

Editorial



Dear readers,

This issue of the National Training Fund's newsletter *Pro futuro* informs on activities which the NTF performs within the Central European Initiative (CEI). The CEI platform emerged already in late 1989 as reaction on political changes in Central and Eastern

Europe. Nowadays this grouping for political, economic and cultural cooperation associates 18 European countries.

When the number of the CEI countries increased and its bodies were adapted several years ago, the NTF Director – Miroslava Kopicová – was asked to chair the international working group focused on the human resources development. The seminars on current topics in the HRD area supported by the CEI Executive Secretariat and the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs were organized in the Czech Republic. In 2005 they were followed by the international conferences designated as the Prague CEI HRD Forum. The key themes for the Prague Forum are usually selected by the HRD working group according to the CEI Plan of Action. Currently the working group as the focal points network is managed by the NTF expert Jaromír Coufalík.

Currently half of the CEI countries are the EU member states while the second half aren't. This fact provides the CEI conferences with a precious chance for mutual informing and experience exchange concerning the EU matters as well as events in the other European countries outside EU. The experts from non-EU countries can acquaint with works focused on achieving goals of the EU educational or employment policy through the conferences and – on the contrary – the experts from the EU countries can obtain information on development in the Western Balkans, Belarus, Moldova or Ukraine there. The CEI conferences – this year the NTF organized already the fifth one – were gradually well received both by the Czech experts and also by experts from the other CEI countries. The good response is illustrated by the participation of the highest CEI representative – Secretary General of the CEI Ambassador Pietro Ercole Ago at the conference.

When I welcomed the conference participants this year, it was unusual moment for me. I came there just after the meeting of the NTF Board of Directors which appointed me Director of the NTF following the fact that the long-standing NTF Director – Miroslava Kopicová – became Minister of Education, Youth and Sports of the Czech Republic. As the CEI conferences take place always in the end of November, the next CEI conferences will evoke my memories on it also in the next years.

Yours
Jarmila Modrá

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About the Central European Initiative



The Central European Initiative was established in 1989 as the first forum promoting regional cooperation among the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. The following countries are currently

the CEI member states: Albania, Austria, Belarus, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro, Poland, Romania, Serbia, the Slovak Republic, Slovenia and Ukraine. In line with the priorities envisaged by the Plan of Action, the CEI operates in the following areas:

- climate, environment and sustainable energy
- enterprise development including tourism
- human resources development
- information society and media
- intercultural cooperation including minorities
- multimodal transport
- science and technology
- sustainable agriculture

• interregional and cross-border cooperation
The focal point networks belong to the CEI working bodies. The activity of the Human Resources Development Network is managed by the NTF representative on behalf of the Czech Republic. This network associates the experts from all CEI countries. Its meeting is organized by the NTF always in the day before the conference. The more detailed information on the CEI activities is available on the CEI web site www.ceinet.org.

Themes of the CEI conferences

2005 Competitiveness – Innovation – Human Resources, Central Europe in the Global Perspective

2006 Financing Further Continuing Professional Training

2007 Education of Adults in Regions. Programmes – Experience – Counselling

2008 Higher Quality of Education and Training – Better Employability

Concert

As usually the NTF organized also the welcome meeting with the cultural programme for participants on the eve of the conference. The concert took place in the Mirror Chapel of the National Library of the Czech Republic in the Prague Old Town on 19th November 2009. After the welcome speeches delivered by the NTF Director Jarmila Modrá and Secretary General of the CEI Executive Secretariat Ambassador Pietro Ercole Ago the students of the Prague Conservatoire appeared on the stage. (This school celebrated

200 years its founding last year.) The participants listened to three compositions: the part of the Concert for flute in G major by W. A. Mozart, Fantasia and fugue in G minor for organ by J. S. Bach and three Biblical songs by A. Dvořák. The conference participants appreciated the performance of students as well as the beautiful atmosphere of the Mirror Chapel from 1724. After concert the participants tasted the samples of Moravian vines in the National Vine Bank.



Meeting of the CEI Focal points network HRD



The meeting of the Focal points network Human Resources Development took place on the occasion of the CEI conference on 19th November 2009. After apology of representatives of Macedonia and Montenegro closely before meeting the following 11 CEI member states were represented there: Austria, Belarus, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Ukraine. The CEI countries were represented either by the official members of the network or by experts in the field of employment support. Also Secretary General of the CEI Executive Secretariat P. E. Ago participated in the meeting.

