Focus and objectives of the project

The main objective of the "nestor" project is to strengthen and promote social dialogue, in particular in CEE countries, and to assist stakeholders from these countries in establishing and expanding their multiplier and expert networks. Based on previous projects ("Auster" VS 102/038 /"ZAUBER" VS/2007/0578 and "INSITO" VS/2009/0470), the focus is on the social dimension of European integration, since these projects clearly demonstrated how important employment and social security are to social cohesion.

The guiding principle of the above-mentioned projects – “European integration can only succeed if the majority of European citizens recognise the advantages of a peaceful and social Europe” – also applies to this project. The measures taken by Member States to overcome the major financial and economic crisis have had positive effects, particularly in those countries where social dialogue and social partners’ industrial relations are well developed. The Commission’s current report entitled “Industrial Relations in Europe 2010” corroborates this analysis, which was the motivation not only for the fundamental direction of the “nestor” project, but also the special perspective on CEE countries.

By setting the contextual focus on promoting and securing employment, equal opportunities for men and women, and social security in Europe, “nestor” is geared towards the priorities, core objectives and guiding initiatives of “Strategy Europe 2020”; it intends to make a constructive contribution to the debate on a European social model by promoting social dialogue and by establishing and expanding multiplier and expert networks.

Despite numerous references to other priorities of “Strategy Europe 2020”, the project will focus on the priority “Integrative growth” with the core objectives of promoting employment (75 % target), promoting education (reducing the number of school dropouts, 40 % in higher education) and fighting poverty (reduction by 20 million). Taking this into account, the “nestor” project addresses three topics:

1. Active ageing and coping with demographic change
2. Promoting equal opportunities for men and women in Europe
3. Promoting the qualification and employment of young people

Based on the priority “Integrative growth” with its associated core objectives and guiding initiatives, the following key issues are devised for the three topics:

1. How can the employment rate of women, older and young people be increased?
2. How can the level of education and qualifications for these three groups be raised?
3. Which poverty reduction or prevention concepts are required for these groups and how should social security systems be equipped to ensure poverty resistance?
4. Which educational opportunities are required to respond to changes in labour markets (increasing number of jobs for the highly qualified, decline in jobs for the less qualified) to promote lifelong learning and to improve coordination between the different levels of education (general, vocational, higher and adult education)?
5. Which measures need to be taken to facilitate work force mobility within the EU and which concepts can protect regions from which workers tend to migrate against a shortage of highly qualified employees?

The close intertwining of the project objectives – promoting employment, promoting education and qualifications and fighting poverty – also characterises the social partners’ shaping requirements with regard “Strategy Europe 2020”. The “nestor” project particularly aims to offer actors assistance in establishing and expanding multiplier and expert networks. Based on the many years of good experience the applicant has with systematically collaborating with academia and the world of work, realised via a partnership with the Cooperation Bodies Universities and Trade Unions, the intensive exchange of information and experience is offered via collaboration with labour-oriented scientists, institutes and research institutions, as well as various foundations. The project also aims to test whether this approach, successfully practised in some Western Member States, in particular in Germany, is also applicable to the special constellation in CEE countries with institutionalised “tripartite dialogue”. The search for and selection, analysis and assessment of “best-practice” examples in the selected topics play an important role in expanding and further developing multiplier and expert networks between academia and the world of work.

The overall objective of the project is to raise the importance of social dialogue and to strengthen developed industrial relations between social partners in the European public sphere. For this reason, it is important to convey the great significance of these tools as an essential prerequisite for coping successfully with the continuing economic crisis.
Project design and transnational dimension

By analysing previous projects (“Auster”, “Zauber”, “INSITO”, see above), the applicant was able to identify important optimisations for subsequent projects. For instance, greater practice orientation and an emphasis on multiplier work have been introduced to the “nestor” project. For this reason, the number of international workshops was reduced in favour of their intensification, enabling the exchange of views to be organised in a more intense (two-day), innovative (tripartite) and integrative (greater practical relevance) manner.

The “nestor” project is composed of four work steps:

1. Bringing together project partners and imparting the objectives and structure of the project
   This work step will be realised at the kick-off conference in Brussels.

