

A contextual map on European policies related to professional development of trainers
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Abstract

This paper is based on the work of the European cooperation project TTplus with the themes "policies for promoting trainers' professional development" and 'relations between national approaches and the European qualification framework'. Firstly the paper presents the policy-related background and the developmental context of the project. Secondly the paper discusses the initial choices and the related agreements concerning the empirical studies of the TTplus project. Thirdly the paper discusses the methodological orientation to working with 'contextual images' and to producing 'grounded policy analyses'. Fourthly the paper presents a more detailed analysis of the German training-related policy context as an exemplary case for using the said approaches. Fifthly, the paper presents nutshell pictures of the training-related policy contexts in other participating countries. The sixth section recapitulates key points of the paper and presents a contextual map on policy developments in the participating countries. This picture is complemented with a catalogue of common issues concerning the role of policies, internal tensions and contradictions. Finally, the paper discusses the implications of the policy analyses for developing the common framework.

Keywords: Professional development of trainers, policy analyses, European cooperation

Introduction

This paper discusses the conceptual starting points and the methodological challenges of the European cooperation project “*A Framework for the Continuing Professional development of Trainers*” (TTplus). The project is funded as a ‘reference material’ project of the European Union action programme Leonardo da Vinci. The TTplus project has studied training cultures and the professional situation of trainers in six European countries: Germany, Greece, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom (primarily Wales). The main tasks of the project are to

- a) carry out case studies on the professional situation of trainers in selected organisations,
- b) carry out complementary expert interviews,
- c) undertake policy analyses with a focus on continuing professional development of trainers and
- d) develop a common framework for promoting the professional development of trainers.

The specific focus of this paper is the task ‘policy analyses’ and the use of the related information in the further discussion on a common European framework. From this perspective it is worthwhile to pose the following questions:

1. What kind of policy background has made it necessary to launch this kind of European cooperation project and how can it be related to its predecessor activities? The questions on the background and particular context are discussed in *the first main section*.
2. What kind of strategic choices have been essential for the research approach of the project and how have these choices influenced the work with policy analyses? The questions on the initial choices are discussed in *the second main section*.
3. What kind of conceptual and methodological foundation can be given for the research approach and for the specific role of policy analyses? The questions on the methodological grounding and the implications for policy analyses are discussed in *the third main section*.
4. What kind of key features emerge from the more intensive study of the German policy context? The key features of the German policy context are presented in *the fourth main section*.
5. What kind of key features emerge from the secondary analyses of other policy contexts? The key features of other contexts are summarised in *the fifth main section*.
6. What kind of conclusions can be drawn concerning the prospects for and limits to common European policies concerning the professional development of trainers. The emerging conclusions are discussed in *the sixth main section*.

1. Background and context of the TTplus project

The policy-related background of the TTplus project can be described briefly in the following way

- a) After the Lisbon Summit 2000 the European education and training policies have been shaped by parallel framework processes that cover different levels of education. In this respect the Bologna process provides the basis for developing the European Qualification Framework (EQF) for Higher Education. In a similar way the Copenhagen process provides the basis for the European Qualification Framework (EQF) for Lifelong learning. Both processes are contributing to the Lisbon follow-up and the qualification frameworks are linked to each other.
- b) In the context of the Lisbon follow-up there has been a special emphasis on promoting the professional development of teachers and trainers. For this reason there has been a specific working group for developing common European principles for teachers’ competences and qualifications. These principles have latterly been adopted as key elements of the Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament “*Improving the quality of teacher education*” (COM (2007)392).

It is worthwhile to note that there have been several projects that have contributed to European knowledge development on teachers and trainers in vocational education and training (VET). Below, a brief summary of some predecessor projects is given regarding the aims of the projects and the role of *trainers* as target groups:

