measures for immigrants: These measures take the target group’s special living conditions into account and offer entry to an educational process that enables participants to actively design their integration by attending low-threshold educational offers and coaching sessions. Language promotion is not conducted in an isolated manner but integrated into educational measures including not only language competence, digital competence, mathematical competence, learning to learn, social and civic competences. Language courses are also part of the preparatory measures for the lower secondary qualification, which are attended by ca. 40% of immigrants. Within the framework of individual multilingual educational counselling, immigrants are supported in the use of their resources, the presentation of their competences, and the recognition of the qualifications they acquired in their country of origin. In addition, the development of schemes of documentation, assessment and the recognition of competences in the field of basic education and language acquisition is promoted.

Another focus is on developing an Austria-wide **training offer for trainers in the field of basic education and second-language acquisition for immigrants**. The particular target group are trainers with a migration background.

The promoted offers in adult learning enable immigrants to achieve different levels of language training: From language level A1 to the internationally recognised Austrian language diploma, which is recognised, among other things, as an additional qualification by the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) and as proof of German knowledge in connection with Austrian citizenship.

¹¹ www.learnforever.at

One major sub-aspect of adult learning is **university-based CET**, which is offered in different forms and types at public universities and represents a major factor in the sense of profile building. Meanwhile a “quiet trend towards higher academic degrees” has occurred among the staff active in the adult education sector, mainly due to attendance of HE study courses and programmes in pedagogy with the focus on adult education. Hundreds of graduates from recent years are now active successfully in middle and upper leadership positions in all areas of ALE / CET (cf. also Annex).

I.4.b. Availability of national data concerning the attendance by adults in measures aiming to expand key competences

Statistical data about adult learning are available both from studies and by queries from Statistics Austria. This is an excerpt of publications supplying data material:

Erwachsenenbildung. Hauptergebnisse der Erhebung über Erwachsenenbildung (AES) 2007, Brigitte Salfinger, Guido Sommer-Binder: In Statistische Nachrichten 1/2009, S. 35-49

Betriebliche Weiterbildung 2005, Wolfgang Pauli, Guido Sommer-Binder, Hrsg. Statistik Austria 2008 (Verlag Österreich GmbH)

Qualifizierungsleistungen der Unternehmen in Österreich. Unternehmensbefragung und Analyse europäischer Erhebungen, Arthur Schneeberger, et alii, ibw-Forschungsbericht Nr. 145, Wien 2008.

More data can be obtained from the website of Statistics Austria¹² and the individual adult learning associations, e.g. the Association of Austrian Adult Education Centres¹³ or the Economic Promotion Institute Austria. In addition, within the framework of the evaluation of the entire ESF OP “Employment” in the field of ALE, the collected data, a part of which also relates to measures aiming at improving the key competences, are being analysed.

I.4.c. Cooperation in the development of measures for adults with representatives of other policy areas, social partners and other actors

Within the framework of the **LLL strategy**, cooperation with other policy areas, the social partners and stakeholders in ALE is effected, on the one hand, through an interministerial strategy group, which also comprises the social partners, and on the other hand via open coordination processes, such as in thematic workshops or written consultation procedures.

For the nationwide coordinated development of **measures in action fields that are an educational policy priority**, a top-notch **working group** directly subordinated to the federal minister has been set up, which apart from representatives of all provinces also comprises the social partners, representatives of the large adult learning umbrella organisations, scientists and one representative of the labour market administration authority. This expert group elaborates new support schemes to enable free-of-charge attendance of the following educational measures:

- Compulsory school qualification for young people and adults
- *Berufsreifeprüfung* for young people and adults
- Promotion of the acquisition of basic competences and completion of basic education

At the level of measures, the AMS, social partners and provincial governments are involved.

Regular communication (journées fixes, working groups, participation in the steering committee of the Austrian Conference of Adult Education Institutions (KEBÖ) when relevant themes are discussed) is held between KEBÖ and BMUKK as one major instrument of continuous cooperation.

¹² http://www.statistik.at/web_de/dynamic/statistiken/bildung_und_kultur/erwachsenenbildung_weiterbildung_lebenslanges_lernen/publikationen?id=5&webcat=129&nodeId=295&frag=3&listid=129

¹³ <http://www.adulteducation.at/de/struktur/statistik/auswertungen/11/>

I.5. Development of curricula; explanations on competence requirements for teaching staff and similar guidelines on IVET; and part-time CVET with a view to a competence-based approach. Special measures for teachers and trainers in VET and CVET

a) IVET

After the transformation of the former “postsecondary teacher training colleges” into the **newly institutionalised “university colleges of education” (PHs)**, a restructuring process in terms of content is taking place in several respects. On the one hand, the entire education has been upgraded, all graduates now complete their training with the academic degree “Bachelor of Education (BEd)”. On the other hand, all pedagogy-related VET paths of the tertiary sector (with the exception of university-based programmes) are held centrally at one single institution, which entails an extremely high degree of fertilisation regarding pedagogical curricula development across the different forms of VET.

At present, a concrete **development process** is ongoing regarding the **curricula’s redesign towards learning outcome orientation and competence basis**. Competence catalogues are being developed that are widely oriented towards the five domains of teachers’ professionalism (cf. *EPIK process*, see below). The Austria-wide coordination of these competence catalogues is planned to be effected within the framework of expert working groups. The results of the competence-based redesigning of curricula will be integrated via PHs directly into initial, continuing and further training of teachers.

Area of special pedagogy: The development of a BMUKK position paper building on the changed occupational requirements of (special) pedagogues (completed paradigm shift from a segregating towards an integrative/inclusive form of pedagogy) and in connection with the reformed initial education of compulsory school teachers at PHs aims to contribute to integrating the principles of integrative/inclusive pedagogy into the curricula of all university-based and HE programmes. At present, the implementation status at PHs is being evaluated.

In the **VET sector** a concrete debate on developments is currently being held regarding a learning outcome-oriented and competence-based redesigning of curricula. The results of debates are integrated via PHs directly into initial, continuing and further training of teachers (see development of standards in the field of VET, Chapter I/2 – Key competence # 7).

In the field of “**Social and civic competences**”, agreements on objectives and performance agreements have been concluded between PHs and BMUKK. In addition, collaboration between PHs and ÖZEPS (cf. Chapter I.2) is being supported and promoted. BMUKK and the Vienna University jointly offer train-the-trainer seminars on social learning for multipliers at PHs.