2. Holding three international workshops in Vilnius, Prague and Warsaw
   These workshops, conceived for two working days, consist of three parts:
   a. Brainstorming workshop
      Experts and multipliers from academia and the world of work explore specific core and guiding issues and “best-practice” examples relating to the selected project topic. This part also lends itself to the exchange of ideas and experience and to a discussion on perspectives.
   b. Theory meets practice
      The local organiser from the host country presents a specific “best-practice” example in situ. This includes a visit to the institution or enterprise by the workshop participants and other multipliers nominated by the local organiser. The aim is to initiate constructive dialogue between regional actors and international multipliers, and to promote the dissemination of such “best-practice examples” through direct contact. The practical examples shall be set in the first planning phase and shall already be a thematic part of the kick-off event.
   c. Multiplier network
      Using the example of the applicant’s positive experience in systematic collaboration between academia and the world of work, a discussion shall be held on associated methods, procedures and demands on efficient networking. The aim is to promote the systematic establishment of expert and multiplier networks and to discuss the prospects of transferring previously tested cooperation relations.

3. Organising an international congress with the aim of discussing the workshop results with experts and multipliers from the whole of Europe and of encouraging a broad debate on the objectives and prospects of “Strategy Europe 2020”.

4. Publishing and disseminating the project results in the form of a multi-language brochure (presumably: English, Polish, Lithuanian, Czech and German) and realising a website to accompany the project.

The Educational Association “ARBEIT UND LEBEN” has been dealing with topics concerning European integration for over 20 years, and has a strong national and international network consisting of experts and multipliers from the fields of academia and the world of work. This network was continually expanded and cemented in numerous EU-funded projects (most recently: “Auster” 2005/2006; “Zauber” 2007/2008; INSITO 2009/2010). The project particularly underlines the central importance of international multiplier networks for the flow of information, strategy development and the search for suitable courses of action to solve European problems. For this reason, all of the project events specifically involve the exchange of particularly effective methods in establishing and expanding such networks, suitable forms of communication of selected multipliers and experience by way of systematic and goal-oriented networking.

As in the previous projects, the transnational dimension of the “nestor” project is realised at two levels. First, numerous actors from different EU Members States who are relevant to the specific topic are involved in the project as project partners (see list of partners). This organised multiplier effect leads to the European-wide dissemination of the objectives and results. Second, some of the project partners are given an outstanding, active role in the project. For instance, the project partners at places where project events are held are involved in shaping the content, selecting the participating organisations and experts and organising the event. As can be seen from the structure of the international workshops (see above), the local organisers additionally assume the task of selecting and presenting “best-practice examples” from their country in the specific planning process, and of ensuring they are published in the media. In particular, they are tasked with actively involving other actors from their own country and neighbouring countries in the project. Project funds are earmarked for this purpose. In previous projects, the applicant called this principle of participation “central diversification”, and tested it accordingly. It is a highly sophisticated method because all kinds of “European cultures” are encountered during the collaborative work, but it promotes understanding of the necessity of European networks with the intensity of project involvement.

In quantitative terms, the applicant assumes that European experts from a minimum of 15-20 Member States and candidate countries will be involved in the project.
Project organisation

The applicant Educational Association ARBEIT UND LEBEN and its cooperation partners work together closely to plan, organise and realise all parts of the project, and has established the following decentralised structure to this end:

1. It is incumbent upon the Educational Association ARBEIT UND LEBEN to manage the project and to assume overall responsibility of the measure.
2. The Cooperation Body Universities and Trade Unions, Osnabrück shall assume the coordination of the entire project in close collaboration with the project management team and other project partners.
3. A preparatory group shall be set up for each project event, the management of which shall be transferred to a selected project partner. This group shall assume the specific conception and conceptual development of the project event, and shall work together closely with other (international) project partners, in particular the “local organisers”.
4. The project partner at whose location a project event takes place (“local organisers”) shall assume all organisational tasks for the particular event, and shall be involved in shaping its content. The partners in Vilnius, Prague and Warsaw shall assume the additional task of presenting outstanding “best-practice examples” (“Theory meets practice”).
5. The project results shall be presented on a multi-language website throughout the duration of the project and shall finally be published in a brochure in five languages (German, English, Lithuanian, Czech and Polish). The project management team shall transfer this task to a team consisting of experts from the cooperation partners’ own ranks.
6. A steering group shall coordinate the project parts.
7. Professor Dr. Ralf Kleinfeld, University of Osnabrück, shall be responsible for overall scientific consultation with regard to the project.