1. The Cedefop project on “Teachers and trainers in VET” (1994-1997) produced country reports on vocational teacher education and training of trainers in the EU Member States and cooperating EFTA countries. The aim of these projects was to give visibility for the related education and training provisions. In this respect the reports reflected the positions of vocational teacher education colleges or leading providers of training of trainers for public training centres.
2. The Europrof and Euroframe projects (1996-2000) sought to develop new training models for new VET professionals (to integrate school-based and workplace-based learning). The aim of the project was to develop common core principles and conceptual frameworks for piloting in different countries. In spite of the integrative approach the project work was divided into an academic strand (that focused on upgrading the vocational teacher education) and into training-oriented strand (that focused on analysing the current patterns for training the trainers).
3. The Maastricht study on the attainment of Lisbon goals in the field of VET (produced for the Maastricht meeting of responsible ministers (2004) included an analysis on developments related to ‘teachers and trainers’ (Leney 2005). The aim of this section was to provide a European overview on recent developments and of parallel conceptual approaches. In this context the study tried to give visibility for different approaches in a European group picture.
4. The more recent Cedefop/ TTnet project on developing VET professionals (2004-2006) tried to produce common European professional profiles. The project outlined separate competence profiles for six professional specialisations (VET teacher, VET trainer, adult trainer (training centre), CVT trainer, training manager (training centre), training manager (enterprise)). With this approach the project paved the way for linking the competence profiles to the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong Learning.
5. The quite recent Eurotrainer and Lot 2 projects (2006-2007) that had that task to provide basic information on the professional situation of trainers (in enterprises or in training centres outside public VET systems). These projects had the task to provide more specific knowledge bases and to cover a broader range of countries (not only the EU Member states but also the EFTA cooperation partners and the candidate countries). The work of these fact-finding projects is being continued by the Eurotrainer *network* and the closely related workshop project.

In the light of the above it is worthwhile to emphasise that the main task of the TTplus project is to link *empirical analyses* (on the professional *situation* of trainers) and to draw conclusions for a *developmental framework* (to promote professional *development* of trainers). In this respect the critical questions for the project are the following ones:

- i) Can ‘*teachers and trainers*’ be considered as a homogeneous target group for joint European policies or is there a need to take a specific approach to ‘*trainers*’?
- ii) Can joint European frameworks be used effectively to promote ‘*training of trainers*’ or ‘*continuing professional development of trainers*’ in different training cultures?

Based on these questions the TTplus project has developed a research strategy that tries to put into consideration, what role different policies can play in promoting the professional development of trainer. This requires a methodological distancing from the traditional policy analyses (that put systems, institutions and policies to the centre) and a movement towards alternative approaches (that put the training contexts to the centre).

2. Methodological choices of the TTplus project and implications for policy analyses

2.1. Starting point: *multiple contextuality* of training as challenge for policy analyses

In the initial phase the TTplus project had a discussion on the various context-dependencies of training activities and trainers' positions vis-à-vis their socio-economic and socio-cultural environments. As a conclusion the TTplus project agreed on some initial working hypotheses (regarding multiple contextuality and implications for policy analyses) that can be summarised in the following way:

1. Training activities are **embedded in the national societies** and in their education and training cultures. Yet, it varies from country to country and from case to case, to what extent the particular training contexts can be characterised as *exemplary cases of the functioning of national training models*. Furthermore, it varies from case to case, to what extent national policy measures can play a major role in promoting the professional development of trainers.
2. The **coverage and targeting of training policies** vary between overarching systemic approaches, patchworked approaches to develop specific sub-systems (e.g. in VET, CVT or employment training) or to develop steering models that support the development of training markets. However, it varies from country to country and from case to case, whether the development of particular training contexts is effectively promoted by specific policies or whether there are *gaps and grey zones between particular policies*.
3. Policies are usually related to the **interventions of central governments** (and/or other major stakeholders) that have an overarching impact on their target areas or target activities. However, it varies from country to country and from case to case to what extent innovations can be promoted via *decentralised initiatives* and via *networking between trainers and their organisations*. Also, there is a great variance between countries and regions, to what extent such developments can be promoted with the help of public support.
4. Policies are usually discussed with focus on **national governments and country-specific implementation** – even in the context of European cooperation. However, the *internationalisation of business processes and markets* has introduced new dependency structures and new dynamics into training activities that may have a more central role in particular training contexts. Therefore, it varies from country to country and from case to case, to what extent such international influences have a dominant or a co-shaping role in the development of training (and the position of trainers).

2.2. Implications for the research design and for the methodological choices

Initially the methodological discussion of the TTplus project focused on the issue, how to approach *different* training cultures and training contexts in order to get an authentic picture on the cultural and organisational *diversity* and on the interests of related key actors. This issue was closely linked to the corollary issue, how to use the empirical findings as material for *common* frameworks for promoting the professional development of trainers.

In this respect the TTplus project developed a common methodological orientation that was based on the examination of different sources (see Kämäräinen 2007 and Kämäräinen & Attwell 2008):

- a) a social-scientific component based on the examination of the Critical Theory of the Frankfurt school and a special empirical approach to the examination of the societal consciousness of teachers with the help of the methodological construct 'contextual images';

- b) an educational-technological component based on the examination of e-portfolio development with the help of the methodological construct ‘use cases’ and related stakeholder-analyses.

