

QUALITY IN CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING

IN GREECE

by

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FOREWORD:

OBJECTIVE, GENERAL ISSUES AND METHOD OF THE STUDY

In the last years the vocational training and especially the in-company further training has expanded to a degree never shown before in all member states of the European Union. It became indispensable in all societies where technology and high tech are the backbone of the economy. Along with the volume the quality of continuing vocational training is on a relatively high standard in general terms.

Nevertheless the importance that continuing vocational training has achieved nowadays makes it necessary to develop means to evaluate and improve the quality continuing vocational training services on a permanent basis as well.

Continuing vocational training should be seen as performing five main functions:

- that of ensuring permanent adaptation to the changing nature and content of occupations and thus the improvement of the skills and qualifications of the workforce,
- that of social promotion of individuals,
- that of contribution to the improvement of productivity of enterprises and employees,
- that of anticipation in order to prevent difficulties from arising in sectors or enterprises undergoing restructuring and
- that of integrating the unemployed.

These have to be the ultimate standards by which continuing vocational training has to prove its usefulness.

The question of quality assurance in continuing vocational training is in any case relevant because the conditions of the general environment of vocational training are not improving. In a stagnating or even shrinking economy a lot of public agencies and private enterprises will evaluate their training budget against the perceived results of this training. In every EU country standards for the evaluation and improvement of continuing vocational training and especially in-company further training are being intensely discussed.

In the context of these discussions quality assurance is being defined as the set of all methods and approaches that aim at an improved quality in continuing vocational training concerning:

- the level of training (strategy, programme, carrying out of training),
- the practice of training (management, adaptation, standard, accession) and
- the provider of training (training needs assessment, demand and supply, agency).

It should be being however pointed out that while there is a similar discussion on quality assurance in training taking place in each country a transnational interchange is still missing and this separation can only partly be ascribed to the different training systems. It seems that it is also the lack of actual opportunities for a such interchange that is responsible for that fact.

Although is widely being accepted today that the main problems in continuing vocational training are very similar in the majority of the EU countries there is a danger that the quality standards in the different countries develop independent from each other and gain a separate determination. Standards that differ from each other in their main content as well as different quality assurance methods would decrease the transparency of continuing vocational training and would restrain the mobility of the clients of the training services.

Towards the support of a necessary interchange process on the matters of quality in continuing vocational training between the EU countries a study initiated within the framework of the studies that are being carried out by FORCE programme under the responsibility of the Task Force Human Resources, Education, Training and Youth of the European Commission. The study carried out at European level by a group of experts appointed by the National FORCE Co-ordination Committee of each EU's member state under the co-ordination of the FORCE Technical Assistance Office whereas the particular studies at national level carried out by each responsible expert. The main purpose of this study is the description, discussion and documentation of applied measures of quality assurance in continuing vocational training on a transnational basis building on the relevant studies on the state of art in quality assurance in continuing vocational training in each EU's country.

The present report outlines the current situation in quality assurance in continuing vocational training in Greece followed the relevant study that carried out from June up to September 1994 by the author as well.

The study that adapted a pragmatic approach and followed a number of commonly accepted concepts, principles and methods extensively discussed during consecutive meetings of the study group limits its consideration to and concentrated at:

- continuing vocational training activities that are in direct relation to enterprises and their employees and
- measures and mechanisms of training quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation that are already in function.

Furthermore any discussion and reflection of general theories of evaluation and quality assurance even in cases that a direct consequence on practical measures in quality assurance in training traced it not included in the matters of the study.

In this context an extensive survey of the most known public and private agencies that are nowadays developing and implementing continuing vocational training activities carried out during the first stage of the study. The collection of information on applied quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation measures based on a formally structured questionnaire.

At the second stage of the study a limited number of cases selected for presentation according to priorities facilitating a comparative approach fixed at European level. That is the selected cases should be representing the main actors in continuing vocational training in the companies or for the companies and their personnel in the country and their applied measures of quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of their training activities should be as more as possible integrated and consistent representing in parallel the main established approaches on the subject matter. More particular information collected during this stage on the selected cases utilising relevant reports received and discussions with the training managers involved in the concerned subject.

Besides the number of cases included in this second stage of the study should be limited depending on the size of the country and the volume of the relevant continuing vocational training activities that are being nowadays organised and implemented. The selection has ultimately aimed to ensure that a representative picture is given of current practices in quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of continuing vocational training in each EU's country.

The report of the study at hand follows as well an agreed at European level format as far as it concerns its content, structure and extent in order to facilitate as far as possible a comparability of the national studies and to permit a comparative presentation and analysis at the European part of the study.

It briefly presents a short description of continuing vocational training in Greece nowadays, a few selected characteristic cases representing the national scenery of continuing vocational training providers and their applied methods for quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of the offered continuing vocational training and finally an outline of the present situation and the future trends on the questions of quality in training.

The description for each case is being structured around:

- the main objectives of the offered training and the principal criteria of its success,
- the procedures applied in quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of the training,
- the methods applied in quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of the training,
- the effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied,
- the implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training field in general,
- the relation of the applied measures to questions of certification and standardisation of quality in continuing vocational training and
- the existence of any transfer processes between the general movement of quality assurance in products and services and the quality assurance in the training offered by the described case.

In the description of the procedures and methods applied in quality assurance and effectiveness evaluation of training a relatively "open" approach concerning the meaning of the relevant concepts has adopted.

Finally throughout the reading of this report it must to be bear in mind that it is not an exhaustive study but more a review of the existing situation in the subject matter at the time of the study in Greece.

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CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GREECE: AN OUTLINE

In Greece there has not up to now been established a uniform formalised system of continuing vocational training and the term itself indeed has quite recently begun to be widely in use. The more usual Greek term for training available outside the formal education system for employed or seeking employment workers who have completed a period of formal initial vocational education or training is closer to the meaning of "Further training."

The first continuing vocational training activities developed in Greece in the mid-1950s by public services and state organisations as well as by large private industrial firms. However the large shortage of trained workers to meet the requirements of the labour market generated by a rapid and uneven economic growth that took place those years in Greece and the non-existence of an effectively organised national formal system of initial vocational education and training up to the early 1960s drove to the development of continuing vocational training activities restricted in their majority to functions of substitution or compensation of the initial vocational training. As a result the distinction between initial and continuing vocational training has remained up to date vague and on the other hand the strictly defined continuing vocational training activities remained marginal until the late 1980s.

