

## Czech Media on Leonardo

### German students participate in placements

On Monday, secondary school students from the Gustav-von-Schlör-Schule in Weiden began their placements with organisations in Karviná. The placement takes place under the Mobility Project of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme, in which the Business and Banking Academy in Karviná also participates. The headmaster of this school, Petr Juras, said: "The young Germans will participate in placements in several enterprises. In their free time they will visit the town hall in Karviná, Darkov spa, the steel works in Třinec and during the weekend they will also visit the families of our students. Our students participate in placements in Weiden where they improve their language skills and perform work activities within firms in the banking, insurance and public administration sectors.

*Moravian-Silesian Daily, April 1, 2003.*

### Living is not only a sofa in the sitting room

The Municipality Real Estate Agency in Havířov successfully participates in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. The aim of the project is to develop training programmes for the new position of housing administrator. "Such people must have the necessary knowledge and skills", said Director Pavel Merta. "The position of housing administrators is very well developed in France. Their experience is an inspiration for us, as well as for Germany, Sweden and Italy." "Everyone knows that the housing administrators promote social stability and crime prevention.

*Moravian-Silesian Daily, April 5, 2003.*

### Design of steel structures according to European standards

The project *Continuing Education in Structural Connections* within the European Leonardo da Vinci Programme is focused on the design of structural connections of steel structures. Experts from seven

European countries participate in the project. The training materials demonstrate, through practical examples, significant savings possibilities and structural reliability improvement. The Czech Technical University will organise a seminar with nine themes concerning the design of structural connections according to European standards in November 2003.

*Journal Construction, April 7, 2003.*

### The date of entrance exams is approaching

Primary school 9<sup>th</sup> grade pupils have only one week left to prepare for their secondary school entrance examinations. Some of them participated in the so called profession diagnostics offered by Q-club in Příbram. This diagnostics exam is able to identify the real interests and abilities of an individual and compare them with their school achievements. The COMDI Programme, developed as part of the Leonardo da Vinci Project, can also identify positive and negative personal characteristics and clarify the youngster's further educational requirements.

*Příbram Daily, April 8, 2003-06-16*

### Unemployed out!

What to do with the unemployed? Employment services in three Czech districts tested a new technique - to provide a short language course to its job seekers and then to send them abroad for placement. Thirteen participants departed for the first placement abroad prepared by the employment service in Chrudim in co-operation with the Dutch town Ede. "What I learned from my dear tulips? To respect what is my strength and to improve what is not so good" said René Pertlová (21, secondary education), who found a job after her return at Czech Mobile.

*Weekly Reflex, April 13, 2003.*

## Czech NA Co-operates with CEDEFOP

The Czech National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci programme will co-organise one of the CEDEFOP study visits this year. Study visit no.38 is focused on the *Vocational Training of Young People*. A group of VET professionals from various countries will come to the Czech Republic in September 2003. The study visit will provide an opportunity to compare

the initial VET system for young people in the Czech Republic with systems in the EU countries. It will also acquaint participants with the preparatory steps in VET for integrating the country into the EU. Several visits to various types of the Czech vocational schools and bodies dealing with VET management are on the agenda of this study visit.

## New Head of the Czech National Agency



At the end of May 2003 the head of the Czech NA, Marcin Stryjecki, finished his work. He had worked in this position since the beginning of the Czech Republic's participation in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in 1996. His primary achievement has been establishing and developing the Czech NA with its superior results on the international level. On the basis of a tender, he started working from June 2003 for the European initiative EQUAL within the DG Employment of the European Commission.



From the beginning of June 2003 Iva Tatarková took over the management of the Czech NA. She has also worked for the CNA from 1996, starting with the mobility projects. She initiated a systematic evaluation and valorisation of mobility projects, as well as, creating the Quality Award for the best mobility projects.

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## Quality in Mobility Projects

In March 2003 the Czech National Agency (CNA) of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme organised the conference *Quality in the Mobility Projects of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme*. The aim of this conference was to present the impact of mobility projects, to award the best quality projects and to further stimulate utilization of these projects. About 220 participants representing secondary and higher vocational schools, universities, social partners, employment services, enterprises and other organisations from all regions of the country attended the conference.

