



CHANGE IN PUBLIC SERVICES:
FORA FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF EXPERTISE IN RESTRUCTURING

Factsheet No. 4

Skills development in the context of restructuring in Public Services

Final version
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December 2011

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1. Introduction: The project and purpose of this factsheet

In January 2011 CEEP started the project *“Change in Public Services: Fora for the improvement of expertise in restructuring”*. The objective was to promote expertise, exchange of information and good practices between public services providers, to develop tools to better anticipate and manage change and to develop a partnership to better tackle these issues in the future.

The *“Change in Public Services”* project that was carried out throughout 2011, built upon earlier activities and developed them further: In 2009 CEEP, with the support of ETUC and the sectoral social partner organization in education, electricity, healthcare, postal services, public transport, railways and public administration initiated a project designed to improve expertise in anticipation, preparation and social support during restructuring in public services or services of general interest (SGI). The project titled *“Anticipation of Change in Public Services”* was intended by the social partner organisations to focus in particular on the "anticipatory" aspect of the restructuring process. A major outcome of the project was the creation of the basis for the Public Services' Employers Forum in order to increase the exchange and collaboration between the cross-sectoral and sectoral social partners whose members provide public services, provide expertise and strengthen the voice of public services in Europe¹.

The *“Change in Public Services: Fora for the improvement of expertise in restructuring”* project on change in Public Services builds on the outcomes of these activities and put it on a higher level with a specific focus on the exchange of information as well as exchange of good practices in social dialogue. This is to be done in respect of the various autonomies of the participants. This exchange took the form of online workshops and traditional, thematic meetings.

To ensure substantial discussion in the framework of the online workshops, specific factsheets were prepared to provide expertise, research and background material in the context of the seven sectors to be covered by the project (education, electricity, healthcare, railways, postal services, public transport, public administration at central and local levels) and the five thematic topics to be addressed in online workshops that have been defined jointly by all project partners involved in the coordination and steering of this measure. The factsheets are expected to provide key information about major trends and contexts of change, highlight good practice and contribute to an exchange on how to improve the expertise of the participating organisations on change in public services.

This factsheet deals with the issue of skills development in the context of restructuring in Public Services. It was drafted for the fourth out of five online seminar that took place on 14 November 2011. The factsheet was revised after the seminar on the basis of seminar discussions, further interviews with social partners and their written contribution, background materials sent by social partners as well as relevant documents available from sector social dialogue committees websites.

¹ See CEEP 2010: A. Wild, E. Voss, *Anticipation of Change in Public Services. Political Report and Anticipation of Change in Public Services. Diverse Backgrounds... Common Challenges*, final report, Brussels, June 2010.

2. Background and key issues: Skills, skills, skills...

'Skills issue' has been growing in importance for at least the last decade. Already in 2000 the European Commission in its Memorandum on Lifelong Learning stated that lifelong learning is crucial for successful transition to knowledge-based economy and society. The list of 'new basic skills for all' included : IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social culture². Skills were defined as basic condition for personal and professional development and employability. They were also perceived as crucial for successful performance in changing careers and jobs.

Importance of skills has been further underlined in 2000 in the Lisbon Strategy; one of its priorities was investment in people. The Strategy implied that EU's fast-changing economy required flexible and highly skilled workforce, while lifelong learning was perceived as means to adapt to changing labour market conditions and ensure employability³. In 2005, in the renewed Lisbon Strategy importance of skills for adaptability was pointed out : "skills are necessary to anticipate, trigger and absorb change"; it was also made clear that continuous process of up-skilling and re-skilling is required throughout professional lives, in all sectors and in all jobs⁴.

The first European Commission initiative related exclusively to skills appeared in 2008 : the Communication titled "New Skills for New Jobs. Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs"⁵ was issued. In the document skills upgrading is perceived as crucial condition for economic growth and social well-being:

*"Skills upgrading is critically important for Europe's short-term recovery and longer term growth and productivity, for its jobs and its capacity to adapt to change, for equity, gender equality and social cohesion"*⁶.

According to this Communication upgrading skills shall not be perceived as luxury reserved only for highly-qualified workers in high-tech jobs, but as basic activity for workers from all educational backgrounds as in the future average level of skills will increase for all categories of workers⁷. The most acute challenges were defined as : ensuring

² European Commission, *A Memorandum on Lifelong Learning*, Brussels, SEC (2000) 1832, 30.10.2000, p. 10.

³ *Lisbon European Council*, 23 and 24 March 2000, Presidency Conclusions (available at : http://www.europarl.europa.eu/summits/lis1_en.htm).

⁴ European Commission, *Working together for growth and jobs. A new start for the Lisbon Strategy*, Communication to the Spring European Council, Brussels, 2.2.2005, COM(2005) 24 final, p. 26 (available at : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2005:0024:FIN:en:PDF>).

⁵ Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council, the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions, *New skills for New Jobs, Anticipating and matching labour market and skills needs*, {SEC (2008) 3058}, Brussels, 16.12.2008, COM(2008) 868 final; available at : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2008:0868:FIN:EN:PDF>).

⁶ European Commission, *Europe 2020. A strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth*, COM(2010) 2020 final, Brussels 3.3.2010, p.3 (available at : <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:2020:FIN:EN:PDF>).

⁷ This has been confirmed by the CEDEFOP study, *Future Skill Needs in Europe, Medium-term forecast. Synthesis report*, Luxembourg 2008.

regular initiatives aimed at skills development, ensuring appropriate level of training for workers with low and medium skills and providing ageing workers with appropriate training so they can adapt their skills accordingly. The reference was made to the crisis : it was argued that training budgets and investment in employee education shall not be cut down during economic slowdown as it enables to prepare for new reality, reorganized institutions and new professional challenges. The 2008 Communication included first assessment on future skills requirements up to 2020, presented regular cross-sector methodology to anticipate future skills needs and proposed to establish European Sector Skills Council. The group of European experts on skills was set up to assess once a year development trends and policy responses.

At the Spring European Council in March 2008 new initiative ‘New Skills for New Jobs’ was launched. This initiative became one of the flagship initiatives of the Europe 2020 Strategy, which indicated importance of continuous development and up-skilling :

“About 80 million people have low or basic skills, but lifelong learning benefits mostly the more educated. By 2020, 16 million more jobs will require high qualifications, while the demand for low skills will drop by 12 million jobs. Achieving longer working lives will also require the possibility to acquire and develop new skills throughout the lifetime”⁸.

At the same time developments in the area of skills became more concrete : the Commission proposed to launch an “EU skills panorama” which was to forecast skills required in the future, further advance development of the European Skills, Competences and Occupations (ESCO) classification and design and implement the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Future skills

One of the studies on the future of work and skills has been published recently by the American Institute of the Future (ITF); it defines six drivers for change and ten crucial skills for future workforce⁹.

Six drivers for change include:

- Extreme longevity : increasing global lifespans change the nature of careers and learning;
- Rise of smart machines and systems : workplace automation nudges human workers out of rote, repetitive tasks;
- Computational world : massive increases in sensors and processing power make the world a programmable system;
- New media ecology : new communication tools require new media literacies beyond text;

⁸ CEDEFOP, *Future Skill...*, op.cit., p.16.