From that time on and especially during the latest decade a remarkable development of continuing vocational training activities has taken place due to a growing demand that is being propelled by companies undergoing profound structural, technological and organisational changes and by employees/workers facing the resulting transformations in their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required for their employment.

A complex network of public and private agencies is being set up offering vocational training to employed and unemployed persons that is being developed side by side but clearly apart from the formal vocational training system along with the majority of large companies that organises and implements training activities for its personnel.

This informal training network is being continuously expanded and modified utilising mainly the national and EU funds for the continuing vocational training. This continuous expansion and modification make the complete and explicit description of the functional and operational characteristics of the today's continuing vocational training system in Greece a very difficult task as well as it explain the lack of valid and reliable statistics.

The expansion and diversification of the continuing vocational training activities are being developed on a heterogeneous legal ground that is mainly constituted by:

- The dispositions in the Law on the Motivation of the Workforce for Vocational Training (Law 709/1977). These aim at the support of employment through the promotion of the initial and supplementary training as well as of the retraining of adults without a professional qualification who are unemployed or threatened by unemployment. The Law deals with the provision of training allowances to the unemployed or training leaves to the employed who are participating in training offered by the Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) as well as with the provision of technical and financial assistance to the private enterprises participating in the organisation and implementation of these training activities.
- The dispositions in the Laws on the Reinforcement of Economic and Regional Development and on the Promotion of Employment (Law 1116/1981, Law 1262/1982, Law 1360/1983 and Law 1836/ 1990) along with the relevant Ministerial Decisions. The Laws concern the rules, regulations and obligations for the financing by the State of the training activities organised by private enterprises for their employees.
- The National Collective Labour Agreements for the years 1988 and 1991 in the private sector of the economy ratified by relevant Laws that lay down the obligation of employers to contribute by a percentage of 0.45% of their annual total wage bill to a Fund for the Financing of continuing vocational training activities organised and implemented by private enterprises. The management of this Fund has being charged to The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED).
- The dispositions in the Law on Continuing Training Activities organised by the Public Authorities for their Employees (Law 1943/1991) that deals with the obligation of the public services and the state controlled organisations employing more than 600 persons to establish training departments and to develop continuing vocational training activities for their personnel.
- The dispositions in the Law on Employees' Councils(Law 1767/1968) that gives the right to employees' delegation to participate in the shaping of the training activities within the company and
- A number of legal texts containing rules and regulations pertaining to continuing vocational training activities co-financed by the ESF and the EU programmes.

In this context as no approval or recognition of the State is required by the providers the continuing vocational training market is open and is characterised by the multiplicity and diversity of suppliers and supply and by the subsidiary role of the State. Among the continuing vocational training providers are included:

- Public authorities and State controlled organisations that are concentrating mainly on unemployed, threatened by unemployment, insufficiently qualified, unskilled or semi-skilled employees/workers and various disadvantage populations.
- Universities and educational institutions that are concentrating mainly on technical, commercial and administrative managers and key staff.
- Professional associations and chambers that are concentrating particularly on their members.
- Organisations set up by employers' and employees' unions that are concentrating on all ranks' of skilled and specialised employees/workers.
- Regional and Local authorities establishments that are being addressed at various groups of their area and
- Private human resources development and training agencies that are being addressed at various target groups of employees/workers.

Ultimately however the continuing vocational training market is being inadequately and asymmetrically covered in many matters due mainly to the lack of specific offer and demand structures.

On the other hand despite the considerable expansion of continuing vocational training activities occurred in last years the questions of quality have only recently begun being widely discussed and gaining in importance within the training agencies and especially within the responsible public authorities.

Although it seems that there is not at present a commonly accepted quality concept for training activities the establishment of quality standards and quality assurance systems for the existing training structures and for the nowadays and future developing activities are generally being approved.

In this context an active State intervention is being taken place today. A recently ratified Law on Regulations of Employment and Other Relevant Matters (Law 2224/1994) lay the foundation of a National Certification Centre of Continuing Vocational Training Structures under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour. The main intended duty of this Centre is the development of standards and the establishment of relevant procedures for the certification

of the continuing vocational training providers' structures and for the quality assurance of their offers as well as the training and certification of trainers.

It is obvious that these activities will strongly influence the continuing vocational training situation in Greece during the coming years.

Using now as a criterion the multitude and the volume of the organised, implemented or financed training activities The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) may be considered as the principal State controlled provider of continuing vocational training offered to employees/workers in Greece nowadays. The OAED is a public organisation under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour that is being administered by a Council composed by representatives of the State, employee's and employers' unions. The OAED is the main vehicle of the governmental employment policy and among its main aims for promoting employment and for ensuring the necessary conditions for the meeting of labour market's requirements in trained workforce are being included the development of initial and continuing vocational training activities.

The OAED has at its disposal for these training activities 45 training centres throughout the country and about 1500 full and part-time trainers. Each successive year about 12000 young people are being engaged in initial training and about 6000 employed or unemployed adults are being engaged in continuing training or retraining activities organised and implemented whereas about 50000 employees are being engaged in in-company training activities co-financed and supervised by OAED.

Among these training activities that are being systematically developed since 1970 are included:

- the intensive initial vocational training and retraining of adults that are directed to seeking employment in order to facilitate their integration to the labour market and to employed in order to ensure their threatened employment or in order to support their professional upgrading through the acquisition of new skills. This training is full-time lasting from 2 up to 12 months according to the professional specialisation and is being offered in the OAED's training centres and/or in large companies co-operating with OAED embracing a wide range of recognised professional specialisations.
- the supplementary training and the specialisation or upgrading training that are directed to employed having an initial vocational training or having a long-standing relevant vocational experience in order to facilitate their adaptation to technological innovations and to new forms of work organisation and/or to reinforce their professional advancement chances. This training is being offered by short-term courses in a variety of specialised professional practices.

- the additional training in operational and supervision techniques that is directed to low and middle ranked industrial companies' staff in order to develop their professional competencies. This training is being offered by seminars meeting specific requests of interested companies.
- the co-financement of initial or continuing in-company training activities that aim at the adaptation of employees of private companies to new production processes and to new forms of work organisation having being introduced in order to ensure their employment. These in-company training activities are short-term (100 - 150 working hours) and are being developed and implemented by companies or by partnerships between companies and training suppliers under the supervision of OAED.