Based on these methodological sources the TTplus project could reach the following internal agreements regarding the common ground and the degrees of freedom in the empirical research:

1. The project does not pre-define the target organisations and the target groups but leaves it to each partner to select the training contexts and the key actors that are to be presented within the country-specific sample. This leaves room for discussion on the position of ‘trainers’ in different training cultures.
2. The project does not require that the country-specific samples should be related in a similar way to government policies or to sectoral approaches on training. This leaves room for discussion on mainstream approaches, alternative approaches and on policy gaps.
3. The project does not require that the cases to be analysed should serve as ‘test cases’ for common qualification frameworks or for common competence statements. This leaves room for discussion on different initiatives and support measures.

The above mentioned internal agreements made it possible for the TTplus partners to make independent choices regarding the organisations to be selected and the target groups to be examined as ‘trainers’ and as ‘training managers’. For the further discussion of the TTplus project it was clear that the country-specific samples bring forward different contextual images regarding the ‘normal practice’ of training, regarding the involvement of trainers (and other key actors) and regarding the expectations on trainers’ professional development.

2.3. Linking empirical findings, policy analyses and framework development to each other

As has been indicated, the policy analyses have had a supporting role in the work programme and in the process dynamics of the TTplus project. Thus, the use of policy analyses has been related to the transition from empirical studies to the shaping of the common TTplus framework for promoting professional development of trainers. However, given the differences in the training cultures and in the policy contexts, this transition has posed different challenges for the TTplus partners.

Therefore, the main challenges for the policy analyses of the TTplus project can be characterised in the following way:

- a) The policy analyses have to provide support for understanding the country-specific preconditions for developing the training culture (and the professional development of trainers) **in order to understand** the relative strengths, the relative weaknesses and the role of public support structures.
- b) The policy analyses have to provide insights into the relative vicinity or relative distance between policies and the training contexts **in order to understand** the possibilities and limits of public interventions.
- c) The policy analyses have to provide insights into the process dynamics and into the risk factors related to decentralised pilot projects and grassroots initiatives **in order to understand** the preconditions for their consolidation and wider dissemination.
- d) The policy analyses have to provide insights into cross-cultural policy developments and influences **in order to understand** the possibilities or Europe-wide policy learning and prospects for enrichment between different modes of promoting innovations.

These challenges are taken into consideration in the subsequent discussion on the conceptual and methodological foundations of the TTplus project.

3. Conceptual and methodological foundations of the *policy analyses* of the TTplus project

Below, the first sub-section presents a brief overview on the ‘contextual image’ approach that was introduced as a basis for developing the methodological approach of the TTplus project. The second sub-section develops the basis for ‘grounded policy analyses’. The third sub-section discusses the usability of the approach in the context of the TTplus project.

3.1. The contribution of the ‘*contextual image*’ approach

As has been indicated, the TTplus project studied the theoretically grounded approach to empirical studies developed by the Frankfurt school representatives of the 1970s (see Ritsert & Brunkhorst 1978, Bracher 1978). It is worthwhile to note that this approach raised questions on the mutual relations between teachers’ perception of society, teachers’ assessment on their own social situation and teachers’ expectations regarding social change. In addition, the study raised the issue, whether the perceptions, interpretations and expectations were based on everyday-life views or on theoretically argued positions. The key construct for analysing the teachers’ social consciousness and its implications for their societal practice was that of ‘contextual image’ (see the project-internal communication on this approach. Kämäräinen 2007a).

For the research design of the TTplus project the key message of the earlier study can be interpreted as the following set of arguments (see Kämäräinen 2007b, Kämäräinen & Attwell 2008):

- i) In order to provide a common ground for analysing the functioning of training in different societies it is essential to produce **contextual images** (*Kontextvorstellungen*) on the training cultures. Contextual images have the task to present the *basic assumptions*, the *cultural conventions* and the *strategic orientations* (or the lack of such factors) at the level of situation assessment, orientation to target groups and goal-setting for learning activities. Thus, researchers are expected to be open for identifying the role of core ideas, core structures and conventions (when there is a ground for tracing a real impact on training) *or* to analyse the dynamics of relatively open, particularised and less regulated training cultures (when there is a ground for presenting a more heterogeneous training context).
- ii) In certain societies (e.g. in Germany) it is necessary to note the impact of traditional **socio-cultural conventions** (the dual system of apprenticeship) that commit public education system and training in enterprises into system-embedded cooperation with each other. Such socio-cultural conventions provide fundamental **core principles** (*Kernvorstellungen*) and the established **core structures** (*Kernstrukturen*) for organising training provide a basis for integrative concept development regarding training. However, in other societies it is not evident that similar core structures, socio-cultural conventions and core principles can be traced. Nevertheless, the existence or non-existence of such conventions, core structures and core principles has a role in the renewal and change of training cultures.
- iii) **Trans-cultural studies** (on the professional situation of trainers in different training cultures) need to be grounded by constructing **empirical and practical contexts for constructive conceptualisation** (*‘empirisch-praktische Verweisungszusammenhang’*). The studies can eventually be supported with the help of **theoretical contexts for conceptualisation** (*‘theoretische Verweisungszusammenhang’*) that cover the range of phenomena, orientations and change agendas to be explored in the empirical inquiry. However, for such an approach it is essential to keep a balance between advance knowledge (assumptions and anticipations) and emergent knowledge (empirical results and interpretative insights). Thus, researchers are expected to make selective use of their prior assumptions (and eventual hypotheses) if they want to trace the *scope of interests*, the *authentic meaning-structures* and the *context-specific strategic reasoning* of training-related social actors.

