TERTIARY SHORT CYCLE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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With the financial support of the Commission of the European Union in the framework of the SOCRATES Programme

Comparative Study carried out by EURASHE

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EURASHE gives advice to the European Commission, Directorate Education and Culture, and to the Bologna Follow-up Group, in connection to the preparation of the upcoming Summit of European Ministers of Education in Berlin, Germany, in September 2003.

Brussels, May 2003

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ANALYSIS OF TERTIARY SHORT CYCLE EDUCATION IN EUROPE

Acknowledgements

This study on Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe could not have been carried out without the support of a number of agents who, by their availability and understanding, have made it possible for us to analyse and synthesize their information, their recommendations and their suggestions.
These acknowledgements go in particular to the following agents:

- The DG EAC services of the Commission who have selected this project and who have made this study possible thanks to their financial support.

- All the people in charge at the ministries of education, the ECTS and Bologna co-ordinators in the different signatory states of the Bologna declaration as well as educational experts in the institutions of the respective countries that have sent us the valuable information. Moreover we would like to thank the people who were willing to grant us an interview thus enabling us to get in-depth information. The information they have communicated orally and the documents they have made available to the team of experts, were the basic elements needed to bring this study to a favourable conclusion. We would like to stress that the fact that the special efforts made towards the study by a large number of people in ministries and educational services has been greatly appreciated.

- Mr. Bernd Wächter, director of Academic Cooperation Association (ACA), Mr. Ole Winther, Head of Section of the Danish Ministry of Education and Mr. Roland Vermeesch, General Director Hogeschool West-Vlaanderen and President of EURASHE for having given their constructive remarks to the draft report.

- The Eurydice services for letting us use their documentation where insufficient data were available.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The sector of Tertiary Short Cycle education and post-secondary education in Europe represents more than **2,5 million** students (1,7 million in TSC and over 800,000 in post-secondary education). These cannot be neglected if we want to become ***the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010***, as stated at The Lisbon summit in 2000. Students in TSC education are mainly students looking for a short professional or vocational qualification after secondary education. Institutions offering TSC are very diverse ranging from universities over other HEIs, centres for adult education and even secondary schools, very often co-operating with companies, professional organisations and chambers of commerce.

Tertiary Short Cycle education definitely contributes to diversification in higher education as it expands the range of studies from which students can choose. Next to the wide range of studies offered in TSC, there is also a variety of **flexible learning paths** such as part-time study, adult education, distance and Internet learning which make these studies especially attractive for mature students or students that would otherwise not access higher education. Such flexibility enhances lifelong and life-wide learning.

Several examples all over Europe show that TSC education swiftly adapts to the needs of the labour market as well public as private. This is also reflected in the fact that in a number of countries TSC education has been set up in collaboration with industry or employers to meet the companies' needs and skills shortages. The fact that over the last few years so many new fields of study have been set up, proves that we are dealing with a thriving sector meeting an existing demand in society.

Although the majority of students who have finished TSC prefer to join the labour market as soon as they have graduated, an increasing number of them decides to take on degree studies immediately after graduation or at a later stage in life. This is definitely facilitated where TSC is already integrated in HEIs or where there are close links between TSC and other HEIs. Ladders of learning, or even better, networks of learning as they exist already in some educational systems in Europe, enhance the student's chances of accumulating credits for the acquired skills and competences and making use of them whenever he or she decides to continue his or her education.

Institutions offering TSC or sub-degree education are also using credit systems (many of them ECTS) and Diploma Supplement very often because of a legal obligation. The accumulation of credits and the transparency and comparability of contents in TSC education will definitely be enhanced by the use of these credit systems and by using the Diploma Supplement. Students and teachers in TSC are mobile under Erasmus (Socrates programme) and Leonardo da Vinci. They also participate in other actions of European or bilateral programmes. Obstacles to mobility are similar to those in university education but the main obstacles specific for TSC are the fact that a number of institutions are too small and that the sector is not well known or not well defined.

Programmes in TSC last between one and (exceptionally) four years. They are certified with a large panoply of titles thus adding to the confusion especially as similar titles are used in different countries to cover different qualifications and programmes of one, two or three years' duration. It is therefore suggested to look for a common qualifications framework and for common European titles in and TSC education. Developments in certain countries such as the UK with the **Foundation degree** are therefore very welcome.

Quality in higher education is one of the key concepts that should embrace different aspects such as teaching, staffing, students, infrastructure etc. It is therefore good to see that the majority of institutions in TSC education are subject to quality assessment and that virtually all of them are accredited. In many cases this accreditation is still given by the Ministry of education and is not the responsibility of an independent accreditation body.

Transition from TSC to degree programmes is relatively easy in most countries. It is obvious that where TSC is integrated in HEIs or where there are close links between institutions offering TSC and other HEIs the transition is just a further step on the ladder of learning. Sometimes the credits earned in TSC can be taken into account entirely when proceeding to degree studies but in other cases they will just grant access to university or degree studies. In those countries where the transition is not governed by legislation or where there are no agreed principles it will be al lot more difficult for a student to get accreditation of his or her prior learning.

Next to TSC education, the sector of post-secondary education, was also briefly studied as in some countries the qualifications earned can be the same or similar to those earned in sub-degree or Tertiary Short Cycle education. The situation as to access to degree higher education coming from post-secondary education, varies even more greatly ranging from access to the last year of Bachelor studies to no credits at all for the education or training received which means that the student coming from post-secondary cannot benefit in any way from the education received if he wants to go on studying.

When we use the term "tertiary education" as defined by the OECD as "*a level or stage of studies beyond secondary education which can lead to a qualification recognised on the labour market"* then we can conclude that as well what is now known as TSC as what is known as post-secondary education can be seen as tertiary education. Especially as the definition continues "*It is undertaken in **formal tertiary education institutions** – universities, polytechnics, colleges; public and private – but also in a **wide variety of other settings**, including secondary schools, at work sites, via free-standing information technology-based offerings and a host of private and public entities"*[1].

The study concludes that TSC education and post-secondary education have to be seen as genuine and vital parts of higher education contributing to the development of a true lifelong and life-wide learning system and to the bringing about of the knowledge-based society which Europe needs to power a dynamic economy. To this

[1] T.J. Alexander, *From Higher to Tertiary Education: Directions for Change in OECD Countries,* Paris, 1998.

effect the study recommends that TSC and post-secondary education be included in all discussions related to the Bologna process. It also recommends that different forms of co-operation be encouraged between different levels of education ranging from university education to TSC education or post-secondary education. It suggests that TSC and post-secondary education be fully included in qualification frameworks which are developed in several European countries.

All these measures and some others, such as the use of common terminology and common titles for TSC or post-secondary across Europe, will or can contribute to enhance the transparency and the readability of qualifications delivered in TSC and in post -secondary education. The further development of the use of ECTS, the diploma supplement and clearer accreditation and QA systems will also contribute to this and action is recommended in those fields.

Finally the study recommends that the European Union follow up closely all developments in relation with TSC education and post-secondary education by involving representatives of these educational fields in all Bologna discussions, possibly through EURASHE. It also recommends that the Commission funds more in-depth research and studies into TSC and post-secondary education so as to make its role and contribution to lifelong learning and to life-wide learning more apparent. More European projects building on partnerships involving university education and TSC or post-secondary education are also seen as a means to enhance quality of education and access to higher education, two of the key objectives of the Detailed work programme of the Future Objectives of the Education and Training systems in Europe. All of these recommendations tend to enhance the opportunities for learning of the more than 2.5 million students who are present in TSC and post-secondary education in Europe.

RATIONALE

At the **Lisbon European Council** in March 2000, government leaders set the EU a 10-year mission to become ***the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world****, capable of sustained economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion.* Education and training systems have a key role to play in making this vision a reality[2]. Hence the detailed work programme of the concrete future objectives of the education and training systems approved in 2002 that the Commission is implementing.

If a dynamic knowledge-based economy is to be created, optimal use has to be made of the full potential of the competencies and skills of all those present at all levels in education and training systems on the one hand. On the other hand flexible learning pathways have to be created to facilitate access to education and training for as many as possible at all stages of their personal and professional life. Tertiary short cycle education and post-secondary education are the key areas that prepare young people for a concrete profession. At the moment they are too often seen as an end in terms of education and training but they should, in the perspective of a knowledge-based society, be seen as a stepping-stone in lifelong and life-wide education.

Within the framework of the Bologna process a lot of attention has been devoted to the BAMA –structure in a European HE area. However, in a number of countries there are still an important number of students attending Tertiary Short Cycle education. In some of these countries there is also post-secondary education whereas in others there is only post-secondary education. The lack of studies and descriptive information shows that those two areas of tertiary short cycle and post-secondary education have received little or no attention so far.

Hardly any attention has been paid to the links between Tertiary Short Cycle education and post- secondary education and the Bologna declaration. Probably they were never included in the discussions because students in the Tertiary Short Cycle education do not acquire a Bachelor's degree as the courses they are attending only last one or two years or are validated with less than 180 ECTS points even if they last three years or more. However, Tertiary Short Cycle courses and professional post-secondary courses are sometimes considered as building blocks towards degree courses. To enhance the reflection on the links between Tertiary Short Cycle education and post-secondary education on the one hand and degree higher education on the other hand and on the inclusion of these programmes or courses in the Bologna process, EURASHE has taken the initiative to carry out the project: "Analysis of Tertiary Short Cycle Education in Europe".

Seen in a European perspective Tertiary Short Cycle (TSC) education constitutes a very varied and heterogeneous group of programmes and studies. In some countries a part of those programmes are recognised as higher education, in other countries none of TSC education are

[2] http://www.europa.eu.int/comm/education/lll_en.html

recognised as higher education. In effect, the same type of education leading to the same professional qualifications can be recognized as Higher Education within one country, but in another country placed in the sector of post-secondary education without connections to higher education. TSC education can be found at university- as well as non-university level and even in secondary schools. This situation creates major problems for both the national and international comparability of programmes as well as for the mobility of students and teachers. To inspire and support this area of education, specific measures have to be taken. It is hoped that the present study clarifies some of these issues and will make people aware of the richness, the diversity and the potential of tertiary short cycle and post-secondary education.

According to the Communication on **Making a European Area of Lifelong Learning a Reality,** adopted by the Commission on 21 November 2001, the Member States should transform formal education and training systems in order to break down barriers between different forms of learning. On 31 May 2002, EU Commissioner for Education and Culture, Viviane Reding stated that if this European Higher Education Area is to become a reality by 2010, a 'special push' is needed in the areas of **credits for lifelong learning**, European Masters and quality assurance. She added that we are still far away from a situation in which transparency, quality and recognition are common features in Europe. EURASHE thinks that its study will enhance the transparency concerning Tertiary Short Cycle education on the one hand and professional post-secondary education on the other hand as a contribution to lifelong learning. EURASHE hopes that this reflection will no doubt also facilitate the creation of the bridges and the possibilities of co-operation between degree education and tertiary short cycle or post-secondary education.

The eventual aim of the study is to promote that students and teachers from a substantial part of TSC education can become an integrated part of higher education, by **including TSC education in the Bologna-process** and thereby enhancing the transparency and recognition of TSC education in Europe. One of the aims is also to stress the important place that tertiary short cycle and post- secondary education have as a contribution to lifelong and life-wide learning. A comprehensive view of this area of education was not available so far. Therefore EURASHE has decided to make a first comparative study of this grey zone of education. The demographic situation is such that no substantial increase in higher education students can be expected. This means that the knowledge-based society can only be brought about by tapping into other groups of students such as those in tertiary short cycle education and post-secondary education. EURASHE hopes that this study will contribute to looking at this education from another perspective and seeing it as a valuable part of the lifelong continuum.
The present study is a first general comparative study which hopefully will be followed by more detailed studies on several key elements of tertiary short cycle or post-secondary education.

INTRODUCTION

The objective of this comparative study has been to make a detailed analysis of existing Tertiary Short Cycle Education in Europe. While the Bologna-process has lead to a substantial documentation about First and Second Cycle Higher Education, there has until now, been little focus on Tertiary Short Cycle education[3], although this kind of education constitutes a very important part of the Higher Education system in several countries. To include this Tertiary Short Cycle education in the Bologna process, EURASHE has taken the initiative to carry out the project: "Analysis of the Tertiary Short Cycle Education in Europe". The authors will present the results of the study at the EURASHE conference in Hungary in June 2003 where they will also organise a European Seminar for discussions on Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe. They also hope that they will be given the opportunity to communicate the results of the study at the Summit of Ministers of Education in Berlin (September 2003).

The study covers all the Bologna signatory countries. The authors have focused mainly on public education, and only in special cases on education in the private sector. Because the situation is so diverse in the countries concerned they have examined Tertiary Short Cycle education in all its aspects: as sub-degree, integrated in a qualifications framework, recognised as higher education or having organised links with it and lastly TSC regarded as tertiary education but not having any organised links with higher education. Because in a consistent number of countries there is only post-secondary education (not) having links with Higher Education they have also included this kind of education in a separate chapter of the study.

The study consists of two parts: the first part being the actual comparative study and the second part giving a brief summary of the situation of HE and especially TSC in all Bologna signatory countries. The comparative study describes in 8 chapters the situation of Tertiary Short Cycle and post-secondary education in Europe. The first chapter gives a survey of the importance of TSC and post-secondary education compared to the situation of HE in Europe. The second chapter deals with the general organisation and legislation concerning Tertiary Short Cycle education describing who provides Tertiary Short Cycle education and in which fields it is organised. It also focuses on the practical organisation of Tertiary Short Cycle education including funding, providers, curriculum and fields in education. In the third chapter the entrance qualification as well as the duration and certification of studies are dealt with. Chapter four looks at the profile of students and teachers in Tertiary Short Cycle education. Chapter five examines the mobility of teachers and students as well as their participation in other actions of EU or other international programmes. It also focuses on the

[3] When we use the term Tertiary Short Cycle education we mean all kinds of Higher education not leading to a first (Bachelor's) degree.

transparency and readability of the qualifications and the use of ECTS and diploma supplements. The Bologna Declaration specifically mentions the establishment of "*a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system"*.[4] It is therefore obvious that the study also examined in how far the TSC studies concerned are validated in ECTS points or other credits and can thus lead to the acquisition of a degree.

In the sixth chapter the use of Quality Assurance Systems and accreditation is looked upon and in the next chapter the existing links with other kinds of Higher Education are analysed. This chapter also focuses on the importance of recognition of Tertiary Short Cycle education in view of Lifelong Learning. Chapter eight gives a survey of post-secondary education and its possible links with HE. In chapter nine the authors give a number of interesting elements of good practice and in chapter 10 they recapitulate the key elements of the previous chapters whereupon they draw the conclusions and make recommendations for the inclusion of Tertiary Short Cycle education in the Bologna process.

Part two gives a short description of TSC and post-secondary education per country. All countries surveyed figure in this part including those having neither TSC nor post-secondary education. The descriptions always start from a brief situation of higher education in the countries concerned and then focus on TSC and/or post-secondary education.

In the annexes the readers find a glossary, a number of comparative data and charts as well as the English questionnaire. The French, German and Spanish questionnaires are available on request.

1. Methodology used

1.1. Questionnaires

The methodology used has been the one announced in the application for the grant. The corner stone of the comparative study are the questionnaires that were sent out to all the members of the Bologna follow-up group as well as the ECTS follow-up group. The questionnaires were also forwarded to the members of the Board of EURASHE and to a number of institutions or organisations such as ADIUT (Association des Directeurs des IUT), SCOP (Standing Conference of Principles), Edexcel etc and to a number of Socrates National Agencies. To facilitate the task of the respondents the questionnaires were translated into French, German and Spanish thus giving the opportunity to a maximum number of people to read and fill in the questionnaires in their own language. These questionnaires have been added as annexes to the study.

The questionnaire contained three types of questions. Some invited to choose one response from several options. For others the possibility was given to tick all possible answers and add the possibilities that didn't occur in the questionnaire. Lastly there were a limited number of open questions. We have also given the opportunity to give comment on a number of questions and to send in supplementary texts or legislation.

[4] http://www.bologna-berlin2003.de/en/aktuell/index.htm

We received 45 filled-in questionnaires from 28 countries, some of them incomplete because certain data were not available. From Finland we did not receive a questionnaire but we did receive several replies stating that they do not have either TSC or post-secondary education. Certain countries sent in several questionnaires or had the questionnaires filled in by a group of people, showing their great interest in the matter (Austria, UK, Ireland, Denmark, Sweden, Romania). Moreover a number of the questionnaires were complemented with additional information (UK, Spain, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Netherlands). As we didn't receive any replies from Croatia, Iceland, Malta, Luxembourg and the French and German speaking communities of Belgium, a text was drafted based on the websites of the ministries and of Eurydice and sent for approval to the countries concerned. As far as the UK is concerned we received separate questionnaires from England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. From Belgium we only received a filled-in questionnaire from the Flemish community.