Welcome speeches were presented in the opening section of the conference by the 1<sup>st</sup> Councillor of the EU Delegation in the Czech Republic, Christian Bourgin; the Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports, Jaroslav Müllner; the Departmental Director of the Ministry for Labour and Social Affairs, Miroslav Kostka; and the Director of the National Training Fund (the hosting organisation of the CNA), Miroslava Kopicová. They primarily stressed the contributions of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in improving vocational education and training and employment support, and to its contribution in developing transnational co-operation at the European level.

Iva Tatarková, from the CNA, presented conference participants with the basic facts on Leonardo mobility projects in the 1997 – 2002 period, when 606 proposals for mobility projects were submitted and 394 were selected. About two thirds of all participants were students of various branches of secondary and higher vocational education establishments.

The CNA tries to stimulate not only growth in the total number of projects but also enhancement of their quality. In order to reach this goal, the CNA launched a tender for the best quality projects, starting with the Year 2000 mobility projects. This newly established tradition will continue in the future. The keen interest in participating in this tender was satisfactory. Forty-four out of 83 organisations applied to participate in it. The projects were carefully assessed by three independent experts on the basis of a whole range of criteria classified into three groups: innovation, results and contributions, project management, dissemination and valorisation and sustainability. Experts from the Government Office, the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and the National Institute of Vocational Education assessed the mobility projects.

Upon reaching the assessment results 10 mobility projects were selected. During a festive ceremony their promoters were awarded the Quality Award signed by the Minister of Education, Youth and Sports; the Minister of Labour and Social Affairs; and the Director of the National Training Fund. The following projects received awards:

- *Agro-gastroteam of Europe* from the Secondary Vocational School in Horky nad Jizerou,
- *Activities of Emergency Units within the Rescue and Breakdown System* from the Integrated Secondary School in Chomutov,
- *Placement Network for Information Specialists* from the Higher Vocational School in Prague 4,
- *Marketing and Sociology Market Survey of Electrotechnical Goods* from the Secondary Technical School in Písek,
- *Czech-Dutch Agricultural-Food Specialisation* from the Secondary Technical School in Jihlava,
- *ACTA 2000* from EDUCHEM Secondary School in Meziboří,



Deputy Minister of Education, Youth and Sports Jaroslav Müllner presents the Quality Award to the British partner organisation's representative in the project from the Higher Vocational School in the Health Care Sector in Prague 5.

- *Clinical Placements in Community Care* from the Higher Vocational School for the Health Care Sector in Prague 5,
- *SOCIO* from the Secondary Vocational School in Údlice,
- *Student Placement in the Branch of Chemical Engineering and Technical Electrochemistry* from the Chemistry-Technological University in Prague.

All ten awarded projects were presented at the conference so that the participants could better understand the preparation, management and, especially, the impact of these projects. In the final discussion the participants stated that the conference helped to demonstrate the contributions of Leonardo mobility projects and that the awarding of the best projects raised the impact and esteem of mobility projects. The CNA uses and offers its experience gained during mobility project quality assessments within the European work group responsible for mobility project quality.



The participants of the Conference on Quality in the Mobility Projects. Prague, 6th March 2003.

# Leonardo Helps the Hearing-Impaired



Testing of the newly-developed training materials.

Young hearing-impaired people are one of the most disadvantaged groups in the labour market. Deafness is first of all a communication handicap that makes contact with the hearing majority difficult. And what is worse – the deafness handicap significantly complicates education and training. Laymen largely believe that it is sufficient to teach people with hearing impairments to read and that they are then able to learn using the written texts. However, only experts know that these people generally cannot read. Also, the level of their general education is often low, even if they are normally intelligent. Therefore, their chances in the labour market are already very limited and are shrinking. Technological progress has made many traditional occupations obsolete, where people with a hearing handicap could be employed. On the other hand, technological progress also creates new opportunities. New information and communication technologies, especially the internet, offer attractive possibilities. Moreover, the internet is a nearly ideal medium for the hearing-impaired, because it is mostly visual.