Among the large private companies having organised training departments of their personnel that develop and implement continuing vocational training activities on a regular basis the large industries and the banks hold an outstanding position. It has been estimated by relevant research that these activities cover a percentage of 1.5% - 2.0% of each company's annual total working time.

Typical examples of such companies are the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. and the National Bank of Greece S.A. whose efforts for the quality assurance and the efficacy improvement of their continuing vocational training activities are included in this report.

The Elefsis Shipyards S.A. is one of the larger private companies in Greece activating in shipbuilding and industrial metal constructions and engaging about 2000 employees/workers. This industry runs an organised training department and an in-company training centre since its foundation in 1969 that it systematically develops and implements training activities for its personnel and it .

The National Bank of Greece S.A. is the largest and the oldest Greek bank (it founded in 1841) that it nowadays holds 558 branch offices in Greece and abroad and engages 14000 employees. It provides any banking service sharing over 50% of the total mass of the current banking services in Greece. This bank runs a personnel training division that develops and implements relevant training activities for its personnel.

Beyond the distinct companies many employers' associations and institutions develop and implement continuing vocational training activities directed to the meeting of common training needs of the employed in the private sector of the economy.

The Companies Institute for the Industrial and Professional Training of their Staff (IVEPE) being included in this report is a considerable supplier of continuing vocational training

directed to the personnel of mainly industrial companies that has being founded and financed by many large companies and that is being supported by the industrial employers' association. It develops and implements continuing vocational training activities since 1980 that are primarily being directed to the lower and middle ranked industrial personnel in order to increase its productivity, to facilitate its adaptation to the technological developments and to reinforce its professional upgrading. Its training courses are short-term lasting from 40 up to 200 hours and are being offered inside the interested companies or in the training centres of the Institute.

Employees' unions and professional associations as well develop and implement continuing vocational training activities apart or in co-operation with public agencies, private or state controlled institutions and employers' organisations.

The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE / GSEE) being included in the present report is the main institution of the employed in the private sector of the economy offering continuing vocational training. It founded in 1990. and since then it develops continuously expanded and multiplied continuing vocational training activities being directed to employed and unemployed at a national, regional and local level whereas at the same time it supports and co-ordinates relevant activities implemented by worker's unions that are being members of the confederation. The Institute develops and implements inside and outside of the companies training activities that primary aim at the training of decision-makers, administrators, training developers and trainers in order to develop, implement and support training activities inside the companies. Besides it develops relevant training activities directed to trade unions' delegates.

Finally an important stage in the evolution of the continuing vocational training in Greece has been the foundation of The Vocational Education and Training Organisation (OEEK) in 1992 aiming at the establishment and development of a national initial and continuing vocational training system.

The OEEK is a public organisation under the auspices of the Ministry of National Education that is being administered by a Council composed by representatives of the State, employee's and employers' unions.

Among the main activities of The Vocational Education and Training Organisation (OEEK) are included:

- the foundation and development of vocational training needs assessment structures at national and regional levels

- the establishment of a unified system for the recognition and certification of all formal initial and continuing vocational training ventures
- the development and application of quality standards and approval procedures of formal initial and continuing training offered by any agency
- the foundation and supervision of Vocational Training Institutes (IEK) offering oriented to the labour market needs initial and continuing vocational training in various professional specialisation and at different certification levels. This training is being offered full-time in training centres lasting from 2 up to 4 semesters and is being directed to young and adult graduates of general or vocational lower and secondary schools in order to acquire and/or to upgrade specific professional qualifications facilitating their employment.

These activities of The Vocational Education and Training Organisation (OEEK) are being foreseen in the near future to influence in a great extent the quantitative but principally the qualitative characteristics of the offered continuing vocational training in Greece. It is from this point of view that its main efforts and a few of its proclaimed plans for the quality improvement and assurance of the offered training activities are being outlined in the last part of this report.

**QUALITY ASSURANCE AND EFFECTIVENESS EVALUATION IN
CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GREECE:
SELECTED CASES OF APPLIED MEASURES**

CASE 1 :

A STATE CONTROLLED VOCATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY: The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED)

1.1.1 Main Objectives of Training and Principal Criteria of Success

The inside and outside the company continuing vocational training activities that are being organised and implemented or co-financed and supervised by The Manpower Employment Organisation (OAED) aim to the support and promotion of employment through adaptation, supplement, specialisation and upgrading of the professional knowledge and skills of the workforce.

Their primary objective is to meet the specific training needs and requirements of employed, threatened by unemployment or seeking employment persons that are being created by the changes in the content and practices of various professions due to the impacts of technological innovations and economic changes.

The quality and efficacy of these activities are therefore being appraised applying criteria pertinent on the one hand to the adequacy and relevance of the provided knowledge and skills for the fulfilment of the related professional requirements and on the other hand to the effectiveness of the training processes and to the suitability of the training conditions in achieving the intended outcomes.

Specifically the primary criteria for appraising the success and quality level of the continuing vocational training activities organised and implemented by OAED refer to:

- the adequacy of the identification of training needs and to the effectiveness of their projection to the training objectives, designs, contents and methods.
- the effectiveness of the training plans, contents and methods in achieving positive outcomes.
- the proficiency of the trainers.
- the suitability of the training materials and tools.
- the suitability of the premises, the equipment and the training conditions.
- the effectiveness of the management and supervision of the training activities.

Ultimately the success of the training ventures is being assessed by the extent of their overall contribution to the integration and the promotion of participants in their respective companies along with the extent of the practicability of their results in the companies.

1.1.2 Procedures Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The OAED does not have established a formal operational system for the quality assurance of its training activities. However it attempts the quality assurance and the efficacy improvement of continuing vocational training activities that are being organising and implementing developing two clusters of complementary activities.

The first one includes the development and application of specifications, standards, regulations and guidelines referring to the:

- training designs and processes,
- training methods and practices,
- training tools and materials,
- training premises, equipment and environment conditions,
- training management and supervision principles and procedures,
- trainees' assessment procedures,
- potential trainees' eligibility criteria and procedures by each particular training activity and
- trainers' qualifications and proficiencies.

