



Promoting professionalisation and innovations in teacher education for *technical and vocational education and training (TVET)*
- The Oslo Memorandum of the UNIP-Europe working conference organised in Oslo 6.2.-7.2.2006 in collaboration with Akershus University College (HIAK) and the UNESCO-UNEVOC Centre

The context

The European working conference of the UNIP network has been organised as a regional follow-up event after the UNESCO International Meeting on Innovation and Excellence in TVET Teacher/Trainer Education (the Hangzhou meeting) in 2004. The main outcomes of the Hangzhou meeting were the approval of an international framework for promoting Masters Programmes in the education of teachers and training professionals for *technical and vocational education and training (TVET)* and the launch of the international UNIP network. The task of the working conference in Oslo/Lilleström has been to prepare the grounds for the regional activities in Europe and to consolidate the European initiative group.

The international framework of the Hangzhou meeting

The international framework that was outlined in the Hangzhou meeting is based on a core structure of “vocational disciplines”. In this respect the Masters programme promotes professionalisation in the field of TVET by focusing on areas of specialisation in occupational work processes. The development of expertise in “vocational pedagogy” is thus not an additional component to be attached to expertise in subject disciplines. Consequently, the framework curriculum puts major emphasis on promoting the research capabilities of the graduates in vocational disciplines and in vocational pedagogy.

The importance of Masters Programmes

The importance of the Masters Programmes as the basis for the international framework has been emphasised in the Hangzhou meeting for the following reasons:

- a) The Masters Programmes relate TVET teachers and training specialists to other professionals on equal footing.
- b) The Masters Programmes provide a consecutive step in diverse professional career models (taking into account Bachelor programmes and other progression routes for acquiring appropriate competences for the Masters Programmes).
- c) The Masters Programmes provide a basis for post-graduate studies and for creating research traditions that focus on vocational disciplines and vocational pedagogy.
- d) The Masters Programmes provide a basis for creating an international professional community that covers diverse global regions and enables exchanges between different socio-cultural contexts.

The prospects for European implementation

Currently the development of TVET teacher education in Europe is characterised by diversity of conceptual starting positions and by different accents regarding the implementation of Bachelor-Master structures. In this context the international framework that was outlined in the Hangzhou meeting provides a common reference structure for promoting innovations, professionalisation and research capabilities in the field of TVET. Moreover, the international framework provides a basis for cross-cultural and networked implementation models.

The preconditions for future European cooperation

The participants of the European working conference are aware that the frameworks for promoting European cooperation in *education and training* as well as in *research and development* are being reshaped. In this context it is essential that research in TVET is supported via European research funding and not merely as a part of educational cooperation. Equally, it is important that the Masters Programmes and research activities in TVET can be linked properly to pilot projects and other activities in the field of TVET. At the same time promotion of Masters Programmes and related curriculum development should be seen as an essential contribution to the development of European Higher Education Area.

In the light of the above the participants raise the following points as necessary measures to upgrade the current standing of TVET-related research at the level of European cooperation:

- Research in TVET should be mentioned explicitly as an area of expertise that is eligible for the 7th Framework Programme of Research of the European Union.
- Support for International Graduate Schools in TVET research and for related networking should be promoted as a priority area in European cooperation in Higher Education.
- Involvement of TVET research in national and regional innovation programmes should be promoted more explicitly.
- European and international networking of successful projects that have been grounded in national innovation programmes should be promoted more effectively via European and national programme architectures.

The commitment to strengthen the UNIP network and its European activities

The participants of the European working conference in Oslo/Lilleström consider it necessary to support the development of the UNIP network as an international professional community and to consolidate the regional initiative group for European activities. In this respect the initiative group UNIP-Europe will support the development of Masters Programmes in Europe and initiate related cooperation activities with the umbrella organisations of European TVET researchers (the VETNET network) and teacher educators (ATEE). At the same time the initiative group will provide support for the preparation of new European cooperation projects and monitor the shaping of new programmes and policies at the European level.

Approved by the participants in the concluding session in Oslo/Lilleström 7.2.2006