Begun in 2000, the Czech Federation of Parents and Friends of the Hearing-Impaired has implemented a pilot project, the *Internet as a Potential Source of New Job Opportunities for Non-Hearing People*. It co-operates with the most respected professionals in the hearing disabilities area (some of them are hearing-impaired), develops and tests training programmes on information and communication technologies for hearing-impaired youth and develops new methods for enhancing the competencies of hearing-impaired people in reading and writing skills in both their national language and English. Nine partners from the Czech Republic, the UK, Belgium and Austria participate in this project.

The expected results of the project are curricula, teaching methodology and training materials for six training courses:

1. Acquiring basic skills in computing and internet usage

2. Enhancing the writing and reading competencies of the hearing-impaired in their national language (Czech, English, German and Dutch)
3. Building basic English writing and reading competencies of hearing-impaired, non-native English speakers for computing and internet usage
4. Training in basic computing typography
5. Creating websites
6. Understanding how to use the internet to earn one's living

One of the significant by-products of the project is the development of computer, internet and typography terminology in sign languages of the partner countries that the participants belong to.

During the first year of the project, working versions of the aforementioned courses have been developed. Within the second year, the proposal of concepts and teaching methods have been tested with representative samples of hearing-impaired people. In the Czech Republic this testing was finished by time of the press conference. The Minister of Informatics, Vladimír Mlynář, presented letters of attendance to the testing participants. All participants in the training course were, for example, able to write the annual report of the organisation of hearing-impaired people for the press. They also created their own websites and improved their skills in both writing and reading the Czech and English languages. Within the independent testing body, all participants successfully passed their examinations for the European Computer Driving License (ECDL). Half of them were successful in all seven modules; the other succeeded in the majority of modules. One third of the participants have already found a job.

In the last year of the project all texts and methodologies were improved using the results of the testing. They have also been translated into the languages of the partner countries. These newly-developed training materials will be offered to all schools educating people with hearing disabilities and to all employment services organising training courses for job seekers with hearing disabilities.



Minister of Informatics, Vladimír Mlynář, at the briefing on the project.

## New Projects in 2003

In April 2003 the Project Steering Committee (the top national decision-making body) selected the new Czech mobility projects. 112 proposals were submitted. After an eligibility check two CNA consultants and 30 external evaluators participated in the proposal assessments. The assessment procedure resulted in selecting 88 proposals (68 placements and 20 exchanges). Nearly 1100 people will participate in placements or exchanges within these projects. According to the Operational Plan for Mobility, approximately half of the total mobility grant is focused on supporting placements of young people in their initial vocational education and training. The number of HRD managers, teachers and guidance counsellors is slightly

increasing. Germany is the most frequent partner country in the Czech 2003 mobility projects. It is followed by Austria, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, Greece and France. There are 26 partner countries in these projects. The number of foreign participants in Leonardo mobility projects in the Czech Republic is increasing.

In June 2003 the Czech National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme received the official decision of the European Commission on the selection of pilot projects and language competences projects. The selection of seven projects submitted by Czech organisations is positive for the Czech Republic, because this

number is rather high in comparison with other participating candidate countries. The following projects were selected:

1. Czech Agricultural University, Prague: *Young Farmers Produce, Think and Live Ecologically* (partners from CZ, EL, F, HU, IRL, SK),
2. Brailcom, Prague: *EUROCHANCE - English and German for Visually-Impaired People* (partners from A, CZ, E, NO, SK, UK),
3. KREO PLUS, Prague: *Professional Motivation and Training for Young Gypsies and Their Engagement in the Job Market* (partners from CZ, D, E, F, I, SK),
4. Kadlec, Opava: *Modular Course for Weighing Machinery Technicians* (partners from A, CZ, D, EL, SK),

5. Occupational Safety Research Institute, Prague: *Risk Prevention and Health Protection in Adult Education* (partners from A, CZ, D, EL, F, PL, SK),
6. DC Vision, Opava: *Training Programme for the Dynamic European Salesman* (partners from A, CZ, D, NL, PL, SK),
7. Free Art Records, Ostrava: *Multimedia Training Programme in the Publicity and Media Field for SME's* (partners from A, CZ, E, EL, P, UK).

Through the selection of seven "new" pilot projects and language competences projects, the total number of Czech promoters in the second period of the programme has increased to 27.