Professionalisation of teachers for the field “German as second language”: To take account of multilingualism at schools (17.8% of all pupils in Austria have a first language other than German) it is planned to further intensify initial, continuing and further training of teachers of DaZ at PHs: DaZ and multilingualism will become part of the obligatory training of all compulsory school teachers. To that effect, a DaZ module has been developed and made available to PHs.

b) Further and continuing training

The following offers can be used by individuals in the field of part-time further and continuing training of teachers: courses for personality development, such as communication competence, conflict resolution strategies, violence prevention (projects including “*White feather – together against violence*”), social competence (projects such as the “*WiSK programme – promotion of social and intercultural competence*”), ability to work in teams, coaching and counselling competence. PHs are primarily responsible for developing these courses. ÖZEPS holds an Austria-wide coordinating function (cf. Chapter I.2.). At internal school level, school development measures are taken regarding the themes above as well as in general, with parts of school teams or all teachers of a school taking part. It is about joint development and processes adjusted to the schools’ focuses and which contribute to a school’s profile building. In addition, joint learning processes about national educational projects take place at internal school level, in which all teachers of a school must be involved – e.g. in the introduction and implementation of educational standards. This guarantees that teachers across Austria are involved in school development measures.

The **EPIK initiative** (*“development of professionalism in the international context”*), which was launched by BMUKK in 2005, has developed a model of *“five domains of teacher professionalism”*, which is integrated into training curricula and courses of further and continuing training of teachers. These domains describe fields of competence that determine teachers’ professional work:

- the ability for reflection and discourse (the sharing of knowledge and abilities),
- the ability to differentiate (dealing with major and minor differences),
- collegiality (the productivity of cooperation),
- awareness of the profession (perceiving oneself as an expert) and
- personal mastery (the power of individual skills)

The implementation of these domains within initial, continuing and further training is primarily effected via PHs but also, in first approaches, at universities (regarding the training of teachers for upper secondary schools).

I.6. Measures to promote the acquisition of transversal key competences in basic education, IVET and CVET, adult learning and continuing teacher training

Area of school education

In the piloting of the broadly designed nationwide **school pilot project “new secondary school”** core elements of this new school form are individual accesses to learning and support measures, “personalised learning”, as well as coaching for pupils. For implementation, continuing and further training measures for teachers are conducted within the framework of an Austria-wide development project with curriculum workshops, learning studios and networking days at regional and federal level. In addition, PHs conduct further training measures, measures accompanying school development and networking at regional level and for individual school locations. The objective is to develop a “new learning culture”, which is also planned to impact on all other school types.

The principle of individualisation and differentiation in teaching is also considered a central task at all other school types: With the **25plus initiative** aiming to reduce the number of pupils per class and, at the same time, individualise teaching and learning, the first moves were taken in 2007 to promote pupils in the best possible way in accordance with their personality, learning prerequisites and potential. Special attention is paid to the fields of: learning status observation, planning of teaching, designing of tasks, and feedback on performance. The goal of this initiative is to integrate the methods of dealing with heterogeneity and diversity (teaching and learning arrangements such as team teaching, open learning, weekly schedule instruction, project work, different forms of inner differentiation, regular individual feedback, alternative forms of performance appraisal - e.g. portfolio) better than in the past in teaching practice (cf. also Annex).

With the academic year 2008/09, the implementation phase of **educational standards**, which requires a large-scale switching to competence-based knowledge provision, will be launched in Austria. In this context, a coherent further and continuing teacher training programme has been developed. Responsible for this development is BIFIE (Federal Institute for Education Research, Innovation and Development of the Austrian Schooling System) with intense involvement of PHs, which are also in charge of implementing the continuing and further training measures and the provision of counselling and support for schools in the development processes that are required for implementation. Programmes have been developed for trainers, multipliers and transformers, counsellors and guidance counsellors, executives (inspection, school management) and for teachers. This further training initiative extends over all regions, has been designed with a long-term perspective and coordinated on a nationwide basis; its aim is to safeguard the change towards outcome-oriented, sustainable competence development as well as targeted individual promotion as a compulsory teaching principle.

New ways of learning applied in the further and continuing training of teachers include new forms of learning from and with each other. The focus here is mainly on **internal school learning schemes** (peer learning, cooperative team learning schemes, intervision and supervision groups) as well as networking strategies (regional, supraregional networks and communities with face-to-face learning phases and/or with the use of electronic platforms).

On the implementation of competence orientation in continuing and further teacher training, see Chapter I.5.

Teamwork and interdisciplinary work are supported and encouraged, thus also project classes for pupils. (Framework ordinances on project-oriented teaching, creativity and holistic education and learning, as well as on media education)

Social and civic competences are anchored by providing the basis in curricula of general-education and VET schools and colleges, in the designing by project-oriented teaching and in schemes for constructive conflict resolution (peer mediation at Austrian schools) (cf. also Chapter I.2.). Education for Europe, like all measures in the wide field of “political education”, is mainly found under the key competence “civic competence”. From development-policy educational work, a switch to a **multiplier training programme** is foreseen. This switch will be effected as early as in 2009. Also offers for pupils’ representatives are conceived as peer learning courses outside the regular teaching framework, in cooperation with NGOs.

About the “*Democracy initiative*” see Chapter I.2.

In 2005, BMUKK set up a nationwide *Austrian Centre for Personal Development and Social Learning* (ÖZEPS, www.oezeeps.at), which is active for all school types. Its main tasks include the following: supporting the sustainable integration of methods, schemes and implementation options for acquiring personal and social competences; the establishment of networks at all public and private PHs; networking with educational and scientific institutions and implementation of supporting measures (teaching materials, seminars, etc.).

The key competence approach requires that more attention is paid to the acquisition of skills and a positive attitude to learning and that concepts for cooperation and increased autonomy are promoted. One of the key themes determined by the Cluster for Key Competences is in this connection the **appraisal of learning and the assessment of the school**. At the level of individuals it is necessary to extend and improve the formative assessment (“assessment for learning”), whereas at system level control instruments to supervise the acquisition of transversal competences need to be developed.

Area of adult learning

In this area, on the one hand, new didactical concepts are tested in educational measures, on the other hand, adult-oriented forms of learning are used that encourage self-directed and self-organised learning and build up lifelong learning competences. Relevant examples include learning workshops and learning arrangements of the “learn forever” initiative (see I.4a).

Target group-oriented assessment instruments to recognise already acquired competences are developed in the individual basic education measures or are already being applied.

A majority of programmes aiming at basic education and the acquisition of educational qualifications offer modules to acquire social and civic competences or take them into account as transversal themes. This is considered in the *Operational Programme “Employment”*.

In the field related to preparation for *Berufsreifeprüfung* and lower secondary school qualification, **competence-based curricula** for courses at adult learning institutions are currently being elaborated. In this context, German language competence, foreign language competence represent major elements. Project activities particularly in the specialist area serve to support independent learning. In addition, procedures to identify competences as well as portfolio instruments to document competences are being developed.