These activities are the subject matter of organised central services that working in close co-operation with the regional departments and the local training centres of OAED collect, document, analyse and utilise information, data and reports coming from various sources of data that are concerning transformations of the professional practices and the correspondingly generated training needs of employees/workers and their companies, the innovations in the training methods and media as well as problems and inadequacies being arisen during the current implementation of each one training activity.

The second cluster of activities includes occasional summative evaluations of the continuing vocational training activities and continual formative evaluations of selective operational components and aspects of the training activities.

The summative evaluations are being carried on by groups of external evaluators usually coming from university institutions and they include:

- training policy evaluation concerning its accordance to the vocational and employment needs and requirements of the labour market
- decision making processes evaluation concerning the planning, development and implementation of the training activities
- training activities content evaluation concerning the adequacy and relevance of their content to the professional requirements, the diffused technological innovations and the employment transformations whose meeting are aiming at
- evaluation of the access and participation conditions of individuals and companies to the training activities
- evaluation of the critical process factors of the training activities
- evaluation of the organisational and administrative arrangements of the training activities and
- evaluation of the training outcomes in relation to the vocational needs of the participated individuals and to the corresponded employment requirements of their companies.

The continual formative evaluations of the selective operational components and aspects of the training activities are as a rule informal and are being carried on by training managers, trainers and training inspectors.

1.1.3 Methods Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The data for the occasional summative evaluations and the correspondent quality assessments of the continuing vocational training activities are being collected by surveys using suitably structured questionnaires and interviews directed to representative related samples of trainees, trained, trainers, training managers, employers, company managers as well as employers' and employees' unions' delegates.

These questionnaires and interviews are being structured around their views, opinions and assessments of the training activities themselves and for their impacts on the individuals and the companies along with their appreciation of the training relevance to the individuals' and companies' training needs.

The data for the continual formative evaluations of selective operational components and aspects of the training activities are being collected by internal audits, inquiries, reviews and process observations during the various implementation stages of each one training activity.

1.1.4 Effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied

On the basis of the outcomes and the relevant conclusions of the mentioned formal and informal evaluations the training management services of the OAED reform the offered training activities as a whole or they restructure and update specific key operational, structural or process components of these training activities. Besides they reorganise the management and the supervision arrangements of the offered training activities at the extent and the level being deduced as necessary.

It must however to be noted that the effectiveness of the used training evaluation activities and their impacts on the quality improvement of the offered training are being appraised only indirectly and on a quite informal basis since has never up to date conducted any type of formal evaluation of these formal and informal evaluation procedures.

1.2 Implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training in general

As has been mentioned there does not exist a formalised system of continuing vocational training in Greece nowadays and as a consequence there does not exist clearly established legal or administrative requirements and regulations concerning the institution and the functions of the continuing vocational training suppliers and their relevant offers. The existing continuing vocational training network is therefore being characterised by a striking diversity and a remarkable extent of the suppliers and the supply. This fact makes actually infeasible the explicit tracing of any mutual influence between the training suppliers as well as between the offered continuing vocational training activities.

On the other hand during the last years a growing demand for continuing vocational training activities due mainly to the impacts of the technological innovations in the production processes and in the forms of work organisation along with an outstanding offer of training activities especially directed to the employed that is being propelled inter alia by the relevant national and European policies and subsidies are being occurred.

A substantial portion however of the continuing vocational training activities is being offered by public or state controlled agencies having a rich tradition and a remarkable reputation in the vocational training and this fact does not allow any reliable assessment of the influences that the quality criteria and standards have on the demand of continuing vocational training by the individuals and the companies.

The impacts of the training quality criteria and the relevant assurance procedures adopted by the OAED are direct only for the in-company continuing vocational training activities that

are co-financed by the OAED, the ESF and the companies themselves. These activities according to relevant regulations have to meet explicit quality specifications and standards and to be subjects of regular supervisions and final evaluations.

1.3 Relation of the applied measures to standardisation of quality in training

The quality management and the quality assurance concepts have quite recently begun being widely discussed and gaining in importance within the various private and public training agencies as well as within the responsible public authorities. Although there is not a commonly accepted quality concept for training activities, the necessity for the establishment of a minimum level of training quality standards and of reliable certification procedures for the training suppliers is generally being approved as a major priority task.

This debate along with the ventures for the effectiveness improvement and for the financial transparency assurance of the continuing vocational training investments of the OAED is directly affecting its relevant training quality assurance activities.

1.4 Transfer processes between the quality assurance in services and in training

First of all it must to be emphasised that the level of the quality control and assurance of the products and especially of the services is actually not being sufficiently developed in Greece up to now and the questions of quality are subjects of the large mainly enterprises that are being engaged in the international market's competition.

One of the impacts of this state of affairs is the absence of any transfer or even influence of the relevant questions, concepts, activities and standards concerning the quality assurance of the products and/or the services to the vocational training activities that are being developed and implemented by any public or state controlled training agency included the OAED.

CASE 2 :

THE TRAINING DEPARTMENT OF A SHIPBUILDING AND METAL CONSTRUCTIONS PRIVATE INDUSTRY: The Elefsis Shipyards S.A.

2.1.1 Main Objectives of Training and Principal Criteria of Success

The Elefsis Shipyards S.A. is one of the larger private companies in Greece activating in shipbuilding and industrial metal constructions and engaging about 2000 employees/workers.

It systematically develops and implements continuing vocational training activities for its personnel and it runs an organised training department and an in-company training centre since its foundation in 1969.

The training department of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. is responsible for the planning and the implementation of in-company initial and continuing vocational training activities that carry out mainly through its technical training centre. The majority of the in-company continuing vocational training activities are primarily being directed to the lower and middle ranked technical personnel in order to increase its productivity and its quality of work, to facilitate its adaptation to new production processes and to new forms of work organisation and to reinforce the security of its work.

The overall quality and efficacy of the vocational training activities that are being organised and implemented by the training department of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. are being assessed applying criteria pertinent primarily to the adequacy, the applicability and the extent of transfer of the acquired or of the developed through the training individual competencies at the work-place. The effectiveness of the training processes and the suitability of the training conditions in achieving the desired specific training outcomes are moreover reference points for the appraisalment of the quality level of the implemented training activities.

The adequacy, the applicability and the extent of transfer of the acquired competencies at the work-place are being assessed by the relative:

- growth of the productivity of work
- upgrading of the quality of work
- reduction of the necessary supervision of work
- adaptability to modified processes and forms of work
- reduction of the accidents caused during the work and
- reinforcement of the personal interest to and satisfaction by the work.