Exchange of information on important initiatives, projects and/or events concerning education and employment support in the CEI countries was the main point on the meeting agenda. The participants received the CEI Plan of Action 2010 – 2012 and dealt also with priorities concerning human resources development in this Plan. In the context of these priorities they also discussed the proposed themes of the next CEI conference.

Interview with CEI Secretary General



Mr. Ago, welcome in Prague where you have also worked at the Italian Embassy several decades ago. What are your relationships to Prague and the Czech Republic now?

During my stay in Prague from 1969 to 1971, notwithstanding the very difficult situation, I tried to establish intensive contacts with the local population, which prompted me to extensively visit the country and to learn the Czech language.

Subsequently, I tried to visit the country at least once a year to maintain the contacts with my friends and not forget the language. I was particularly happy to be able to witness the success of the Velvet Revolution and the return of the country to its democratic fold.

In the most recent years, as Secretary General of the CEI-ES, I was very pleased to be able to have official contacts with the Czech Republic once again. I was particularly glad to witness its active role within the CEI and especially its very important decision to financially support the launch of the newly established CEI Climate Fund, representing a major contribution to the effectiveness of the activity of the CEI.

The CEI Prague HRD Forum is regularly focused on education and/or employability of people. Do these issues belong to the important objectives and activities of the CEI?

Yes. One of the CEI's main areas of activity is Human Re-

source Development.

In fact, according to our new Plan of Action 2010-12, CEI cooperation in this field will focus on activities aimed at promoting employability through education and training and on the concept of life-long learning and its implementation.

The development of education will also be promoted through a further development of the CEI University Network (CEI UniNet).

The CEI UniNet is a Network of universities belonging to the 18 CEI Member States. It aims at facilitating cooperation among the universities and other institutions of higher learning through the mobility of students and teaching staff for specific post-graduate level Joint Programmes such as PhD courses and Master's courses, summer schools, seminars and workshops.

How do you evaluate the contribution of the National Training Fund and the Czech Republic in general to the CEI activities in the field of HRD?

Our cooperation with the National Training Fund is excellent and has existed for various years. It has always organised this event which has become a CEI Feature Event. The National Training Fund has always dealt with issues such as human resources development, employability, continuing education and training and social integration and I am very pleased with this cooperation and with the fact that we can contribute to this important event. Hopefully the Czech Ministry of Foreign Affairs, which as always supported this gathering will continue doing so in the future in cooperation with the CEI.

Conference



In the introductory part of the conference the **Minister of education, youth and sports Miroslava Kopicová** spoke. She stressed a. o. the importance of forecasting labour market needs both for sector of education and for the economic and social development in general. She also appreciated the NTF activities within the Central European Initiative.

Also **Secretary General of the CEI Executive Secretariat Amb. Pietro Ercole Ago** appreciated the conference as one of important CEI events held in the year of the 20th anniversary of the CEI founding as well as the NTF cooperation with the CEI. He emphasized the CEI priorities concerning human resources development mentioned in the new CEI Plan of Action 2010 – 2012.

The first keynote speech of the conference was delivered by **Alena Zugersteinová, Project Manager of the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) in Thessaloniki**, who was involved in the large analytical works dealing with the medium-term prognoses of the supply and demand at the EU labour market. (The conference participants received the CEDEFOP's synthesis report *Future Skill Supply in Europe* published by CEDEFOP this year. It presents the main results of the forecast of the supply side of the labour market up to 2020.) A. Zugersteinová informed on the main identified trends, e. g. on increasing demand for the labour force with the medium and higher qualification, on faster trends concerning women etc. She dealt also with the existing discrepancies at the European labour market and proposals how to reduce and prevent them.

The second keynote speech delivered **Lizzi Feiler** who works for the **European Training Foundation (ETF) in Turin as expert in the field of labour market and employment policy**. As the ETF deals with the employment support and promotion of vocational education and training especially in the Western Balkans and post-soviet countries she mentioned some specific features of situation in these countries, e. g. the high unemployment rate of young people or less developed information systems on the labour market. Just the specific features of these countries should be taken into account also in case of forecasting labour market needs or implementing some usually accomplished and efficient measures in these countries. She recommended e. g. to elaborate the prognoses of qualifications needs in the Western Balkan region both at the national and regional level.

Two „transnational“ speeches were followed by a set of seven speeches on forecasting the labour market needs in some CEI countries.

The first such speech was delivered by **Catalin Ghinaaru, Scientific Secretary of the National Institute of Labour and Social Protection in Bucharest**. After provi-

ding with the basic information on the labour market in Romania he presented the methodology and results of surveys carried out in Romanian enterprises every year already several years. He also presented the experience from cooperation of his institute with the other organisations within the international network SkillsNet which deals systematically with the forecasting labour market needs under coordination of the CEDEFOP.