1.2. Telephone interviews

Wherever necessary these questionnaires were supplemented by telephone interviews. This was mainly when we received either conflicting information or when the information received was not entirely clear to the experts. The experts who had read the documentation that was made available by the questionnaires as well as the databases of the Eurydice service also prepared these interviews by an in-depth study of the websites of the ministries of education of all the signatory states of the Bologna declaration.

1.3. Meetings of the experts

The experts met at least once every two weeks to discuss first the questionnaires and then the drafts of the texts based on the questionnaires received and the telephone interviews held.

1.4. Drafting of the chapters per country

Starting from the questionnaires, the interviews, the information found on the websites of the ministries and of Eurydice as well as other documentation made available to the experts, the experts started by drafting a chapter for each of the signatory countries of the Bologna declaration. The texts were based on the questionnaires received. The drafts were then submitted for approval to the representatives of the Ministries of the respective countries and/ or to other respondents. Most ministries reacted very positively by adding information and correcting inaccuracies. After their approval the texts have been finalised. If no questionnaires had been received, the authors sent a draft text, based on the Eurydice database and on the website of the Ministry and this text was sent for approval to the ministries concerned. All countries except three reacted to the draft. However, sometimes the additional information asked for was missing. This is the reason why for some countries certain data are not available.

A brief survey is given of the HE-structure of all Bologna signatory countries, also those not offering TSC or post-secondary education. Very often it becomes clear from this introduction why there is no (longer) Tertiary Short Cycle education. Moreover a

distinction is made between TSC/sub-degree and post-secondary education. The importance, organisation, duration and certification of studies is looked upon very briefly as well as the profile of students and teachers, use of ECTS and diploma supplement, mobility and possible transition to degree programmes.

1.5. Drafting of the comparative chapters

During a work meeting the experts have jointly listed the important points that should be included in the comparative chapters. The chapters were written on the basis of the data received. These chapters follow the layout of the questionnaire and are followed by the conclusions by the authors.

1.6. Interesting elements of good practice

The authors have focused on a number of elements of good practice. Although there were many more examples that could be given they were limited in time and space and tried to give a number of diverse examples that could be adopted by other countries that want to implement similar structures.

1.7. Recommendations

A number of recommendations are given that could contribute to making the European space of Higher Education a reality and that could help to reach the objectives of the Lisbon summit as well as those of the communication on lifelong Learning.

1.8. Compilation of the whole in the comparative study

The comparative chapters as well as the chapters per country and the elements of good practice with the recommendations have been compiled to make up the present study. The study is completely available in English and a summary has been made in French, German and Spanish.

1.9. Scientific committee

The draft version of this study was extensively discussed with a team of experts from several European countries. Suggestions and remarks were subsequently integrated in the final version of the study.

2. Limits of the study

2.1. Complexity of the matter

During the development and creation of the study it became clear that this area of Tertiary Short Cycle education is a very complex matter. From the beginning of the study it also became clear that Tertiary Short Cycle education is in fact a grey area that is not well known and that it is very difficult to define. Moreover it is conceived differently in the countries studied.

One of the difficulties was to draw the line between post-secondary education and Tertiary Short Cycle education. In some countries this line is very easy to draw as they regard Tertiary Short Cycle education as part of their HE system and post-

secondary as part of secondary education. In other countries (such as Spain) this line is not so clear and Tertiary Short Cycle education figures as well in the description of HE as in the description of post-secondary education. Moreover the same qualifications are often delivered in TSC or sub-degree or even post-secondary education. This led to a number of terminological difficulties.

As far as post-secondary is concerned the situation is even more confusing. In a large number of countries it is part of secondary education or is delivered in secondary schools. In other countries there is no post-secondary education but there are longer forms of secondary education. Lastly the interpretation of post-secondary education by the respondents is linked to the delivery of secondary school leaving certificates at different ages and the compulsory school age ranging from 15 to 18.

Moreover the sector surveyed is one that is constantly on the move. Especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe a number of these programmes have been created recently and a large number of new institutions and new programmes have been established over the last five years. The fact that so many changes have taken place over the last few years is also reflected in the fact that very often websites of the ministries (especially in other than the native language(s)) have not been updated. This sometimes led to conflicting information.

Lastly the Bologna declaration has also affected the sector of TSC education. Virtually all countries where TSC studies are present have recently adopted new legislation or are going to do so.

2.2. Terminological difficulties

As already mentioned in the previous paragraph there were a number of terminological difficulties. The main terminological difficulty was the fact that what countries understand under Higher Education, Tertiary education, sub-degree and post-secondary education varies greatly. Maybe the most striking example of this terminological confusion is the fact that in certain countries the term post-secondary education is sometimes used to describe all kinds of tertiary education including doctoral studies (e.g. Austria and Spain).

We therefore tried to define the education surveyed by the International Standard Classification of Education[5]. The first distinction we made was between Tertiary Short Cycle Education and post-secondary. When taking into account this classification we see that ISCED level 4 refers to post-secondary non-tertiary education and ISCED level 5 to the first stage of tertiary education. We therefore defined post-secondary education as ISCED level 4. Normally the entrance requirement to this level is the successful completion of ISCED level 3A or 3B or ISCED level 4 A.

ISCED level 5 programmes do not lead directly to the award of an advanced research qualification and last at least 2 years from the beginning of level 5. The kind of tertiary education surveyed lies clearly within ISCED 5. The level is subdivided into theoretically based/ research preparatory/ giving access to professions with high skills

[5] http://www.uis.unesco.org/en/act/act_p/isced.html

requirements programmes on the one hand (ISCED 5 A) and more practical or technical programmes (ISCED 5 B) on the other hand. *Level 5B* education (termed tertiary-type B by the OECD) covers more practical or occupationally-specific programmes that provide participants with a qualification of immediate relevance to the labour market (UNESCO 1997; OECD 2001). Level 5B programs are typically shorter than those of level 5A. They normally have a minimum duration of two years FTE at the tertiary level. The courses typically provide practical, technical or occupational skills for direct entry into the workforce[6]. It is this type of education that we have been looking at. However, within ISCED 5B no distinction is made as far as the duration of studies or qualification/title received is concerned. In view of the BAMA structure a new subdivision within ISCED level 5 B seems required.

As the International Standard Classification and also the latest OECD[7] studies do not make a distinction between Tertiary and Higher Education the authors also regarded all forms of education classified as ISCED level 5 or Tertiary as Higher Education.

The Second difficulty was to choose the term for the education surveyed. The authors hesitated between sub-degree and Tertiary Short Cycle Education. The term Tertiary Short Cycle Education was eventually preferred because on the one hand the term is generally known and on the other hand because it implies that these studies are not necessarily part of other studies and can exist in their own right leading to a professional qualification. They are aware that the term does not always reflect the reality as some of these studies last 4 years (e.g. Lithuania), which can hardly be regarded as short cycle. However, when taking the ECTS credits into account the latter studies only get 165 ECTS points. It is obvious that all HE or Tertiary courses under 180 ECTS should therefore be considered as TSC as this is the minimum required for a Bachelor's degree. Although in general the term TSC is used the term sub-degree is preferred by a number of countries where the studies are part of an integrated system and can eventually lead to a degree (Cyprus, Malta, Norway, Sweden, the UK…). This is the reason why for certain countries the term sub-degree higher education is used.

These terminological difficulties also became obvious when the translators were looking for the correct translation of the term Tertiary Short Cycle education. Although a number of experts in education were contacted for the translation of the term Tertiary Short Cycle education there was no unanimity for any of the languages. This proves that what is understood under Tertiary Short Cycle education is not clear at all especially in non-English speaking countries.

However, when we use the term tertiary education as defined by the OECD as "*a level or stage of studies beyond secondary education which can lead to a qualification recognised on the labour market"* then we can conclude that as well what is now known as TSC or sub-degree as what is known as post-secondary education can be seen as Tertiary education. Especially as the definition continues "*It is undertaken in* ***formal tertiary education***

[6] http://www.pc.gov.au/research/studies/highered/finalreport/chapter02.rtf
[7] Education at a Glance, OECD, 2002.

institutions *– universities, polytechnics, colleges; public and private – but also in a* ***wide variety of other settings****, including secondary schools, at work sites, via free-standing information technology-based offerings and a host of private and public entities"*[8].

We could therefore conclude that the scope of this study covers all tertiary education (in the sense of the definition given by OECD – see above) accredited with less than 180 ECTS points.

2.3. Absence of similar reference studies

During the first phase of the comparative study, i.e. when the questionnaires were being prepared, an in-depth research took place to find other similar studies. The results of this research were disappointing as no single quality report was found to have carried out an in-depth comparative study of Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe. This means that the team didn't have any points of reference.

2.4. Absence of coherent statistical data

An element that has not facilitated the task of the experts was the absence of coherent statistical data made available to them. Tertiary Short Cycle education is not clearly defined in a number of countries and a number of signatory states do not dispose of coherent figures for different reasons. As Tertiary Short Cycle education is in some countries the first stage of degree programmes these data cannot be conclusive. In a small number of cases there were simply no data available. The authors have written the report to the best of their ability and based on the questionnaires received. However for certain countries it was very difficult, if not impossible to get accurate information. The lack of statistical material, caused by a lack of statistical data is one of the weaknesses of this study.

2.5. Lack of time and means

Every study must take into account the financial means and the time available to be completed. The present study has been finished in less than six months' time. Because in many countries Tertiary Short Cycle education is being delivered in a large number of small institutions or schools it was impossible to carry out the study at institutional level. The sheer size of the number of institutions would have made it impossible to finish the study on time. Moreover the area surveyed is constantly growing, especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and it would probably have been nearly impossible to get hold of complete lists of the institutions concerned. Although the authors have received a lot of very interesting information from certain countries they were not able to expand upon the situation in a number of cases as far as they wanted to. It would require other studies to make an in-depth comparison of a number of elements of the study in the countries surveyed.

Although the authors have tried to work to the best of their abilities to convey accurate information they are aware that mistakes might be found due to the fact that not all countries reacted to the questionnaire, the information received was not always

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[8] T.J. Alexander, *From Higher to Tertiary Education: Directions for Change in OECD Countries,* Paris, 1998.

complete, sometimes conflicting information was given and to the fact that the situation is constantly changing.

I. COMPARATIVE STUDY

Chapter 1. Importance of Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe: over 2,5 million students involved

1.1. Introduction

The main objective of the present study is to survey the existing TSC education or sub-degree in Europe. The authors would therefore like to start with a complete overview of existing Tertiary Short Cycle education.

Table 1 – Presence of TSC- PS education and links with HE

	TSC	Links HE	PSE	Links HE	Notes
Austria	●	●	●	●	
Belgium			*		*Within SE there is a 4th stage of SE and 7th years (see Belgium)
Bulgaria	●	●	●	●*	*Certain studies
Croatia	●	NDA			
Cyprus	●	●			
Czech Rep.	●	●*			*exceptionally
Denmark	●	●			
Estonia			●	●*	*only for certain studies
Finland					
France	●	●	●	●*	*only for certain studies
Germany	●*				*Berufsakademien - only in certain states (Länder) see D
Greece			●		
Hungary	●	●			
Iceland	●	●			
Ireland	●	●			
Italy	●	●	●	●	
Latvia	●	●			
Liechtenstein	*				*Agreements with CH and A - See text Liechtenstein
Lithuania	●	● *	●		*occasionally
Luxemburg	●	NDA	●		
Malta	●	●	●	●	
Netherlands	●*	●°	●	●°°	*Will be integrated in degree programmes from 2007 °depending on institution °°access to HE
Norway	●	●	●	●*	*Only for certain studies
Poland			●		
Portugal					
Romania	●	●*	●	●°	*depending on institution
Slovak Rep					
Slovenia			●°	●*	°10-20% - * only for certain studies
Spain	●	●	●°		°access to university
Sweden	●	●	●	●*	*Only for certain studies
Swiss Confed	●	●			
Turkey	●	●			
UK Eng &	●	●	●	●	

W					
NI	●	●	●	●	
Scotland	●	●	●	●	

They have added existing post-secondary education to this table as in certain countries it is difficult to draw the line between post-secondary and tertiary education and as according to the definition of the OECD post-secondary education should be regarded as part of tertiary education.

As can be seen in the table above, there is Tertiary Short Cycle education in most Bologna signatory countries. With the exception of the Netherlands, Lithuania and the Czech Republic where transition with credits is only exceptionally possible, there are links between TSC and HE. As far as the Czech republic is concerned an attempt to update legislation in a new School Act failed in 2002. In the Netherlands TSC education (kort-hbo) will be discontinued and integrated in Bachelor's programmes. In Belgium, Estonia, Finland, Greece, Liechtenstein, Poland, Portugal, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia there is no TSC. This means that these countries will not figure in the comparative chapters on the following pages. In Germany there is in fact no TSC but in certain *Länder* and in private education there is non-recognised degree-level education that is sometimes regarded as sub-degree (see Germany*)*. Germany will therefore also not appear in the comparative chapters.

1.2. Importance of Tertiary Short Cycle education compared to the whole of HE in the Bologna signatory countries

In table 2 the participation in HE as well as the completion rate of students in HE are given. The latter is taken into account because it is paramount for the number of graduates on the market and also because reducing the high drop-out rates in tertiary education is seen as a priority by the OECD[9].

These percentages are compared with the participation rate in Tertiary Short Cycle education. Next to the participation rate in TSC the figures of students in TSC and post-secondary education are given because more than percentages they indicate how many students are involved.

The first conclusion that can be drawn from this table is the fact that although in most countries studied the percentage of students in Tertiary Short Cycle education is not very high, the total number of students in TSC and post-secondary education in all Bologna signatory countries is quite considerable. The numbers of students in post-secondary education have been added to the table because in certain countries the distinction between TSC education and post-secondary education is difficult to make. Altogether more than 2,5 million students are concerned.

[9] OECD: *Redefining Tertiary Education,* 1998.

If the EU wants to achieve the goals of the Lisbon Council viz. that "The European Union is to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based society in the world, capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion" then the countries of the EU and the applicant countries cannot afford to disregard such an important group of students.

Table 2: Participation rate in HE/TSC – student numbers in TSC and PS (data from the questionnaires unless indicated otherwise – grey figures are not counted because of overlap)

	% in HE	Comple-tion rate	% in TSC	Total TSC	Male TSC	Female TSC	Total In PS	Male PS	Female PS
Austria	+ 30%	70 %	10-20%	30,000	21,000	9000	22.000[10]		
Belgium nl Belgium fr Belgium de	58% NDA NDA	50-60 % NDA NDA					4,731	1,645	3,076
Bulgaria	< 30%	40-50 %	<10 %	16,369	6,344	10,025			
Croatia	31,3 %[11]	NDA	NDA	24,858	NDA	NDA			
Cyprus	57 %[12]	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA			
Czech R..	30,4%	50-60%	10 %	27,584	8,918	18,666			
Denmark	35-40 %	60-70%	18 %	±24,000	12,000	12,000			
Estonia	> 55 %	50-60%					NDA		
Finland	60-65%[13]	70-75%[14]							
France	> 55%	40-50%	10%	118,829	NDA	NDA	236,795	NDA	NDA
Germany	40-45%[15]	70 %[16]							
Greece	>50 %	50-60%					49,000	NDA	NDA
Hungary	35-40 %	> 80 %	< 10 %	17,000	7,500	9,500			
Iceland	NDA	NDA	< 10%	770					
Ireland	56%	60-70%	> 30%	48,360	±25,000	±23,000			
Italy	42 %[17]	40 %[18]	< 10%	13,000	NDA	NDA	13,000	NDA	NDA
Latvia	< 30%	40-50%	< 10%	9,291	4,843	4,457			
Liechtenstein									
Lithuania	>55%	60-70%	10-20%	26,000	10,000	16,000	15,000	7,000	8,000
Luxemburg	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA			
Malta	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA			
Netherlands	40-45%	70-80%	<10%	2,700[19]	NDA	NDA			
Norway	< 30%	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA			
Poland	40-45%	60-70%					211,004	79.700	131.304
Portugal	< 30%	40-50%							
Romania	<30%	NDA	<10%	50,000	23,000	27,000	82,117	NDA	NDA
Slovak Rep	40-45%	< 40 %							
Slovenia	> 55%	NDA					10,025	5,714	5,311
Spain	30-35%	> 80 %[20]	30%	227,574	± 50%	± 50%	227.574		

[10] in last year BHS
[11] figures found on http://www.hgk.hr/
[12] http://www.moec.gov.cy/Educational%20System%20English.htm; the figure refers to secondary school graduates enrolled in tertiary education in Cyprus or abroad.
[13] http://www.syl.helsinki.fi/english/edu/numbers.html
[14] OECD, Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2002, Paris,2002,p.43.
[15] Gross participation, according to Cheps – higher education monitor Trend rapport, 2001.
[16] Fritz Schaumann, Recent developments in German Higher education, 1998.
[17] OECD, Education at a Glance: OECD indicators, Paris, 2000.
[18] OECD, Education at a Glance: OECD indicators, Paris, 2002.
[19] Students in state-funded institutions
[20] of students in TSC

Sweden	45-50%	59 %[21]	NDA	33,318	19,565	13,753			
Swiss Conf	<30%	< 40 %	<10%	70,000	majority		27,500	14,600	12,900
Turkey		> 80 %[22]		401,277	± 50%	± 50%			
UK E /W	40-45%	> 80 %	10-20%	567395 [23]	192,500*	332,500*	156,00[24]	NDA	NDA
UK NI	50-55%	> 80 %		20,001	7,250	12,751	79,867	46, 376	33,491
UK Scot	> 50 %	> 80 %[25]		99,039	41,612	57,427			
Total				**1705,625**			**827,172**		

* Academic year 2000-2001

The second conclusion is that there is no relation between the participation rate in HE and the occurrence of Tertiary Short Cycle education. TSC is not used to boost participation figures in HE and neither is it deemed unnecessary because participation in HE is high enough. There might however be a relation between completion of a first tertiary-level degree and the occurrence of Tertiary Short Cycle education. The countries with the highest completion rates in HE (Ireland, Turkey, the UK[26]) are countries where TSC education or sub-degree is strongly represented. This might be due to the fact that students can gradually climb along the ladder of learning and that they do not necessarily have to complete a three- or four-year degree course in order to receive a formal qualification.