Thus, the ‘contextual image’ approach provides guidelines for collecting empirical information from *different* training cultures and interpreting them at the level of trans-national knowledge processing. For the TTplus project it is important that the ‘contextual image’ approach also gives advice, how to relate the case-based findings to wider policy contexts.

3.2. From the mapping of diverse policies to ‘grounded policy analyses’

As has been indicated, the role of ‘policy analyses’ in the TTplus project was not primarily to analyse the national policies as such. Instead, the role of policy analyses was to provide background material that could help to further development of initiatives to promote the professional development of trainers. In this respect the TTplus project used a simple mapping instrument that gathered information on the main responsibilities on education and training policies, on the role of public bodies and other stakeholders and on emerging issues or change agendas that are being debated. However, this information as such was of limited use for exploring the possibilities for launching new initiatives or for promoting effective measures. Therefore, there was a need to change the perspective from policy mapping (policies in the centre) to grounded policy analyses (with trainer-related problems and concerns in the centre).

In the first phase this transition required an awareness of the limits of current policies regarding the shaping of boundary conditions for training and the work of trainers. In this respect there is a need to draft policy scenarios that take into account the following tensions:

- a. **System-oriented vs. market-oriented development of training provisions:** The first tension refers to the status of training as part of (public) training systems (VET, CVT, employment training) or as contributions to training markets. Accordingly, the trainers are treated as systemic actors or as service providers to the market. Depending on the system-orientation or market-orientation of the policy climate, the public policies may play an active role or marginal role in training the trainers and in promoting their continuing professional development.
- b. **Professionalisation vs. incremental competence accumulation:** The second tension refers to different social dynamics regarding the professional development of trainers. The perspective of professionalisation links trainers to similar career models as teachers and HRD professionals and requires similar opportunities for career development and recognition. The perspective of incremental competence accumulation emphasises *heterogeneous learning needs of trainers, context-specific interests on utilisation of the outcomes* and the related time constraints.
- c. **Regulative measures vs. incremental interventions:** The third tension refers to different options for government interventions regarding the development of training (and the professional development of trainers). In addition (and as an alternative to) regulative measures the recent policies are to some extent characterised by incremental interventions (that may support market-oriented developments in the training culture).
- d. **Targeted measures vs. spill-over effects:** The fourth tension refers to the somewhat ambiguous position of training provisions (and the professional development of trainers) as target area or interface area or as grey zone between diverse policies. Therefore, it is not clear, to what extent training (and the position of trainers) is mainly influenced by targeted policies or by spill-over effects from other policies (either via deliberate measures or via unintended consequences).

The tensions that are outlined above should not be taken as mutually contradicting alternatives but rather as a continuum of options that can be linked to each other. Therefore, an adequate picture of current policies can at best be presented as a complex *policy landscape* in which the key measures may have a limited impact on the work of trainers whilst an effective *support environment* for promoting professional development of trainers may require new policy initiatives.

3.3. The role of critical issues and generative themes for grounded policy analyses

For grounded policy analyses the identification of the main characteristics of the policy landscape (with the help of the above outlined tensions) is only the first step that narrows down the range of possible policy choices to the range of most likely developments. However, scenarios that are drawn only with the help of such macro-characteristics would give a one-sided picture of policy processes. In addition to such general characteristics it is necessary to pay attention to critical issues and/or generative themes that are more closely related to the development of particular training contexts and the interests of trainers.