The work programme

1. **kick-off conference in Brussels**
   “Employment, Equal Opportunities, Social Security”
   -Overcoming the Economic Crisis with Strong Social Dialogue-
   
   **Date:** 6. – 8. March 2012
   **Venue:** Brussels
   **Local organizer:** ÖGB
   **Number of participants:** 40-50
   **Conference languages:** English & German

   The main focus of the event will be the conceptual classification of the project into “Strategy Europe 2020”. In addition to the overall concept of the project, in particular the key issues derived from this strategy will be presented and discussed. The project partners shall agree upon the basic concepts of the following three international workshops in Vilnius, Prague and Warsaw, as well as upon the structure of the closing congress in Osnabrück.

2. **International Workshop**
   „Promoting equal opportunities for men and women in Europe”
   
   **Date:** 2. - 4. Mai 2012 / 2. - 4. May 2012
   **Venue:** Vilnius
   **Local organizer:** LPSK
   **Number of participants:** 20-30
   **Conference languages:** Lithuanian, English & German

   Programmes and actions that promote equal opportunities are under tremendous pressure to succeed, particularly in economically tough times. There is a risk of equal opportunities being regarded as secondary and of missing the economic and social opportunities offered by encouraging equal opportunities in the fight against the recession. Various indicators show that gender-specific differences are evident in all EU Member States. Although the forms vary and the real life situations of women – and men – in the individual Member States differ considerably, a number of trends can be regarded as a pan-European phenomenon.

   From the 1990s to 2008, the average employment rate of women in the EU has gradually increased to 59.1 %. However, despite this altogether encouraging development, the average difference between the employment rate of women and that of men was still as high as 13.7 % in 2008. In fact, the increase in the female employment rate conceals the high percentage of part-time jobs. In 2008, approximately 31 % of gainfully employed women in the...
EU had a part-time job, compared to approximately 8% of males in gainful employment. While the part-time rate in CEE countries remained low, it dominates women's everyday working lives in many Western European states. The level of women's labour participation depends on the existing child care infrastructure and on the infrastructure in place to help other persons requiring care in each Member State. About 30% of working age women with care obligations would work more hours, or would work in the first place, if adequate care facilities were available. In Spain and Greece, this rate exceeds 60%; in Romania it is even over 80%. However, even if women work full-time, an average gender pay gap (the difference between the average gross hourly wage between men and women as a percentage of the average gross hourly wages of men) of 17.6% is evident in the EU. This automatically leads to a significantly poorer economic situation for older aged or unemployed women who, due to atypical, temporary and/or part-time employment, were able to acquire only fewer prospective entitlements to social security benefits, resulting in women being on average at a greater risk of poverty, even after social transfers.

With regard to the ten CEE states, however, divergent developments from the overall development in the EU can be observed in some cases. The trend in the "old" Member States to tend to integrate women into the labour market by giving them part-time jobs appears to be spreading to the "new" Member States. This form of integration at a level that is lower for women shall be strongly countered by analysing the more successful mechanisms for integrating women into the labour market available in CEE states.

Guiding issues:
- What specific measures can be used to ensure groups of women, such as single mothers, older women or migrants, who were previously inadequately integrated into the employment system are now integrated successfully?
- How can integration that is qualitatively and quantitatively adequate be achieved?
- What infrastructure is required to this end to care for children and other people in need of care?
- How can prevailing typical gender roles be changed in the long term in everyone's interest?
- How can women's and men's choice of profession/degree subject be promoted in their potential diversity?
- Which tools of social security systems effectively protect women (and men) in precarious employment situations from poverty?
- How can women's participation in economic and social decision-making processes be increased in line with their proportion in the population and levels of education?
- What options do the experiences gained by CEE states offer regarding a solution strategy?