As mentioned above participation in Tertiary Short Cycle education is under 10 % in most countries studied. It is, however, clear that in those countries where TSC is strongly embedded as in Denmark, France, Ireland, Romania, Spain, Turkey and the UK, participation in Tertiary Short Cycle education is much higher.

There are some 3,300 higher education establishments in the European Union, approximately 4,000 in Europe as a whole, including the other countries of Western Europe and the candidate countries. Tertiary Education takes in an increasing number of students, over **16 million in 2000[27],** compared with fewer than 9 million ten years previously.

The table shows that more than 1,7 million students are involved in Tertiary Short Cycle education while more than 800.000 students are participating in post-secondary education. This means that we are dealing with a total of over 2,5 million students. Those figures clearly show the importance and the potential of both those areas for lifelong learning and for degree higher education.

[21] Denotes rate of HE entrants who complete their HE degree or at least 120 credits (180 ECTS) within 7 years. The actual proportion of students that complete their *intended* education is therefore probably higher.
[22] OECD, Education at a glance: OECD indicators 2002, Paris,2002.
[23] Source HESA : All other undergraduates academic year 2001–2002 - UK-wide: Part-time and full-time students combined.
[24] Difference between all other undergraduate students in HE and FE institutions and those in HEIs
[25] http://www.universities-scotland.ac.uk/Media releases/PRs 2000 PDFs/PR2100.pdf
[26] Education at a Glance: OECD Indicators 2002, Paris, 2002.
[27] Key data on education in Europe, 2002, European Commission/EURYDICE/Eurostat

Chapter 2: Organisation of Tertiary Short Cycle education

Because the main area of the present study is TSC education we shall only enlarge in detail on the latter in the following chapters. The findings on post-secondary education will be dealt with in chapter 8.
The situation in the UK will be dealt with as well as a whole as at the level of England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. This decision was taken because on the one hand the legislative framework is different and on the other hand the numbers involved in the UK exceed those of all other countries concerned. Moreover detailed information on the situation in the different regions was made available to the authors.

2.1. Legislation on Tertiary Short Cycle education

In all countries offering Tertiary Short Cycle education, there is specific legislation governing Tertiary Short Cycle education. As can be seen from the chart below virtually all legislation is very recent. The oldest legislation governing Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe is the Education Act of Turkey (1981) and the Education Act of Malta (1988). The latter has already been amended several times by legal notices. The UK Further and Higher Education Act (1992) re-created the polytechnics as universities, bestowing on them the defining characteristics of a university: the power to award their own taught and research degrees. However, on the 22nd January 2003 the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, Charles Clarke, announced publication of the White Paper "The Future of Higher Education", which sets out the Government's plans for radical reform and investment in universities and HE colleges. After the launch of the document there will be a period for comment, in which the Government will be engaging in a wide-ranging dialogue with those who provide higher education and those who benefit from it. The *UK National Qualifications Framework* – should be fully implemented by September 2003. In the Czech Republic the new 2002 School Act failed to be passed by Parliament.

The fact that legislation is so recent in most countries proves that this is a sector that is on the move. A lot of the recent changes have to do with access to courses, changing curricula in professional education, but also QA, accreditation, ECTS and more transparency of these programmes.

In most countries legislation is a national responsibility but in a number of countries it is a shared responsibility between federal and regional authorities (Austria, Germany and the Swiss Confederation) whereas in others (the Czech Republic, Hungary and Italy) it is a regional responsibility. In the Swiss confederation powers are shared at the level of higher, or tertiary, education. Under the new (1999) Constitution, the Confederation enacts legislation governing advanced vocational training. The Confederation therefore has responsibility both for advanced vocational training and for universities of applied sciences.

In the UK there is a separate legislative framework for Northern Ireland, Scotland, England and Wales. Overall responsibility for all aspects of education lies with the Department for Education and Skills – England, the Welsh Office, the Scottish Executive and the Department for Employment and Learning – Northern Ireland.

Table 3- Legislation on Tertiary Short Cycle education

	Law on TSC	Nat/ R/C	Recent Changes in the Law	What changes?
Austria	•	N/R	On-going	Curricula of Prof ed.
Bulgaria	•	N	2000	Access to university level studies and precision on the Type of sub-degree content
Croatia	•	N	1996	
Cyprus	•	N	1997	Private tertiary Institutions
Czech Rep.	•	R	1996	Accreditation, Linkage to FCHE, Modules, Credits
Denmark	•	N	1999, complemented in 2002	ECTS, Diploma sup, QA, Transparency Transformation of study programmes
France	•	N	1999	Creation of vocational degree
Hungary	•	R	2002	Credit-system, State financed student numbers
Iceland	•	N	1997	Admission criteria
Ireland	•	N	Qualification and Training Act 1999, implemented in 2001	Qualification process
Italy	•	R	1999	
Latvia	•	N	2000	Norms for Tertiary Short Cycle education
Lithuania	•	N	2000	Foundation of institutions, Management of new Colleges, Tuition fees
Luxemburg	•	N	1990	Most students study abroad
Malta	•	N	1988[28]	University of Malta
Netherlands	• *	N	1998	Integration in Bachelor Programmes
Norway	•	N	2003	Increased autonomy for HEI; QA
Romania	•	N	1998	
Spain	•	N	2002	Qualifications, Accreditation, LLL
Sweden	•	N	2002	Autonomy of HEIs, Quality requirements
Swiss Confed	•	N/R[29]	2001	
Turkey	•	N	1981	
UK E/ W	•	N	- law of 1992 - 2003 White Book	- boosting vocational education, funding - structural changes to the delivery of programmes, - access to programmes - move towards being driven more by regional, employer and individual needs.
UK NI	•	N/R	UK Qualifications framework (by 2003)	
UK SC	•	N	- Scotland Ed Act 1996	

The fact that the educational systems for England and Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland are subject to independent legislation results in variations with respect to the organization, administration and control of the education systems and in the educational terminology and the designation of educational institutions[30].

[28] amended by various legal notices

[29] the Confederation enacts legislation governing advanced vocational training. The Confederation therefore has responsibility both for advanced vocational training and for universities of applied sciences.

[30] http://www.eurydice.org/Documents/Struct/en/uk.pdf

As far as Italy is concerned TSC education is not organised nationally but only in a number of regions. In Norway the universities were given a large degree of autonomy in the matter in 2002, enabling them to decide on a number of matters concerning the organisation of sub-degree education.

2.2. Who organises TSC education?

Table 4: Organisation, recognition and funding of TSC ?

Organised by whom?							**Other than state ed. Recognised**		**Other than state funded**
	State	Private	Industry	Professional Organisations	Authorities in collaboration	Others	yes	Under certain conditions	
Austria	●	●		●	●	●		●	
Bulgaria	●	●					●		
Croatia	●	●						●	●
Cyprus	●	●						●	
Czech Rep.	●	●				●[31]			
Denmark	●								
France	●				●				●
Hungary	●	●			●		●		●
Iceland	●	●						●	●
Ireland	●	●		●	●		●		
Italy	●							●	
Latvia	●	●					●		
Lithuania	●	●					●		
Luxemburg	●							●	●
Malta	●								●
Netherlands	●	●						●	●
Norway	●	●				●[32]	●		●
Romania	●	●						●	
Spain	●	●							
Sweden	●	●						●	●
Swiss Confed	●	●					●		
Turkey	●	●[33]							
UK	●	●	●	●	●		●		
E /W	●	●					●		
NI	●								
SC	●	●					●		

In all the countries surveyed where we have found Tertiary Short Cycle education it is organised by the authorities (state, ministries, local authorities) sometimes in collaboration with either private education providers or professional organisations. In most countries TSC is also organised by private education providers and in some countries by professional

[31] The church
[32] Universities and University colleges
[33] Only 4,6 % of sub-degree education provided

organisations or others (such as the church in the Czech republic). Denmark, Italy, Luxemburg, Malta, and Northern Ireland only know state education.

The Czech Republic and Spain are the only two countries where private education is provided but not recognised by the authorities (in a certain way this is also true for Denmark). In most countries this recognition is subject to QA by the authorities (see chapter 6).

2.3. Funding and recognition of TSC Education

In all countries where TSC is present it is funded by the state. In a number of countries (Austria, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Romania, the Swiss Confederation, Turkey and the UK) there is also private funding. Industry also contributes but only in a limited number of countries (amongst others: Austria, the Netherlands, the Swiss Confederation, Turkey, Romania, Italy, France and the UK), but mostly this funding is only complementary to that of the authorities. As far as funding is concerned, professional organisations are only involved in Turkey. Austria and Turkey mention other sources of funding without being specific.

The authors have deliberately made a distinction between funding and organisation because in some countries (Croatia, Hungary, Iceland, France, the Netherlands, Norway and Sweden) TSC is funded by the authorities but organised by private education providers (see annexes Table 1b). In those cases funding is always subject to recognition and institutions have to meet a number of criteria set forward by the authorities.

In general we can conclude that the authorities see Tertiary Short Cycle education as their responsibility. This is not only made clear by the fact that wherever TSC is present it is organised by the state or the authorities but moreover by the fact that other than state education is funded by the authorities.

2.4. Where is Tertiary Short Cycle education delivered?

In order to see in how far Tertiary Short Cycle education is really part of Higher Education it is important to find out where Tertiary Short Cycle education is delivered. It is obvious that as long as TSC education is not delivered at or in collaboration with HEIs it will not be regarded as Higher Education.

In Austria, Croatia, France, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Sweden, the Swiss confederation, Turkey and the UK, TSC is delivered at universities and/or at other Higher Education Institutions. This could mean that in more than half of the Bologna signatory countries TSC is actually

regarded as a fully-fledged part of Higher Education. In most of these countries students can also attend Tertiary Short Cycle education at colleges.

In Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Luxemburg and Spain Tertiary Short Cycle education is only delivered within the college sector or in schools. In Lithuania TSC education is delivered in non-university Higher Education Institutions and mainly in colleges. In Croatia it is delivered within independent schools for professional HE. Austria, France and the Czech Republic also mention other providers. As far as France is concerned these are *Lycées* (secondary schools, offering post-secondary education). Although the studies take place in secondary schools, they are recognised as Tertiary education.

Table 5: Institutions offering TSC

	University	HEI/IT	Colleges	Adult education	Other
Austria	●	●	●	●	●
Bulgaria			●		
Croatia					●[34]
Cyprus		●	●		
Czech Rep.			●		●
Denmark		●	●	●	
France	●				●[35]
Hungary			●		
Iceland	●	●	●		
Ireland	●	●	●	●	
Italy	●	●			
Latvia		●	●		
Lithuania		●	●		
Luxemburg			●		
Malta	●				
Netherlands		●			
Norway	●	●	●[36]		
Romania	●	●	●		
Spain			●		
Sweden	●			●	
Swiss Confed	●	●	●	●	
Turkey	●				
UK	●	●	●	●	
E/ W	●		●		
NI	●		●		
SC	●		●		

Courses are also organised within the framework of adult education in amongst others Austria, Denmark, Ireland, the Swiss Confederation and the United Kingdom. In Sweden courses are organised by the universities in collaboration with municipal adult education centres. There are voluntary short programmes (generally one year or less) aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualification for a certain area of study

[34] Independent schools for professional HE
[35] Lycée
[36] university colleges

(*basår*), often in the fields of science and engineering. The possibilities to provide this type of introductory education have recently been extended also to other fields of study, on certain conditions. The "basår" gives eligibility for undergraduate study in the chosen field. It is arranged by HEIs or within the framework of adult education.

In cooperation with municipal adult education, universities can offer so-called college programmes (*collegeutbildning*) in order to promote recruitment to higher education. This introductory programme consists of an upper secondary school component and a higher education component. The programme aims, i.a., to improve the student's general qualifications and provide an introduction to higher studies. The aim is for participants to continue to study at university level.
In view of a true knowledge-society and Lifelong Learning these are developments that should be encouraged and supported by authorities.

In virtually all countries TSC courses are offered as well on a part-time as on a full-time basis (except Italy, Spain). However as far as Spain is concerned TSC courses will in the future be offered part-time within the framework of adult education. This means that TSC offers the flexibility needed to make HE accessible for all.

2.5. Objectives of Tertiary Short Cycle education

Very often the main and sometimes the only aim of Tertiary Short Cycle education is, to give students a short professional training not linked to previous studies (Bulgaria, Cyprus, the Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Spain, the Swiss Confederation and Turkey). This does however not exclude the possibility to use credits from these studies for a degree programme (see chapter 7). The objectives can also be twofold: further professional specialisation or a short professional training not linked to previous studies (Austria, Croatia, Denmark).

In countries that have either very strong links with degree programmes or are embedded in a structure of degree studies one of the objectives is virtually always the preparation for degree studies. This can be combined with a short professional training not linked to previous studies (France, Hungary, Malta, Romania, Norway, Sweden, England and Wales, Turkey, Scotland, Iceland), or with a further professional specialisation (Ireland, Northern Ireland, Italy, Scotland).

Hence we can conclude that the main objective of TSC education is in the first instance a short professional course for youngsters who want to join the labour market. In most cases the TSC programmes give a professional qualification. However, the fact that these courses have either strong links with HEIs or are embedded in them incites more youngsters to either take up degree studies or return to education at a later stage in their life.

Only in those countries where flexible learning paths and a smooth transition from TSC to degree education is provided by the educational system is TSC regarded as a preparation for degree studies.

2.6. Curriculum in Tertiary Short Cycle education

There are only a few countries where the curriculum in TSC education is mainly theoretical viz. Austria, Iceland, Malta and Norway. In Norway there might, however be elements of practice and even work placement. In all the other countries it is either a combination of theory and practice (Bulgaria, Ireland, the Swiss Confederation, England, Wales and Scotland) or a combination of theory, practice and work placement (the Czech Republic, Latvia, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Romania, Spain, Sweden, Turkey, Northern Ireland). In Denmark and Hungary the curriculum is even mainly practice-based.
We can conclude that with some exceptions the curriculum in TSC education is a combination of theory and practice. This is not surprising as we have seen under 2.5. that there is always a professional or vocational element involved.

2.7. Fields in Tertiary Short Cycle education

It is obvious that in countries where Tertiary Short Cycle education is well embedded in the system such as Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Romania, Spain and the UK and where it also represents an important number of students virtually all (sometimes all) fields of education mentioned are present. Moreover in most of these countries there are more fields of education available than those mentioned in the questionnaire. Thus in Spain there are as many as 22 fields with 75 different qualifications and Professional Profiles.

Although no figures were given as to the number of students studying in the different fields, we can assume that the largest numbers can be found in Business Studies. As can be seen from the chart below Business studies are present everywhere and ICT, Health care and Social work are being provided within TSC in most countries. Next to the fields of study in the questionnaire, a number of studies were mentioned by respondents such as Library studies, Documentation, Engineering, Technical studies, Tourism, Biology, Engineering, Architecture, Technology, Police Studies, Military studies, Psychology and even Theology and Philosophy.

Sometimes we see that specific fields such as Marine studies, (Lithuania), Aquaculture (Norway) and Forestry (Cyprus) are organised that are linked to the specific economic and geographical situation of the country concerned. This proves that very often specialisations are being developed that meet the real needs of the labour market.

Moreover some respondents referred to new studies being developed within the fields mentioned in the chart such as Economics, Finance, Financial services, Accounting, Financial management, Small Business Enterprise and Marketing within Business Studies, or TV and Video Production within Music and Drama, Disability & Rehabilitation in Social work, Furniture Restoration within Restoration and Montessori within education.