I.7. Use of overall assessments and formative assessments to support pupils/students in the acquisition of key competences including transversal competences

The examination of the educational standards in general education at the end of the four-year programmes is a **summative evaluation**. This is the first step in Austria to implement external evaluation. Educational standards however are currently mainly used as monitoring instruments, rather than as performance assessments related to individual pupils. The assessments and feedback based on them provide information about the success of teaching and about development potential of the Austrian school system, and are intended to support sustainable outcome orientation in planning and implementation of instruction and quality development (at federal, provincial and school level).

It is also important to make available to teachers instruments of **formative evaluation** (“assessment”) for the various grades before external examinations (levels 2,3 and 6,7). BMUKK has commissioned the development, piloting and dissemination of diagnostic instruments for self-evaluation, these are planned to be used even before the first external surveys.

The strategy consists in creating a **system balanced as much as possible between formative (external) and summative (self-) evaluation**, to give teachers continuous feedback about the success of their teaching and the pupils’ competence development. The Austrian contribution to the draft comparative report “*National Testing of Pupils in Europe*” dated February 2009 relates to the educational standards in general education and the strategy described here.

Area of VET

About educational standards in the area of VET, cf. Chapter 3

Engineers’ and technicians’ projects – diploma projects conducted at colleges of engineering as part of the diploma exam, as well as project work carried out during classroom instruction – serve the acquisition and development of competences such as sense of initiative and independence, ability to work in teams and communicate, as well as the ability to acquire knowledge oneself and use it. In addition, these activities train entrepreneurial competence, as diploma projects are frequently conducted in cooperation with companies or non-profit organisations (see Annex).

Area of adult learning

The *Academy of Continuing Education* (wba; www.wba.or.at) is a best-practice model of an accreditation and recognition system for adult educators that builds on competences. The competences are assessed and recognised based on defined standards. wba awards a two-tier occupational qualification with a certificate and diploma and support permeability between adult education and university-based initial and continuing training (see Annex).

I.8. Assessment of outcomes of education and training systems in relation to key competences at national/regional/local levels. Use of outcomes for the development of strategies

The **securing of “basic¹⁴ competences” in the area of the key competences: mother tongue, foreign languages, mathematics/sciences** is a project of educational policy priority. Not least participation in and the outcomes of international assessments (*PISA*, *PIRLS*, *TIMMS*) have revealed need for action in this respect. The development, legal anchoring and implementation of the national education standards has therefore been encouraged by educational policy-makers in recent years and included in the government programmes as a mission.

The connecting element is **competence and learning outcome orientation**, which also points towards a paradigm change in the control of the education system: from mere input control towards an at least partial outcome orientation. The development of standardised, competence-oriented forms of final exams at the end of upper secondary level (the so-called *Reifeprüfung*, coupled with granting of access to the tertiary sector) must also be seen in this context; this development was launched two years ago in the field of general education and has, in the pilot stage, already met with widespread acceptance among the involved schools. The VET sector has also introduced analogous development processes.

In April 2009 the *Austrian National Report on Education 2009* (NRE) will come out, which – apart from the indicator section from the first volume – will probably comprise 18 thematic analyses of selected educational policy activity fields. In this second volume, some of the key competences (mother tongue and foreign language, mathematics, science and technology, digital competence, cultural awareness and expression) will be addressed directly, the others (learning to learn, social and civic competences, sense of initiative and entrepreneurial thinking) are included in the contributions as a transversal theme. Great importance is attached to the NRE, not least because it is elaborated – following a consultation process in the selection of topics – without the political control level exerting any influence and also because the quality of contributions is ensured by applying a complex review procedure. It can be assumed that the

¹⁴ Competences are considered basic if they cover major content-related areas of a subject and are thus essential for the development of competences whose sustainable acquisition is of central importance for further school-based and vocational education and training.

findings and recommendations contained in the NRE will play a major role in upcoming strategy development processes.

About the *VET Quality Initiative (QIBB)* see Chapter III.

CHAPTER II: TRANSVERSAL ISSUES RELATED TO LIFELONG LEARNING

II.1. Progress in the development and implementation of a coherent and comprehensive LLL strategy (including the development of a national qualifications framework in connection with the EQF, of systems to validate non-formal or informal learning, and of concepts based on learning outcomes)

Between October 2007 and June 2008, in an interministerial consultation process and with the collaboration of scientists and the informal involvement of the social partners, the **LLL strategy paper** “*Knowledge – opportunities – competences; strategy to implement lifelong learning in Austria*” was drawn up.

The 119-page paper aims to function as a joint reference document for the further implementation of the LLL strategy with consideration of the various spheres of responsibility (e.g. at federal or provincial level and social partner responsibilities). In this way, a framework encompassing institutions and spheres of responsibility for the strategic orientation of the individual measures towards a comprehensive perspective of lifelong learning is to be created.

To achieve this aim, the LLL strategy paper first of all assesses the current situation and then reveals on the basis of the preliminary work presented in the NR2007 and, in particular, on the basis of the Government Programme of the XXIII. Legislation Period the following action-controlling aspects:

- Measures already launched according to the five strategic “guidelines” (here, examples are mentioned that have to date been submitted by the members of the interministerial working group to elaborate the LLL strategy.)
- Medium- and longer-term objectives and development plans – with medium-term measures designed for a period of 2–5 years, longer-term measures for a period of 5-10 years.
- Targets and indicators for success control
- Additional steps to define actions in individual, still open activity areas

The presentation of challenges and the current framework for LLL is built up as follows:

- In Section 1, a broad overview of the LLL strategy objectives and content-related cornerstones is provided.
- In Section 2, on the basis of some informative areas, the overall economic and social framework is specified, an overview of the financial structures and the structures in terms of competence legislation in Austria is given, and reference to additional, also internationally anchored strategic activity areas that are closely associated with the LLL strategy are explained.
- The 3rd Section is dedicated to the individual activity areas pursuant to the five guidelines of the LLL strategy and puts them into a relationship with current projects conducted within the framework of the present government programme. Apart from major activity areas, targets and indicators for every guideline are also formulated. Concrete individual measures serving to implement these guidelines are then listed in the Annex.
- In Section 4, timeframes and objectives are used to define those areas that still require more in-depth clarification within the framework of the implementation of the LLL.
- The Annex then provides a selection of concrete individual measures related to the activity areas of the individual guidelines. These are measures submitted by the members of the interministerial working group by way of example. In addition, the Annex also includes complementary table material.

Another consultation process about the LLL strategy paper conducted on a broad basis with the involvement of all stakeholders was held in the period from June to November 2008. Although a short delay occurred in the original schedule due to the reconstitution of the federal government, since January 2009 a team of five independent scientists has been responsible for evaluating the submitted statements and elaborating recommendations for the next action steps and the further definition and implementation of the LLL strategy (see also Annex).

After that, in 2009, it is planned to officially inform the ministerial council about the outcomes of the consultation process and bring about an interdepartmental decision about the further procedure.