Paola Zito, Researcher from the Gruppo CLAS in Milano spoke on Italian experience at the conference. The data on the employment structure are gathered in Italy through several surveys focused both on individuals and on enterprises. Forecasting labour market needs is held within the Excelsior survey organized by the Italian Union of Chambers of Commerce (Unioncamere) and financed by the Ministry of Labour from the ESF resources. This survey is carried out every year (since 1997) with the sample more than 100.000 enterprises and resulted in detailed data on the demand for labour in Italy.



The Czech Republic contributed to the conference agenda by the presentation delivered by **Jiří Braňka, Analyst of the National Training Fund** (section National Observatory of Employment and Training). He informed on the specific features of the Czech economy and on the demand trends at the Czech labour market. He also spoke on the five-year employment projections in 32 aggregated clusters of occupations and in 27 clusters by education. He also acquainted the conference participants with three developed sector studies (power supply industry, electronics/electroengineering, ICT services) as well as with the web platform informing on skill needs trends.

Sanja Crnković-Pozaić, Director of the consultancy and training organisation BIT-Croatia in Zagreb presented selected data on the situation at the labour market in Croatia including consequences of structural changes in the Croatian economy in the beginning of her speech. The outstanding feature of the local labour market is its segmentation, shadow economy or seasonal swings in more sectors. Training is a factor limiting the faster development. She also spoke on results of the last survey among employers concerning trends in labour force requirements. She gave vent to her feeling that better information on the past than on the future is available through statistics and econometrics.

Information and experience from Ukraine was presented by **Maksym Drozach, Scientific Officer in the Research Institute of Labour and Employment of Population in Kiev**. He spoke on the legislation concerning labour market in Ukraine, on bodies responsible for the national labour market policy and influencing labour market and also on the current situation at the local labour market. The demand for workers and craftsmen is increasing there. He also informed the conference participants on the natio-

nal and regional programmes promoting employment.

Also **Oliver Demkó, Advisor and Analyst of the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs in Budapest**, opened his speech by the basic information on the situation at the labour market in Hungary where especially the less qualified people have less stable jobs. He focused his presentation on survey among employers concerning the medium-term prognosis of development of the labour force requirements, the methodology of this survey, used indicators, organisational aspects etc. The results of this survey are published through Internet in an interactive database where also the lists of occupations with the good chances for jobs are available (see www.mmp.hu).

Information from Poland was presented by **Łukasz Arendt from the Department of the Economic Policy, Łodz University** at the conference. He declared the discrepancies between supply and demand and/or the less efficient and flexible training system the key factors influencing the Polish labour market and the economy in general. The information system Forecasting Labour Market Demand is the main initiative in the field of forecasting labour market needs in Poland. The speaker finally informed the



participants on the new system of forecasting qualification needs developed within an ESF project. It consists of two modules: the aim of the first module is to harmonize the activities of the public employment services and education, the second one forecasts the changes at the regional labour market.

During the closing part of the conference the participants also discussed on the delivered presentations and approved the conference conclusions.

Jaromír Coufalík

List of the conference papers

Alena Zukersteinová (European Centre for Development of Vocational Training - CEDEFOP, Thessaloniki, Greece)	Future Skills Need in Europe - CEDEFOP's Medium-term Forecast
Lizzi Feiler (European Training Foundation, Torino, Italy)	Forecasting Labour Market Needs - the Relevance for Modernising Vocational Education and Training Systems
Catalin Ghinararu (National Scientific Research Institute for Labour and Social Protection, Bucharest, Romania)	Forecasting Labour Market Needs in Romania - Main Outputs
Paola Zito (Gruppo CLAS, Milan, Italy)	Anticipating Needs in Challenging Times - Italian Experience
Jiří Braňka (National Training Fund, Prague, Czech Republic)	Forecasting Skill Needs: Will Better Times Ever Come Back?
Sanja Crnković-Pozaić (bit Croatia, Zagreb, Croatia)	Forecasting Labour Market Needs - Croatian Approach
Maksym Drozach (Research Institute of Labour and Employment, Kiev, Ukraine)	Forecasting Labour Market Needs - Ukrainian Example
Oliver Demkó (Ministry of Social Affairs and Labour, Budapest, Hungary)	Short-run Employer Survey for Identifying Labour Market Needs in Hungary
Łukasz Arendt (University of Lodz, Lodz, Poland)	Forecasting Skill Needs on the Local and Regional Labour Markets in Poland

For more informations: www.nvf.cz/cei_2009