The effectiveness of the training processes and the suitability of the training conditions on the other hand are being assessed by applying the commonly used criteria referring to the adequacy of the training plans, contents and methods for achieving the desired outcomes, the proficiency of the trainers, the suitability of the training materials and tools and the suitability of the premises, the equipment and the training conditions.

2.1.2 Procedures Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The training department of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. have not established a formal operational system for the quality assurance of its training activities. It systematically controls the quality and the effectiveness of each training activity that is being organising and implementing by conducting formal summative evaluations.

These evaluations are internal being carried on by the training management and they include:

- evaluation of the training activity's objectives and content concerning their adequacy and their applicability to the specific requirements of the work-place whose meeting is aiming at,
- evaluation of the net training outcomes concerning the ultimately acquired professional competencies by the trainees in conjunction with the accomplishment of the predetermined training objectives.
- evaluation of the actual extent of transfer of the acquired competencies at the work-place and
- evaluation of the critical process factors of the training activity (proficiency of the trainers, suitability of the training materials, premises, equipment and conditions).

2.1.3 Methods Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The data for these evaluations and for the correspondent quality assessments of the continuing vocational training activities are being collected by the parallel application of two methods. The first one is a series of systematic observations at the work-place using suitably structured observational grids for the recording of data. The observation method utilises a quasi-experimental approach involving comparisons between the trained and the non-trained workers as well as comparisons of the training participants before and after their participation in the specific training activity. The observational grids are being structured around manifested individual competencies, accident prevention and environmental protection concerns, work responsibility, interest and flexibility and the overall quantity and quality of the individual work outcomes.

The second method for the data collection is a survey using suitably structured questionnaires and interviews directed to the trainees after their participation to a specific training activity and to their work-place foramen. These questionnaires and interviews are being structured around their views, opinions and assessments of the training activities themselves and of their fundamental factors along with their appreciation of the training relevance to and the training final impacts on the individual workers and their work.

2.1.4 Effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied

On the basis of the outcomes and the relevant conclusions of the mentioned evaluations the training management of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. in co-operation with the related production and managerial staff restructure and update specific key operational, structural or process components of its training activities.

The effectiveness of the used training evaluation activities and their impacts on the quality improvement of the developed and implemented training are being appraised by the training management on an informal intuitive basis.

2.2 Implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training in general

As has been mentioned there is actually infeasible the explicit tracing of any mutual influence between the continuing vocational training activities that are being developed and implemented by the various private industries.

The Elefsis Shipyards S.A. is one of the first large private industries in Greece that has systematically developed and implemented continuing vocational training activities for its personnel and that has organised a training department and an in-company training centre. It has therefore gained a notable reputation in the in-company vocational training and it has actually served as a model for many relevant industries.

Accordingly it may be deduced analogous impacts of the adopted training quality control procedures to the in-company continuing vocational training activities of many relevant industries.

2.3 Relation of the applied measures to standardisation of quality in training

The quality concept adopted for the training activities developed and implemented by the training department of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A. is absolutely determined by the interests of the enterprise towards the growth of its productivity and the strengthening of its competitiveness as well as towards the minimisation of the work accidents.

However the wide debate on the establishment of national training quality standards and of certification procedures for the training providers that is being taken place nowadays in Greece is arising relevant questions to the training management of the Elefsis Shipyards S.A.

CASE 3 :

THE PERSONNEL TRAINING DIVISION OF A BANKING COMPANY: The National Bank of Greece S.A.

3.1.1 Main Objectives of Training and Principal Criteria of Success

The National Bank of Greece S.A. is the largest and the oldest Greek bank (it founded in 1841) that it nowadays (1993) holds 487 branch offices in Greece and 71 abroad and that is engaging 14000 employees. It provides any banking service sharing today over the 50% of the total mass of the current banking services in Greece. It runs a training division that systematically develops and implements continuing vocational training activities for its personnel. The training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. is responsible for the planning and the implementation of the in-company initial and continuing vocational training activities that are being directed to the personnel in order to increase its productivity and its quality of work, to facilitate its adaptation to new offered services, forms of work organisation and utilised technologies as well as to support its professional upgrading through the acquisition of new competencies.

The overall quality and effectiveness of the continuing vocational training activities that are being organised and implemented by the training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. are being assessed applying criteria concerning the adequacy and the relevance of the provided knowledge and skills for the meeting of the relevant professional requirements of the individuals and the company along with criteria referring to the effectiveness of the training processes and to the suitability of the training conditions in achieving the intended outcomes.

More specifically the main criteria for appraising the success and the quality of the continuing vocational training activities organised and implemented by the training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. are being referred to:

- the adequacy of the training objectives, designs, contents and methods for the meeting of the relevant specific training needs,
- the applicability and the transfer of the acquired through the training individual new competencies at the job,

- the effectiveness of the training plans, contents and methods in achieving positive outcomes,
- the proficiency of the trainers and
- the suitability of the training materials.

3.1.2 Procedures Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. have not yet established an integrated formal operational system for the quality assurance of its training activities. It systematically controls the quality and the effectiveness of each training activity conducting process, output and impacts evaluations. These evaluations are internal being carried on by the training management and they include:

- evaluation of the objectives and contents of the training activity concerning their adequacy in meeting the participants' training needs and expectations as well as the extent of their applicability to the specific work requirements,
- evaluation of the critical process factors of the training activity (proficiency of the trainers, suitability of the training methods, media, materials, premises, equipment and conditions) and
- evaluation of the extent of transfer of the acquired through the training individual competencies at the job and assessment of the training impacts in the professional performance of the trained individual.

3.1.3 Methods Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The data for these evaluations and for the correspondent quality assessments of the continuing vocational training activities are being collected by two consecutive surveys. The first survey is being directed to the trainees after their participation to a specific training activity and to their trainers using suitably structured questionnaires. These questionnaires are being structured around their views, opinions and assessments of the training activities themselves and of their fundamental factors along with their appreciation of the training relevance and applicability to their job.

The second survey is being directed to the participants of the specific training activity and to their work supervisors six months later using also suitable questionnaires.

These questionnaires are being structured around the applicability and the final net transfer of the acquired competencies at the everyday work processes along with the actual training impacts on the professional performance of the trained individual.

Besides occasional informal evaluations of the training activities are being carried on by the training managers utilising data that are being collected by internal audits and process observations during the implementation of selected training activities.