One success of the strategy development to date is, at all events, that the five guidelines of the Austrian LLL strategy are now widely accepted, with reference made to them in a large number of sub-strategies and planning documents of various administrative areas and organisations. Examples of these references include documents published by the Austrian University Conference as well as documents of the Federal Ministry for Agriculture and Forestry, the Environment and Water Management, and documents of Public Employment Service Austria (AMS), the Chamber of Labour, the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber, the Federation of Austrian Industry, and many more.¹⁵

The **activities related to lifelong guidance (LLG)** also need to be mentioned in connection with the development and implementation of a national LLL strategy. LLG is firmly established as one of the five guidelines. The national LLL strategy, which has been prepared by the national steering group under the general supervision of BMUKK with representatives of all ministries and institutions in charge at federal level for information, guidance and counselling on educational and career issues, pursues the following five main programmatic objectives:

1. Implementation of basic competences for educational career and life planning in all curricula
2. Focus on process orientation and support
3. Professionalisation of advisers, counsellors, trainers
4. Quality assurance and evaluation of offers, processes and structures
5. Widening access – creating offers for new target groups.

The LLG strategy formed the basis of planning for a large number of measures in the years 2007 and 2008. Relevant examples include:

- Extension of provider-neutral offers in educational counselling for adults accompanied by improved coordination and measures aiming at the further professionalisation of counsellors (project “bib-innovation-network 2007-2010” - www.bib-infonet.at)
- Intensification of guidance for holders of the “Reifeprüfung”-Certificate within the *key2success*¹⁶ initiative and the “*Studienchecker*” project (for more details, cf. Annex)
- Promotion of projects aiming at information, counselling and guidance on learning and occupations in, and in cooperation with, schools within the framework of implementing the Operational Programme of ESF Objective 2 (2007-2013).
- Establishment of interdepartmental coordination and cooperation mechanisms in information, counselling and guidance projects on learning and occupations at the regional and federal level (national LLG Forum, [siehe www.lifelongguidance.at](http://www.lifelongguidance.at)).

For the further development of the national LLL strategy, the linking with other European projects such as the European Qualifications Framework is important. As a result of the consultation process on the EQF, the **development of a National qualifications framework (NQF)**, which includes formal, non-formal and informal learning, has been advocated. In the development design, the overall education process was structured into three corridors:

- ⇒ corridor 1 deals with the formal education system with (state) recognised certificates,
- ⇒ corridor 2 with non-formal learning, including adult learning, and
- ⇒ corridor 3 deals with the theme of informal learning in connection with the NQF, which is planned to be developed.

¹⁵ The five guidelines of the Austrian LLL strategy are: 1) **life-stage orientation**, 2) **putting learners at the centre**, 3) **lifelong guidance**, 4) **competence orientation** and 5) **promoting participation in LLL**

¹⁶ <http://key2success.schulpsychologie.at>

Relevant activities are planned to be conducted in parallel, to ensure that interactions, references and information transfer are considered. For the entire development and implementation process, the following work structures have been set up:

- One project group comprising representatives of BMUKK and BMWF, which conducts strategic planning, the coordination of the development and consultation process and operational implementation.
- One national steering group comprising representatives of the main actors of the Austrian education landscape that have direct influence on the qualification processes and content, on validation and recognition mechanisms, and on legal framework conditions (i.e. ministries, social partners, representatives of the provinces, other stakeholders if and when necessary).

A consultation phase on the NQF took place from January to June 2008. A total of 276 opinions were obtained among others from the fields of general education, vocational training, adult learning, tertiary education, ministries and social partners. A group of experts has analysed the statements it received and drawn up an expert document. The main results of the consultation process were the following recommendations as expressed in an expert report:

- Improving communication between the individual educational segments (i.e. creation of trust)
- Necessity of clarifying terms such as equivalence, qualification/partial qualification
- Development of an explanatory table about the descriptors
- Switching to learning outcome orientation
- Recognition of non-formally and informally obtained learning outcomes.

Parallel to the developments in corridor 1, activities related to corridor 2 were also launched. For that purpose, a strategy and a working group were formed. The objective is to present a **concept document on non-formal learning**. This is to present the importance of non-formal learning within the NQF and enable positioning as well as point out possible competence identification procedures and validation strategies. Organisational considerations such as the establishment of so-called “awarding bodies” are at the centre of debates as well as the achievement of transparency, comparability and comprehensible permeability.

CHAPTER III: VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION AND TRAINING

III.1. Successes in relation to initiatives to make VET and CET more attractive and enhance these sectors' importance for the labour market

The VET sector plays a major role in the Austrian education landscape. The number of youth who attend an IVET programme in Austria at the upper secondary level is with some 80% the third highest within the EU, after the Czech Republic and Slovakia. In the VET sector, a wide range of different IVET programmes and IVET forms are available. The low youth unemployment rate in Austria in an EU comparison is also considered a success achieved due to VET (see Annex).

One explicit goal of VET policies that is of high priority at all levels is the maintenance of the attractiveness of VET and its extension and continuous further development. In this context, the reform processes are pushed forward in particular by the changing requirements of the labour market, technological change, the worldwide recognisable trend towards attendance of higher and longer VET programmes, the increasing importance of lifelong learning, social changes, migration combined with a growing number of pupils of non-German mother tongue, the EU education policy, and comparative OECD studies.

Here, the Austrian VET system remains unchanged in its basic structure while being adjusted to new economic and social requirements by undergoing permanent reforms. The reform process is facilitated by close as well as **institutionalised cooperation between the responsible national and regional authorities and the social partners**. Thus, the Austrian curricula for VET schools and colleges and the dual system are regularly updated and new programmes created, with competent ministries cooperating closely with the social partners and various experts. This aims to ensure that programmes also meet actual training needs.

In the reporting period 2007 until 2009 in particular the further development of existing measures as well as the following new initiatives could be observed:

Increasing permeability: The **Berufsreifeprüfung**, which was introduced in 1997 (as an exam and certificate providing HE access as an additional exam and certificate for graduates of an apprenticeship or VET school) is becoming increasingly popular and shows growing attendance figures. Due to reforms and expansion it is also becoming attractive for other target groups. A new introduction is the possibility of **completing an apprenticeship and Berufsreifeprüfung at the same time** (under the so-called “*Lehre mit Matura*” scheme): Under this scheme, preparation for Berufsreifeprüfung should be conducted simultaneously with apprenticeship training in “first-chance education”, either by prolonging training time upon completion of the apprenticeship contract or in parallel/shortly after apprenticeship training. Three of the four partial exams can be taken before the final apprenticeship exam, the final partial exam – as previously – only when candidates are at least 19 years of age. Uniform, competence-oriented curricula are being developed for the three core subjects German, English and mathematics; the specialist-area exam can also be taken within the framework of the apprenticeship-leave exam (abbreviated in German to “LAP”). Since the academic year 2008/09 attendance of courses has been free of charge for apprentices.

