

Brussels, 9 November 2010

## Leonardo da Vinci programme: 15 years of EU support for vocational education and training

*The EU is celebrating the 15th anniversary of its Leonardo da Vinci programme, which helps to fund thousands of vocational education and training courses across Europe. Since 1995 the EU has helped more than 600 000 young people to go on training placements abroad. It has also funded 110 000 exchanges for trainers and more than 3 000 projects aimed at modernising the sector. Around 50% of all students in upper secondary education receive vocational education and training.*

Androulla Vassiliou, the European Commissioner for Education, Culture, Multilingualism and Youth, said: "Vocational education and training gives students the kind of skills that are increasingly sought after on the labour market. The Leonardo da Vinci programme offers them more by helping to fund work placements abroad. This experience boosts their language abilities and other broad skills like team-working and adaptability, which makes them more employable and enhances their personal development. In the long-term this contributes to building a better-qualified workforce and to making Europe more competitive."

The European Commission is currently investing €240 million a year through Leonardo da Vinci to support the mobility of trainees, apprentices and trainers and the modernisation of vocational education and training in 31 countries.<sup>1</sup>

In 2009, more than 80 000 trainees, apprentices and jobseekers received EU support from Leonardo da Vinci for a training placement abroad. The highest number of trainees came from Germany (15 800), followed by France (7200), the Netherlands (6200), Turkey (6000), Spain (5100), Italy (4700), the United Kingdom (4600) and Poland (4200). Since 2000, the most popular destination countries for trainees have been Germany, the United Kingdom, Spain, France and Italy.

The programme has had a lasting impact on national reforms and on the way European initiatives are put in practice in EU countries, for example through the creation of national qualification frameworks, which are aimed at making qualifications more transparent and comparable. The programme also contributes to combating discrimination and supporting the integration of vulnerable groups into the labour market by providing people with training opportunities, professional skills and a chance to build their self-confidence.

Part of the programme's success is due to the involvement of European regions. Leonardo da Vinci fosters regional co-operation amongst schools, companies and regional authorities. It also opens the way to other sources of EU funding and co-operation. In remote regions, it has helped to reinforce the competitiveness and innovative capacity of smaller training institutions.

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<sup>1</sup> EU-27 + Iceland, Liechtenstein, Norway and Turkey. People and institutions from the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and Croatia can participate in parts of the programme

In June, the European Commission launched a 10-year plan aimed at enhancing the quality of vocational education and training (see [IP/10/707](#)). This builds on the objectives of the 'Europe 2020' strategy for smart and inclusive growth, and links in with the new 'Youth on the Move' initiative (see [IP/10/1124](#)) which supports wider learning and mobility opportunities for young people. The Commission's 'New Skills and Jobs' strategy, due to be adopted before end of the year, will also underline the importance of vocational training and education in equipping people with the medium and high-level skills which are increasingly required in the labour market.

### **Anniversary conference**

A conference in Brussels today marks the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. The programme's impact and results will be illustrated by some of those who have benefited from its support. The conference will also discuss what lessons can be drawn from the past 15 years in preparation of the next generation of the programme from 2014. In parallel with the event, a new website on mobility schemes will be launched. The [EuroApprenticeship](#) site was created by a network of organisations involved in the mobility of apprentices.

### **Public consultation on the future of the programme**

Leonardo da Vinci is part of the Lifelong Learning Programme, which runs from 2007-13 and also includes three other programmes supporting mobility: Erasmus (for higher education students), Comenius (schools) and Grundtvig (adult education). The Commission has launched a public consultation on the Lifelong Learning Programme after 2014. See

[http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education\\_culture/consult/index\\_en.html](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/education_culture/consult/index_en.html).

### **To find out more:**

European Commission: [Leonardo da Vinci](#)

More about the [conference](#)

European Commission communication on a new impetus for European cooperation in vocational education and training to support the Europe 2020 strategy:

[http://ec.europa.eu/education/vocational-education/doc/com296\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/vocational-education/doc/com296_en.pdf)