3.1.4 Effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied

The outcomes and the relevant conclusions of the above mentioned evaluations are being utilised by the training management of the National Bank of Greece S.A. in reforming the planning and the organisation of the offered training activities and in restructuring and updating specific key operational, structural or process components of these training activities towards the improvement of their quality and efficacy.

On the other hand the effectiveness of the used evaluation methods and instruments are being systematically assessed by the training management and they are accordingly being rectified and improved.

3.2. Implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training in general

The banking sector is being one of the most developed and active sector in the field of the in-company continuing vocational training in Greece. Therefore the explicit tracing of any mutual influences between the quality standards and the quality assurance procedures of the training activities that are being developed and implemented by the various banks or by other relevant financial service companies are actually infeasible.

3.3 Relation of the applied measures to standardisation of quality in training

The quality concept implicitly adopted for the training activities developed and implemented by the training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. is the usual generally being conceived concept of the traditional training institutions. That is the training objectives and contents must to be specified in accordance with the employees' training needs and the job's requirements as well as the maximum transfer of the acquired through the training competencies to the job must to be assured.

3.4 Transfer processes between the quality assurance in services and in training

In the context of the movement for the quality assurance and the effectiveness control of the continuing vocational training ventures the training division of the National Bank of Greece S.A. has established a close co-operation with the French bank S.N.V.B. (Nancy) aiming at the joint development of a system for the quality assurance and the effectiveness evaluation of their specific continuing training activities.

CASE 4 :

AN EMPLOYERS' CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY: The Companies Institute for the Industrial and Professional Training of Their Staff (IVEPE)

4.1.1 Main Objectives of Training and Principal Criteria of Success

The Companies Institute for the Industrial and Professional Training of their Staff (IVEPE) is a considerable development and implementation agency of continuing vocational training that is being supported by the industrial employers' association. It founded in 1980 and is being financed nowadays by 21 large private and state controlled enterprises. The offered by the IVEPE continuing vocational training is primarily being directed to the lower ranked industrial technicians and to the middle ranked industrial staff in order to increase their productivity, to facilitate their adaptation to technological innovations and to new forms of work organisation and to reinforce their professional upgrading. Its training courses are short-term lasting from 40 up to 200 hours and are being offered inside the interested companies or in the training centres of the Institute.

The overall quality and effectiveness of the continuing vocational training activities that are being organised and implemented by the IVEPE are being assessed applying criteria concerning:

- the adequacy of the provided knowledge and skills for the meeting of the relevant training needs of the individuals and the corresponded requirements of their companies,
- the suitability and the effectiveness of the training processes and conditions in achieving the intended outcomes and
- the applicability and the of transfer of the acquired or of the developed through the training individual professional competencies at the work-place.

4.1.2 Procedures Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The Companies Institute for the Industrial and Professional Training of their Staff (IVEPE) is today at the stage of establishing an integrated formal operational system for the quality assurance of its training activities according to the ISO-9000 series standards.

Up to now It systematically controls the quality and the effectiveness of each implemented training activity conducting output and impact evaluations. These evaluations are being carried on by the training management of the Institute and they include:

- evaluation of the critical process factors of the training activity (proficiency of the trainers, suitability of the training methods, media, materials, premises, equipment and conditions) and
- evaluation of the extent of transfer of the acquired through the training individual competencies at the job and assessment of the training impacts in the professional performance of the trained individual.

4.1.3 Methods Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The data for these evaluations and for the correspondent quality assessments of the continuing vocational training activities are being collected by two consecutive surveys. The first survey is being directed to the trainees right away after their participation to a specific training activity using questionnaires that are being structured around their views, opinions and assessments of the quality and effectiveness of the fundamental factors of the specific training activity.

The second survey is being directed to the work supervisors of the participated in the specific training activity several months using interviews inquiring the applicability and the net transfer of the acquired competencies at the everyday work processes along with the actual training impacts on the professional performance of the trained individual. later using also suitable questionnaires.

4.1.4 Effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied

On the ground of the outcomes and the relevant conclusions of the mentioned evaluations the training management of the IVEPE in close co-operation with related industrial production and managerial staff reforms its training activities and updates specific key operational, structural or process components of these activities on a regular basis towards the improvement of their quality and effectiveness.

A formal evaluation of the used by the IVEPE training evaluation activities or a formal assessment of their impacts on the quality improvement of the offered training has never up today conducted.

4.2 Implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training in general

The tracing of any mutual influences between the quality standards, the quality assurance and the effectiveness evaluation procedures of the training activities that are being developed and implemented by the various in-company training suppliers is in this one as well as in any previously reported case actually infeasible given in addition that very few innovative relevant approaches have being occurred up to now in the Greek vocational training market.

4.3 Transfer processes between the quality assurance in services and in training

The quality concept implicitly adopted for the training activities developed and implemented by The Companies Institute for the Industrial and Professional Training of their Staff (IVEPE) seems to be up to now the traditional one of the educational institutions.

In the context however of the recent movement for the quality assurance and the effectiveness improvement of the continuing vocational training ventures the IVEPE has already activated the procedures for establishing an integrated formal operational system for the quality management of its training activities according to the ISO-9000 series standards for services* .

The first stage of this project that includes a detailed study of the existing training situation oriented to the detection and the explicit description of any technical, administrative and human factor affecting the quality of the developed and implemented training activities is almost coming to an end and the documentation plan of the quality assurance system is being prepared.

* ISO 9000 series standards is evaluating services not only in itself but as results of processes that have to be evaluated . "The system of total quality is including all processes that are needed to produce adequate services, starting with marketing, ending with delivery. It is including the analysis of the service provided for the customer" (ISO 9004-2). According to this norm, training institutions should first describe their business process management and the interfaces in relation to external institutions. A manual "quality assurance would describe the operationalisation of norms in ways of guidelines for action and organisation. Training of employees of training institutions has to include processes of quality assurance on all levels of their service process. This guarantees the application of the guidelines. Audits and reviews by internal and external experts are controlling the application of the standards.

CASE 5 :

AN EMPLOYEES' CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING AGENCY: The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE / GSEE)

5.1.1 Main Objectives of Training and Principal Criteria of Success

The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE / GSEE) is the main institution of the employed in the private sector of the economy offering continuing vocational training. It founded in 1980 and since then it develops continuously expanded and multiplied continuing vocational training activities being directed to the employed and the unemployed at a national, regional and local level whereas at the same time it supports and co-ordinates relevant activities implemented by worker's unions that are being members of the confederation.