In the future, students who have successfully completed at least three years (minimum requirement) of a VET college and boast at least three years of professional experience can also take a Berufsreifeprüfung.

In addition, the option of an “exceptional admission to the apprenticeship-leave examination”, which those people are eligible to who can furnish proof of relevant professional experience, is also still being used successfully.

Another measure to increase permeability in the (VET) school system is the currently discussed **recognition and validation of informally and non-formally acquired learning outcomes**.

QIBB was launched in 2005/2006 as a comprehensive quality management system with the aim of safeguarding and further developing the quality of VET schools and colleges (cf. NR2007,). QIBB sees itself explicitly as a strategy for implementing the Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) developed at European level (cf. BMBWK 2006, p. 16 and 18-21). A key success factor of QIBB is its high participation rate by schools of an average of 75%, in the majority of school types the share of schools implementing QIBB is at 90% or above (as of March 2007, cf. Gutknecht-Gmeiner et al. 2007, p. 93). This is a very high value particularly when considering the voluntary nature of participation. In the reporting

period, the **Austrian Reference Point for Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training (ARQUA-VET)** was set up.

Educational standards have been developed in the VET school sector since early 2005 (piloting phase since 2007). To ensure acquisition of a final qualification, first of all educational standards for the 13th year of schooling were formulated for selected general-education subjects and selected entire specialist training programmes. This aims to improve the definition of interfaces and design transitions more smoothly. Current work is focusing on designing and piloting didactic examples for the classroom which are to contribute to improving teaching quality (cf. also Annex).

Modularisation: The 2006 BAG amendment is the legal basis for modularisation of apprenticeship training aiming to flexibilise the VET system, improve compliance with sectoral requirements, create additional numbers of potential new training enterprises, and link IVET and specialisation in occupations. A modular apprenticeship trade consists of a basic module as well as main and specialised modules, with qualifications corresponding to the respective sectors' special production modes and services. Within a maximum total training period of up to four years, there are relevant options.

About the **EQF/NQF** see Chapter 2.

ECVET: At present, preparatory activities, particularly a comprehensive study, about the implementation of ECVET are being conducted in Austria. Austria is also taking part in a large number of pilot projects. Primarily, ECVET is seen as an instrument to promote transnational mobility, with implementation within Austria currently not being considered.

Securing training in the dual system and facilitating supra-company training: Under the motto "*Labour market – Future 2010*", to put the training guarantee for youths below the age of 18 into practice, the government and social partners agreed in 2008 on a comprehensive package of measures for youth employment and covering the demand for skilled workers. In the Vocational Training Act (BAG) regulations have been newly created that aim to complement company-based apprenticeship training, which continues to hold the prime position, by adding supra-company training at training provider institutions, making supra-company training an equivalent and regular part of the dual system. Previously ten-month courses organised within measures conducted pursuant to the Youth Training Guarantee Act (JASG) are merging with previously independent training institutions into one uniform form of training – high-quality supra-company training in provider institutions across the entire occupational profile and the entire apprenticeship period.

In addition, this has led to the following measures being taken to support the young people and training companies:

1. Reform of the subsidisation of apprenticeship posts for companies (differentiation of subsidisation schemes, consideration of quality criteria of training),
2. improved VET provision via the Public Employment Service Austria (AMS) for young people who do not find an apprenticeship place, with the offers now comprising entire programmes until acquisition of the apprenticeship diploma,
3. mediation procedures for extraordinary terminations of apprenticeships with the aim of continuing or completing training in a company-based or supra-company form.

Companies receive grants in particular on the following conditions:

- Support for additional apprentices in companies where apprentices are trained for the first time or following a long period without providing training as well as in start-ups,
- Quality bonus for enterprises whose apprentices can successfully furnish proof of their qualifications by the middle of their apprenticeship period,
- Subsidies for training alliances and additional training programmes for apprentices that exceed the statutory occupational profile,
- Grants for the VET and CET of trainers,
- Bonuses for apprenticeship-leave exams taken with excellent or good results,
- Support for corporate measures aiming at equality of access to different apprenticeships for young women and young men.

This package of measures also aims to ensure the quantity and quality of apprenticeship training in economically speaking tense periods.

CHAPTER IV: PROGRESS IN THE MODERNISATION OF THE HE SECTOR

IV.1. Plans and measures to diversify the HE institutions' sources of income

The 2002 Universities Act and the 2004 Federal Organisation and the Federal Act on the University for Continuing Education Krems have created the legal basis for far-reaching autonomy at the 22 Austrian state universities.

Financing by the federal government: This form of financing still plays the major role in this context, it comes in the form of global budgets and represents the main revenue component of universities with some 77% (source: 2007 closings of accounts). The larger portion of the federal government's global budget contribution is laid down in performance agreements, the formula-driven portion forms the second part of the global budget and is calculated by using 11 quality- and quantity-related indicators from the fields of teaching, research and social goals.

Income from third-party funds: The universities' income from third-party funds, which is increasing as against previous years, mainly comes from research projects and also most often flows back into the university-based research infrastructure or the financing of staff resources required for research projects.

Apart from "traditional" third-party funds, i.e. income from research commissioned by third parties (in 2007 some EUR 406m), Austrian universities also increasingly implement activities such as fundraising, sponsoring or private-public partnerships. According to available knowledge, universities received in 2007 approx. EUR 7.7m from sponsoring activities. Alternative sources of financing are also used by universities for the costs of professorships. As of July 2008, in the field of the 22 state universities there were 38 professorial chairs, so-called "foundation professorships", that were financed by third parties (e.g. business enterprises) for a particular period (most often 2-5 years). This enables universities to expand their teaching and research to a certain degree. In 2008 some 2% of expenses for professors were paid in this way.

The students' tuition fees represent a major source of income for universities. Recently the legal regulation governing tuition fees underwent fundamental reform, so that as of the year 2009 only long-time students and students from non-member countries will pay tuition fees.

Now as before, the institutions active in the Fachhochschule sector finance 90% of their teaching activities from federal funds. The additionally required funds are raised from other sources (provincial governments, municipalities, enterprises, etc.). The collection of tuition fees is still conducted at the discretion of the provider of a Fachhochschule institution.

Another financing option of LLL measures consists in regional subsidies within the framework of the respective university's knowledge and technology transfer into its regional environment. But these subsidies differ widely between regions and still require stronger intensification to form a real basis for longer-term education measures.

The Austrian system of study grants: The previous two *amendments to the Student Support Act* (2007 and 2008) have brought about the following changes: an increase of study grants by 12%, the creation of a mobility grant to promote studies attended completely in EEA countries and Switzerland, the raising of the students' parents' income limits by some 20%, the raising of the additional earnings ceiling for study grants recipients from EUR 5,800.00 and EUR 7,195.00 to a uniform EUR 8,000.00, special promotion of students with childcare obligations, and improvement of grants for students with health impairments.