Table 6: Existing Fields in Tertiary Short Cycle education

Country/region	Administration	Agriculture	Arts	Biotechnics	Building	Business studies	Catering and Hospitality	Chemistry	Crafts	Cultural heritage	Domestic sciences	Education	Environmental studies	Health care	ICT	Language studies	Leisure recreation	Mechanics	Music and Drama	Product development	Restoration	Social work	Other
A	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
BG	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•		•	•		•		•	
HR						•													•				
CY						•	•							•	•							•	•
CZ	•	•	•		•	•	•	•		•			•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
DK	•	•		•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•		•	•		•			
F	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•
D	•					•	•	•			•	•	•	•		•						•	
HU	•	•				•	•						•	•	•							•	
IS						•						•				•							
IRL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
I	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•		•	
LV		•				•	•		•	•	•				•		•	•	•			•	
LT	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•			•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	
L	•					•								•	•							•	
MT						•	•																
NL	•					•	•								•	•	•						
N	•	•	•			•	•		•	•	•		•		•	•	•		•	•			•
RO	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	
E	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	
S	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
CH	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•		•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	
TR	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•			•		•	•	•	•
UK	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
E/W	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
NI	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	
SC	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•

On the one hand we have a number of fields of study that are new as far as content is concerned such as Primary School Language Teaching, Electronic Business, Avionics, Digital Media Technology, Rural Development, Internet Technology, Model Making for Film & Media, Equine studies, retail studies, Leisure, e-Business, IT-support and animal husbandry, multimedia, hospitality management, Private and public administration, Virtual Logistics, Hospitality, Tourism, Audio-Prothesis, Optometry and Visual Aids.

On the other hand we found new courses that are being developed where the objective is not so much to offer new content but to prepare students for our knowledge society. These courses lay the foundation for lifelong learning and are foundation courses in the true sense of the word. They are e.g. the Foundation degrees in the UK and the preparatory courses in Sweden. In fact these courses, together with others in Ireland, Turkey, Malta etc., do not only offer the student a professional training but give him the opportunity to return to education at any stage in his life.

We should also bear in mind that in a number of countries of Central and Eastern Europe and in the Baltic states, the system of professional tertiary education appeared only in the early 1990's. The ambition was to introduce an extra-university sector of higher education[37]. In Latvia all courses have even been developed over the last three years. In those countries Higher Education was until the 1990's very often mainly geared at academic research and the sole realm of the universities. With the appearance of the market economy a number of new professions came into existence and thus also the need for more professionally oriented higher or tertiary education.

It is also clear that as we move towards a knowledge-based society there is a growing need for a more skilled and flexible workforce. TSC definitely contributes towards widening participation in Higher Education and to supplying the labour market as well as far as the private sector (business studies, hospitality, ICT, etc.) as the public sector (health, social care, education…) are concerned.

All these elements point to the fact that in most countries surveyed we are dealing with a thriving sector that is adapting swiftly to the needs of our rapidly evolving society in general and the labour market in particular.

In the Netherlands we have a particular situation as there is a ban on new courses "kort hbo" (TSC) and all these sub-degree courses must be discontinued by 2007. The institutions offering these courses are offered the chance to upgrade themselves to Bachelor's level. This means that they will have to meet accreditation standards for degree courses by that date. New short programmes within the bachelor's programmes are possible. In the new legislation that is being prepared the government provides moments where students can leave the degree course early in order to meet the demand for greater flexibility. These will, however not be sanctioned by an official qualification but only by a qualification recognised by the labour market. However, the students leaving education at the moments set down by law will not be regarded as drop-outs as they have acquired a professional qualification that is recognised by the labour market.

2.8. Collaboration with professional bodies and industry

As far as the involvement of professional organizations in designing and restructuring of curricula in is concerned the picture is quite diverse:

[37] Michael Karpisek, Background note to the questionnaire

In some countries these organizations are closely involved (Austria, Denmark, France (rather closely), Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, UK, Northern Ireland. In other countries they are occasionally involved (Bulgaria, Ireland, Sweden, Scotland). Lastly these organisations are not or rarely involved in the Czech Republic, Norway, Romania, the Swiss Confederation and Turkey.
In some countries such as the Netherlands it is the responsibility of the institutions and therefore difficult to assess nationally.

In a number of countries such as Bulgaria (as far as organisation is concerned), the Czech Republic, Hungary, Norway and the Swiss Confederation there is no or hardly any collaboration with professional organisations. It could be that as far as the countries of Central and Eastern Europe are concerned there is no tradition of collaboration with industry. However, this is very unlikely for Norway and the Swiss Confederation.

Table 7: Which organizations are involved?

	Chambers of Commerce	Trade Unions	Employment Agencies	other	No collaboration
Austria	●	●	●	●	
Bulgaria					●
Croatia					NDA
Cyprus					NDA
Czech Rep.					●
Denmark	●	●		●	
France	●			●	
Hungary					●
Iceland					NDA
Ireland	●	●	●		
Italy	●	●	●		
Latvia	●	●	●		
Lithuania	●			●	
Luxemburg					NDA
Malta					NDA
Netherlands				●[38]	
Norway					●
Romania					●
Spain	●			●	
Sweden		●	●	●	
Swiss Confed					●
Turkey	●	●			
UK: E & W	●	●		●	
UK: NI	●			●[39]	
UK: SC				●	

[38] Responsibility of the institutions
[39] Employer & sector organisations

When professional organisations are involved they are most likely the Chambers of Commerce. They are involved in Austria, Denmark, France, Italy, Ireland, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain and the UK. In this respect we should like to point out that Spain and France have a long tradition of collaboration with Chambers of Commerce. These were in a number of countries (e.g. France) the first to grant professional qualifications. These Chambers of Commerce still organise highly valued courses and deliver professional qualifications. In many cases students take additional exams to receive a qualification from a Chamber of Commerce because these are still much valued by the labour market.

Trade unions are also involved (e.g. Austria, Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Sweden, Turkey and the UK) as well as employment agencies (Austria, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, and Sweden) or others such as employers and their sector organisations (Northern Ireland). Recently HNCs have also been devised in Scotland in partnerships between the Scottish Qualifications Authority and local consortia of colleges.

In fact the best examples of close collaboration with industry are to be found in the UK. In Scotland HNs have recently been devised in partnerships between the Scottish Qualifications Authority and local consortia of colleges. In the England, Wales and Northern Ireland the Foundation degrees have taken off. These are developed directly with employers and have as an objective to develop, upskill and retain the current workforce, making the employees more motivated and flexible[40]. The foundation degree provides a new model of vocational higher education based on close collaboration between employers and providers of higher education. It aims to widen and increase participation in higher education by delivering knowledge and skills needed for employment by the application of work-based and flexible modes of learning[41]. They are new *employment-related, higher education qualifications, designed to equip students with the higher-level skills crying out for. They are bringing higher education and business closer together to meet the needs of employers*[42].

[40] http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/empl/
[41] http://www.qaa.ac.uk/public/foundation/foundation_statement_preface.htm
[42] http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/

Chapter 3: Entrance requirements, duration and certification of studies

3.1. Entrance requirements

In virtually all countries the entrance requirement is a leaving certificate of secondary education. However Accreditation of prior experiential learning is (sometimes) accepted in Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, the Netherlands, Spain, Sweden, England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland.

In a number of countries (Austria, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Spain, England, Wales and Scotland) a minimum age requirement, sometimes in combination with professional experience, is also accepted.

In Bulgaria and Romania students sometimes have to sit exams in order to be accepted on the programmes. Whether this is due to a numerus clausus could not be derived from the questionnaire.

3.2. Duration of studies

With the exception of the UK, Cyprus, the Netherlands and Ireland all courses in Tertiary Short Cycle education last more than one year. In the Netherlands short-cycle courses will be discontinued or integrated in 4-year Bachelor programmes. Although the first formal qualification received will be the Bachelor title, students will be able to leave education at certain moments where they will receive a certificate that although not being a formal qualification will be proof of certain professional qualifications and will also allow them to return to education using the credits acquired. Whether this will be after one year or more has not been decided yet as the system will only be fully implemented by 2007. We should like to point out that in Ireland the first formal qualification received is the National Certificate, which takes two years to acquire.

Most TSC programmes take two years, some of them three. However, in the Czech Republic and Lithuania TSC programmes can take more than three years. When discussing the average duration of Bachelor degrees in Europe in the "Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe the authors state that "it is clearly out of line with the definitions of "undergraduate" when these courses take five to six years and it weakens the European and international competitiveness of these countries'[43]. Consequently we can say that bearing in mind that it takes between 180 and 240

[43] Christian Tauch and Andrejs Rauhvargers, *Survey on Master Degrees and Joint Degrees in Europe*, European Commission - EUA Joint publication, 2002.

ECTS credits, or the equivalent of between three and four years to earn a Bachelor's degree that students who have successfully attended a four-year recognised programme should not be regarded as only holding a qualification of Tertiary Short Cycle education. Moreover the credits earned are not even always taken into account when these students want to continue their education.

It is obvious that the only criterion should not be the length of studies but that ECTS points earned and the competencies acquired should also be taken into consideration. If we want to enhance the comparability, the transferability and the readability of Tertiary Short Cycle education then common titles should be used for students who have achieved a comparable level of competences.

3.3. Certification of studies

As can be seen from the table below a wide range of titles is used to certify TSC programmes. Wherever possible we have used the title in the original language and have tried to translate it to the best of our abilities. Although the title Diploma is very often used for a two-year programme, a certificate might be given after one, two or three years. This means that there is a lack of transparency and comparability especially in a European or international context. Consequently the need is felt for common qualifications.

In this respect we refer to the UK where, next to the Bachelor's and Master's titles, the Foundation degree will find its place in the qualifications framework using descriptors to define each level. "The Foundation degree is an intermediate higher-level qualification. It sits at level four"[44]. For more information about the qualifications framework we refer to "The framework for higher education qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland"[45].

Great Britain was a pioneer in the area but also in Denmark there is a move towards a Danish "Qualifications Framework for higher education"[46] and the Netherlands have worked with the issues. As stated by the two commissions for higher education in England and Scotland respectively it should be "**a framework for qualifications, which provides for progression, is broad enough to cover the whole range of achievement, is consistent in terminology, will be well understood within higher education and outside it, and incorporates provision for credit accumulation increasingly, scope for the transfer of credits earned**

[44] http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/stud/what/requirements/qframework/
[45] http://www.qaa.ac.uk/crntwork/nqf/ewni2001/contents.htm
[46] *Towards a Danish ,Qualifications Framework' for higher education*, Final report approved by the Danish Bologna follow-up group, 2003.

in one institution or another[47]**"**. The goal was to define a degree system by describing the qualifications systems' various graduation levels rather than the length of study period.

Lastly we want to refer to the Scottish Credit and Qualification Framework (SCQF). **The Scottish Framework is at the forefront of European and world-wide developments, achieving the inclusion of qualifications across academic and vocational sectors into a single credit-based framework.**

The central aims of the SCQF are to:

- enable employers, learners, and the public in general to understand the full range of Scottish qualifications, how they relate to each other, and how different types of qualifications can contribute to improving the skills of the workforce

- help people of all ages and circumstances access appropriate education and training over their lifetime to fulfil their personal, social and economic potential

The SCQF will make the relationships between qualifications clearer. It will clarify **entry and exit points and routes for progression** within and across education and training sectors. It will also maximise the opportunities for credit transfer. In these ways, it will assist learners to plan their progress and learning throughout their lives.

[47] The Dearing Report, 1997

Table 8: Qualification received

	One year	Two years	Three years	More than three years
Austria		Different titles according to the profession		
Bulgaria			Diploma, specialist in Диплома за обрзователно-квалификационна степен “Специалист по”	
Croatia		Associate degree	Associate degree	
Cyprus	Certificate	Diploma	Higher Diploma	
Czech Rep.		Diploma Diplomovany specialista	id	id
Denmark		Diploma in ...		
France		Brevet de Technicien Supérier (BTS) /Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie (DUT) (équivalent DEUG)	Diplôme d’Etat Spécialisé	
Hungary		certificate		
Iceland		Diploma/certificate		
Ireland	One-year certificate	National certificate	National Diploma	
Italy		crediti formativi (credits)	crediti formativi (credits)	
Latvia		Diploma 4th level of qualification	Diploma 4th level of qualification	
Lithuania			Diploma of HE	Diploma of HE
Luxemburg		BTS/DUT		
Malta		certificate	diploma	
Netherlands	HBO-diploma+ Certificate for Bachelor prog	HBO-diploma+ Certificate for Bachelor programme	HBO-diploma+ Certificate for Bachelor programme	
Norway	●	Diploma Hogskolekandidat		
Romania		Diploma de absolvire	Diploma de absolvire	
Spain		Titulo de tecnico superior		
Sweden		University Diploma		
Swiss Confed		Techniker/in TS	Ing. FH	
Turkey		diploma		
UK :E & W	Certificate in HE Higher National Certificate (HNC)	Diploma in HE Higher National Diploma, Foundation degree Entry to honours degree programmes		
UK: NI	Certification in HE	HND Foundation degree Dip in HE		
UK: SCOT	HNC	HND		

Chapter 4: Profile of students and Teachers

4.1. Gender of students

Not all countries have data available as far as the gender of students is concerned. In the UK, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Lithuania, the Slovak Republic and Romania the majority of students in Tertiary Short Cycle education are female whereas in Austria, the Swiss Confederation and Sweden the majority of students are male. In the other countries there are no significant differences as far as the gender of students is concerned. As one of the respondents in Sweden states "this difference depends on the specialisation. There is a rather traditional division, with more women than men on programmes leading to degrees or qualifications e.g. in social care, nursing, and education, and more men than women on programmes leading to degrees in engineering and applied technology".

Because the vast majority of students in Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe are situated in the UK where the number of women on sub-degree programmes greatly exceeds that of men (63% women versus 37 % men) there is an overall majority of females in this kind of education (± 55 % female versus ± 45 % male).

Moreover we have to bear in mind that over the last years the proportion of women in tertiary education has increased enormously and that they are now a majority in most countries. The only two countries in Europe where they are still a minority are Germany and the Czech Republic (marginal in the latter case) and as far as women graduates are concerned Austria is the only country where they are still a minority[48].

OECD research on higher education in Canada, the United States, Australia, France, Spain, Germany, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and Sweden also indicates that whereas already in 1995 more women than men were enrolled in higher education in all countries except Germany and the Swiss Confederation women were only the majority in the United States at both university and non-university levels [49].

However, as we have not received detailed figures for all the countries concerned and as the results are influenced by the high numbers of females in TSC or sub-degree in the UK, the authors think that it needs more in-depth research before any conclusions can be drawn.

4.2. Social-economic background of students

Although for most countries there are no data available as far as the social background is concerned it is generally believed that TSC education tends to attract more students

[48] *Key data on Education in Europe*, 2002.
[49] *Education at a glance: OECD Indicators*, 1997.

from disadvantaged groups such as people without a family history of participation in HE (first generation students), people from the working classes (technicians, clerks, farmers, factory workers), people with disabilities, people from minority ethnic groups, people with non-standard qualifications and mature students. These do, however, not necessarily constitute the majority of students in Tertiary Short Cycle education. It is therefore not surprising that where data are available they point in this direction. In the Dearing report it was mentioned that men from socially disadvantaged groups are twice as likely to be studying for a sub-degree qualification as those from professional and managerial groups[50].

In the academic year 2001-2002 the overall majority of students in sub-degree education took the courses part-time (567395 of which 437695 were part-time or 77,5 %). Older students are particularly strongly represented among part-time students as was mentioned already in the Dearing report (63 % of first-degree students studying part-time are over 30)[51]. The Euro-Delphi Survey (1995) revealed that in the 1993-1994 period there were 6,665 mature entrants to Higher education in the Republic of Ireland of whom 75% were part-time students. The proportion of mature students at the universities is lower than at the IT's or colleges[52].

On the basis of the data received we are inclined to state that the threshold to Tertiary Short Cycle education or sub-degree is lower than that to other forms of Higher Education. These data are however not conclusive. We have not asked or received any data on students with disabilities, students from ethnic minorities or the participation of students from different localities in Tertiary Short Cycle education. In a number of countries (e.g. Scotland[53]) a major element of the increase in participation in HE is due to the increased participation in sub-degree education. All these elements should definitely be looked upon in a more detailed way. In how far Tertiary Short Cycle education or sub-degree can contribute towards widening participation of disadvantaged groups is definitely worthwhile looking into especially as the first priority mentioned in the World Declaration on Higher Education is **equal access** to all.[54]

4.3. Qualification of teachers

In none of the countries surveyed teachers have been reported with less than a Bachelor's degree. The minimum qualification for teachers in Tertiary Short Cycle education seems to be a Bachelor's degree. However in a lot of countries the (vast) majority of teachers have a Master's degree (see annexes table 5 b). In some countries the qualifications are as well Bachelor's as Master's and in Austria, Norway, Sweden and France an important number of

[50] National Report, Widening participation in Higher Education, 1997.
[51] Id.
[52] Marie Morrissey, *Mature students in the Higher Education Sector*, Galway, 1997.
[53] Scottish Executive, A Framework for Higher Education in Scotland: Higher Education Review Phase 2, 2003.
[54] http://www.unesco.org/education/wche/summary.shtml

teachers in Tertiary Short Cycle education have a Ph. D. This might be due to the fact that Tertiary Short Cycle education is either embedded in the universities (Austria, Sweden) or has strong links with the universities as in France. In the Netherlands there are no data available but we can assume that the qualifications held go along the lines of the countries where data are available.