The Institute develops and implements inside and outside of the companies training activities applying participatory training methods that primary aim at the training of decision-makers, administrators, training developers and trainers in order to develop and support the function of training structures inside the companies. In parallel it develops and implements relevant training activities directed to trade unions' delegates.

The overall quality and effectiveness of the continuing vocational training activities that are being organised and implemented by the INE/GSEE are being evaluated applying criteria being principally oriented to the philosophy and the objectives of the participatory training methods.

The success and quality level of the organised and implemented continuing vocational training activities are being initially appraised by:

- the adequacy of the identification of the targeted training needs and by the effectiveness of their projection to the training objectives, designs and contents,
- the effectiveness of the training plans in achieving the pointed outcomes,
- the adequacy of the potential training group identification,
- the expertise of the chosen trainers and
- the effectiveness of the training activities management.

5.1.2 Procedures Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE/GSEE) systematically controls the quality and the effectiveness of each implemented training activity conducting ongoing formative evaluations of the critical process factors of the training activity. These evaluations make use of appropriate techniques allowing a comparative analysis of the consecutive stages of the training activity that is yielding to the flexible conversions for the optimisation of the training outcomes. A principal component of these evaluation techniques is the judgements of the training participants.

5.1.3 Methods Applied in Training Quality Assurance and Effectiveness Evaluation

The data for these evaluations and for the correspondent formative interventions that are assuring the quality of the continuing vocational training activities are being collected by the application of a variety of techniques and instruments that is including evaluation plans, structured training sessions' reviews, measurement instrument (barometer) of the learning milieu, questionnaires structured around the training contents, the trainers' work and the trainees' participation's conditions.

A training evaluation technique known as future workshop is also repeatedly being applied.

5.1.4 Effectiveness assessment of the procedures and the methods applied

The effectiveness of the adopted quality control procedures is being appraised by the training management of the INE/GSEE as satisfactory as they adequately outline the qualitative characteristics of the offered training courses. On the ground of the outcomes and the relevant conclusions of these evaluative procedures the training offers of the institute are being reformed and specific key operational, structural or process components of these activities are being converted on a continuing basis during and after their implementation.

The training evaluation and quality control procedures are on the other hand systematically being updated as a result of corresponding assessments of their relative efficacy that are being grounded on relevant interim inquiry reviews and workshops taking place after the implementation of each training activity with the participation of external training evaluators and training experts.

5.2 Implications of the applied measures in relation to continuing training in general

The participatory training methods and the relevant training quality control techniques that are currently being introduced by the training management of The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE/GSEE) are quite innovatory for the Greek continuing vocational training market. From this point of view their impacts on the training services suppliers as well as on the training demand are not yet precisely perceptible although the INE/GSEE seems to be progressively extending its in-company continuing training market share.

5.3 Relation of the applied measures to standardisation of quality in training

The quality concept adopted by The Labour Institute of the General Workers' Confederation of Greece (INE/GSEE) for its continuing vocational training activities is a specific one characterised by the relevant participatory training approach and primarily focused on the adult learning processes and the consequent outcomes.

In this context the questions of the quality assurance and the effectiveness improvement of the continuing vocational training ventures are being approached by a specific educational point of view. The development of this training approach and of the relevant training quality concepts and assurance procedures is the subject matter of many transnational co-operation's with training and education institutions that the INE/GSEE has set up.

QUALITY IN CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GREECE: AN OVERVIEW OF THE PRESENT STATUS AND THE FUTURE PERSPECTIVES

As it has also mentioned in the introduction of this report during the latest decade a remarkable development of continuing vocational training activities has taken place in Greece due to a growing demand that is mainly being propelled by companies undergoing profound structural, technological and organisational changes and by employees/workers facing the resulting transformations in their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required for their employment.

Despite however a such considerable expansion of continuing vocational training activities the questions of quality have only recently begun being widely discussed and gaining in importance within the private and public training agencies and especially within the responsible State authorities, notably for reasons of public accountability, training market transparency and training effectiveness given that the majority of the continuing vocational training activities in Greece nowadays are being co-financed by public services and EU's funds.

From this debate and from the relevant proposals and plans that are being publicised in its context a common approval of the necessity for establishment of a minimum set of quality standards and of quality assurance systems for the continuing vocational training structures and for the training activities is being got up although not being advocated by identical arguments.

Towards a such direction an important governmental intervention has recently taken place by the foundation of a National Certification Centre of Continuing Vocational Training Structures laid on relevant dispositions of a ratified Law on Regulations of Employment and Other Relevant Matters (Law 2224/1994). This Centre that will be functioning under the auspices of the Ministry of Labour has as its main duty the development of standards and the establishment of relevant procedures for the certification of the continuing vocational training providers' structures, for the quality assurance of their offers and for the certification of trainers. along with the development of co-operation and the support of transfer processes in the relevant matters on the European level.

Besides the foundation two years ago of The Vocational Education and Training Organisation (OEEK) and the activities that it is already developing or designing are strongly

shaping the context and the orientation of the current debate on the quality in the continuing vocational training and according to the present pieces of evidence they will decisively influence the future activities on the relevant matters.

This Organisation has adopted and applies a set of minimum quantity and quality standards and requirements pertaining the material and training structures of the Vocational Training Institutes that is running or supervising, it has developed and it implements training programmes that they incorporate thoroughly specified intended outcomes along with the necessary for their attainment specific training contents, methods and tools, it has prescribed the trainers' required qualifications and competencies and it has explicitly set on a scale of awarded training certifications and the corresponding prerequisites and acquiring procedures.

In parallel many foreseen ventures that are being today proclaimed by the OEEK, as for example the creation of vocational training needs assessment structures at national and regional levels or the establishment of a national documentation and statistical record system

for the continuing vocational training activities, are indirectly but substantially influencing the quality matters of both the short-term as the long-term development of the training activities in the country. The fact moreover that the OEEK always incorporates as much into its current activities as into its announced future plans a European dimension and perspective is notably influential.

On the other hand It must however to be emphasised that a cluster of actual factors is considerably confusing the current debate on the quality in training and at the same time is virtually retarding the development of any befitting activities.