3. International Workshop „Active ageing and coping with demographic change”

Date: 5.–7. September 2012 /
(Arrival & opening event 5.9.12 / Symposium 6. / 7. 9. / departure 7.9.12)
Venue: Prague
Local organizer: FES / EDUKRATES
Number of participants: 20-30
Conference languages: Czech, English & German

One of the greatest challenges facing the EU in the decades ahead is coping with demographic change. Low birth rates accompanied by a simultaneous increase in life expectancy drastically change the age structure of the population and the working population in EU Member States. High demands are placed on restructuring labour markets and adapting social systems. Against the backdrop of the major financial and economic crisis, with high unemployment figures and rigorous austerity programmes in almost all Member States, the objective is nevertheless to increase the employment rate and to prevent the spread of old-age poverty. To achieve these core objectives of “Strategy Europe 2020”, it is essential to analyse why the European Council’s Stockholm target (increase the employment rate for older people (55-64 years) to 50 % by 2010) largely failed, particularly in Central and Eastern European Member States, and to look for solutions.

The qualification deficits of older employees can be regarded as a key problem. Owing to transformation processes and economic structural crises, the qualifications held by the members of this group of employees are increasingly losing their value and, so far, too little has been invested in their further training. However, good professional (further) training is a prerequisite not only for prolonging the period of work activity in view of the increasing retirement age, but also for re-integrating people after a phase of unemployment – making it an essential prerequisite for fighting old-age poverty. For this reason, one of the aspects the workshop “Active ageing” will focus on will be existing qualification approaches and strategies for older employees. Taking into account the special tasks of social partners and governments in these countries, different concepts of “active ageing” will be discussed in relation to this, and their transferability (i.e. model character) investigated. The “Network of demographic development and corporate answers” from Hannover (partner: Cooperation Body Hannover) will be presented as a best-practice example from Germany. This project underlines the importance of working within networks and with multipliers, and is therefore suitable as a point of departure for concepts in CEE states. The central questions are:
- What effects of demographic change are expected amongst the working population of CEE states and what are the distinguishing features compared to western Member States? How, in particular, do different qualification prerequisites affect labour participation?
- How have transformation processes and economic structural crises affected qualification requirements for older employees and how are they being reintegrated into gainful employment?
- What specific contribution can qualifications and further training make to reducing social inequality with regard to older employees and to avoiding the risk of poverty in CEE states? How can further training strategies reduce the risk of special subgroups, such as older women, older low-qualified people and older migrants, falling into unemployment and poverty?
- What specific concepts of active ageing are available, taking into account qualification strategies? To what extent can relevant policy areas (amongst others, education policy, social policy and labour market policy) and relevant policy levels (corporate, intermediate, state) be combined more effectively in this context?
- What role does “tripartite dialogue” play in the development of coping concepts to intensify on-the-job further training in the second phase of life and lifelong learning?
- How can corporate concepts of further training and personnel development be communicated more effectively and widely (“best practice”) and how can their importance be raised in the public debate?

4. International Workshop
“Promoting the qualification and employment of young people”

Date: 10. – 12. October 2012
(Arrival & opening event 10.10. / Symposium 11./12.10. / Departure 12.10.)
Venue: Warsaw
Local organizer: FES / OPZZ
Number of participants: 20-30
Conference languages: Polish, English & German

In light of dramatic unemployment figures, in particular among the young population, the EU’s aim to increase the employment rate among the employable population to at least 75 % is one of the most urgent matters of concern for Strategy 2020, which aims to be comprehensible to citizens. According to the European Parliament, 20 % of under 25-year-olds in the EU are unemployed. If they do find work, about 40 % are given only fixed-term contracts. Only about 30% of Europeans hold a university degree, 15 % of 18- to 24-year-olds do not have an intermediate school-leaving qualification and about 14 % of 18- to 24-year-olds leave school without a qualifying certificate. The social explosive force inherent in this negative development calls for European-wide joint activities and clarification of the problem amongst all relevant actors. There are many publications on various courses of education and training in the EU. However, social dialogue on this policy field requires practical and specific discussions at European level. The aim of this multiplier workshop is for scientists and practitioners to substantiate the process of the guiding initiative “Youth in Motion” by means of an information and agreement programme. The programme of the initiative and the 28 measures associated with it shall be reflected as a guiding idea and questioned with regard to their (decentralised) implementation. After exchanging “best practices” experiences in the countries involved in the nestor project, comparable “bench marks” shall be defined, giving real drive to a modernisation of the vocational training and labour market. Corporate, academic, dual and university qualification patterns will be introduced by country experts, compared using previously developed parameters (duration and funding, permeability and validity, methods and didactics) and reflected upon concerning their transferability, also with regard to prevailing cultural demands.