The study has revealed no information on the degrees or qualifications which are held by the teachers involved in teaching practice and/or practical subjects. Neither has it revealed any information on the qualifications held by the teachers involved in mentoring placements in industry. Finally in some countries (like France and the UK) people from industry may be involved as regular teachers in Tertiary Short Cycle education or in post-secondary education but no information is available on the qualification required of them.

Bearing in mind the major role of the teacher to contribute to quality of education as stated also in the first sub-objective of objective one of the Detailed Work programme on the Future Objectives of Education and Training systems in Europe, it would be useful to look into this matter in a separate study. Such a study could also focus on the various forms of interaction between enterprises and Tertiary Short Cycle education or post-secondary education and on the role of mentors in companies helping students during placements or thesis work in companies.

Chapter 5: Mobility – Use of ECTS – Use of Diploma Supplement

5.1. Mobility and participation in other EU actions

Although it is clear from Table 9 that as well students as teachers in Tertiary Short Cycle education actively participate in mobility and in other actions of EU programmes a number of respondents mention obstacles to participation in mobility and other actions.

It is not surprising that most of the obstacles mentioned (lack of resources, lack of knowledge of foreign languages, lack of knowledge of foreign cultures) are not specific to Tertiary Short Cycle education[55]. However, a number of countries (Czech Republic, Denmark, Spain, Ireland) mention the fact that Tertiary Short Cycle education is not well known and the fact that there is a lack of comparability, transparency and transferability of professional and vocational qualifications as obstacles specific to Tertiary Short Cycle education. The respondent from Spain mentions these problems and hopes that the Bruges process[56] will help to enhance the comparability, transferability and transparency of this type of education.

The Bruges process, which deals with recognition of qualifications and transparency in vocational education and training (VET), was given priority by the Danish Presidency. On 29 and 30 November 2002, the ministers from the Member States and the accession countries, discussed and approved the Copenhagen Declaration[57], which sets out measures designed to enhance European co-operation in vocational education and training.

As far as specific obstacles are concerned the Czech Republic also mentions the small size of some institutions making it very difficult to have staff available to organize the participation in mobility and other programmes. The size of institutions is indeed one of the problems the sector faces and not only as far as mobility is concerned. In this respect we refer to Guy Haug who stated that "a basic requirement [for the college/polytechnic sector] is that institutions need to reach a critical size and offer a minimum range of courses and services.[58]" As far as the programmes are concerned as well for teachers as for students the preferred mobility is under **Erasmus** (in at least 16 countries students participate in this mobility, see Table 9). This proves that Tertiary Short Cycle education is clearly regarded as Higher Education.

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[55] see Beernaert et al., *Comparative Study on Mobility of teachers in the European Union*, Leuven, 2002.
[56] http://www.esib.org/wg/bruges.html
[57] http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/copenhagen/index_en.html
[58] Guy Haug , The college-polytechnic sector in the post-Bologna scenarios, Chania, 2000.

Table 9: Participation of students and teachers in mobility and participation of TSC institutions in

other actions of EU programmes

Teachers						**Students**						**Institutions**					
	Erasmus	Comenius	Leonardo	Other mobility	No mobility	Erasmus	Comenius	Leonardo	Other mobility	Use of Europass	No mobility	Erasmus	Comenius	Leonardo	Other EU programmes	Other programmes	No internalisation
Austria			●			●		●		●°		●		●			
Bulgaria	●		●	●		●		●	●	●°		●		●		●	
Croatia																	NDA
Cyprus																	NDA
Czech Rep.	●*	●	●			●*	●	●				●*	●	●	NDA	NDA	
Denmark	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
France	●		●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●			
Hungary	●	●	●								●	●	●	●		●	
Iceland	●		●			●		●									
Ireland	●		●			●		●				●		●	●	●	
Italy				●*		●		●				●		●	●	●	
Latvia	●		●			●		●				●		●			
Lithuania	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●		
Luxemburg																	NDA
Malta																	NDA
Netherlands																	NDA
Norway	●		●	●		●		●	●	●		●	●	●	●	●	
Romania	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
Spain			●					●						●			
Sweden	●		●	●**		●		●	●**			●		●	●**	●	
Swiss Confed	●					●						●			●	●	
Turkey											●°°						●°°
UK	●	●	●	●		●	●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●	
E & W	●			●		●						●				●	
NI	●					●						●				●	
SCOT	●		●	●		●		●	●			●		●	●	●	

* since 2003 limited number

**(ASEM-DUO, Linnaeus-Palme, Tempus, EU Canada, EU USA, EU-Australia e.al.)

° in an initial phase , being introduced

°° not yet possible

As professional education is concerned it is not surprising that Leonardo comes next as well for teachers as for students. Only in 7 countries do teachers participate in mobility under Comenius and students only in 6. This can probably be explained by

the fact that Teacher Training is in most countries at degree level. Mobility under Comenius is even surpassed by mobility under other EU and non-EU programmes. Mobility under Comenius is normal in post-secondary schools as those schools are eligible within the framework of the Comenius - school education - chapter - of the Socrates programme.

As far as involvement in other actions is concerned, most countries once again participate in Erasmus, followed by Leonardo and other programmes within or outside the EU. Programmes that are mentioned are ASEM-DUO, Linnaeus-Palme, Tempus, EU Canada, EU USA, EU-Australia e.al.(Sweden).

Turkey cannot yet participate in mobility in the framework of Socrates and Leonardo at the moment. Their involvement is scheduled for 2004.

Although the Europass is not yet generally used, a number of countries are introducing it and its use is even encouraged in certain countries.

5.2.Use of ECTS

Not only the use of ECTS was surveyed, but also the use of other (usually national) credit systems. With the exception of institutions in Austria, Bulgaria, Spain, the Swiss Confederation and Turkey the majority of institutions in TSC use some kind of credit system, sometimes national, sometimes regional, sometimes ECTS (often alongside the national credit system). This is an important step towards the comparability of TSC-studies and towards integration in the Bologna process but also towards accumulation of credits earned. The **Bologna Declaration** specifically mentions the establishment of '*a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system*'. The fact that so many institutions (see table 10) are already using ECTS or any other credit system enhances the chances of the sector of being integrated in the Bologna process.

Generally speaking we can say that in most countries ECTS or a national/regional credit system is used by the majority of institutions. In some countries (Denmark, France[59], Latvia, Norway) there is a legal obligation for the use of ECTS. In those countries where the use of ECTS is not compulsory we note that the majority of respondents see the fact that it facilitates international co-operation as the main reason for the use of ECTS. Moreover in a number of countries (the Czech Republic, Denmark, France, Ireland and the UK) it is also regarded as a means to facilitate the transition to Bachelor programmes as credits can be accumulated in a transparent way. There are national systems in Scotland and Wales with regional systems in England. These tend to link to ECTS.

The respondents of Austria and the Czech Republic point to the fact that although no or hardly any Institutions offering Tertiary Short Cycle education use ECTS, the majority of other Institutions of Higher Education do use ECTS in some way or another.

[59] Will be introduced next academic year

Table 10: Use of credit systems in sub-degree

Use of credit system							Reasons for use of ECTS				
	National	ECTS	National & ECTS	ECTS in all TSC HEIs	ECTS Majority SD	ECTS Small number	Legal obligation	Encouraged	Facilitates transition	Facilitates int Cooperation	No credit System
Austria					● *						●
Bulgaria						●					●
Croatia											NDA
Cyprus											NDA
Czech Rep.					● *				●	●	●
Denmark		●		●			●		●	●	
France		●[60]				●	●°		●	●	
Hungary	●				●						
Iceland			●	●			●				
Ireland			●		●			●	●	●	
Italy	●										
Latvia			●	●			●				
Lithuania			●		●			●		●	
Luxemburg											NDA
Malta											NDA
Netherlands			●		●						
Norway		●			●		●				
Romania			●		●			●		●	
Spain										●	NDA
Sweden	●		●	●[61]		●				●	
Swiss Conf											●
Turkey											NDA
UK			●*		● **			●	●	●	●
E & W	●							●	●	●	
NI		●				●				●	
SCOT	●										

* other HEIs ** of HEIs in Socrates

Those few schools in CZ implementing ECTS see it as an important investment in their future and a milestone in their development. The reasons would be both transition to HE, international co-operation and internal development and organization of education.

5.3. Use of diploma supplement

A number of countries (Denmark, Italy, Latvia, Northern Ireland and Norway) already have a legal obligation to use the diploma supplement. Others (Sweden) have recently implemented this legislation or are preparing it (Lithuania, Bulgaria). The UK higher education sector is currently working towards the introduction of a standardized transcript which is also compatible with the Diploma Supplement.

[60] Starting to
[61] Within the framework of international cooperation

Table 11: Use of diploma supplement in Tertiary Short Cycle education

	All Institutions	Majority Institutions	Small number	Not used	Legal obligation	Encouraged	Better transition	Better Int COOP	other
Austria				●					
Bulgaria				●[62]					
Croatia									NDA
Cyprus									NDA
Czech Rep.				●					
Denmark	●				●		●	●	
France									NDA
Hungary			●					●	
Iceland									NDA
Ireland		●					●		
Italy	●				●				
Latvia	●				●				
Lithuania					●[63]			●	
Luxemburg									NDA
Malta									NDA
Netherlands									NDA
Norway	●				●				
Romania				●					
Spain		●						●	
Sweden	●				●[64]				
Swiss Confed				●					
Turkey									NDA
UK		●			●*			●	
E & W		●							
NI	●				●				
SCOT				●					

The main reasons why institutions use the diploma supplement in those countries where it is not compulsory are an easier transition to degree programmes and better international co-operation.

It is clear from this table that the diploma supplement is being used increasingly by institutions offering TSC, very often because there is a legal obligation. We should bear in mind that if we want to go to the use of competence portfolios, the diploma supplement is certainly the first step in this direction. The diploma supplement does not only refer to the skills and competencies a student has acquired in a formal way but also includes references to generic competences such as e.g. communication skills acquired by being a member of the student council. Student mobility or participation in all kinds of programmes are also referred to in the diploma supplement.

Only Spain mentions the use of the certificate supplement by a limited number of institutions.

[62] will be introduced next year
[63] will be introduced in the future; legislation is being prepared
[64] has been introduced since January 2003

Chapter 6: QA and Accreditation

6.1. Use of quality assurance system(s)

In virtually all countries surveyed there are Quality assurance bodies. In many cases the quality is assured by a national quality assurance agency. In Spain the quality is still checked by the Inspectorate of the Ministry of Education. Ireland and Sweden are the only countries that mention foreign experts being part of the Quality Assurance body. As far as quality assurance of private Institutions is concerned, they are subject to the same quality assurance as the state institutions. In Ireland, Norway, Romania, Sweden and Switzerland this Quality assurance by a QAA is needed in view of recognition of the institution or the programme concerned.

Table 12: QAAs

	QAA	National QAA	Regional QAA	National QAA + foreign experts	QAA of a Professional body	Other	Same for Private education providers
Austria	●						●
Bulgaria	●	●					In view of recognition
Croatia	●						
Cyprus	●						
Czech Rep.	●					●	●
Denmark	●	●			●		No private
France	●	●					Not always
Hungary	●	●					●
Iceland	●						
Ireland	●	●		●	●		In view of recognition
Italy	●				●		No private
Latvia	●	●			●		● all
Lithuania	●	●					● all
Luxemburg	NDA						
Malta	●						
Netherlands	●	●			●	●	● all
Norway	●	●					In view of recognition
Romania	●	●					In view of recognition
Spain	●					●	● all
Sweden	●			●			In view of recognition
Swiss Confed	●	●					In view of recognition
Turkey	●[65]						
UK	●	●			●		● all
E & W	●	●					
NI	●	●	●				No private
SCOT	●	●					● all

[65] is being developed

There is a strong move towards Quality Assurance in Higher Education in general and this is also visible in TSC education. Indeed, if institutions providing sub-degree or Tertiary Short Cycle education want a wider understanding of the nature of standards and quality in their sector they will only be able to do this by referring to common reference points and sound standards of the education qualifications provided.

6.2. Accreditation

In all countries except the Netherlands there is a mechanism for accreditation of Tertiary Short Cycle education. However, in a number of countries the awarding body seems to be the Ministry of education.

Table 13: Accreditation

	Accreditation	Ministry of education	National AC A	Regional Accreditation agency	International accreditation agency	Professional AC A	Private accreditation agency	Foreign HEI	other
Austria	●	●	●			●	●	●	
Bulgaria	●		●						
Croatia	NDA								
Cyprus	●	●							
Czech Rep.		●							
Denmark	●	●							
France	●	●							
Hungary	●		●						
Iceland	●								
Ireland	●	●	●			●			
Italy									
Latvia	●	●	●						
Lithuania	●	●	●						
Luxemburg	NDA								
Malta	●								
Netherlands									
Norway	●		●						
Romania	●		●						
Spain	●	●							
Sweden	●	●[66]	●[67]						
Swiss Confed	●	●							
Turkey	●[68]								
UK	●		●			●			●
E & W	●		●						
NI	●					●			

[66] for non-state HEIs
[67] for state HEIs
[68] is being developed

SCOT	●		●						

As far as the Czech Republic is concerned, attempts are made to introduce an Accreditation Commission. At the moment there is also a kind of accreditation by the ministry of education. It is striking that in most countries of Central and Eastern Europe as well as in the Baltic states (Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Hungary) there is an independent national accreditation agency. This is also the case for Austria, Ireland, Norway, Sweden and the UK.

We presume that the absence of an accreditation agency for Tertiary Short Cycle education in the Netherlands is due to the fact that TSC programmes in that country will be discontinued or integrated in Bachelor programmes. For the latter there is a Dutch Accreditation Organisation (NAO).

In Sweden all HEIs must apply for accreditation for each professional degree they intend to provide. State HEIs have a general right to award the University Diploma (Hogskoleexamen), the Bachelor's degree (kandidatexamen), and one of the two Master's degrees (Magisterexamen med ämnesbredd). Non-state HEIs have to be accredited also for the general degrees they intend to provide.

Chapter 7: Transition to degree studies

7.1. Legislation governing transition to degree programmes

In most countries on which we have received data there is legislation governing transition to degree programmes. Only in the Czech Republic (where the law failed to be passed), Lithuania, the Netherlands (where TSC will be discontinued), Romania, Sweden and the UK is there no legislation on transition.

Although in the UK there is no legislation on transition to degree programmes there are agreed principles concerning the transition from sub-degree to degree programmes, but these are not driven by legislation.

As for Sweden, legislation is in fact not necessary as we are dealing with an integrated HE system. TSC education is formally and in practice part of the overall higher education framework. There is thus no separate system for courses or shorter degree programmes. Transition to degree programmes is therefore mostly relatively easy. Students from short-cycle programmes can enter studies aiming at a higher degree, subject to the same eligibility requirements as other students.

It is clear from the chart below that where there is no legislation, or where there are no agreed principles, students are in fact very dependent of the HEIs and it will be up to the latter whether the student will be accepted or not for a degree programme and how many credits will be given for the qualifications acquired.

In Spain legislation is underway in the "Formación Profesional Especifica de Grado Superior" (Professional HE) in which top-up programmes are being prepared through which students with professional experience can take exams in order to get the qualification of "Tecnico Superior" (Diploma of qualified technician). The same law also provides for the use of ODL and ICT in order to allow TSC students to study in an Open and Distance learning environment and thus get qualified. Also in Turkey ODL plays a very important role. Anadolu University in Eskiþehir offers two-and four year programs through distance education. Altogether there are in Turkey 623.465 students in bachelor's education through distance education, and 138.628 students in pre-bachelor's (sub-degree) distance education.

In the Czech Republic the transition from sub-degree to degree programmes is not yet possible. It was foreseen in the 2002 School Act, which did not pass Parliament. Although the Ministry tries to promote the idea of transition to degree programmes, cases where sub-degree students are exempted of parts of the degree programme are still rare. There are only a number of individual cases where there are agreements between schools and HEIs. A few non-university HEIs offer graduates of sub-degree programmes the opportunity to acquire a Bachelor's degree in one year. However this is not automatic. Students have to apply and take exams before their former education is taken into account.