The Austrian study grants system has undergone a positive extension over the past 8 years: Over that period, the number of recipients of study allowances has risen from 34,000 to 48,000 students. Today, every third student at Fachhochschule programmes and every fifth student at university obtains study grants or allowances; related expenses have risen by EUR 94m to some EUR 200m since 2000.

IV.2. Plans and incentives for HE institutions to open up to lifelong learners

Austrian HE institutions actively tackle LLL issues. To support them, in autumn 2008 an Advisory Board on LLL in the HE sector was set up at BMWF comprising representatives of universities, Fachhochschule institutions, students, etc. The Advisory Board has the following tasks:

- ensuring the involvement of the tertiary sector in the development of an LLL strategy,

- and discussing inclusion of LLL into the respective planning and control instruments,
- as well as discussing permeability, access, recognition of prior learning, flexible forms of teaching and learning, financing, etc.

In the field of **universities**, the inclusion of LLL in the individual universities' overall strategy and profile building is making headway. Measures to implement LLL have to be developed and implemented with or by universities with a view to diversification and autonomy of HE institutions.

The performance agreement is planned to be increasingly used as a central control instrument to develop mutual understanding and joint objectives related to the implementation of LLL.

For the next performance agreement period 2010-2012, universities are called on to present objectives and procedures to establish an institutional LLL position/LLL strategy and the increase in the number of corresponding projects. In addition it is planned to encourage the creation of HE programmes organised on a part-time basis – also taking into account blended learning – and thus increase “regular” university study courses to address the target group of lifelong learners in particular.

Based on the currently valid **Fachhochschule developmental and financing plan** the focus of further expansion is on programmes organised on a part-time basis and on technological courses.

Furthermore, access to FH-based Bachelor and diploma studies is not only possible for holders of the general university entrance qualification but also for people who can furnish proof of relevant professional qualifications, such as graduates of the apprenticeship system.

Apart from the opening-up and flexibilisation of first studies, **CET** represents another major measure provided by universities and Fachhochschulen to open themselves up to lifelong learners. These offers promote the opening-up of education via recognition of relevant subject-specific qualifications and their orientation to people in employment (cf. also NR2005 and NR2007). The Danube University Krems is one institution specialising in CET programmes.

Regarding the **opening-up of HE institutions to all age groups** (from the children's university to programmes for senior citizens), universities and HE institutions are becoming active in manifold ways. Two lines of action have manifested themselves after stimulating initiatives in the universities' development plans:

Blended learning: Students with special needs include students in employment, students with health impairments, and students with social obligations. For this target group of students, parts of the curriculum are made available online within the blended learning strategy which universities have adopted. The proportion of lectures supported online varies from 13% to over 50% of the available courses. Almost 100% of individual study offers can be completed online. An extension of these online study offers is planned at selected locations.

University courses for continuing education (ULGs) almost exclusively address employed people. On the one hand, they have a high share of online learning/teaching. On the other hand, they constitute the lifelong learning offers in the tertiary and post-tertiary education sectors par excellence, as they mainly serve as CET measures for HE graduates.

Study programmes for senior citizens: For citizens of all ages who are interested in science and research, so-called “ring lectures” and “summer universities” are offered. Individual universities address senior citizens with tailored offers.

In the sector of private universities different innovative schemes are applied that orient themselves towards the requirements of “lifelong learning”. In the foreground there are fields such as university lectures that are tailored to the needs of people in employment and take into account relevant previous professional qualifications by introducing partly alternative access regulations, part-time forms of studies, blended learning and distance learning. As the private universities' study programmes are subject to accreditation obligations, these aspects are examined in the course of accreditation with the involvement of specialist experts.

ANNEX

re Chapter I.2)

Educational principles – Learning areas

To further develop the pedagogical activity framework and enhance efficiency in the acquisition of “key competences”, the following goals have been formulated:

1. to focus the educational principles systematically on the 8 key competences,
2. to take more into account the different aspects inherent in the term competence (subject competence, methodological competence, judgemental competence and competence to act) within the concrete formulation,
3. to counteract a counterproductive segmentation of the individual subjects and additional offers by strategic bundling with regard to the competence fields to be fulfilled,
4. to elaborate and implement in a binding manner “cross-curricular competence modules” that are conceived holistically, efficient within the concrete learning environment and practicable for teachers,
5. to specify relevant qualitative, competence-oriented standards for all teaching aids (in particular textbooks) and prepare materials that are appropriate for the “cross-curricular competence areas” to be elaborated,
6. to orient in-service and further teacher training more strongly towards competence-oriented instruction,
7. to elaborate new models and procedures for quality assurance in order to safeguard the educational yields in a sustainable manner as well.

IMST initiative

IMST is a project headed by BMUKK in cooperation with universities, PHs, schools, etc. IMST issues a newsletter four times a year, organises the IMST award and one annual conference with the name “Innovation in mathematics, science and informatics instruction”.

With IMST energy the project offered its own competition in 2008 on the topic “Energy for Human Development and the Protection of the Environment”.

Within the framework of the assistance system IMST3 (2004-2006), the dynamic initiated in “IMST2” was extended systematically and in a structurally secured way. “IMST3 Plus” (2007-2009) continues the programmes launched by the predecessor project and supports the learning initiatives launched under IMST3 as an umbrella brand.

In the whole of Austria, teachers are thus working with it to improve their teaching by cooperating in “regional and thematic networks” and are carrying out innovative teaching projects. They are supported in terms of content, organisation and financing by the “Fund for Teaching and School Development”. Under the programme “Exam Culture”, teachers jointly reflect on their forms of performance appraisals. Gender sensitivity and gender mainstreaming represent major principles of the project and flow into the activities of the Gender Network. To investigate the impacts of IMST, evaluation is integrated at all levels.