⁹ The Institute for the Future, *Future Work Skills 2020*, Paolo Alto 2011 (available at : http://cdn-static.phoenix.edu/content/dam/altcloud/doc/research-institute/future-skills-2020-research-report.pdf?cm_sp=Research+Institute-_-PDFs-_-Future+Work+Skills+2020+-+Report).

- Super-structured organizations : social technologies drive new forms of production and value creation;
- Globally connected world : increased global interconnectivity puts diversity and adaptability of the center of organizational operations¹⁰.

Ten skills crucial for future workforce include:

- Sense-making : ability to determine the deeper meaning or significance of what is being expressed;
- Social intelligence : ability to connect to others in a deep and direct way, to sense and stimulate reactions and desired interactions;
- Novel & adaptive thinking : proficiency at thinking and coming up with solutions and responses beyond that which is rote or rule-based;
- Cross-cultural competency : ability to operate in different cultural settings;
- Computational thinking : ability to translate vast amounts of data into abstract concepts and to understand data-based reasoning;
- New media literacy : ability to critically assess and develop content that uses new media forms, and to leverage these media for persuasive Communications;
- Transdisciplinarity : literacy in and ability to understand concepts across multiple disciplines;
- Design mindset : ability to represent and develop tasks and work processes for desired outcomes;
- Cognitive load management : ability to discriminate and filter information for importance, and to understand how to maximize cognitive functioning using a variety of tools and techniques;
- Virtual collaboration : ability to work productively, drive engagement, and demonstrate presence as a members of a virtual team¹¹.

Independent to which sources we refer to - the European or the American ones – message is the same : changes are complex and influence both private and public sectors, they require constant adaptation and skills updating. Moreover, skills required by private and public sector employers’ converge : in both sectors there is growing need for management and leadership skills as well as interdisciplinary competences to provide complex services.

¹⁰ The Institute for the Future, *Future Work...*, op. cit., pp. 3-5.

¹¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 8-12.

3. Challenges related to skills development - trends and good practices

Public services employers face and will face profound changes linked to globalization, liberalization, transition to low-carbon economy and 'greening' of economy¹², application of new technologies, changes in work organization, which are themselves a result of technological change, and demographic trends¹³. These changes influence the nature of jobs and required skills. Additionally, in the nearest future public services will have to cope with serious job reductions due to public finances pressure, introduction of e-services and strive for 'slim' and effective public services. There will be some new jobs created, however, replacement jobs will appear in fewer numbers than the disappearing ones¹⁴.

Developing skills of public services employees serves multiple purposes. Firstly, public services is known for long careers, most often with one employer¹⁵. In the future employees will stay even longer in their careers (result of promoting longer careers and extending retirement age) so up-skilling and re-skilling are crucial for their adaptability. Secondly, training initiatives prepare workers of all ages for proficient use of new technologies and offering more complex services (result of changing nature of jobs). Developing skills is also crucial for internal reform and improvement of public services in general¹⁶. Thirdly, skills development is a condition for internal and external mobility (redeployment), therefore meaningful and secure careers. Additionally, interesting prospects of professional career and long-term commitment to employee training and development are factors attracting skilled (also young) professionals to work in the public services.

New challenges are linked to organization of training and offering tailored programmes for diverse groups of employees (older workers, young workers, migrant workers etc.). It is suggested that such programmes shall be developed in partnerships to become more flexible and demand-led.

The issue of skills mismatch between skills of the current workforce and those needed in the future are common to public services. In the final report from the 'Anticipating Change in Public Services' ones reads:

"Specific skill mismatches were reported in each sector;

- *In central and local and regional administration the challenge of implementing e-government initiatives imposes new and very different workforce demands;*
- *Skill changes in the rail sector include eco-driving; foreign languages; customer orientation; sales and logistics;*
- *For the education sector, teachers have to keep pace with changing technology, its impact on learning methods and changing pupil profiles;*
- *The rail industry skills shortages exist in the areas of logistics, IT and environment engineering;*

¹² Especially important for such sectors as energy, railways or public transport.

¹³ For details consult factsheet No 3 "Change and its impact on human resources" drafted within the framework of the same project.

¹⁴ Eurofund, *European Restructuring Monitor Quarterly*, Issue 4 - winter 2010.

¹⁵ A. Wild, E. Voss, *Anticipation of Change in Public Services. Diverse Backgrounds... Common Challenges*, final report, Brussels 2010, p. 13.

¹⁶ A. Wild, E. Voss, *Public Administration at Central and Municipal/Regional Level*, report prepared within the framework of 'Anticipation of Change in Public Services' project, Brussels 2010, pp.21-21.

- *In electricity, despite a large number of jobs have either disappeared or been outsourced, jobs have been created at both ends of the skill spectrum including call centres, customer service specialists, brokerage, business development, project managers, legal services and new product development¹⁷.*

Moreover, two sectors (health and education) reported not only skills mismatches within the current workforce, but a chronic shortage of suitable entrants into the services. From this perspective retraining and re-skilling of older workforce becomes even more important.

3.1. General and cross-sector trends and practical experience

During the seminar in Brussels in September 2011, social partners indicated key areas that can benefit from common reflection. These were : skills development in the context of restructuring, approaches to job enrichment and lifecycle approach to skills development. During interviews held with representatives of public service employers' organizations in October and November 2011 three other areas of interest appeared : practice of skills development, its financing and new challenges related to skills development.

Skills development in the context of restructuring

In the context of serious changes all public employers foresee the need to develop such skills as entrepreneurship, interpersonal skills, creativity and ability to combine knowledge from different areas. In some sectors (i.e. post, energy, railways) further job reductions are likely or even planned (i.e. the Polish Post has just announced reduction of some 2 400 employees). Workers who remain in employment will have to update their skills according to current requirements (i.e. skills required by eco-driving in railway sector). Dismissed workers shall also be equipped with appropriate skills so their redeployment is possible, either internally or externally.

In case of *education sector* teachers need to develop their skills on regular basis due to, a.o., introduction of new tools and more diverse pupil and student population – they come from different social, ethnic and/or religious backgrounds). Teachers need to develop 'sales' skills - more and more often they are involved (directly and indirectly by the quality of their teaching) in promotional and informational activities to attract parents (and children) to school. Additionally, there is urgent need to develop management skills for school principals and vice-principals as they have to take up more responsibility related to decentralization process. Teachers need to be able not only to pass knowledge, but also to facilitate acquisition of skills and general competences. For education sector lifelong learning (LLL) has also other important consequences : new market opens for education institutions. By designing appropriate training/skills development programs (time, content, teaching techniques, organization etc.) new categories of students, such as adult, older people or migrants, can be attracted to schools. Last but not least, there

¹⁷ A. Wild, E. Voss, *Anticipation...*, op.cit., p. 14.

are some country specific developments, i.e. in the UK appropriate courses for class room assistants are needed as the scope of their responsibility increases, i.e. they help to manage diverse classes and process administrative tasks.