Guiding issues:

- Do the Scandinavian experiences and results of the PISA study meet the requirements of the European-wide transferability and standardisation of European education and training processes?
- How can the mechanisation of European learning and teaching techniques (e-learning) be classified in the sense of a pro und contra debate?
- How will new media de facto influence learning and cultural behaviour; what are the prospects?
- How can the often described study and training programmes in the EU be substantiated and extended?
- What measures to promote cross-culturality at all education and teaching levels are pursued in the EU Member States and are they transferable?
- Can European countries be compared to explain and interpret monochronic and polychronic cultural assumptions, and is it possible to initiate communication processes?
- Is it desirable to achieve a dual interconnection of courses of training, and is it transferable?
- What practical experiences in EU Member States are contrary to this principle?
- What are the risks of slimming down vocational training?
- What long-term economic impacts could a continuing ‘brain drain’ have, in particular for the new EU Member States?
- How significant are language skills as a key factor for a prosperous, integrative Europe? and
- What synergetic effects arise from combining programmes with Leonard da Vinci? (based, amongst other things, on the applicant’s several years of experience)

5. International Congress and final results
“Employment, Equal Opportunities, Social Security”
-Overcoming the Economic Crisis with Strong Social Dialogue-
The congress will focus on the current state of discussion on “Strategy Europe 2020” regarding the topics involved in the project as well as the results of the international workshops in Vilnius, Prague and Warsaw. Against the backdrop of the impacts of the crisis on numerous Member States, in particular “best-practice examples” will be used to clarify a Social Europe that promotes cohesion to encourage a broad debate on the perspectives. The congress particularly addresses multipliers in the public domain and the general public with the message that only a social Europe has a future.

Potential project partners:

a) Applicant organisation and project management:

Educational Association ARBEIT UND LEBEN Lower Saxony Nord gGmbH, Osnabrück branch

b) Project Partners:

1. European Trade Union Confederation (ETUC), Brussels
2. European Metalworkers’ Federation (EMF), Brussels
3. European Trade Union Institute (ETUI), Brussels
4. European Social Action Network (ESAN), Brussels
5. Institute for Social and Trade Union Research of Cite, Sofia
6. Institute Recherché Economique e Sociali (IRES) Emilia-Romagna, Bologna
7. Austrian Trade Unions Confederation (ÖGB), Vienna
8. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Bratislava
9. Friedrich Ebert Foundation, Warsaw
10. OPZZ - Ogólnopolskie Porozumienie Zwizków Zawodowych, Warsaw
11. Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), Bratislava
12. ECHOZ, Bratislava
13. KASZ, Union of Commercial Employees, Budapest
14. ETOSZ, Budapest
15. LPSK, Confederation of Lithuanian Trade Unions, Vilnius
16. Lithuanian Labour Education Society, Vilnius
17. European Office of the Lithuanian Parliament, Vilnius
18. EDUKRATES, Prague
19. Keynote, Prague
20. Institute of Sociology AS CR, Prag
21. Hans Böckler Foundation, Düsseldorf
22. Confederation of German Trade Unions, Berlin
23. IG Metall Executive Board, Frankfurt
24. ver.di - United Trade Union for Service Providers, Berlin,
25. The Confederation of German Trade Unions, District of Lower Saxony – Bremen – Saxony-Anhalt
26. ver.di - United Trade Union for Service Providers, District of Lower Saxony – Bremen, Hannover
27. IG Metall, District of Lower Saxony – Saxony-Anhalt
28. Cooperation Office Universities and Trade Unions, Osnabrück *
29. Cooperation Office Universities and Trade Unions Oldenburg *
30. Cooperation Office Universities and Trade Unions Hannover *
31. Cooperation Office Universities and Trade Unions Braunschweig*
32. Cooperation Office Universities and Trade Unions Göttingen *
33. "EUROPE ENTERPRISE NETWORK" (EEN), Osnabrück
34. City of Osnabrück
35. University Vechta
36. Centre for Research an Angeing and Society, Vechta