

Integrating SMEs into Regional Educational Networks

Workshop No 5

The Challenges

- Global competition
- Fast Technology developments
 - Shorter product lifecycles
 - More demanding consumers
- Changing enterprises structures

Problems + Difficulties

- Unsufficient financial ressources
 - Lack of time considerations
 - Lack of planning
- Lack of relevant training courses
 - Lack of guidance
- Lack of motivation of the managers
- Lack of motivation of the employees
- Owners negative attitude to changes and innovation
 - „Poaching“ of skilled employees

The answers

- Policy measures at national/regional level for SMEs
 - Bottom-up approaches

Policy Measures

- The learning regions
- Forms of regional cooperation within networks and cooperative partnerships

Forms of regional cooperation

- Between SMEs and educational providers
- Between SMEs and other actors (chambers, trade unions, employers associations, ...)
- SMEs networks
- SMEs „clusters“ by sectors

Weaknesses

- Lack of strategic vision
- Lack of competence and culture of cooperation
- Short term business pressures
 - Quick and easy solutions
- Lack of firm relations between educational providers and SMEs

Examples of good-practice

- Learning Region Chemnitz, Germany
- Vox, Institute for Adult Learning, Norway
- Learning Region Emmendingen, Germany
- INDOR, a Valencian perspective, Spain

The way forward I

- Development of the European Dimension of policies for SMEs
- Work at EU-level and Act locally
- Holistic approach to the „Learning Region“
- Involvement of the accession countries in concrete projects with SMEs
- Synergies between Education, Enterprise and Regional policy Directorates at EU-level
- Cooperation at national level between the respective Ministries

The way forward II

- More involvement of the social partners
- More involvement of local government
- More transparency on policies
- Future conferences/seminars on SMEs involving managers of SMEs, pupils, students, young people, workforce, older employees, retired persons