There is a similar development in *healthcare sector* : at present the role of nurses increases across Europe. Nurses take over more clinical responsibilities from doctors, i.e. they do endoscopies in the UK or have the right to write prescriptions in specific circumstances¹⁸, and need to have higher skills than before as well as appropriate aptitudes to cope with increased responsibility. There is a trend to expect that nurses are adequately educated and have a degree. This trend has also adverse effect : sometimes nurses are highly educated, but cannot/do not want to perform basic tasks, i.e. making up beds or looking after patients' personal needs, which is a bottom line in nursing profession. At the same time doctors are expected to take more managerial responsibility - there is an emerging category of 'executive doctors' who are charged with managerial duties and run hospitals/health clinics. For them a huge challenge is to combine duties of a manager with those of clinician, which is linked to preserving their status as 'practicing doctor' and the related respect. There is a big debate about appropriate staffing and the right balance between the number of 'real' doctors and 'managing doctors'. Like in other public services, liberalization of the market requires new skills. Healthcare staff has to acquire skills in the field of sales and management to face up growing competition; they shall also have an orientation in the EU level regulations impacting everyday operations (i.e. related to opening of the market and treatment offered to cross-border patients).

In case of *postal sector* liberalization and development of new technologies, which have caused a decrease in volume of traditional mail and services (i.e. sending money), force postal operators to diversify offer. There are two main directions of diversification : logistics and express services (in TNT or Deutsche Post) or services (in Poste Italiane or La Poste). New areas of activity require new skills, but their consequences can be twofold : introduction of new technologies results in automatization of activities, which leads to simplification of work as simple tasks are realized by machines (i.e. sorting). At the same time there is an increasing demand for more highly-skilled workers in ICTs, sales, customer relations and management roles. Restructuring and/or reorganization may also result in the need for internal and external mobility as well as requirement to develop workers' employability. According to postal sector representative life-long learning and training are key to ensure internal mobility. Specific mobility programs have been implemented for example in Sweden (Svenska Posten Futurum - outplacement program for dismissed workers). Another approach to managing external mobility is facilitating transfers within public sector to move civil servants to jobs where they can maintain their status. Such approach has been adopted in France, Spain and Austria, where postal sector employees are transferred to jobs in public administration or police. Such transfers require appropriate training so employees can fulfill their new professional tasks successfully.

New skills required in *public administration* do not differ significantly from new skills required in other public services. Additionally, skills of public administration staff are shaped by *New Public Management(NMP)* concept,

¹⁸ It is important to note that nursing staff responsibilities can vary significantly between 'old' EU countries and 'new' EU members, i.e. British nurses are much more independent in their work than their Latvian or Bulgarian counterparts.

which is private sector-inspired and outcome-oriented. To deliver services public administrators need management and leadership skills, e-skills required by e-administration, business- and performance-orientation. Public administrators need to search for quality improvement in their everyday job and possibility to make some savings. Furthermore, most local and regional authorities introduced benchmark system to improve their quality and productivity, which puts administration bodies under pressure. The extent to which such skills are required is linked to national characteristics : trend to decentralize or centralize local administration. In the situation of the present crisis public, regional and local administration is faced with additional challenge of serving increased number of customers with significantly less means (i.e. cuts of the Labour Fund in Poland in 2011 by approx. 50% and maintaining the same level of financing in 2012, which poses new challenges for public employment services). Such skills as innovativeness and searching for synergies in service delivery will become increasingly important. It is also possible that public administration will have to compete with other service providers for contracts and its budget will depend on its HR skills and entrepreneurship.

Railway sector is strongly impacted by liberalization process. Restructuring process has been continuing for the last decade and is at different stage in various Member States. It resulted in employment reductions and requirement to increase productivity. It seems that two types of skills need to be developed to face current challenges. These are technical skills required by introducing new equipment and new work organization (i.e. skills related to 'eco-driving' and energy saving) and business-oriented skills (i.e. management, sales, logistics). Like other public services, railway sector employees are challenged by growing competition and internationalization of services, which requires cross-border education and training as well as knowledge of foreign languages¹⁹. Sometimes lack of foreign language knowledge may even reduce professional career perspectives.

Practice of skills development

There are different opportunities for continuing skills development in *education sector*. At the EU level COMENIUS programme is aimed at facilitating mobility of teachers. By COMENIUS sponsored job-shadowing or work placement teachers have a chance to observe work performed in countries with different education traditions. Such an experience may help them in managing more diverse classes and work with pupils from different backgrounds. Education pathway to become a teacher is pretty well defined, while the practice of continuing vocational development is less regulated. Responsibility is usually delegated to the local level and training consists of formal and non-formal initiatives. Skills development in 'soft' areas such as managing relations with parents or teaching diverse classrooms is developed 'on the job'.

In the *postal sector* skills development is of a strategic importance. In 'Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development in the Postal Sector' one reads that : "In this context of the in-depth and sustainable change of the

¹⁹ Based on the material from A. Kwiatkiewicz, *Railways and Public Sector*, report prepared within the framework of 'Anticipation of Change in Public Services' project, Brussels 2010, pp. 13-14.

postal sector, the development of skills in a lifelong learning perspective must be considered as a priority investment²⁰. Acquiring new qualifications and skills enables not only preparation for new work organization, but also improves quality of traditional services delivery. Moreover, ensuring development of employees' skills and competences is perceived as internal aspect of Corporate Social Responsibility²¹.

Representative of *railway sector* stressed that effective training program is not only about the content, but also about proposing appropriate training methods. Moreover, lifelong learning shall become daily practice and cross-sectoral approach to training could be considered as good practice to equip workers for flexibility and inspire them to think 'out of the box'. Harmonization of railway infrastructure across Europe results in increasing demand for international training facilities and foreign apprenticeships. Another challenge for rail training centers is training during transition period : trainees will have to be trained in several technical systems and cross-border operations add to this complexity.

In *healthcare sector* developing training programmes is perceived as important condition for upward professional mobility. Education takes place both in formal and informal (on the job) settings, and e- learning is on the increase. Regular licensing and acquiring specific levels of specialization are typical for the sector. Examining present and future changes in professional responsibilities of different groups of employees is crucial for developing relevant training programmes so is introduction of specific tools and methods for skills analysis. Defining qualification standards and relevant skills requirements (in line with the European Qualifications Framework and/or the Bologna process²²) seems to contribute to improvement of the quality of delivered services, while mentoring and coaching are perceived as important to ease new employees into their careers. Additionally, frameworks to increase transferability of competences and qualifications shall be developed. While designing skills development programs for healthcare sector employees it is increasingly important to analyse macro-economic trends such as providing care in patient's homes, individualised treatment instead of generalised care pathways, integrated care and management to ensure that healthcare system 'follows' patient and growing need for interdisciplinary teams to respond to new demands and deliver joint services.

It is also important to note that in such professions where specific categories of workers (i.e. nurses and care workforce in healthcare or primary school teachers in education) are female dominated, appropriate approach to skills development can contribute to gender equality, reconciliation of family and work life and increase female workers employability.