## The Czech Republic Participates in Thematic Monitoring

Since 2002 Leonardo countries have participated in the thematic monitoring of projects. This activity is focused on identifying the best practice projects with the strongest impact on the VET system and on supporting the largest utilization/mainstreaming of these projects. All 20 pilot projects and language competences projects submitted by Czech organisations in 2000, 2001 and 2002 have also been involved in thematic monitoring activities.

The staff of the Czech National Agency of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme participates in three of the five thematic monitoring work groups. Silvia Petrová participates in the 1<sup>st</sup> thematic monitoring group led by the Austrian NA. This group is focused on the projects dealing with *Integration into the Labour Market*. This theme was also the main topic of a joint Czech-Austrian two day seminar organised in October 2002 by the Czech and Austrian NAs. The first day of this seminar took place in Český Krumlov in South Bohemia and the second day in Gmünd in

Upper Austria. Iva Tatarková is a member of the 2<sup>nd</sup> thematic monitoring group *Development of Skills within Companies, Particularly SME's* led by the Dutch NA. Jaromír Coufalík participates in the 3<sup>rd</sup> thematic monitoring group – *Adaptation of Training Supply and New Training Methods – Quality of Training* – led by the NA in the UK.

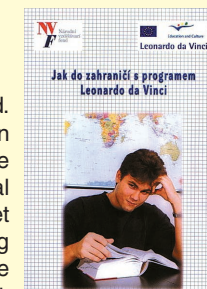
Information on thematic monitoring is regularly disseminated in the Czech Republic. Several tools and mechanisms are used for this purpose: the newsletter of the Czech National Agency and seminars at both the national and regional level. The list of 150 relevant institutions and experts was also developed in order to send them information on thematic monitoring. In September 2003 the meeting of the 3<sup>rd</sup> thematic monitoring group will take place in Prague. In December 2003 the Czech NA will organise the national conference on thematic monitoring and on ways of leveraging the best practice Leonardo projects in the Czech Republic.

## How to Go Abroad with Leonardo

The Czech National Agency prepared and published the practical guide *How to Go Abroad with Leonardo*. The promoters of mobility projects and, especially, the participants in placements abroad are the main users of this booklet.

Both general information on all countries participating in the Leonardo da Vinci Programme and a more detailed description of each country is presented in the guide. The guide presents basic facts on geography and culture and on regulations concerning entering and staying in the country. Also, the required documents for

placement participants and the relevant fees are specified. Information on what to do in case of illness, a description of health care system in the country and how to arrange for insurance are also included. Each country's typical features are also presented. In addition, the booklet provides information on weather and rules for importing and exporting goods. Important addresses, phone numbers and internet contact data are presented as well. The content of the guide is expected to be updated regularly.



## Seminars in Regions

The Czech NA (CNA) puts special emphasis on direct contact with the target groups of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme. Therefore, it co-operates permanently with various organisations from the Czech regions, disseminating information on the programme and encouraging potential promoters of new projects. The area of the Czech Republic is divided into 14 regions with an average population of about 730,000 inhabitants. According to the Work Plan of the NA, the staff of the CNA should participate in seminars in seven regions in 2003 and the year after. The real number of regions with joint events of the CNA and regional bodies will be higher, because six regional Leonardo seminars will be organised in 2003 alone.



Seminar on the Leonardo da Vinci Programme in Jihlava (Vysočina Region) in May 2003.

Information on implementing the Leonardo da Vinci Programme is presented at these seminars. The participants are also presented with concrete examples of successful projects, and

preparation support for new projects is offered. At the end of the seminars the CNA staff usually provide individual consultations concerning project ideas. People from various vocational schools, enterprises, authorities, regional development agencies, employment services, and non-profit organisations participate in these consultations. Usually 60 – 200 persons participate in each regional seminar.

Also, the representatives of the European Commission, Mr. Otto Dibelius (DG Education and Culture) and Julius op de Beke (DG Employment), participated in the successful national seminar *Lifelong Learning and the Accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union* in May 2003 in Kroměříž (Zlín Region, Eastern Moravia).



One plenary session of the seminar *Lifelong Learning and the Accession of the Czech Republic to the European Union* took place in the Assembly Hall of the castle in Kroměříž (Zlín Region, Eastern Moravia).

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