Appraisal of multilingual potential: The *VoXmi* project (German abbreviation for “Learning and experiencing languages from and with each other”) has been commissioned by BMUKK and is conducted by the Austrian Language Competence Centre jointly with the association E-Learning Netzwerk eLSA. The project’s aim is to appraise and use the multilingual potential available in schools; together with their teachers, students elaborate language learning materials for their own (mother/first) languages, also for German. Special attention is paid to preparing the materials for use of digital media.

re key competence 2

At VET schools and colleges, the focus of further training is on the holistic use of CEFR, the results of the Educational Standards Working Group and the language portfolio for language classes in the VET sector.

re key competence 3

Jugend Innovativ is a school competition for innovative ideas from the fields of business, design, engineering, science, as well as from the thematic fields ICT and climate protection. Participation in the competition promotes and

further develops key competences such as creativity, social competence, entrepreneurial thinking, learning to learn, etc. (www.jugendinnovativ.at)

Sparkling Science is a programme aiming to promote projects involving pupils actively in the actual research process. Scientists are supported by pupils in their scientific work and in making the joint research results accessible to the public. Cooperation can e.g. take the form of jointly conceived subject-specific project work, upper secondary qualification projects, or be within the framework of cross-curricular school projects. The aim is to improve the interface between school and university. By firmly establishing cooperation schemes between research and educational institutions, young people are to be facilitated to make a more qualified selection of HE studies and a faster transfer of scientific findings to the education system and the public is to be supported. (www.sparklingsscience.at)

Generation Innovation: Building on the pilot project “Learning from research” (“Forschung macht Schule”), the project *generation innovation* focuses on the direct dialogue between the young generation and present-day researchers and innovators. The *generation innovation* initiative develops offers in science and technology from nursery school to school graduation and aims to enable young people to come into contact with research, technological development and innovation in a playful manner and discover their potential in this process. The aim is to provide children and youths across the entire educational system with greater incentives to study the sciences and technology. Offers include work placements at research-oriented companies, research institutions and universities, research cheques for innovative educational projects, and mentoring programmes for pupils, particularly young women, in the sciences and technology. (www.generationinnovation.at)

re key competence 4

Futur(e)Learning II initiative: The objectives of this BMUKK initiative are the following:

Priority 1: **Support for new forms of learning and learning arrangements by central services**

FutureLearning is mainly about modern **learning arrangements and forms of learning** that lead away from classic face-to-face instruction and support individual learning paths. To ensure concentration on pedagogical and didactic approaches at schools, central services need to be created such as learning portals, the administration of multi-instance learning platforms, or the distribution of compiled commercial or open-source software products. That is one particular focus of FutureLearning II.

Priority 2: **Modern further teacher training at all levels**

The times of classic seminar-form further teacher training are long gone. This field has undergone a paradigm change in two respects: At occasions of importance for school development, external seminars are replaced with in-house school development programmes with a high degree of commitment on the part of heads of schools and with coaching phases; and attendance events give way to a blended learning concept that combines elements of attendance and virtual phases (online activities).

Priority 3: **Promotion of a culture of innovative pilot projects**

Many new developments in implementations of IT and e-learning innovations and on the practice of electronic school- and pupil-administration need to be tested. Therefore support is provided for projects with combined aspects of learning development and technology development. Vital for conducting these innovation projects is the application of a cofinancing principle, precise documentation on the dissemination of applied methods and results, and support for organisational developments and evaluations (these principles have also been summarised in the accompanying document “Guidelines and standards of IT pilot projects”).

In early December 2008 a **conference on the implementation of the European Commission’s e-learning recommendations** was held for stakeholders in VET. In addition, a network of 250 school locations has been set up where e-learning is offered as a key element of their pedagogical programme.

The eLSA project (short for: *e-learning in day-to-day school life*, elsa20.schule.at)

The objective of eLSA is to test the framework conditions under which e-learning in daily school life could lead to a new form of teaching and learning and can contribute to school development, and whether (teams of) teachers can be trained to become authors of e-learning sequences.

The project scope comprises:

- 100 model schools in the academic year 2008/09 with locations in all provinces
- comprehensive testing of e-learning in the classroom in all subjects of lower secondary level
- integration of e-learning into school development

- networking of schools among each other on one learning platform
- networking of schools with initial teacher training programmes at in-service teacher training colleges, at post-secondary colleges of teacher training, HE institutions, universities, etc.
- project monitoring BMUKK
- cooperation with HE institutions (initial teacher training) with external and internal counselling support

re key competence 7

When working on the subject-specific theme, all students at schools and colleges of social and services industries and schools and colleges of business administration have to carry out and document practice-oriented projects independently.

Software tool on entrepreneurship

In a separate research project, BMUKK had a software tool (EEP) developed to measure personality traits and attitudes towards entrepreneurship (identification of current status) and any changes to attitudes as a result of special training measures. This software tool is made available to all schools free of charge (also to 40 Bulgarian business colleges within the framework of a cooperation project).

In addition, all VET schools and colleges have been provided with a media package (the “EESI kit”) free of charge to encourage EE (in cooperation with the Economics Ministry).

As part of the school textbook scheme (free supply of textbooks), students are also provided with the approved textbook “Entrepreneurship and Management”.

PHs offer a large number of postsecondary courses and seminars for teachers with focus on EE.

The **Impulse Centre of Entrepreneurship Education (EESI)** and a group of multipliers in all provinces were entrusted with the task by BMUKK of promoting and supporting EE in all schools at secondary level. Every year, an “Entrepreneurship symposium” with expert lectures and workshops is held; approved EE textbooks that are given out free of charge such as “Entrepreneurship and Management” have been developed; every year so-called business plan competitions are organised; a software tool to measure personality traits and attitudes towards entrepreneurship (EEP) has been developed and made available free of charge to all schools at upper secondary level. A large number of further teacher training events on EE are offered by PHs in collaboration with the EESI Impulse Centre, e.g. the summer university in Kitzbühel, postsecondary teacher training programme. For colleges of business administration, cross-curricular educational standards “Entrepreneurship and management” have been developed. Relevant further training events for teachers are offered for competence-oriented classes.

re key competence 8

Under a series of VET schools and colleges, the following are included: schools and colleges for fashion and clothing; for artistic design; of management and service industries; “design” colleges of engineering; schools and colleges for social occupations.

Culture portfolio at colleges of business administration

This culture portfolio aims at the pupils’ individual work on the concept of culture, enhancing creativity and cultural expression, and promoting the individual focus on – and the capacity to criticise in – the cultural discourse. Within the framework of the oral elective subject “culture” in the oral “Reife- und Diplomprüfung”, candidates furnish proof that they are able to classify cultural phenomena on the basis of their individual focuses of the culture portfolio, explain them and establish cross-connections.

re Chapter I.4.a

University-based CET is currently mainly provided in CVET university courses, but postgraduate courses, courses on scientific CET, language courses, evening courses and summer universities are also offered. The goal is stronger participation in university CET, an extension of target groups and enhanced study organisation for people in employment.

Universities are taking on responsibility in the public sector and in society. They seek close cooperation with public and semi-public CET providers and/or companies and adjust their offers to current needs. Thus, for example, at Innsbruck University (www.uibk.ac.at/studium/weiterbildung), Graz University (www.kfunigraz.ac.at/ or www.uniforlife.at), Klagenfurt University (www.uniforlife.at or www.uni-klu.ac.at/main/inhalt/565.html or study programmes for senior citizens www.uni-klu.ac.at/main/inhalt/uninews_3917.htm), the University of Vienna (www.weiterbildung.univie.ac.at) and many more.

re Chapter I/6.