²⁰ European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector, *Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development in the Postal Sector*, Brussels 2006, p. 2 (available at : http://www.postsocialdialog.org/images/stories/Joint_Declaration_Training_EN.pdf).

²¹ Ibidem, *Diversity Management and CSR-Communication in the Postal sector* Brussels 2008 (available at http://www.postsocialdialog.org/images/stories/csr_communication.pdf), p. 108.

²² EPSU position on cross-border recognition of professional qualifications, point 3 (available at : <http://www.epsu.org/a/7448>).

Financing skills development

In *education sector* majority of financial resources for teachers' training come from national funding; there are, however, some training programmes that schools have to find their own financing for. It is likely that in the future more fundraising will have to be organized to cover additional training expenses. There is also a natural process of growing competition for resources between schools. These schools that attract more pupils will have access to more funding as available school budget is closely linked to the number of pupils.

While addressing the issue of lifelong learning and employee training *postal sector* social dialogue committee underlines the idea that skills development should be perceived as investment. Postal operators from different member states adhere to this idea to a different extent : according to sector representative, Western operators place more priority in training and make more money available for this purpose than their counterparts from Eastern and Central Europe.

In *railway sector* training has been so far financed from national sources. Together with growing harmonization of national rail system it is possible that more joint training/skills development initiatives is organized and they can be financed from different sources.

In *healthcare sector* the issue of equal access to financing skills development emerges. According to some social partners non-registered and caring staff do not enjoy equal access to training²³.

Securing appropriate funding for skills development in *public administration* can be quite difficult in the situation of economic crisis and pressure on public budget, freeze on salaries and employment cuts.

New challenges in skills development

- Anticipating future skills

Anticipating changes and their impact on skills is necessary for effective HR planning, both in quantitative and qualitative terms. In *postal sector* the need for regular anticipation of future skills is perceived as crucial to support change management process and ensure better matching between jobs and skills. Comprehensive analysis of the future skills needs was also conducted in *railway sector* – it aimed at defining skills needs in the sector towards 2020 and assess capacity of available training arrangements to meet the challenges of increased demand for training²⁴. In *healthcare sector* it is anticipated that a growing share of services is provided at patients' homes and training programmes are to prepare care professionals to perform their tasks in this setting.

²³ Based on written contribution from EPSU representative, November 2011.

²⁴ For details check Danish Technological Institute, CAS, Lloyds Register Rail Europe B.V., *Rail Training 2020*, published in 2007.

- Preparing for diversity

In *education sector* teachers were suddenly faced with big inflows of migrants and they had to cope with such a situation without any formal preparation. The same concerns *healthcare sector*, where foreign languages and intercultural skills amongst healthcare staff are becoming more important, as patients and clients bring new demands and national workforces become increasingly ethnically diversified. Among required skills one may find : cross-cultural skills, soft skills, ability to manage diversity and resolve conflicts. This trend can be also found in *railway sector*, which opens up to offer cross-border services, serves a more diverse customer base and needs to recruit people, often foreign workers, with appropriate competences. *Public administration* also serves a more diversified customer base and is expected to deliver more complex services, therefore requires more diversified skills.

- Preparing for effective use of ICTs

In case of *education sector* introduction of ICTs has added new responsibilities to teacher's tasks : he/she not only has to be able to use new technologies in his/her everyday work, but also learn how to facilitate pupils' ICT-based learning at their own pace. ICT skills in *postal sector* are to help workers to modernize and diversify postal activities. *Healthcare staff* uses new technologies in everyday work and need to be prepared to use more advanced diagnostic equipment; ICTs facilitate communication with patients. In dealing with more information, healthcare workers need new skills in information management to base medical interventions on the best available evidence. It is also stressed that appropriate ICT training has to be made available for workers from all age groups. *Public administration* staff more and more often have to work using ICTs to provide e-services. In *railway sector* new, 'more computerized' ways of working bring about such changes as introduction of ERTMS and ETCS systems or information system used to monitor freight and trains in real-time.

- Customer satisfaction-orientation

Employees of public services must more than ever be customer-oriented. They all depart from a comfortable starting point of proximity developed with consumers, quite often derived from their 'monopolistic' position in a given sector. Situation changes profoundly due to liberalization which opens the way for more competition. As a result, ability to maintain satisfying relationship with customers is crucial. Training programs related to quality improvement and/or control (i.e. popular in postal sector) are important for ensuring customer satisfaction. In *healthcare sector* preparing workers for serving 'new customer' is also a challenge. Doctors and nurses more and more often have to liaise closely with an informed patient while deciding about treatment, which quite often patient wants to influence or even co-design. Good interpersonal skills are useful in managing such relations. In *railway sector* customer orientation often implies growing diversification of professional tasks of employees working in direct contact with customers. In the *postal sector*, one can observe an emerging trend towards customer-driven

diversification of companies, therefore quality of services is the key. Moreover, evolving customer needs towards less expensive products and an increased reliability have also a direct impact on the companies' strategic choices. For *electricity sector* overreaching challenges are those related to internal market, liberalization, competition and on-going restructuring. Additionally, impact of climate change is more pronounced for electricity than in case of other sectors. It contributes to emergence of new occupations such as installations of solar panels or integration of electricity grids, so it is necessary to up-skill those in existing jobs.

Coping with third party aggression is another aspect of handling relationship with users/customers. Across public services - especially in health, public administration, railways and education - third party violence is rising, therefore such skills as assertiveness and conflict resolution are required. They help to prevent or manage conflict among workers and/or users/customers. In the Czech Republic pilot project addressed to healthcare and social workers and aimed at teaching them assertive behaviour is being implemented at the moment. The project is a result of the social dialogue²⁵.

- New jobs

As a result of change processes not only new skills are required, but entirely new jobs appear. All public employers need to hire more IT specialists/administrators. For example in *education sector* a whole new group of supporting staff responsible for IT school infrastructure appeared²⁶. Growing demand for IT specialists is also observed in more computerized *postal sector* or *healthcare sector*, where new diagnostic tools are introduced.

In *electricity sector* jobs have been created at both ends of the skill spectrum including call centers, customer service specialists, brokerage, business development, project management, internal consultancy, legal services and new product development²⁷. Emergence of new jobs quite often impacts form of employment relation. It is argued that in *healthcare sector* lifetime career is increasingly built around a variety of employment arrangements, including part-time employment, short-term contracts, on-call work, multiple employments and independent contracting. Together with the tendency to increase intensification of work, it creates new, often stressful conditions and other physical health hazards - training in stress management skills could ease the negative effects of these changes²⁸. Moreover, supporting development of highly skilled nurses and care workforce is necessary to prevent skills shortages and ensure appropriate for employability 'skills mix'.

²⁵ Based on the information from healthcare sector representative from the Czech Republic (exchange during thematic on-line seminar on 14 November 2011).

²⁶ It is worth mentioning that ETUCE has submitted to the EC a project on IT developments in education.

