



1. Introduction to the OEFP

The *Observatório do Emprego e Formação Profissional* [Monitoring Centre for Employment and Vocational Training] ('OEFP'), a tripartite consultative body, was set up in 1993 following a decision by the Council for Social Concertation. Its aims are:

- to monitor the development of employment and qualifications of staff in both quantitative and qualitative terms;
- to assess the sectoral and regional impact of employment and vocational training policy instruments;
- to formulate proposals in specific areas concerning employment and training problems.

The OEFP is given impetus by a Central Coordination Unit (CCU), formally composed of a President, representing the Ministry for Labour and Social Solidarity, other government representatives (subordinate bodies of the Ministry for Labour and the Ministry of Education) and by employer and trade union representatives. Four recognised experts in the field of employment and training, and one representative of the National Statistics Institute, also participate at CCU meetings in an advisory capacity. Representatives of other ministries may also be invited, if the matters under discussion warrant their presence.

The CCU holds regular, fortnightly meetings, annual regional seminars in each of Portugal's five regions, sectoral dialogues and one nationwide conference.

Bearing in mind the Monitoring Centre's objectives, the Unit's efforts are particularly focused on obtaining relevant information that will allow the situation and development of the labour market and qualifications to be analysed, problems in their early stages to be detected, and proposals to be formulated.

The study visit to Portugal

The subcomponent 2.1 of the MEDA-ETE project aims to promote the Monitoring Centre's function in the MEDA region. The study visit to Portugal is based on the importance of information relating to the labour market, technical teaching and



vocational training for decision-making. This study visit is aimed at the key actors in the 10 MEDA region countries who contribute to the information system relating to the labour market, technical teaching and vocational training for employment.

The information system in place in Portugal aims to provide responses to the classic planning phases:

- Diagnosis of the situation
- Design and formulation of measures
- Follow-up of implementation

The information system is fed, on the one hand, from ‘pure’ statistical sources, in the sense of statistical operations put in place only for statistical purposes, and, on the other, from administrative sources, basically devised for management purposes and from which statistical results may be drawn.

There are thus several actors in this system, such as bodies mainly concerned with producing statistics, and bodies responsible for designing, implementing and managing labour market policies and the vocational training system.

As a result, the study visit will afford the opportunity to meet the following organisations:

- Statistical production – National Statistics Institute (INE), Directorate-General of Studies, Statistics and Planning (DGEEP) and the Ministry of Education
- Management of the labour market, design and implementation of vocational training measures – Institute for Employment and Vocational Training (IEFP)
- Norms and standards (legislation) – Directorate-General of Employment and Labour Relations (DGERT)
- Financial management of training programmes co-financed by the European Social Fund – Institute for the Financial Management of the European Social Fund (IGFSE)
- Research and development of the quality of vocational training – Institute for Training Quality (IQF)
- Management of information relating to education and validation of educational competencies – Ministry of Education - Office for Information and Evaluation of the Educational System (GIASE) and Directorate-General for Vocational Training (DGFV)



- Analysis of the situation, detection of problems and formulation of proposals
– Monitoring Centre for Employment and Vocational Training (OEFP)

These organisations include bodies that provide information via statistical surveys and bodies that produce information based on administrative sources designed for management purposes.

The study visit will also include a visit to an employment centre, a vocational training centre and an industrial production centre (Volkswagen AUTOEUROPA).

A coherent information system requires, however, a certain statistical rigour and the use of suitable concepts, definitions and nomenclatures. It is for that reason that the possibility of benefiting from administrative sources for statistical results must be anticipated at the time of conception.

Portugal has witnessed, particularly since the end of the 1980s, an increased demand for professional training indicators and, as a result, several surveys have been conducted on professional training, especially within businesses.

Similarly, the framework of training programmes and measures given impetus by the European Social Fund has resulted in the setting up of an administrative management and monitoring system.

As such, the architecture of an information system must now face up to the non-existence, as regards international recommendations, of a regulatory framework for a statistical system on vocational training – which is not the case for statistics relating to the active population, employment and unemployment, salaries, occupational accidents and strikes.