Among them the following may to be considered as being crucial.

- A lack of a commonly accepted quality concept for the training activities is the most prevailing factor of misunderstandings and even discrepancies between the concerned actors and this fact is quite evident in the characteristic cases included in this report. Quality is of course a complex and multifaceted concept and its adoption in training activities is actually an open problem. In the various representative cases described in this report, for example, it may to be detected different explicit or implicit perceptions of the quality in training. Quality is being essentially approached in terms of the training aims or processes or outcomes apart or in terms of the wants and needs of the particular trainees' group or even in terms of a vague overall combination.
- A relatively undervalued role of the evaluation as a crucial factor in the training improvement and a corresponding inadequate development of applicable, integrated and

effective evaluation models approaching the quality dimensions of a training activity, as is clearly perceivable by the distinctive cases included in this report.

- An inherent contradiction in the movement for the quality assurance in training, though not being an exclusive in Greece affair, that is being arisen in any relevant debate and proposed action. On the one hand the establishment of quality standards and quality control and assurance systems for training that have been developed on a legal basis is being generally accepted as necessary and is being supported, as for example the legal adoption of standards and procedures for the certification of the continuing vocational training providers' structures and the potential trainers by the authorities (The National Certification Centre of Continuing Vocational Training Structures, Vocational Education and Training Organisation) or the administrative establishment of norms and control procedures for the assurance of a minimum quality level in the co-financed by the State in-company continuing vocational training activities of the private enterprises (Ministry of Labour, The Greek Manpower Employment Organisation) or the formal recognition and certification of the vocational training qualifications.

On the other hand at the same time is being desired and promoted the development and application by the training providers of internal mechanisms improving and assuring the quality of their training offers on a market-oriented basis as for example the adoption by the training providers of quality assurance systems inherent in the offer following ISO 9000 standards or the utilisation of self-assessment systems or the publication of relevant comparative reports.

- An actual unfeasibility in establishing universal quality standards and generally applicable quality assurance procedures that may to be functional and effective in any type and form of training activity as well as in any of their particular components. On the one hand training quality standards and assurance procedures have to be uniform and independent from any specific training agency, type, form, content or setting (national standards or generally acknowledged standards like ISO 9000) and on the other hand they have to be applicable and adaptable to each one individual structure and activity of the respective training agencies, types, forms, contents and settings (training institutions or companies, on-the-job or off-the-job training, public or private funded training).
- A concern for the financial and the subsequent ultimate control of the continuing vocational training that is being actually ascribed even implicitly in any initiative for the formal establishment of training quality standards and assurance procedures since their impact in the allocation of the public and the EU's funds for training, that nowadays share a considerable portion of the training expenditures, seems to be inevitable.

Given the present situation it seems that in the foreseeable future the main trends in the quality assurance and in the effectiveness improvement of the continuing vocational training ventures in Greece will be directed though in a slow pace at the development and the establishment of relevant uniform structures. The main propelling forces of a such evolution it seems that will be the public services and the social partners' unions which today are actively participating in the debate on the quality in training expressing sound views and stating substantial proposals along with being involved in the formal and informal planning of the relevant measures.

Towards this perspective it may to be anticipated as a most probable fact the development and the adoption of a national system of training quality standards and assurance procedures principally directed to the certification of the structures of training providers and in parallel to the accreditation of the individuals' training qualifications providing some kind of a formal recognition of the individuals' relevant training achievements.

In such a development it seems that will be a strong European influence as it is in the present debate and in any current initiative on the matters of quality in continuing vocational training due mainly to the impacts of a wide transfer of relevant information, ideas and experiences between training agencies and training managers that it has and it is being taken place in the context of the EU's programmes and initiatives.

Besides on the same matters of quality a relevant European dimension is being incorporated in the perspective of the foreseen reality that the European single market and its impacts on the employment at the national and European levels are to be gradually creating in the vocational training field.

QUALITY IN CONTINUING VOCATIONAL TRAINING IN GREECE

SUMMARY

A remarkable development of continuing vocational training activities has taken place in Greece during the latest decade due to a growing demand that is mainly being propelled by companies undergoing profound structural, technological and organisational changes and by employees/workers facing the resulting transformations in their professional knowledge, skills and attitudes required for their employment. A complex network of public and private agencies has set up offering vocational training to employed and unemployed persons that is being developed side by side but clearly apart from the formal vocational training system along with the majority of large companies that organises and implements training activities for its personnel.

The expansion and diversification of this informal continuing vocational training network is taken place on a heterogeneous legal ground and in this context as no approval or recognition of the State is required by the providers the continuing vocational training market in Greece is open and is characterised by the multiplicity and diversity of suppliers and supply and by the subsidiary role of the State. Among the continuing vocational training providers are included public authorities and State controlled organisations, universities and educational institutions, professional associations and chambers, organisations set up by employers' and employees' unions, regional and local authorities establishments and private human resources development and training agencies.

Despite however a such considerable expansion of continuing vocational training activities the questions of quality have only recently begun being widely discussed and gaining in importance within the private and public training agencies and especially within the responsible State authorities, notably for reasons of public accountability, training market transparency and training effectiveness given that the majority of the continuing vocational training activities in Greece nowadays are being co-financed by public services and EU's funds.

In this context five cases representing the national scenery of continuing vocational training and having a direct relation to the training in enterprises or for enterprises and their employees have selected and their applied measures in quality assurance and in the effectiveness evaluation of their training ventures have being concise reported.

The main lines of the debate on the questions of quality in continuing vocational training that is ongoing in Greece nowadays are also being reported in brief. From this debate and

from the relevant proposals and plans that are being publicised in its context a common approval of the necessity for establishment of a minimum set of quality standards and of quality assurance systems for the continuing vocational training structures and for the training activities is being got up although not being advocated by identical arguments.

The governmental intervention towards such a direction that has taken place by the foundation of a National Certification Centre of Continuing Vocational Training Structures and the activities that The Vocational Education and Training Organisation (OEEK) is already developing or designing that are strongly shaping the context and the orientation of the current debate on the quality in the continuing vocational training are also being briefly reported.

Besides the most crucial factors that is being got up both from the reported cases and from the current debate and the relevant initiatives that are nowadays taking place in Greece on the quality in continuing vocational training that seems to be considerably confusing the subject matters and at the same time may to be virtually retarding the application of any befitting measures on the quality assurance in training are being summarised.