²⁷ A. Wild, *Postal services and Electricity*, report prepared within the framework of "Anticipation of Change in Public Services" project, Brussels 2009, pp. 16-17.

²⁸ A. Kwiatkiewicz, *Education and healthcare*, report prepared within the framework of 'Anticipation of Change in Public Services' project, Brussels 2010, p.26.

Approaches to job enrichment

Job enrichment is a daily fact, quite often it enters through back door, i.e., teachers have more responsibilities related to the use of ICTs during lessons or in communication with pupils and parents. The same concerns doctors and nurses who use ITCs in their diagnostic work, but also for documentation purposes and to communicate with patients. Important challenge linked to job enrichment is to ensure that enriched workload is still manageable. Some trade union representatives argue that ‘multi-tasking’ is a new key word that enables uncontrolled growth of job responsibilities. They opt for using the notion of ‘polyvalent’ skills and propose alternative solutions, i.e. revising job descriptions and developing new professional profiles, if necessary, instead of cumulating skills/professional qualifications. Additionally, trade unions point out the need to reward newly acquired qualifications²⁹. The notion of polyvalent skills is also found in the already cited *postal sector* joint declaration, which states that development of skills “(...) allows the polyvalence of employees, and their autonomy, to be improved : it helps the setting in place of flexible and responsive work organisations, always favouring rewarding professional paths”³⁰. Quite often developing skills is a crucial condition for internal mobility; in postal sector moving employees from delivery services , where employment levels are decreasing, to clerical tasks or financial activities is quite popular.

In *healthcare sector* skills enrichment is related to increasing need for elderly care, till recently usually performed by family members. These changes can be observed in such professions as : home-care workers, nurses, community health nurses and physiotherapists³¹. This shift in the nature of required services results in changed demand for skills and a need for qualifications corresponding to the increased cure and care of older people together with social and activation techniques. Across all jobs in the healthcare sector soft skills and the ability to acquire new knowledge and competences become more and more important. Visible trend is growing role of personal adaptability and a relative decrease in significance of predefined technical knowledge capabilities³². There is also a tendency to equip medical staff with the complementary competences that enable them to ‘switch’ between jobs. Redesign and/or extension of existing professional roles is executed by bringing together skills of different professional groups or by requirement for more specialization and proficiency in use of modern equipment. It is claimed that natural limit to this ‘re-education’ must be taken into consideration.

Some social partners from *railway sector* believe that there is a tendency to expect from workers transferable competences, which enable them to cope with technological progress and non-standard situations. It is suggested that there are cases when these expectations are exaggerated and exceed the psycho-social limits of employees as they are more about adding more tasks to the same profession under the cover of ‘job enrichment’

²⁹ Hospitals social dialogue committee, minutes from plenary meeting on 23 June 2008 in Brussels (available at : http://circa.europa.eu/Public/irc/empl/sectoral_social_dialogue/library?l=/hospitals/2008/20080623_plenartagung/hosp_080623_enpdf/_EN_1.0_&a=d).

³⁰ European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector, *Joint Declaration....*, op.cit., p.3.

³¹ A. Kwiatkiewicz, *Education...*, op.cit., p. 25.

³² European Commission, *Investing in the Future Jobs and Skills*, Sector report, Health and Social Services, Brussels 2009; (available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=pl&catId=89&newsId=583&furtherNews=yes>).

than about developing professions in a systematic way, creating new professions or at least posts. Moreover, a proper training is missing. This approach is to be true especially in the freight services³³.

Concluding, shared cross-sector observation is that skills development is a condition for internal and external mobility (redeployment) and condition for meaningful and secure professional careers.

Lifecycles approach to skills development

Employees' needs as regards to skills change throughout their professional life. Most often they need more training at the beginning of their careers, often formal training to acquire necessary certificates. Informal training in the form of mentoring or coaching is also important to ease new employees into their careers. At a later stage of professional life, training programmes shall enable timely update of skills and acquisition of new ones, while need. A lot of skills development initiatives take place on the job – it has been proven that up to 60% of skills are acquired in non-formal and informal setting³⁴. Need for training increases in the situation of serious changes (i.e. restructuring, introduction of new technologies, new work organisation etc.), but also when workforce is ageing. Objective of training programmes for older workers is to equip them with such skills that enable them to perform their duties successfully or will make their redeployment to different tasks possible.

In *education sector* appropriate education is perceived as basic condition for successful professional career. It is believed that professional education of teachers starts with initial teacher education and ends at retirement. There are three stages of professional development : initial education, induction phase during the first years on the job and continuing professional development for those who remain in the career. Quality of teachers' development strongly depends on the quality of support provided in the respective phases of their professional career, being especially important during the induction phase³⁵. An interesting solution for new teachers is found in the UK³⁶ : they are charged with a smaller workload, i.e. amounting to 50 -70% of full-time duties of proficient teachers. It is justified by the fact that it takes longer for younger teachers to prepare lessons and assess homework. They also have fewer classes, which is to ensure that they have a more 'gentle' professional start and protect them from early burnout. It is believed that this approach can contribute to their ability and willingness to stay longer in the career. Such a solution can be interesting for newly hired workers in other sectors, which are characterized by close relations with customers, i.e. healthcare. This arrangement can also be interesting for older teachers, who shall be provided with opportunity to change their full-time employment to part-time one, of course on voluntary basis. Specific training for older workers is not discussed at the EU level at present, however, a soon-to-be- started project on recruitment and retention can shed some light on the issue and help to discover good practices.

³³ A. Kwiatkiewicz, *Railways...*, op.cit., p. 14.

³⁴ European Commission, *A Memorandum...op.cit.*

³⁵ European Commission, *Developing coherent and system-wide induction programmes for beginning teachers: a handbook for policymakers*, Staff Working Document SEC (2010) 538 final, p.3. In this report it is argued that a coherent and systematic approach to developing new teachers is missing in majority of countries.

³⁶ The scheme has been in place for over 20 years.

In the *postal sector* lifelong learning issues are reflected upon within the scope of 'generation management'. It is believed that the best results are achieved while recruiting young workers is balanced with initiatives for skills development of 'more mature' workers. The issue of 'ageing and employability' is of a growing concern in postal sector since the employee average age is quite high. Lifecycle approach to training shall facilitate transfer of competences between different generations of employees, i.e. such as ability to maintain effective relationship with customers.

Lifelong learning is very important in *healthcare sector* as innovations enter the profession on a daily basis. Lifelong learning enables keeping up with development of the profession and maintaining professional position. Licensing and renewing certifications are also very important. Like other public services, *healthcare sector* and *public administration* face the challenge of re-skilling and re-deployment of ageing workforce. It is especially true in the light of the current economic slowdown and uncertain future. Apart from training to equip employees with concrete skills, attitude and aptitude training for workers with long employment history can be useful. Specific training needs and wishes of older employees shall be taken into consideration. The issue is even more important in countries which face the problem of ageing workforce and have lost many doctors, i.e. the Baltic States whose doctors left to work in the UK or Germany. Appropriate training of older employees can be a solution to prevent/limit labour force shortages.