Table 14: Existing links to degree programmes

	Law for transition	Transition is easy	Bridging courses required	No transition possible	Do majority make transition ?	Access courses organised	APEL	Top-up programmes	ODL and ICT used	Access possible foreign students
Austria	●	●			no	●	*	**	●	●
Bulgaria	●	●			●				●	●
Croatia	●[69]	● ****								
Cyprus	●[70]	●								●
Czech Rep.	No[71]			●	***			**		●
Denmark	●	●	●				**			●
France	●[72]	●			no	*	*	**	*	Not yet
Hungary	●	●			●	●	*	**	●	no
Iceland	●	●							●	
Ireland	●	●			●[73]		●	●	●	●
Italy	●	●			no		*		●	NDA
Latvia	●	●			NDA					
Lithuania			●		no					
Luxemburg	NDA									
Malta	NDA									
Netherlands		● ****			NDA		NDA		●	NDA
Norway	●	●			NDA		*		●	●
Romania		● ****			no	● ****	● ****	● ****	●	
Slovenia	●*		●						●	no
Spain	●	●						*	*	●
Sweden		●					*		●	●
Swiss Confed	●		●		no	●				
Turkey	●	●								
UK		●	●*		●	●	*	**	●	●
E & W		●			●	●	*	**	●	●
NI		●	●		no	●	*	**	●	●
SCOT		●			no	●	●	**	●	●

* sometimes
** for certain studies
*** impossible
**** depending on HEI

[69] students can ask for transfer to degree programmes – decision lies with HEIs
[70] In preparation
[71] Act was introduced but not passed
[72] For STS it is the remit of the universities
[73] The situation differs according to the institutions concerned.

7.2. Facilities for students who go on to degree programmes

Access courses are organised in Austria, Hungary, Ireland, Romania (sometimes, depending on the HEI), the Swiss Confederation and the UK (as well England, Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland).

Top-up programmes are organised in the same countries and in France but very often only for certain studies or programmes.

Accreditation of prior experiential learning is accepted in a.o. Ireland, Romania and Scotland, but in a large number of other countries it is sometimes accepted and not as a rule.

7.3. Open and Distance Learning – Internet Technology

As we can see from the chart ODL-courses are made available in the majority of countries, sometimes only for a limited number of programmes. Whether Open and Distance Learning and Internet Technology are only used to support teaching or whether qualifications can actually be earned through ODL could not always be concluded from the questionnaire. References were made to the Open University in the UK where students can earn modular sub-degree qualifications[74]. Ireland also has a well-developed system of course providers at the level of tertiary short cycle education[75]. As mentioned above legislation is being prepared in Spain providing for the use of ODL and ICT in order to allow sub-degree students to study in an Open and Distance learning environment and thus get qualified. Turkey also has a well-developed open and distance learning system in higher education.
In Sweden ODL courses and some programmes are offered within the framework of the Swedish Net University. The Open University of Cyprus was established in 2002 and an interim Governing Council was appointed in February 2003. The University will exclusively employ distance learning methods, means and technology.

7.4. Students making transition

Although in many countries the transition is seen as fairly easy the majority of students do not make the transition to degree programmes. This is only the case in Bulgaria, Hungary and the UK (England and Wales).

Students from other countries can make the transition to degree programmes in most countries surveyed. However, with the exception of the English-speaking countries

[74] http://www.open.ac.uk/
[75] http://www.learningireland.ie/provider_login/

(or countries providing English-speaking programmes such as Cyprus) this rarely happens probably because of language problems students might encounter.

Chapter 8. Organisation of post-secondary education

8.1. Introduction

According to the respondents only a limited number of countries have Post-secondary education not integrated in HE/ Tertiary education. Because the emphasis of the questionnaire was on tertiary education it is possible that some countries only filled in the questionnaire if post-secondary education in their country has links with tertiary education.

We received questionnaires on post-secondary education for the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria, Estonia, France, Greece, Italy, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK. Luxembourg and Malta reacted to a text that was drafted by the authors. In all those countries post-secondary education is present.

According to the questionnaires there are links with HE in the following countries: Austria, Bulgaria (only for certain studies), Estonia (for certain studies), France (for certain studies), Italy, Norway (for certain studies), Romania (for certain studies), Slovenia (certain studies), the UK (Northern Ireland – *Funded by Department for Employment and Learning). There are no links with HE in the Netherlands (except access to HE), Lithuania, Poland and Spain.

Austria, Bulgaria, France, Italy, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Romania, Spain, Sweden, and the UK have as well TSC as post-secondary education. In Lithuania post-secondary education will be discontinued in 2003. The existing post-secondary schools will have to prove their capacity to become colleges. If they cannot do so they will be reorganised into other types of vocational training institutions.

8.2. Organisation of post-secondary education

In most countries where post-secondary education is provided it is organised by the Ministry of education next to private education providers and professional organisations. It is interesting to see that e.g. in Northern Ireland it is organised by the Department of Employment and Learning and in the Netherlands it is the responsibility of the department of Vocational and Adult and Education (BVE).

There have not been as many changes in legislation as for Tertiary Short Cycle education. However, where there have been changes they were very recent: Norway (2003), Slovenia (2001), Spain (2002), and Sweden (2002).

Table 15: Organisation of post-secondary education

	Austria	Bulgaria	Estonia	France	Greece	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	England and Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
Ministry of Education	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●[76]	●	●	●		●	●	●		●
Private education Providers	●	●	●	●	●					●	●	●	●	●	●	●			
Professional organisations	●										●	●	●			●	●		
Others						●					●			●		●		● *	

8.3. Providers of post-secondary education

Post-secondary education is provided as well in secondary schools as in further education colleges and in formal adult education. Nevertheless we see that the majority of these post-secondary studies are provided in secondary schools. Sometimes they are organised in collaboration with industry. Slovenia mentions vocational colleges, Austria and Estonia mention vocational schools.

Table 16: Providers of post-secondary education

	Austria	Bulgaria	Estonia	France	Greece	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	England and Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
FE colleges	●						●		●		●	●					●	●	●
Secondary schools		●		●	●	●		●		●	●		●		●		●		
Sec. schools in collaboration with industry						●				●	●		●		●		●		
Formal adult education							●			●	●	●			●	●	●	●	●
Other	● *		● ***								●			● **		●	●		

* Berufsbildenden höheren Schulen, ** Vocational colleges *** Vocational schools

[76] BVE, Beroeps en Volwasseneneducatie (department of Vocational and Adult Education).

8.4. Objectives of Post-secondary education

The main objective of post-secondary education is clearly a professional specialisation or sometimes a professional training not linked to previous studies. This kind of education clearly enhances the professional skills of youngsters who want to join the labour market. In a number of countries (Austria, Sweden) these studies make it possible for students from vocational studies to access HE. In perspective of LLL it is relevant that so many countries offer post-secondary education in institutions for adult education thus offering adults the opportunity to update and enlarge their professional skills.

Table 17: objectives

	Austria	Bulgaria	Estonia	France	Greece	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	England and Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
Professional specialisation	●		●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Professional training not linked to previous studies	●	●		●				●		●	●	●	●			●	●		●
Other	●							●		●	●					●	●	●	●

8.5. Duration of Post-secondary education and qualifications received

Post-secondary education can last from 6 months to 3 years. What is perhaps most striking when looking at the table with qualifications below is the fact that very often the qualifications received are identical to those received in Tertiary Short Cycle education.

The best example is the UK where HNs and Foundation degrees are awarded as well in Tertiary Short Cycle education as in post-secondary education. This is probably a confusion of terminology as “post-secondary” is a vague term and **could** refer to anything beyond secondary level (level 3 of the **National Qualifications Framework** (not the same as the Higher Education levels)) - although it wouldn't usually be used to refer to Degree programmes. It could refer to professional qualifications at level 4, short awards at level 4, Foundation Degrees (level 4), Higher Nationals (level 4), entry onto Honours Degree programmes, or almost anything that 'comes after' secondary education. Apart from Honours degrees, Masters, PhD etc, these can all be offered in both colleges of Further Education (FE colleges) and in Higher Education Institutes (HEIs). The main distinction here is not so much the duration or the qualification received but the education provider.

The same can be said about the STS in France where in fact the same qualifications are granted as for students at the IUT. The students who have obtained their BTS are

also eligible to apply to take the Vocational degree *(Licence professionnelle*) (see chapter on France).

Table 18: Duration and certification of studies

	One semester	One year	Qualification received	Two years	Qualification received	More than two years	Qualification received	Credits when going to degree programmes
Scotland		●	HNC	●	HND			
Northern Ireland		●	HNC	●	HND			●
England and Wales		●	Higher National Certificate	●	Diploma, Foundation degree		Foundation degree	Certain cases
Sweden		●	Certificate of advanced Vocational Education	●	Certificate of advanced Vocational Education	●	Certificate of	●
Spain				●	Titulo "tecnico Superior			●
Slovenia				●	Diploma			●
Romania		●		●	Graduating certificate	●	Graduating	Certain cases
Poland	●	● °	Skilled worker	● °°		● °°	Technician	no
Norway		●	Diploma	●	Diploma			Certain cases
The Netherlands	●	●	NDA	●	NDA			
Malta		●	NDA	●	NDA			
Luxembourg				●	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur			
Lithuania		●	certificate	●	certificate			Certain cases
Italy		●	certificate					no
Greece	● [77]		Diploma level …	●	Diploma level …			
France				●	Brevet de Technicien Supérieur (BTS)	●	Diplôme d'Etat	●
Estonia				●				
Bulgaria		●	Certificate for					no
Austria		●*	Abschluß Meister und Werkmeistershule	●**	Diplomzeugnis	●***	Reife- und Diplomprüfung	●

*In Meisterschulen and Werkmeistershulen (schools for craftsmen), **In Kolleg (colleges), ***In höheren Shulen für Berufstätige (Vocational Higher Schools), °Between 0,5 year and 1 year. °°Between more than one year and 2,5 years

[77] Certificate

In a number of other countries there is a clear distinction such as the Austrian qualifications granted at In Meisterschulen and Werkmeistershulen and höheren Shulen für Berufstätige. These are clearly specialisations for students who have finished vocational education, at the same time giving them access to university programmes or professional university programmes. At the Kollegs the same qualifications are awarded but mainly to students who have finished general (not vocational) secondary education. These Kollegs are sometimes regarded as TSC education.

8.6. Existing Fields in post-secondary education

Where post-secondary education is present, there, just as far Tertiary Short Cycle education, studies in virtually all fields mentioned in the comparative table. Studies that have been introduced recently are Administration and ICT (Italy), ICT (Austria), Health care (Norway) Agriculture, Business Studies, Product Development, Services, Health care, ICT (Slovenia)

Table 19: Fields in post-secondary education

Country /region	Administration	Agriculture	Arts	Biotechnics	Building	Business studies	Catering and Hospitality	Chemistry	Crafts	Cultural heritage	Domestic sciences	Education	Environmental studies	Health care	ICT	Language studies	Leisure, recreation	Mechanics	Music and Drama	Product development	Restoration	Social work	Other
A	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	
BG					•						•							•		•			
EE	•	•	•		•						•	•		•							•		
F	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
GR	•	•	•			•	•			•				•			•	•					
I	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•			•			•			•	•	
LT	•	•			•	•	•		•								•	•		•	•		
L	•					•											•						
MT						•	•										•						
NL																							
N	•	•	•		•	•		•	•					•	•	•		•	•	•		•	
PL	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
RO	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•			•					
SK	•	•			•	•	•							•	•			•		•			•
E	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•		•		•	•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	•
S	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	•	•		•	•	•	•	•	•	
UK: E/W	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•
UK:NI	•	•	•		•	•	•	•				•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•			•	
UK:SC	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	•	

8.7. Participation of students and teachers in mobility programmes

Contrary to what we have seen in Tertiary Short Cycle education, mobility in post-secondary education is mainly under Leonardo. This is not surprising as mainly vocational education is concerned. Students and teachers also participate in mobility under Youth (only in Lithuania as far as teachers are concerned) and Comenius as well as in other programmes. Mobility under Comenius is normal in post-secondary schools as those schools are eligible within the framework of the Comenius - school education - chapter - of the Socrates programme.

There is no mobility in Italy and we did not receive any information about mobility in the UK. We don't dare to conclude that this means there is no mobility in post-secondary education in the UK.

Table 20: Participation of students in PS in mobility

	Austria	Bulgaria	Estonia	France	Greece	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	England and Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
Leonardo	•		•	•	•		•					•	•	•	•	•			
Comenius	•				•							•							
Youth							•					•	•						
Other programmes	•	•	•	•	•		•							•					
No mobility						•		NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA						NDA	NDA	NDA

Table 21: Participation of teachers in mobility programmes

	Austria	Bulgaria	Estonia	France	Greece	Italy	Lithuania	Luxembourg	Malta	The Netherlands	Norway	Poland	Romania	Slovenia	Spain	Sweden	England and Wales	Northern Ireland	Scotland
Leonardo	•		•		•		•					•	•	•	•	•			
Comenius	•			•	•							•			•				
Youth							•												
Other programmes	•	•	•	•			•							•	•				
No mobility						•		NDA	NDA	NDA	NDA						NDA	NDA	NDA

Chapter 9: Elements of good practice in Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education

Introduction

The original idea was to develop within the framework of this study some examples of good practice at country level concerning Tertiary Short Cycle education or post-secondary education. During the process of analysing the data and writing the present report, it became apparent that it was more appropriate to focus on some interesting elements of good practice that are to be found in several countries across Europe. Furthermore it was thought to be difficult to select a limited number of countries as examples of good practice. While reading the contributions on each of the individual countries the reader will be able to appreciate innovative and interesting elements while comparing with his or her own situation.

9.1. Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning (APEL)

APEL to access Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education

In all countries a certificate or diploma of full post-secondary education (general, vocational or technical) is requested to enter either TSC or professional post-secondary education.

Several countries, however, allow students to enter Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education even if they do not have the required secondary education certificate or diploma. In most of those cases students are required to prove that they have the certificate of compulsory school plus a certain number of years of practical experience working in the professional field in which they want to take the Tertiary Short Cycle education or post-secondary education studies.

Although this evolution is to be welcomed it also requires the setting in place of competent assessors of this prior learning in order to avoid unnecessary disappointments or failures.

In some cases there is a minimum age limit and a minimum number of years of practical experience required to be able to take advantage of this accreditation of prior experiential learning. Norway is the only country that explicitly states that applicants who are 25 years of age can apply for specific subjects in Tertiary Short Cycle education and can be admitted on the basis of formal, **informal and non-formal competence gained** at work and life in general. In Iceland, among other countries, applicants with substantial work experience who have not completed their matriculation exam may be admitted to TSC education within the universities.

9.2. Multiple learning pathways for students are an asset in the perspective of lifelong learning

9.2.1. Part-time or full-time studies in Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education with modular approaches

Virtually all countries enable students to take Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education either in full-time study or in part-time study. The part-time study takes mostly twice as many years as full-time study. In most cases the part-time study is built on a modular approach enabling the student to spread his or her studies over several years split up into modules. As an indicator of the importance of this possibility we refer to the UK where out of 567,395 students on sub-degree programmes 437,695 were part-time during the academic year 2001-2002.

The possibility to take Tertiary Short Cycle education studies or professional post-secondary studies with such flexibility is definitely an element that facilitates access to higher/tertiary education.

9.2.2. Adult education

Tertiary short Cycle education is offered in the framework of adult education in many countries. Because this is the case for virtually all countries studied we give only a few examples:

In Denmark TSC is provided within the college sector and adult education is provided by the same institutions that offer the ordinary programmes. In Austria The *berufsbildende Schule* is a type of post-secondary school which leads to the "*Reife- and Diplomprüfung*". The evening form (*berufsbildende höhere Schule für Berufstätige*) is open for adults under employment.

In Sweden there are also voluntary short programmes (generally one year or less) aimed at applicants who lack the specific qualification for a certain area of study (*basår*). The "basår" gives eligibility for undergraduate study in the chosen field. It is arranged by HEIs or within the framework of adult education. In cooperation with municipal adult education, universities can also offer so-called college programmes (*collegeutbildning*) in order to promote recruitment to higher education. The aim is for participants to continue to study at university level.

9.2.3. The same or similar qualifications can be earned at different institutions

It is definitely an asset when within the same educational system different pathways exist for students to obtain a bachelor's degree, possibly through Tertiary Short Cycle education or through professional post-secondary education. The multiple learning pathways for students are a valuable asset in the perspective of lifelong and life-wide learning.

France is a good example of this where students who do not go to university have the choice between the IUT (leading to the DUT diploma) and the STS (leading to the BTS certificate). First of all, if one takes the DUT, this diploma can be reached already in three ways either through the two-year full time course, through continuing education on a part-time basis and even through an apprenticeship. Having acquired the DUT the student can either go for the Vocational degree (Licence professionnelle) but he or she can also choose to go to the university and the DUT studies would be recognised as one or two years of the normal three years DEUG leading to a general bachelor's degree. The student having obtained the DUT can also decide to do just a third year of specialisation.

