

VENet ...

... is the transnational co-operation among partners from Austria, Cyprus, Germany and Poland with the aim of developing a model of an innovative vocational education network. Disadvantaged youths should be integrated into the labour market through an individual practice-oriented qualification.



From left: Charlotte Gruber, Piotr Bastek, Peter Sicking, Christian Wolf, Christina Naziri, Manfred Leonhard, Karl-Heinz Kuehne, Gerd Beiderniki, Brigitte Kukovetz, Judith Riessner

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First TCA VENet Meeting in Cyprus

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Equal and TCA

The EQUAL Initiative is a laboratory of new ideas for the European Employment Strategy and the social inclusion process. Its mission is fighting discrimination and exclusion in the labour market. The EU's contribution to EQUAL of EUR 3.274 billion is matched by national funding. EQUAL differs from other programmes in its function as a laboratory (principle of innovation) and its emphasis on active co-operation between Member States. Over 2000 Developing Partnerships (DPs), selected by the Member States, are networking at national and European levels. The requirement that projects be transnational should enable individual DPs to learn from each other and to co-operate productively across borders via a Transnational Co-operation Agreement (TCA)

TCA VENet Partners

TCA VENet is a co-operation among partners from Austria, Cyprus, Germany and Poland from July

2005 to March 2007. During this time the partners will meet once in each country in order to develop transnational products like the VENet model, a homepage, mainstreaming, a support system and a final event.

The **Austrian project "BAP"** creates a vocational training pact with a platform of small and medium-sized enterprises and educational bodies. Disadvantaged people will receive interdisciplinary, practical training in different businesses accompanied by psychosocial support. The training schedule is developed individually according to the beneficiaries' strengths and the companies' requirements. The pact will be tested in both a rural and an urban area.

DP **"Arris" from Cyprus** is focusing on the construction of an internet portal, where one may search for youth-oriented job vacancies that are permanent, temporary, seasonal, part-time, or voluntary in Cyprus and in other EU member states. Additionally, the partnership will create counselling centers in all towns

of the Republic, in which young people can get advice on any legal or vocational issue, as well as psychological support. The project also includes educational programmes and vocational training.

For **Germany's "Quinta"** all relevant vocational and job market policy bodies should contribute to a professional network in order to improve the current unfavourable employment situation for disadvantaged youths in the Soest district in North Rhine Westphalia. The network is carrying out ten sub-projects in the field of qualification, employment, job placement, counselling and sensitisation of companies.

The **Polish Partnership "First Shift"** is set up by the Chamber of Crafts and Small and Medium Enterprises in Katowice with the participation of the regional Trade Union "Solidarity", the Labour Office and the "Foundation in Support of Local Democracy". The target group of people with a low level of education should be integrated into the labour market by gaining qualification through a practical apprenticeship within businesses, accompanied by theoretical classes.

First TCA VENet Meeting in Cyprus

The first meeting took place in September in Nicosia and was a great opportunity for all partners to get to know each other in a very nice environment at the Cyprus Youth Board. Apart from discussing practical issues of the co-operation, the first results have been achieved.





VENet Model

The aim of the transnational co-operation is the creation of an innovative vocational education network (VENet Model) that joins all relevant bodies such as vocational schools, companies, chambers, authorities etc. It has been agreed to create a general "slim model" on the basis of the information from the TCA countries which is transferable to all EU countries. Four best practice models from different regions should demonstrate how the slim model could be customized. To ensure that the model is useful for a broad target group, it must be transferable, modular and network-based. Starting in October 2006 the Polish partners will provide a support system for organisations in Europe that want to apply the VENet model in their region.

The beneficiaries of the VENet model are young, disadvantaged people with low or no useful qualification. The overall aim is their integration into the labour market (and thus into society) by providing them with job qualifications through a vocational education network with psychosocial support and human resource management.

During the meeting, the contents of the homepage which should be online by the end of January were also agreed upon. The concept of the evaluation of the VENet products and the process was finalised. Guidelines for Gender Mainstreaming and Diversity Management are being set up.

The next TCA meeting will take place in Graz, Austria, from January 16–19, 2006. The next newsletter will focus on the VENet model and will be published in Spring 2006.

VENet Statistics				
Country	Austria	Cyprus	Germany	Poland
Capital	Vienna	Nicosia	Berlin	Warsaw
Year of entry into EU	1995	2004	Found. member	2004
Km ²	83,858	9,000	356,854	313,000
Population	8,206,500	749,200	82,500,000	38,173,800
Population 15–24 years	16.3%	20.0%	14.7%	17.2%
Unemployment rate (9/2005)	5.2%	6.3%	8.7%	17.7%
Unemployment rate 15–24 years (9/2005)	10.5%	14.1%	13.8%	37.9%

Source: Eurostat

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