3.2 Sector specific trends, experiences and good practice³⁷

Lifelong learning and skills development have been already discussed within the framework of the majority of sector social dialogue committees (apart from health and municipality administration). Longer careers and a desire for continued employment stability raise important training and transition challenges, which is reflected in the social dialogue agendas. Training and skills development programs are usually organized at the national level, while at the EU level exchange of good practices is the most common initiative.

Healthcare

Issue of skills development and social partners' contribution to skills development can be found in the work programs for the years 2006-2007 and 2008-2010. The following areas of activity were addressed:

- Challenge of new skills in the hospital sector

The following initiatives were proposed : defining existing categories of hospital professionals and workers, identifying successful training initiatives, collecting and exchanging practices and experiences in the field of

³⁷ This section is based either on information received from representatives of sector's employers' organisation and/or from material accessible via website of each sector social dialogue committee.

education and training, management of health care, and interaction between technology, ICTs, skill needs and/or workforce planning and assessing consequences of different developments for work organization and workers, with specific focus on education and training, 'skill mix' and healthcare management . In 2006 the joint EPSU-HOSPEEM study titled "Identifying Successful Training Initiatives in the Hospital Sector" was commissioned. The study indicated challenges faced by the health sector across Europe, described national member states' answers to the phenomenon of workforce and skills shortages and gave examples of good practices, national models and experiences³⁸.

- Forecasting future skills needs

The European social partners in the healthcare sector have contributed to the debate on skill needs in the health sector. Together with CEDEFOP they organized a workshop to define key trends, future skills and occupational requirements in the health care sector. It took place in Thessaloniki on 22-23 May 2008. In particular it looked at the interaction between technology, ICTs and skill needs, the management of health care and education and training needs in the sector with the attempt to enhance evidence based development and policy-making at the national and European level. Social partners from healthcare sector have also been involved in developing questionnaire "on future skills needs in the health care sector".

- Skills issue in the cross-border recruitment and retention

In 2008 social partners signed the second agreement; it is titled "Code of conduct and follow up on Ethical Cross-Border Recruitment and Retention in the Hospital Sector". Its aim was to promote ethical practices in the cross-border recruitment of health workers. One of the key principles and commitments included in the document is equal access to training and career development as well as recognition of qualifications and proper induction process. Another HR fields related to skills and professional qualifications were the following : workforce planning, equal access to training and career development and proper induction programme for new employees, especially for workers recruited from abroad.

Further discussions on cross-border recruitment and retention resulted in signing agreement on a framework of actions on recruitment and retention (December 2010). In this agreement there is a section on qualifications and skills, further work on skills was planned, however no concrete steps have been taken up so far. Among relevant topics the following have been identified : a/ identification and forecast of skills needs (possibly in cooperation with DG SANCO within the framework of a Joint Action on Health Workforce planned in 2012); b/ collecting and exchanging good practice in identification skills needs (i.e. in the field of technology/ICTs³⁹/e-Health) and measures to address them as well as c/ exploring the added value of joint social partners initiative on the basis of the Framework of Action to close skills gaps and to promote development of competencies and qualifications across professions.

³⁸ The report can be found at: <http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/report-training-initiatives-hospital-sector-2006.pdf>.

³⁹ It is expected that guidelines for ICT use and mentoring practices will be drafted by mid-2012.

It is worth noting that like in case of other public services, coherent approach to skills development can potentially become one of the factors attracting new employees.

- Cross-border recognition of professional qualifications

The 2011-2013 Work Programme of Sector Social Dialogue Committee foresees further initiatives related to cross-border recognition of professional qualifications. These are : revision of the Directive on the Recognition of professional Qualifications (2005/36/EC), exchange on priority issues and objectives for revision and elaboration of joint HOSPEEM-EPSU contributions to the two consultations in 2011⁴⁰. Particular attention was devoted to issues related to cross-border recognition of professional qualifications in the first half of 2011; at present social partners follow the issue of cross-border recognition of qualifications with the European institutions and European social partners.

Good practice : practicalities of cross-border recognition of qualifications

- Proposal to integrate the framework for Continuous Professional Development (CPD) into Directive 2005/36 (potential Article 22) and improve cross-border recognition of certificates issued under CPD.
- Workers who are up to taking up work abroad should pass language test.
- Organising appropriate induction training for foreign workers to help them to start in their foreign assignment.

There is “Working Group (WG) on Skills Needs” within the healthcare sector social dialogue committee. WG Skills was established to follow up the 2008 Thessaloniki meeting and forecast new skills in the healthcare sector. In October 2008 it indicated three main areas for monitoring : leadership (management of workers and health care), ‘skills mix’ (over/under supplied, better professional mobility) and workforce planning (recruiting students, specialization).

- Skills development for older workers

Already in 2006 HOSPEEM and ETUCE have commissioned a study titled “Promoting realistic active ageing policies in the hospital sector”. The report provides overview of the health care sector and includes examples of regional and local activities aimed at addressing demographic change and promoting realistic policies⁴¹. The issue is again addressed between 2011 and 2012 : WG and Drafting Group (DG) Ageing Workforce are to tackle the issue of older workers and challenges related to their adaptation to changing world of work (i.e. such issues as ageing workforce,

⁴⁰ The first consultation was done on 15 March 2011 as a response to the first round of consultations organised by the EC (available at : <http://www.epsu.org/a/7448>) and the second on 20 September 2001 as a response to consultation on Green Paper on the Modernization of the Professional Qualifications Directive (available at : <http://www.epsu.org/a/7993>).

⁴¹ The report can be found at: <http://www.epsu.org/IMG/pdf/report-active-ageing-policies-hospital-sector-2006.pdf>.

increasing retirement age or organizing work for older employees will be discussed). Some concrete actions have already been indicated (see the box below).

Good practice : complex approach to developing skills of older workers

- Objective : to identify future skills needs of older employees and define/design appropriate training and LLL programmes and find the best combination of applying skills of young and older employees.
- Outcomes : collection of case-studies illustrating effective age management practices and a set of guidelines and best practice models.
- Joint seminar planned for 2012.

It is worth noting that in 2009 the Working and Drafting Groups on “New Skills Needs” were to be set up with a view to elaborate on a cross-sectoral Framework of Actions for Lifelong Development of Competencies and Qualifications. This initiative has not been realised due to the shift of priorities (negotiations on Directive 2010/32/EU on the prevention from sharp injuries in the hospital and health care sector).

Railways⁴²

Sector social dialogue committee has addressed the issue of lifelong learning via different initiatives. The 2004 and 2005 agreements related to working conditions of cross-border workers and licensing of drivers in the interoperability services. Both addressed the issue of skills required to perform new tasks and competency standards.