Initiative 25 plus

In the course of the VET Quality Initiative (QIBB), VET schools and colleges put focus on further developing teaching and learning. The two previous nationwide quality themes “performance assessment” and “individualisation” are covered by all VET schools and colleges in Austria.

With the establishment of a professorial chair for Didactics of Political Education at the University of Vienna and manifold offers at all PHs, measures have been taken in the field of initial teacher training. The aim of competence-oriented teaching is reflected and (self-) reflective political awareness. This is not primarily about the acquisition of knowledge which is as comprehensive as possible, but about learning offers enabling learners to think and act politically. A connection is made to the pupils’ own life situation and experiences.

www.politiklernen.at/content/site/basiswissen/politischebildung/kompetenstrukturmodell/index.html

re Chapter I.7.

VET

Diploma projects are specified at the beginning of every final year in agreement between the tutoring teachers and students. Students work on the themes in autonomous teams of two or three persons each, outside regular classes and in project form. Documentation of the work is in correspondence with common practice. The work must be completed by the day of the diploma exam, the available timeframe is six months; it takes every student some 200 hours to complete.

Academy of Continuing Education (wba)

wba is financed and supported by various bodies of the cooperative system of Austrian adult learning at the Federal Institute for Adult Education St. Wolfgang, a network of ten institutions active throughout Austria:

The Board of Trustees bears the overall responsibility for content, the Steering Committee controls content and organisational matters, an independent Accreditation Council examines, corrects and confirms submitted applications and submitted offers by institutions.

The Certification Workshop, attendance of which is compulsory for all wba students, represents a major stage on the way towards the wba certificate; the Workshop comprises one knowledge test and a test of adult learning competences within the framework of practical exercises (three-day event with assessment and multiple-choice test). To wba it is important to make informal learning visible and recognise it. Possibilities of furnishing related evidence include the following, by way of example: competence acknowledgements issued by the employer; participation in procedures to recognise informally acquired competences; or authoring of a paper. The Austrian CVET Academy was founded on the 1st February 2007, since then some 150 people have completed a programme with a certificate or diploma.

re Chapter 2./9.

LLL strategy – consultation process

Social partner institutions, umbrella organisations from the school and tertiary sectors, parents’ associations, senior citizens’ associations, immigrants’ associations, church institutions, and associations active in adult learning have taken part in the LLL consultation process. The individual federal provinces and various federal ministries have also taken the opportunity to introduce current perspectives and developments.

Overall 64 opinions have been received within the framework of the consultation process, with all major establishments and institutions having taken part in the process. A large dissemination and motivation event is scheduled for 2009 within the framework of a full-day conference. On this occasion, the results of the consultation process will be presented by the scientists commissioned with evaluation and also the planned next steps will be communicated and discussed.

Lifelong guidance strategy

The five main programmatic objectives of the LLG strategy are the following:

1. Creation of offers for new target groups
Implementation of basic competences for educational career and life planning in all curricula: in as many educational measures as possible the objective should consist in **consciously aiming at teaching and**

acquiring major basic competences to be able to take responsible educational and vocational career decisions.

2. Focus on process optimisation and support: Top-quality decision-making processes are the prerequisite for successful educational and vocational career decisions in all life stages. Therefore, all support measures should be oriented towards these processes. Therefore, the support aspect should be paid particular attention to.
3. Professionalisation of advisers, counsellors, trainers: Improvement and intensification of training, continuing, further and in-service training of counsellors, trainers, teachers active in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work in various sectors. In accordance with a comprehensive understanding of lifelong guidance, they in particular have to have sufficient personal competences for the fulfilment of their task, depending on the specific type of course being offered.
4. Quality assurance and evaluation of courses being offered, processes and structures: For creating an efficient lifelong guidance system it is necessary to systematically analyse and further develop the quality of available courses, processes and structures in the fields of information, guidance and counselling for education and the world of work. In this connection, particularly attention must be paid to orientation towards actual citizens' needs. The used methods' efficiency should be evaluated.
5. Widening access – creating offers for new target groups: the offers should be designed and custom-made in such a way that they actually reach the people who are in special need of this support. A topic that must still be investigated is what are the specific problems for which there are no offers at all or too few.

The “study checker” scheme (www.studienchecker.at)

The “study checker” is an instrument to help students in the 7th grade of secondary academic school (AHS) or in the 4th year of VET college (BHS) prepare for taking the decision for the future HE study or training path. This initiative is conducted jointly by BMWF and BMUKK.

The “study checker” is implemented in two parts:

- a) Young adults receive basic information about the studies and complete a “self-check questionnaire”, which enables them to identify their own inclinations and interests.
- b) Counselling provided by the Psychological Student Counselling Office on the basis of the “self-check results”.

In the autumn of 2008, the pilot project “study checker” was launched at a total of 40 AHSs and BHSs, i.e. 157 school classes, in the pilot regions of Vienna, Salzburg and Tirol.

re Chapter III

Unemployment rates 2003-2007, Austria and EU average

Total	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Austria	4.3	4.8	5.2	4.7	4.4
EU (27 countries)	8.9	9.0	8.9	8.2	7.1
EU (25 countries)	9.0	9.0	8.9	8.2	7.2
of people below the age of 25	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Austria	8.1	9.4	10.3	9.1	8.6
EU (27 countries)	18.0	18.4	18.3	17.1	15.4
EU (25 countries)	17.8	18.2	18.2	16.9	15.2

Source: Mayr/Archan 2007

In 2008 the unemployment in Austria overall was 4.2% in the first quarter and 3.7% in the third. Among people below the age of 25, the unemployment rate was 8.1% in early 2008. In the second quarter, unemployed people between the ages of 14 and 25 accounted for 6.8%. In the third quarter, it was 8.2%. The average of (27) EU countries was 15.5% in 2008.¹⁷

¹⁷ Source: STATISTICS AUSTRIA, microcensus labour force survey (average of all weeks of one year or quarter). Public Employment Service (AMS; average of month-end data in the respective quarter or year). Drawn up on: 17.12.2008 and EUROSTAT databases: Unemployment rates – annual averages by sex and age group (%).

QIBB

The framework conditions, triggers and challenges for the development of QIBB can be found in the increasing autonomisation of the school locations, the participation of interest groups in the further development of the school sector, and in international and European discourses and development paths.

Educational standards in VET

At present, competence models, descriptors and prototypical examples are being developed in 24 working groups. Some working groups have already completed their piloting stage and are communicating the revised education standards to all teachers and other stakeholders. The first steps of implementation in the form of competence-oriented teaching and competence-oriented curricula are being made. The results of education standards will also be integrated into the final exams (“Reife- und Diplomprüfung”, the upper secondary school-leaving exam that provides access to HE and labour market qualifications).