Thus, a student has a variety of learning pathways at his/her disposal. This may be complex on the one hand but on the other hand it offers many possibilities to the students and the learners. It enables every interested student to reach the educational objectives he or she has set for him/herself. The fact that there is such a multiplicity of learning pathways contributes definitely to enhance access to higher education, which is one of the three key objectives of the detailed Work Programme on the Future objectives of the Education and Training systems in Europe.

It has, of course, to be added that it is probably more efficient and easier for the student to be aware of all the possibilities, if the multiple pathways are all available within one clear higher education structure instead of being spread over different education providers.

9.2.4. Use of ODL

As we can see from the chart, ODL-courses are made available in the majority of countries, sometimes only for a limited number of programmes. Whether Open and Distance Learning and Internet Technology are only used to support teaching or whether qualifications can actually be earned through ODL could not always be concluded from the questionnaire. References were made to the Open University in the UK where students can earn modular sub-degree qualifications[78]. Ireland also has a well-developed system of course providers at the level of tertiary short cycle education[79]. As mentioned above, legislation is being prepared in Spain providing for the use of ODL and ICT in order to allow sub-degree students to study in an Open and Distance learning environment and thus get qualified.

In Sweden ODL courses and some programmes are offered within the framework of the Swedish Net University. The Open University of Cyprus was established in 2002 and an

[78] http://www.open.ac.uk/
[79] http://www.learningireland.ie/provider_login/

interim Governing Council was appointed in February 2003. The University will exclusively employ distance learning methods, means and technology.

In Turkey there are 623.465 students in Bachelor's education through distance education, and 138.628 students in pre-Bachelor's distance education.

9.3. Co-existence of Tertiary Short Cycle education and degree higher education in the same HEI

The co-existence between Tertiary Short Cycle education and degree education within the same university or higher education institution has many advantages. It first has an impact, no doubt, on the quality of the education itself as the same teachers will both be involved in sub-degree and in degree teaching. Secondly it facilitates the counselling of students who may be interested or who have the potential to go on to the degree courses once the sub-degree courses are finished. It is also interesting that the students are already in contact with both teachers and students in degree courses during their sub-degree studies; this will definitely have an effect on the sub-degree students who have the potential for degree education. Finally it facilitates continuing studies after having finished sub-degree studies or it facilitates coming back to studies after an interruption of studies at the end of the sub-degree studies. Thus we point to the Institutes of Technology in Ireland where professionally oriented sub-degree courses are offered (certificate and diploma level) and where students can go on to degree studies and where a small number of them even goes on to Ph D. level. Also in other countries such as the UK, Turkey, Sweden, Iceland, Malta, Cyprus etc. we see the co-existence of sub-degree or TSC education and degree education within the same institution.

9.4. Close co-operation between the universities or other HEIs and sub-degree or post-secondary education

Close co-operation between HEIs and TSC education or professional post-secondary schools will definitely have an impact on the quality of TSC or post-secondary education and on the motivation for students to go on to degree courses later on.

The best example of such close co-operation is the virtual integration of universities and other HEIs in Norway where students from the State university College can easily take courses in the university as part of their TSC and degree higher education studies. Thus, the motivation to go on studying after the TSC phase will no doubt be increased. Such interaction between universities and State university colleges in Norway has definitely had an impact also on the quality of education or the academic upgrading. This is reflected in the fact that in State university colleges there are more faculty members holding doctoral degrees than previously.

The academic upgrading in Norway is also reflected in the fact that more high-level degrees are being offered by the state university colleges.

In France the professional post-secondary STS (leading to the BTS Brevet) organised in upper secondary schools (Lycées), can be associated to a university which is in charge of delivering the Vocational degree (or Licence professionnelle). The university sets the standards to take students in this vocational degree or at the end of their professional post-secondary studies.

Also in Estonia according to the Standard of Higher Education the study programme in professional higher education level may have 2/3 of the study programme in common with post-secondary education. The graduates of post-secondary education can continue at professional higher education level.

The same applies to the two-year Foundation degrees in the UK that are offered by universities in partnership with colleges of both higher and further education. These Foundation degrees can be valuable on the one hand in their own right as they give an enhanced status of qualification to the students who have taken them and they can on the other hand, form part of a coherent ladder of progression which gives students choice about their next steps in degree studies. For completeness' sake it has to be added that Foundation degrees may also be organised by companies in co-operation with universities, thus becoming a major tool in modernising both private and public sector workforces. On completion of a foundation degree, there is progression to a full honours degree with just a further 15 months study, on either a full or part-time basis[80].

The French, Estonian and the UK example mentioned above are certainly mechanisms that will increase the motivation for students to apply for such possibilities.

The case of the Flemish speaking community of Belgium is interesting where students who have finished the fourth stage of secondary education in nursing (8-9 years of secondary education), having earned a secondary education certificate and/or a brevet, may be allowed to a top-up year. They are thus able to acquire a degree in nursing in one year **provided they have had at least five years of experience** as a nurse. This is a development that has been brought about by the shortage of highly qualified nurses but it has been the start for co-operation between HEIs and (post)-secondary education.

9.5. Development of higher education systems along the concept of the ladder of learning coupled to a network of learning

Several of the countries studied clearly want to promote explicitly or implicitly a coherent ladder of progressive learning. This is amongst others the case in Sweden, Norway, the UK,

[80] http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/inst/

Ireland, Iceland and Turkey. This ladder of learning enables students to start off, in professional post-secondary or Tertiary Short Cycle/ sub-degree education and to progress gradually and coherently to first obtain a TSC qualification and then a degree. This ladder of learning may integrate possibly periods of professional work during which the student works and later on comes back to go on in degree education. The fact that this ladder of learning is clearly reflected in the structure and the learning pathways is definitely an asset in terms of lifelong learning. The example of Ireland given above is a clear example of this.

The fact that the idea of the ladder of learning is furthermore coupled to a network of learning with possibilities for students to move across different parts of the higher education systems either within their country (or even in Europe) adds to lifelong learning also an element of life-wide learning mentioned in The Memorandum of lifelong learning. Several countries are developing such networks at the moment as e.g. France, the UK, Spain, Sweden, Norway and Ireland.

9.6. Use of a portfolio

Although no information, except the information from the Netherlands, about Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education explicitly refers to the use of a portfolio in education, it is clear that several systems take into account the idea or the concept of the portfolio. The Dutch system proposes towards the future to embed short cycle programmes within Bachelor programmes in the *Hogescholen* with the possibility to take a part of a Bachelor's programme and flow in and out at specific times obtaining a certificate of competences acquired. The latter would be recognised by the labour market on the one hand and by the institutions of higher education on the other hand and clearly builds on the concept of the competence portfolio.

9.7. Top-up year

In Austria, the Czech Republic, France, Romania, and the UK there are top-up years organized, generally only for certain studies.

One clear case has been met in which the possibility exists for students who have either a TSC qualification in higher education or a professional post-secondary certificate or diploma to take an extra year which leads them to a Bachelor's degree; this is the case in France where both students of IUT (giving a DUT or Diplôme Universitaire de Technologie) and STS (having a BTS or Brevet de Technicien Supérieur) can do a top-up year which leads to a professional Bachelor’s, not to an academic Bachelor’s. Particularly interesting is that this professional Bachelor is available both to students having done Tertiary Short Cycle education and to students having done professional post-secondary education. This system is being revised in 2003 (see France).

The possibility of such a top-up year to get a professional Bachelor's, the structure of the year and the active involvement of people from companies in the contents of the curriculum and in the teaching can be said to be innovative elements in this top-up year.

It has to be pointed out that top-up years are not always available in systems that put into practice a coherent approach to the ladder of learning outlined earlier. Thus no top-up years are available in Sweden, Norway, and Ireland as there is the possibility of a steady, easy and regular progression from one step of the ladder to the next one. The Foundation degrees also have their place in this coherent ladder of learning. On completion of a foundation degree, there is progression to a full honours degree with just a further 15 months' study, on either a full or part-time basis.

However, many HEIs in the UK organize top-up years for students coming from abroad, thus offering the opportunity to students who otherwise would not be able to proceed to degree studies or would have to take bridging modules, to acquire a Bachelor's degree in one year.

9.8. Close links with companies, professional organisations chambers of commerce (teachers, curriculum design and updating)

As mentioned in the comparative analysis most Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary studies have a curriculum that is a mixture of theory, practical courses in the institution and placements in enterprises. Involvement of companies in the design and the implementation of the curriculum differs greatly. The influence of the companies - both public or private -, of professional organisations and/or chambers of commerce may also be found in the work-based approach (alternating study and work) of some of the new learning pathways.

Co-operation with Chambers of commerce is to be found at least in Austria, Denmark, France, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Spain, Turkey and the UK.

In a few cases the role of companies is very important and very close. This is already the case in the Foundation degrees in the UK and it will still be strengthened towards the future. The White Paper on the Future of Higher Education presented to the Parliament in January 2003 emphasizes under item 3.18 that "New foundation degrees are developing well as employer-focused higher education qualifications. One of the key features is that employers play a role in designing courses, so both they and the students can be certain that they will be gaining the skills that are really needed in work". This White Paper goes on under 3.19 "major employers like KLM and ROVER have developed foundation degrees designed to meet their needs, as they modernise their workforce. And in the public sector, both the Ministry of Defence and

Department of Health have found the work-based approach of foundation degrees valuable. Recently the department of health announced that any health service employee with 5 years of service will be entitled to training and development leading to an appropriate foundation degree. For teachers, new foundation degrees are being developed as routes into some courses, and dedicated foundation degrees will be part of the new standards and qualifications framework proposed for higher level teaching assistants. By providing an important route to further career development, foundation degrees have a key role to play in modernising both private and public sector workforces".[81]

Close co-operation with industry and professional organisations and companies is also apparent in the top-up year in France the so-called Licence Professionnelle. The originality of this Vocational degree resides in the fact that it is developed through partnerships between universities, training organisations, professional organisations and companies. This co-operation has an impact on the contents of the curriculum for the specific special fields of the Vocational degree of which there are 610 at the moment. The co-operation with enterprises is also reflected in the important placements of the students and the fact that an important number of teachers is coming from industry and enterprises.

Close co-operation is also apparent in Romania as companies and institutions interested in setting up post-secondary education may conclude an agreement with the school inspectorate upon new specialisations to be set up. Contracts will be signed between the parties involved that have to be approved by the Ministry of National education.

In some cases co-operation between TSC or post-secondary education and companies may be reflected in co-operation at the level of the region in which those institutions are embedded. Thus new specialisations may be set up responding to the regional economic needs and developments. Close links with the region are clearly to be seen in o.a. France, Ireland, Italy and Romania. This is also reflected in specific fields such as Marine studies, (Lithuania), Aquaculture (Norway) and Forestry (Cyprus) that are linked to the specific economic and geographical situation of the country concerned. This proves that very often specialisations are being developed that meet the real needs of the local labour market.

It is interesting to point out that close co-operation with trade unions is explicitly referred to in at least seven countries: Austria, Denmark, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Sweden, Turkey and the UK.

[81] The full text of the White paper and further information on Foundation degrees is available on the following website: http://www.foundationdegree.org.uk/

Employers and their sector organisations (Northern Ireland) are also mentioned as having close collaboration with TSC. Recently HNs have also been devised in Scotland partnerships between the Scottish Qualifications Authority and local consortia of colleges.

Finally it is interesting to point out that co-operation with companies may be more or less regulated in relation with the number of professionals from companies who have to be involved in the teaching. In the IFTS in Italy 50% of the teachers have to come from companies while in the French Licence Professionelle offered to students who have finished the BTS or the DUT 25% of teaching staff are teachers from companies.

The case of the Berufsakademien mentioned under Germany is a development that also requires our particular attention as to co-operation with industry.

It would be very interesting to look into all the issues mentioned above such as co-operation with companies or chambers of commerce, responding to the regional economic needs and co-operation with trade unions be looked into more closely in a separate study.

9.9. Practice oriented and experienced based learning methodologies

Although these issues have not been explicitly addressed in the questionnaire, it is clear from the information received that both in TSC education and in post-secondary education practice-oriented and experienced-based learning methodologies are very actively used. Virtually all TSC and post- secondary education integrates up to a certain extent placements in industry into the curriculum or have people from industry teaching within this type of education so that there is a clear interaction between theory and practice. Adults are often admitted to TSC and post-secondary education and can thus build on their experiential learning. In some cases as courses are part-time or as in the case of the Foundation degree in the UK they can be integrated into work-based learning, study is closely related with practical work so that there is a stronger interaction between theory and practice.

It may be assumed that practice-oriented, experience-based and work-related learning used in TSC and post-secondary education is the more appropriate methodology to be used for those students who may have a more deductive than inductive approach to learning. This may in several cases also apply to some students in degree higher education in institutions of higher education with a clear professional profile. It would be useful to study this more thoroughly so as to see whether those deductive pedagogical methodologies - going from practice to theory - are more appropriate for those students. It should also be looked into in which ways those deductive methodologies promote more strongly motivation for lifelong and life-wide learning

9.10. Use of Quality Assurance systems

All Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education studies have some form of quality assurance through a Quality assurance agency which is either independent or in many cases the responsibility of the Ministry of Education.

In the case of professional post-secondary education that is clearly organised within the framework of schools, quality assurance is most often the responsibility of the inspectorate who carry out the quality assurance on behalf of the Ministry of Education. For Tertiary Short Cycle education studies integrated into universities and other institutions of higher education, the quality assurance systems and quality assurance agencies are the same as the university and obey the same rules.

Chapter 10: Conclusions and Recommendations

10.1. Conclusion

10.1.1. The place of Tertiary Short Cycle and post-secondary education in HE

Seen in a European perspective Tertiary Short Cycle (TSC) Education constitutes a very varied and heterogeneous group of programmes and studies. In some countries a part of those programmes are recognised as higher education, in other countries none of TSC Education is recognised as higher education. In effect, the same type of education can be recognized as Higher Education within one country, but in another country placed in the sector of Post-secondary Education without connections to higher education.
TSC Education can be found at university- as well as non-university level and even at secondary school level but also in the framework of adult education or in industry. In fact the authors have come to the conclusion that there is not one but several types of TSC education:

- Tertiary Short Cycle education in the sense of sub-degree education, actually embedded in the universities or the HEIs,
- Tertiary Short Cycle education taking place in separate institutions but having strong links with HEIs; these institutions can be colleges, centres for adult education, professional organisations or companies,
- Tertiary Short Cycle education taking place in separate institutions and having no or only occasional links with HEIs,
- post-secondary education having strong links with HE and very often delivering identical qualifications to those received in TSC and thus subject of the present study,
- lastly, post-secondary education, very often taking place in secondary schools, having no or hardly any links with HE and just offering a short specialisation or a preparation for degree studies and thus falling under ISCED 4.

These **are in fact all covered** by the broader and wider view of the term "**tertiary education"** as used by the OECD and defined as "*a level or stage of studies **beyond secondary education** which can lead to a qualification recognised on the labour market. It is undertaken in **formal tertiary education institutions** – universities, polytechnics, colleges; public and private – but also in a **wide variety of other settings**, including secondary schools,*

at work sites, via free-standing information technology-based offerings and a host of private and public entities"[82].

10.1.2. The EURASHE study and its potential contribution to the implementation of EU policy in the field of education and training.

The present study has been focusing on Tertiary Short Cycle and post-secondary education. It is clear that this Tertiary Short Cycle education and post-secondary professional (or vocational) education, has a major role to play in the perspective of the developments in Europe at the moment, especially those subsequent to the European Council in Lisbon, the Bologna declaration, The communication of the Commission on lifelong learning (Making a European Area of lifelong learning), the Communication from the Commission on "The role of the universities in the Europe of knowledge" and the "Detailed Work programme" of the Concrete Future Objectives in education and Training.

- The first conclusion that could be drawn from the study was the fact that such an **important number of students (more than 2,5 million) are concerned.** These cannot be neglected if we want to become ***the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world by 2010***, as stated at The Lisbon summit in 2000.

- The second conclusion is the fact that in **Tertiary Short Cycle** education we are dealing with **professional or vocational education**. This can be derived from the curricula that are always a mix of theory and practice and sometimes work placement. It has been stressed that TSC education attracts a large group of students who want to get (short) **quality professional education** after their secondary schooling. The fact that Tertiary Short Cycle education contributes to delivering knowledge and skills is very often undervalued in debates on the needs of the labour market. However, if the European Union is to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and better social cohesion, a goal set in 2000 at the European Council in Lisbon, the European Union needs an even more flexible and better skilled work force. **TSC definitely contributes towards supplying the labour market** as well as far as the private sector (business studies, hospitality, ICT, etc.) as the public sector (health, social care, education…) are concerned.