Among the main issues of the social dialogue committee’s work programs implemented between 2000 and 2008 one finds such issues as use of new technologies in training, new work organization and employability in the railway sector. The social dialogue committee work programme 2009-2010 was based on two pillars: “Adaptability and Interoperability” and “Employability and Equal Opportunities”. Project titled “Employability faced with challenge of demography” has been completed recently; it addressed such issues as potential shortage of skills and staff. Future initiatives in the area of skills development and training provisions are of social partners’ interest as significant number of workers will retire within the next 5-10 years. One of the responses to potential skills and labour force shortages is attracting more women to railway sector - WG on Employability and Equal Opportunities is working on designing appropriate recruitment strategies and career development opportunities.

There are not any ‘social observatories’ or ‘pulse taking bodies’ at the sector level - the only observatories that have been set up are the ones located on the EU border with the third countries.

⁴² This section is based on the report on railways sector drafted within the framework of “Anticipation of Change in Public Services “ project and exchange with sector representatives within the framework of 4th on-line seminar in November 2011.

Interesting sector-level initiative is the report on training needs and offers in the European railway area in the next decade titled *Rail training 2020*, which was published in 2007. It includes extensive list of training needs arriving from technological, legal, market and social changes. The report also presents over 100 rail training facilities across Europe and their capacities to train rail staff. Most training rail centers are owned and run by rail operators - training for railway sector remains to a large extent national business. Due to increasing competition, more and more often these training centers are open for operators other than national ones. Both training centers and rail operators are expecting an increase in the demand for training towards 2020, also international training⁴³. Interest in international training is additionally stirred by introducing EU-wide standards, i.e. Directive 2007/59/EC on the certification of train drivers.

Post

Postal sector recognised importance of tuning skills development to market requirement long time ago. There are five working groups within sector social committee, two of which focus on skills (WG "Training and Skills Development" and WG "Evolution of Postal Sector"). Since 2000 examples of good practice related to skills development have been provided by various European postal operators, i.e. Deutsche Post, La Poste, TNT, Österreichische Post AG or CTT Correios. These good practices are collected and made accessible through the social dialogue committee website⁴⁴. In 2006 good practices were supplemented by a study carried out by the employers on the evolution of skills development needs and practices within the sector. Also in 2006 the Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development in the Postal Sector was signed.

Good practice : Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development (2006)

Declaration acknowledges all the changes that the sector undergoes and their implications for skills. It proposes six orientations - priorities for assisting sector evolutions : ensuring close link between training and skills development and professional activities, promoting validation of training and recognition of skills, informing staff about opportunities for training and skills as well as career paths, sharing responsibility for training between company and staff, anticipating future needs, and diversifying approaches to learning and skills development.

In 2007 and 2008 the declaration was implemented within the framework of a project supported by the Commission: 36 questionnaires with examples of good practices were submitted by employers' organizations and trade unions (among them two joint questionnaires) and three joint workshops were organized to discuss good practices and

⁴³ DIT, CAS, Lloyds Register Rail Europe B.V., *Rail Training...* op.cit., p.113.

⁴⁴ For details check :

http://www.postsocialdialog.org/index.php?option=com_psd&task=good_practices_categories&workgroup_id=1.

joint declaration. Importance of good social dialogue for effective skills development was underlined throughout the project⁴⁵.

Between 2008 and 2010 project aimed at establishing 'Social Observatory' to monitor social impact of evolutions in the postal sector was realized. Within the framework of the project nine case studies illustrating how HR policies were tailored to changes in the sector were drafted. These case studies were discussed during three international seminars followed by the conference in Brussels. Final report from the project was sent to postal operators and trade unions.

Good practice : combining sector-specific and expert knowledge to anticipate future changes

In realization of both projects (implementing joint declaration and setting up 'Social Observatory') similar working method was adopted : it started from drafting case studies to illustrate specific HR developments, then followed a series of international seminars to discuss findings and compare solutions adopted at the national level. Projects ended with final conference, where external experts and representatives of the European Commission were invited to discuss project findings from a larger perspective.

It is worth noting that WG "Exchange with other sectors" has been established within the sector social dialogue committee, which can further feed in the reflection about future developments and provide examples of good practices/effective solutions.

Between 2010 and 2011 project "Social Partners preparing for change" covering all EU member states and with particular focus on change management was implemented as the second step of the 'Social Observatory' initiative; final report from this project will be available soon. The WG "Training" aims at submitting a project to the European Commission (the project is titled "Crucial and Strategic Job Positions in Postal Sector"; 12 postal operators participate in it), which objective is to examine how better match jobs and skills and increase transferability and certification of competences – the project is to be implemented in 2012.

*Electricity*⁴⁶

The agenda of the European social partners since the launch of the social dialogue process has focused on the issues of corporate social responsibility, skills and lifelong learning (LLL), diversity and, more recently, restructuring. In a number of cases social partners have developed practical 'toolkits' for the use of electricity companies (i.e. toolkit

⁴⁵ European Social Dialogue Committee for the Postal Sector, *Joint Declaration on Training and Skills Development implementation : Follow up analysis*, Brussels 2008 (available at : http://www.postsocialdialog.org/images/stories/Joint_Declaration.pdf).

⁴⁶ This section is based on the report on electricity sector drafted within the framework of "Anticipation of Change in Public Services" project and exchange with sector representatives within the framework of 4th on-line seminar in November 2011.

on restructuring, on age management and demographic change and on diversity). In the field of LLL and skills development the following initiatives have been realised so far: the jointly commissioned Syndex report on lifelong learning⁴⁷ produced in 2002 underlined the challenges the sector faced in assuring internal and external mobility of older workers in the industry at a time of ongoing structural and technological change. It also highlighted the relative absence of programs at that time aiming to promote mobility amongst the sector's older workers. Just 30% of companies had specific programs in place. The report was followed up in July 2003 by a joint statement to encourage improvements in lifelong learning. This study was followed up in December 2003 with report for the social partners titled "Future Skills Needs in the European Electricity Sector". The report assessed then current and future skills needs in the context of the liberalization agenda facing the sector.

More recently, in 2008, the broadly based equality work programme was combined with the ideas generated on lifelong learning to produce further work on "Demographic change in the Electricity Industry in Europe" and incorporating a new toolkit on promoting age diversity and age management strategies. The publication gave practical advice, guidance and examples of good practice approaches taken by electricity companies to address demographic change. In March 2009 a toolkit and best practice guide to socially responsible restructuring was published⁴⁸. One of the four sections of this report is devoted to retraining needs and transition management strategies. Recently a project aimed at mapping national situation related to labour market and skills needs has been submitted to the EC. If it is successful, it may be followed by feasibility study for the European Sector Council for Skills.

Social partners stress that their involvement in all skills development - related initiatives is crucial to ensure "Just Transition". In order to address labour market and skills issues most effectively, it would be desired to involve in future initiatives not only DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, but also DG Enterprise or DG Competition.

Education

Issues related to skills development and lifelong learning have been one of the most important subjects discussed within the newly born sector social dialogue committee. Social partners have organised joint workshops with representatives of student population and the national governments to discuss current policies on LLL. EFEE – employers' organization - is implementing a project (together with OBESSU⁴⁹) aimed at identifying good practice in implementation of national strategies on LLL. As a result of these prior activities, at the beginning of 2011 EFEE and

⁴⁷ Syndex, *Lifelong learning in the electricity sector*, A report for EMCEF – EPSU – Eurelectric.

