



Declaration of the NEWTON Network November, 24th 2009, Berlin

Vocational training and education concerns everybody! We, as trade unions and their training organizations, have many years of experience in vocational education and training programs for the labor market. We want to spread this experience significantly by enhancing closer cooperation and networking in Europe.

We, as trade unions and their training organizations represent our members, we are partners for employees and we aim at supporting their professional career. Furthermore we assume special responsibility for people who are disadvantaged due to low qualifications, their migration background or other factors and who want to improve their professional possibilities. We, as social partners and non-profit organizations, are in the position to work in a particularly efficient way in a sector which is mostly financed by public funds.

Even in the economically strong member states of the European Union the proportion of low-skilled workers is too high. This is one of the main obstacles for full employment and has to be changed in order to develop more and new jobs. The future of *Europe* as a location for industry and commerce depends on knowledge-based production and service as well as quality and innovation. Vocational education and training is therefore indispensable. Along with the single European market's demand for more employees' mobility, employees' concerns have to be represented internationally. Facing this aspect we want to bring forward the education and training issue. The expansion of the university sector as well as of the education and training sector plays a crucial role for the development of Europe. In the upcoming decades, most of the employees will acquire their competences by vocational education and training. It will not only be a matter of training for specific jobs but also a matter of holistic concepts for the professional and personal development of competences. This implicates social skills and competences to exercise rights of employees' representation and co-determination. We, as trade unions and training institutions, are already strongly engaged in this field. We intend to contribute sustainably to the economic and social development in Europe. Therefore we aim at working more closely with European institutions in the future and actively engaging in European initiatives and programs in order to implement sustainable strategies and programs for work and employment in Europe!

As a result of a one-year analyzing and clearing process NEWTON (“*Network between Workers Federations and their Training Organisations in Europe Now*”) established as a network of trade unions and their training organizations. It was initiated by fourteen organizations from seven countries of the European Union under the roof of the European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC) and the European Metalworkers’ Federation (EMF).

We invite trade unions on European level, national trade unions as well as their training organizations to join our network and share our goals.

OUR GOALS

Education

Education and vocational education and training belong together. Therefore everybody has to gain access to both. We lobby for making education accessible for everybody regardless of their origin or their economic situation:

- More transparency of the national education systems.
- Fair access to training measures, improvement of the employability especially of low-skilled workers, migrants and disadvantaged workers.
- Democratic procedure at developing and implementing the European Qualifications Framework (EQF), traceability of the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQR) with regard to the EQF.
- Recognition of informal competences within the EQF, recognition of social and personal competences within the EQF.
- Legislation for the participation in vocational education and training free of charge for the employees and the unemployed.

Employment and Training

We as trade unions and their training organizations stress the importance of an employee-oriented approach even in times of a crisis when companies are in the doldrums or in a structural change. We considerably contribute to maintain and improve the employability of employees and the development of one’s own professional identity:

- Orientation of training measures with regard to the training needs and personal development possibilities of the individual. Thus we contribute our share to employment policies and the development of qualified employees.
- Possibilities for everybody to improve their educational and professional condition. Therefore training measures must be free of charge and public grants for living costs must be secured.
- Respond to demographic change by means of target-group specific training measures.
- Maintenance of the comprehensive understanding of integrative education of the trade unions.

Europe

We work with European institutions to enhance and improve vocational education and training and employment. We contribute with our experiences in the social dialogue, to

employment policies and vocational education and training. Our goal is to improve the employability and the mobility of employees in Europe:

- Support of the cohesive goals of the European commission with regard to trade unions and employees' interests
- Defining the common positions of trade unions and strengthening of social dialogue in order to develop common educational and vocational programs of joint vocational training standards and European career profiles
- Development of vocational training programs which can be realized Europe-wide within the scope of existing education system
- Establishment of consultation schemes for the Europe-wide mobility of participants of training measures organized by the social partners.
- Creation of sectoral qualification frameworks which are comprehensible, precise and manageable for education activities within the respective labor market
- Active support of all measures to improve the education and training level of the European workforce
- Introduction of a transparent legal framework which guarantees access to vocational education and training for everybody, which establishes a right for public funding

European Network

Trade unions and their training organizations have shared issues and interests. This is due to the fact that work and employment are not only a national issue but also a European issue. Therefore trade unions and their training organizations established a network to learn from each other, to support each other and to enhance shared interests Europe-wide:

- European dialogue for the exchange of experience and for the joint development of propositions for professional education policy
- Use of synergy benefits in with regard to training offers and respond to changed requirements
- Cooperation in development and improvement of innovative concepts for training of qualified employees
- Representation of shared interests on the European level, mutual support at the national level and common public relations
- Provision of a virtual online platform for central knowledge management and permanent cooperation of all partners

www.newton-project.eu