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Vocational Training: Leonardo da Vinci welcomes the first Czech and Cypriot projects

The first Czech and Cypriot projects have been selected within the framework of the Leonardo da Vinci programme for the implementation of a European vocational training policy, under the responsibility of Mrs Edith Cresson, Member of the Commission in charge of Research, Education, Training and Youth. The two selected projects from the Czech Republic and the four from Cyprus have received Community funding for a total amount of almost one million Ecus. Furthermore, almost 700,000 Ecus have been awarded to Czech and Cypriot partners in projects originating from the 15 Member States of the European Union and the three EFTA countries which participate in the European Economic Area, namely Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. These funds come from the national contributions of the Czech Republic and Cyprus.

The projects deal with, for example, adapting information society tools to the needs of the blind, or training employees in the dairy industry. They also concern professionals in the tourism industry or health care sector.

The financing of these projects marks the beginning of the full participation of the Czech Republic and Cyprus in the Leonardo da Vinci programme. This decision was adopted by the Association Council on the 30th September and by the Council of Ministers on the 6th October.

The participation of the Central and Eastern European countries in the Leonardo da Vinci programme, of which several are in the pre-accession stages, will allow all parties concerned by vocational training (young people about to enter the labour market, workers, managers, social partners, those looking for work or trainers) to undertake training placements abroad and take part in pilot projects. Furthermore, these newly participating countries will be able to adapt their structures in the light of the vocational training policies and operational methods of the European Union. The educational benefits that these newly participating countries will gain from a Community programme such as Leonardo da Vinci cannot be underestimated.

Some examples of projects

Training for dairy workers

This project was submitted by the Pribina organisation from the Czech Republic, in partnership with 5 other organisations from 4 European countries. Its objective is to tackle the dual challenge of quality and competitiveness in the dairy industry, so as to ensure the sustainable development of this sector. The project aims not only at developing advanced technical know-how for the treatment of dairy products, but also the acquisition of core skills in the field of communication or team work. The final outcome of the project will be to help work organisation methods to be developed.

The project plans to use video as a training tool and to progressively integrate new communication technologies.

Towards a network of cultural tourism

This project was submitted by the Cyprus Tourism Association (CTO) in Nicosia, in partnership with 14 organisations from 4 European countries. It is designed to meet the needs pointed up by the rapid growth of cultural tourism in Europe. In order to differentiate itself from a more traditional “sea-side” kind of tourism, the project focuses on the enhancement of local culture, craft and architecture, and highlights how cultural tourism can contribute to employment and local development and to the revival of traditional crafts.

More specifically, the project will analyse training needs, design training modules to be integrated into curricula, and network the organisations involved.

Evaluation methodologies will be developed to measure the impact of the project on individual workers, SMEs, training organisations and, finally, local or regional authorities.