⁴⁸ Working Lives Research Institute, *Restructuring in the Electricity Industry : A Toolkit for Socially Responsible Restructuring with a Best Practice Guide*, March 2009.

⁴⁹ OBESSU stands for Organising Bureau of European School Students Unions.

ETUCE signed agreement on some guidelines for equipping school students with competences for LLL⁵⁰ – competences important for labour market and effective functioning in the society in general. Additionally, a project on recruitment and retention has been submitted to the Commission for financing - it is not directly linked to skills development, but for the purpose of this project skills are treated as important retention factor. Recently two projects have been completed : on LLL in schools and the IT use in schools.

Good practices and examples⁵¹ : work and training organisation

- Smaller workload for new teachers to ease them into the profession and prevent from early burnout (the UK example exclusively) .
- Management training programs for school principals and vice-principals.
- Reflection how to prepare teachers to work with more diverse pupil and parents population.
- Reflection how to prepare teachers for a more ‘entrepreneurial’ role : managing projects, organizing school exchanges and ‘selling’ school to potential pupils and their parents.
- Organising ‘Peer Learning Activities’ to equip teachers with required skills that cannot/are difficult to acquire within formal education system.

Mis en forme : Espace Avant : 0,4 ligne, Après : 0,4 ligne

Public administration

Public administration social dialogue still remains in its informal phase (attempts to formalize it have been made since mid-2000 and informal exchange started as long ago as early 1990s). Within the present framework for social dialogue in public administration there have not been any developments directly related to skills development, however, some relevant elements can be found in joint statement on equality and diversity (2005), joint statement on mobility and the one on management and leadership (both signed in 2006). During on-line seminar sector representative pointed out that financial crisis was dominating current discussions and long-term reflection on developing employee skills was missing. It can be very dangerous since there is a need to predict future skills (i.e. required in the next 15-20 years) and reform the sector to offer modern and innovative services.

Within the framework of sector social dialogue committee of local and regional government skills development issue was ‘touched’ in a more direct way: the 2008-2010 EPSU/CEMR work programme foresaw developing sector specific contribution to the framework of action on LLL as agreed between the EU cross-sectoral social partners.

⁵⁰ Report from the project is titled : “Trans-regional cooperation in Lifelong Learning among education stakeholders – teacher trade unions, school student unions and education employer representatives. Joint guidelines”.

⁵¹ Some social partners stress that it is very difficult to define good practices as skills requirement and approach to skills development are closely related to the specificity of each member state. Therefore national contexts have to be remembered while analysing everyday practices and its potential for transferability.

Potential transferable practices and areas for cooperation

Some transferable practices were indicated by social partners. They are presented in the box below.

Transferable practices : cross-sector organisational aspects of work on skills development

- Setting up Working Groups or Drafting Groups within sector social dialogue committee devoted to skills development.
- Collecting case studies and good practice examples (adopting common criteria such as quality, innovativeness or transferability to ensure that 'good practices' are real 'good practices').
- Organising technical seminars to exchange information.
- Elaborating framework of actions, code of conducts, position papers etc.
- Supporting regular, cross-sector exchange on relevant subjects and practices.
- Analysing work done within the framework of the National Skills Councils to define a set of Core Skills relevant across the EU.
- Organising multi-sector seminars and conferences on issues of common interest⁵².

Mis en forme : Espace Avant : 0,4 ligne, Après : 0,4 ligne

European Sector Councils on Skills (ESCS) - development stage

Assessment of the usefulness of setting up European sector skills councils vary across sectors. For example, ESCS seems not to be useful for *postal sector*, where network of national skills councils does not exist. At the same time ESCS could be beneficial for *education sector*. Recently social partners from education sector have jointly submitted a bid for feasibility study to set up European sector skill council - they shall receive answer soon. *Healthcare* sector will conduct its feasibility study in 2012 – the project was approved by the Commission on 18 November 2011. In case of social partners from healthcare sector (especially HOSPEEM) it is a challenge to allocate appropriate staff to advance the EU level sector skills council project due to limited human resources. In response to the EC proposal to set up ESCS, *railway sector* representatives are in the process of consulting national sector skills councils - in countries where they exist - to see how they operate. Railway sector representatives are interested in other sectors' experiences and activities related to setting up ESCS.

⁵² One of the subjects can be further reflection on multi-sector guidelines to prevent third party violence and harassment. Projects related to third party violence have been already realized in such sectors as healthcare or social work; alike project is planned to be implemented in railway sector at the end of the year (December 2011/January 2012).

4. Key points arising from the seminar discussion

The 'Public Services Employers Forum' is created, a.o., to exchange information and best practices as well as to learn from good and innovative practical examples and/or initiatives carried out by national or European sectoral social partners. Main points of the discussion in the context of the online seminar on 14 November 2011 on skills development in the context of restructuring in Public Services were the following:

- Importance to develop skills is recognised by all public services, but they are in different phases of the discussion : from commissioning report of lifelong learning (electricity) or signing a joint declaration on training and skills development and establishing skills observatory (postal sector) to defining training needs by 2010 and taking stock of existing training facilities (railway sector).
- The issue of developing skills is treated differently within the framework of each sector social dialogue committee - as a separate subject or a 'side issue' related to other priority areas, i.e. ageing workforce.
- Across public services the most often undertaken initiatives are : drafting joint guidelines and framework of actions, setting up working groups to address skills development/lifelong learning, and, in case of sectors 'more advanced' in work related to skills development planning to conduct/conducting feasibility study to set up European sector skills council.
- It was agreed that exchanging practices/model solutions among sectors can contribute to developing sector specific initiatives.
- Lifecycle approach to training is important for all sectors : they need to develop effective induction programme for new employees, appropriate skills development initiatives for older workers and programmes enabling lifelong learning for all categories of employees.
- Three of the seven researched sectors (public administration, education and healthcare) have submitted to the EC project for feasibility study of the EU level sector skills council; three sectors have not yet addressed this possibility in a formal way, and one sector (post) perceives the EU level sector skill council as not useful.
- Precondition of having national sector skills councils to set up the EU level sector skills council was discussed; majority of partners agreed that existence of national skills councils is not necessary to establish the EU level one.
- National systems and practices vary to a great extent : these differences are especially visible in education and public administration; as a result, it is very difficult to propose 'good practices' or 'model solutions' as they are deeply rooted in specific national culture and tradition; this has to be remembered while attempts to transfer specific practices are made.
- Social partners reflected whether describing users of public services by term of 'customers' is appropriate and agreed that in case of some sectors and some services (i.e. education and teaching, healthcare and medical treatment) this term does not correspond to a specific relation between public service provider and

user; the question, however, remains how to include the notion of ‘quality improvement’ and ‘performance –orientation’ without introducing the notion of demand, supply and customer satisfaction.

- Pressure on public finances poses significant challenge for skills development and training initiatives in all public services since most often these initiatives are financed from the public budget.

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