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[82] T.J. Alexander, *From Higher to Tertiary Education: Directions for Change in OECD Countries,* Paris, 1998.

- The third conclusion that can be drawn from the study is the fact that **Tertiary Short Cycle education has the strength to respond adequately to the changing needs, choices and interests of students and the labour market.** Diversifying higher education models is according to the World Declaration on Higher Education one of the priorities of HE for the 21st century. The fact that in so many countries new fields of study have recently been created ranging across all sectors of industry, that teaching methods and curricula have virtually everywhere been changed and that partnerships with industry have been created or consolidated indicates that we are dealing with a thriving sector that is adapting swiftly to the needs of our rapidly evolving society in general and the labour market in particular. Maybe its strength lies in the very fact that we are mostly dealing with relatively short courses that can more easily be adapted than the traditional long university courses.

- Some sub-degree or professional post-secondary studies have developed **specific forms of co-operation with enterprises so as to prepare their students better for future employment.** This was largely expanded upon in the elements of interesting practice. This co-operation is brought about either through placements of the students in enterprises or through enterprises being involved in the design, the updating and/ or delivering the curriculum. Developing the spirit of enterprise (a.o. at local or regional level), the second sub-objective of the third strategic objective of the Detailed Work programme - Opening up education and training systems to the world - is definitely an area where close co-operation between the universities and institutions of higher education and sub-degree studies or professional post-secondary studies may prove to have a beneficial effect for all concerned.

- Tertiary Short Cycle education is very often embedded in the local community and has by its very nature close links with business, professional organisations and industry and thus it can definitely contribute to the effectiveness of the **knowledge sharing between the world of (higher) education and the professional world.** Europe, must not only have a healthy and flourishing university world, as mentioned in the Communication on the Role of the Universities. It needs excellence in universities and it needs to support the processes that underpin the knowledge society so that the targets set in Lisbon can be met. However, Europe also needs a flourishing and **healthy tertiary education system in which there is clear and strong interaction and co-operation between all its key players.** These are the universities, other HEIs, Tertiary Short Cycle education departments or institutions within or outside HEIs, adult education centres, further education centres, professional organisations organising training and education at Tertiary level and the post-secondary education centres giving professional post-secondary training. The interaction between al those players will be vital to bring about the knowledge based society which Europe needs **to create sustainable economic growth** with more and better jobs and with more social cohesion.

- Most legislation governing TSC education is very recent and has been enacted over the last five years or is still in preparation. The fact that legislation is so recent in most countries proves that this is a sector that is on the move. A lot of the recent changes have to do with access to courses, changing curricula in professional education, but also with QA, accreditation, ECTS, qualification frameworks and more transparency of these programmes. All of this reflects the fact that sub-degree or TSC education already takes into account European developments and priorities that have an impact on degree higher education.

- The next conclusion is that **Tertiary Short Cycle education and post-secondary education considerably contribute to the development of lifelong learning.** As seen in the examples of good practice there are a number of elements that facilitate LLL:

  Although students generally need a certificate of secondary education, there is a growing number of countries where they can **access TSC on the basis of APEL**. This means that the knowledge and skills they have acquired through experience are taken into account when being admitted to TSC courses.

  In many cases students in Tertiary Short Cycle education are taking the courses on a part-time basis. The fact that all countries (except one) offer TSC as **well on a part-time as a full-time basis shows that the sector has had the flexibility to adapt to the needs of society**.

  Courses are also organised **within the framework of adult education** thus offering the possibility to those **returning to education** to get a qualification in HE whilst continuing their working life. The fact that in a number of cases such as the Foundation Degrees the course can be taken **within the framework of the student's professional environment** enhances the attractiveness of this kind of education. In view of a true knowledge-society and Lifelong Learning these are developments that should be encouraged and supported by authorities. This means that TSC offers the flexibility needed to make HE accessible for all.

- TSC education attracts in the first instance important numbers of students (as already mentioned above) who, for one or other reason choose a short course in tertiary education to get a professional qualification. However, the study also emphasises that for an important group it may be a **platform towards degree higher education in a lifelong learning perspective**. If managed carefully, it also enables those students who, after finishing TSC education or post-secondary education, want to go on to degree programmes to use their first qualification as a **stepping-stone for further studies**. This may happen immediately after Tertiary Short Cycle education or post-secondary has been completed or it may be after some years of working in the profession they have been trained for. It can be expected that the group that wants to

return to education will grow in the future as the labour market demands ever more skills from its work force.

- For all the reasons mentioned above, (APEL, flexible learning paths etc.) there seems to be a lower threshold to TSC education than to traditional university education and TSC plays a very important role in involving those groups of society that would otherwise not or less participate in higher education. It is important that these advantages of TSC and post-secondary education do not get lost in future developments that tend to integrate both TSC and possibly post-secondary into higher education as steps towards degree education.

- As stated in the World Declaration on Higher education, higher education should be part of a seamless system of education and reordering its links with all levels of education should be a priority. **In most countries surveyed there are links between TSC education and HEIs**. By facilitating access of students who have finished TSC/sub-degree studies or professional post-secondary studies, universities and institutions of higher education do or will contribute to the **implementation of some of the key objectives of the Detailed Work programme on the Future Objectives of Education and training systems in Europe.** Indeed objective 2 of the detailed Work programme is all about facilitating access for all to education and training systems. The introduction clearly states that: "access to education and training must be simplified and made more democratic; and that passage from one part of the education and training system to another must be made easier". The strategic objective 2 expands on the key issues to be tackled to facilitate access and 5th key issue mentions "**Promoting networks of education and training institutions at various levels in the context of lifelong learning**". To this effect networks (associations, consortia) between universities, institutions of Tertiary Short Cycle education, professional post-secondary, adult education and/or further education centres have to be promoted. We can conclude that **as far as TSC is concerned enormous efforts are made towards meeting these objectives**.

- We have seen in the study that **the integration of TSC within HEIs or the interaction between the HEIs and institutions providing TSC** education can help maintain or upgrade **the quality of TSC**, sub-degree and professional post-secondary higher education and also **boost its attractiveness for as well the students as for the labour market**. When there is collaboration this is a.o. reflected in higher qualifications of the teachers in TSC. This integration of Tertiary Short Cycle

education within, or the promotion of collaboration with universities and other HEIs facilitates the development of flexible lifelong learning pathways for the students concerned. This is already the case where students can decide after two or three years whether they will join the labour market or continue their education. Interaction will have no doubt an **effect on the quality of TSC or post-secondary studies offered** as universities are able to pass on the results of applied research to TSC and professional post-secondary education more easily and in a more structured way and can also benefit from the interaction when they can immediately assess the practical implementation of their research. It is, however, **important that the vocational and professional profile and characteristics, such as more deductive pedagogical approaches of TSC education are maintained**.

- As far as participation in European programmes is concerned we can conclude that TSC and post-secondary education actively participate in different programmes. As far as mobility is concerned students and teachers in TSC programmes are mainly mobile under **Erasmus**, whereas students in post-secondary education are mainly mobile under **Leonardo**. The only specific obstacles that were mentioned were the small size of the institutions and the fact that the sector is not well known and not well defined. A small number of countries are introducing Europass.

- An increasing number of countries and institutions in Tertiary Short Cycle education are using **credit systems**, national or ECTS. This enhances the chances for accumulation of credits for students who have successfully finished studies in TSC. The **Bologna Declaration** specifically mentions the establishment of '*a system of credits – such as in the ECTS system*'. The fact that so many institutions (see table 10) are already using ECTS or any other credit system enhances the chances of the sector of being integrated in the Bologna process.

- The Diploma Certificate is being used increasingly by TSC institutions, thus enhancing the comparability of the skills and competences acquired. The enhancement of the readability of TSC, sub-degree and/or professional post-secondary qualifications, diplomas or certificates will no doubt incite also more of the students in this kind of education to consider at one time or other, with or without professional experience, to go on in degree higher education. The Certificate Supplement is only used at TSC or sub-degree level in Spain and only by a limited number of institutions.

- More co-operation at the level of the contents of the TSC studies will create **more trust** especially with the universities and facilitate recognition of degrees, diplomas and certificates obtained in Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education. This trust is vital for the development and implementation of bridges from Tertiary Short Cycle

education and from professional post-secondary education into degree higher education. This will also facilitate the mobility of students who have obtained a TSC or a professional post- secondary qualification, certificate or diploma. The promotion and the use of the ECTS system within Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education can only facilitate the readability of those TSC and post-secondary qualifications, diplomas, or certificates.

As a first general conclusion it has to be stressed that **closer co-operation between universities and HEIs on the one hand and Tertiary Short Cycle education and/or professional post-secondary education on the other hand will result in a major contribution to implement the three key objectives of the detailed work programme of the Future objectives of the education and training systems in Europe**. Interaction and co-operation will enhance the quality of education in general and the quality of Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education in particular. Interaction and co-operation will facilitate access to higher education and will thus really contribute to educate the work force the knowledge-based society of tomorrow needs in Europe. Finally more interaction and co-operation will also result in opening up Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education more to the world by strengthening the links with working life, research and the society at large; by promoting the spirit of enterprise further; by promoting language skills and by developing more mobility and exchanges.

Developing sustainable economic development has to do with a number of issues ranging from the contents of the curriculum to the structures developed within higher education. Students at all levels ranging from professional post-secondary to sub-degree and to degree studies at universities have to be made aware and study the basics of sustainable development. Interaction will thus prove to be useful and have a cross-fertilisation effect. Research findings resulting from university work will also in this area be more easily transferred to TSC and professional post-secondary education. It will enable the development of integrated coherent approaches across all forms of further, higher or tertiary education.

As a second general conclusion it is important to state that it **is very difficult to indicate very clearly which way developments are going as far as TSC and post-secondary education are concerned.** There is clear tendency to integrate TSC in degree higher education both in universities and in other institutions of higher education that deliver degree education. In several cases TSC is seen as a stepping-stone towards degree education and is recognised by universities and institutions of higher education as such. In a few cases TSC is appreciated below the appreciation it deserves mainly for strategic or inner political reasons related to the position of universities or institutions of higher education. The distrust that seems to exist has to be removed through more co-operation and exchanges at different levels.

One may, however, assume, that TSC education and possibly even post-secondary education will be more and more closely linked to university and degree education in

institutions of higher education over the next 5 to 10 years and this should be seen as beneficial for all parties involved.
In this likely event it is important that higher education which includes TSC or sub-degree higher education and possibly even post-secondary education keeps on offering as many possibilities and keeps on attracting those youngsters which are now found in TSC and in post-secondary education. Including them in universities and institutions of other HEIs doesn't reduce the value of the latter but increases their potential for lifelong and life-wide learning. It also increases the potential of universities and other HEIs to play their cultural and societal role fully towards the knowledge-based society.

10.2. Recommendations

- It is strongly recommended that **all issues related to Tertiary Short Cycle education in Europe are included in all discussions related to the Bologna process**. If quality of higher education and lifelong learning are to be taken seriously Tertiary Short Cycle education has to be seen as a major, valuable and valid stepping stone towards degree education and as a major contribution to lifelong learning as a whole.

- EURASHE recommends that **different forms of co-operation be encouraged between different levels of education ranging from university education, to Tertiary Short Cycle education and even to professional post-secondary education,** thus warranting better quality assurance and trust between the different levels of Higher Education in Europe. However, **this should not lead to TSC losing its specific vocational or professional profile**. Stronger co-operation between HEIs and the Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary education sector may in the end also have a favourable impact on the student numbers in degree courses at universities. As the demographic trend points towards a decrease in student population in secondary schools, HEIs can find in TSC institutions and professional post-secondary schools, a vital human resource they can tap into towards maintaining or increasing their numbers of students towards the future. Stronger interaction between universities and institutions of higher education and Tertiary Short Cycle education or professional post-secondary schools will facilitate activities and actions that have to be set up towards other key aspects of the Lisbon declaration. First of all the education of future citizens and professionals contributing to sustainable economic development. Secondly the promotion of entrepreneurship.

- EURASHE therefore recommends that in order to enhance the continuum of lifelong learning **barriers and obstacles between levels of education** and between different streams of education should be mapped out and that efforts have to be made to find constructive ways to **remove those obstacles**. This coincides with the view of the OECD that we should move away from 'higher education' and 'post-secondary education' to **'tertiary education'** along a **continuum of learning** rather than a hierarchy to examine pathways and transitions. Hence it is important that universities and higher education institutions facilitate the access of TSC and post- secondary students to degree courses by developing bridging courses or access courses or in some cases top-up years for those who want to return to education. This can also be achieved by creating much closer links between Tertiary Short Cycle education and

universities where such links do not exist yet. Furthermore one should also envisage which kind of links can be created between university education and professional post-secondary education so as to strengthen lifelong learning at all levels.

- It is strongly recommended that all **qualification frameworks** which are developed at the moment such as in the UK, the Netherlands and Denmark **include specific references to Tertiary Short Cycle education** (and possibly in some cases to post-secondary education) including descriptors for this/these level(s) of study.
  The setting up and implementation of a study similar to the TUNING studies for Tertiary Short Cycle education could be a major contribution in this field.

- EURASHE recommends that in order **to enhance the transparency of European qualifications in sub-degree higher or Tertiary short Cycle** education and even post-secondary education it would also be commendable to foresee not only a **common language** when referring to the sector but also **common titles** for students in Tertiary Short Cycle education. Whether these qualifications are seen as an interim step towards a degree programme or as a professional qualification is in fact irrelevant as long as the qualifications received are taken into account whenever the student decides to take on additional studies. Such common titles **would also promote European and trans-national mobility** of students and co-operation between institutions having such Tertiary Short Cycle education. The proposal in the UK White paper of 2003 referring to the suggestion to create the FD could help to inspire. Recognise that foundation degrees are ends in their own right, would give them enhanced status as qualifications. **Those with foundation degrees will have the right to use the letters 'FDA'** (for arts based subjects) **or 'FDSc'** (for science based subjects) after their names.

- EURASHE recommends as a concrete step that a **joint working group** is set up of representatives of universities with TSC courses and other institutions with such courses to make a detailed analysis of the ways in **which transition from TSC to degree level is organised.** This group could also look into the possibility of using a common diploma or degree denomination for the end of Tertiary Short Cycle education across Europe.

- In order to **reduce the high drop-out rates** in certain countries EURASHE recommends that co-operation between universities and institutions of higher education delivering Tertiary Short Cycle education also includes the development of flexible learning pathways within which students **can upgrade themselves instead of**

ending up in a waterfall system and thus preventing an enormous waste of human and financial resources. In relation with this it is also recommended to see in which way links can be made with professional post-secondary education in a perspective of the development of integrated lifelong learning systems.

- EURASHE recommends encouraging the use of **competence portfolios in Tertiary Short Cycle education in co-operation with degree education** to promote life-wide and lifelong learning**.** In order to make flexible learning paths acceptable to all those concerned, EURASHE thinks that the duration of the studies should not be the first criterion but the competencies the students have acquired. Therefore still more attention should be paid to **the diploma supplement** that could in fact develop towards a competence portfolio.

- EURASHE recommends further encouraging the **use of ECTS and diploma supplement in Tertiary Short Cycle education to enhance the comparability and transferability** of sub-degree tertiary education. EURASHE also recommends investigating which tools can enhance comparability and transferability in matters related to professional post-secondary education thus **creating links between the Bologna process and the Bruges Copenhagen process**.

- **EURASHE recommends that QA and Accreditation procedures should be put in place** in all Tertiary Short Cycle education, preferably by independent QA agencies and Accreditation bodies working together with professional bodies and foreign experts. Universities could play a major role in helping to develop such Quality assurance systems in Tertiary Short Cycle education where they do not yet exist.

- **EURASHE recommends to the Commission and the Member States of the European Union to follow-up closely all developments in relation with Tertiary Short Cycle education and professional post-secondary education** in Europe so as to be able to advise policy-makers to develop both Tertiary Short Cycle education and post-secondary education further in such a way that they can become clear stepping stones to further degree studies in lifelong learning. Regular European studies and clear quantitative data will contribute to this.

- **EURASHE recommends that European projects in the field of mobility and curriculum development be funded by priority** within the framework of the EU programmes in the field of education and training that try to promote co-operation between degree and Tertiary Short Cycle education and possibly also linking up with professional post-secondary education. Especially projects should be funded of which the objective is to develop more flexible learning pathways and recognition of qualifications, the development of quality assurance and accreditation systems and the development of portfolios.

- As this is the first European study on Tertiary Short Cycle and post-secondary education EURASHE strongly recommends that **more in-depth research** and studies should be carried out on the strategic elements of this comparative study, especially the transition to degree studies and the impact of TSC on the continuum of lifelong learning, and the sectors and disciplines concerned. Particular attention should also be paid in studies focusing a.o. on the deductive pedagogical methods used in TSC and post-secondary education, the ways in which they promote entrepreneurship and the way they work with APEL to enhance lifelong and life- wide learning.