In the light of the policy mapping and the empirical studies of the TTplus project it is possible to identify some critical issues and/or generative themes that are essential for linking the trainers' concerns or interests to policy agendas:

- 1) ***The role of mandatory certificates confirming trainers' pedagogic competences:*** In several countries there are mandatory certificates that are required of the trainers or of their supervisors. What kind of merit value do these certificates have? What kind of basis do they provide for further professional development as training-related specialists? What kind of basis do the related courses provide for the curricular and pedagogic expertise of trainers?
- 2) ***The role of quality control systems and patterns of monitoring the training quality:*** In some countries government bodies or umbrella organisations of training providers have quality control systems that include registers of training providers that meet the criteria for being included in the register. What kinds of training activities are covered by such registers and what are not included? If there are parallel registers, are the quality criteria compatible with each other? What is the importance of such registers for the professional development of trainers?
- 3) ***The role of specific measures for upgrading trainers' competences:*** Some countries are developing specific curricula or accreditation concepts for upgrading trainers' competences. To what extent are these measures at an early stage of piloting and to what extent are they becoming established? In what way are the related curricula creating a balance between subject areas and work process-oriented knowledge? In what ways can the accreditation models create an awareness of learning in terms of subject areas and work process knowledge? How can these measures be related to frameworks for formal recognition?

The list of critical issues or generative themes is not exhaustive. Equally, it is worthwhile to note that in different participating countries (and in the training contexts that have been examined) the issues and related initiatives have different relevance. Therefore, the empirical studies and the related expert meetings have had the task clarify, what issues come up as priority issues (for the experts) and whether they can be considered as central or peripheral for the future policy agendas.

In the light of above it has been appropriate to try to reconstruct the pictures of country-specific policy landscapes and to explore, what kind of evidence they give

- a) on the impact of general policies on trainers' position and on the specific implications for the professional development of trainers and
- b) on the prospects of trainer-oriented initiatives to gain wider policy support.

4. The analysis of training-related policy context in Germany

Below, the German policy context is analysed with a focus on basic policy responsibilities, major policy interventions, emerging change agendas and on the role of control arrangements. The related sub-sections shift the emphasis from terrains (for policy development) to arenas (for interventions and participation) and to regimes (power structures and controlling arrangements). Then, the specific points are summarised with a reflective commentary.

4.1. The presence of government policies in the German training landscape

Due to the German system architecture in *vocational education and training* (the dual system of VET) the power structures are divided between education-related responsibilities (the educational ministries of the federal states) and the training-related responsibility (the federal ministry of economy). As the federal institute that supports the development of vocational training, the BIBB acts to some extent as a bridging agency regarding the educational and work process -related aspects in developing VET.

At the same time the realm of *continuing vocational training* (CVT) is **not** covered by similar federal regulations. The training provisions (public or private) have to become competitive in the training markets. In particular, the development of employment training schemes is guided by the federal agency for labour (BA) according to the principles of training markets. In this context the public, para-public or private training centres act as market-based service providers for the local or employment authorities.

However, regarding the trainers' qualifications the basic regulation concerning the training-related aptitude certificate of in-company trainers (the AEVO-certificate) has also been widely used in the realm of CVT and in the training centres. In this respect the diversity of system architecture has not created different terrains for developing trainers' formal qualifications. However, there are several training-related focal areas (e.g. rehabilitation, counselling etc.) that are promoted by particular training provisions and related certificates that are not related to the AEVO regulation.

4.2. The role of major governmental interventions

"The alliance to promote training opportunities" (*Ausbildungspakt*) has been launched as a joint framework process to link the initiatives and measures of different public actors and other stakeholders together. The main focus of this alliance is to improve the availability of training opportunities in enterprises. The alliance was originally agreed for the years 2004-2007 between the Ministries of Economy and Education and the central organisations of the chambers (DIHK, ZDH) as well as the central organisations of employers and industries (BDA, BDI). In 2007 the alliance was renewed for the years 2007 - 2010 with a wider range of signatory parties.

The theme "Training of trainers" is not explicitly linked to the above mentioned framework process but can be seen as one of the complementary measures. The Federal Government decided to suspend the regulation on the mandatory trainers' certificate for the years 2003-2008. With this measure the government wanted to expand the supply of training opportunities to such companies that do not have staff members with the mandatory certificate. Thus, this specific measure is linked to the strategic goal-settings of the wider strategic alliance.

In 2007 the Ministry of Education gave BIBB the task to analyse the impact of the temporary suspension of the AEVO certificate. The report indicates that as a stand-alone measure the

suspension as such was not a key factor in contributing to new training opportunities. Also, clear signals were given on the need to support the quality development of training. In this respect it is expected that the suspension will be prolonged for a short transitional period. During that period BIBB is expected to prepare a proposal for a renewed trainer's certificate.

4.3. The role of pilot projects and new training initiatives

The suspension of the basic certificate for training of trainers has given rise to alternative initiatives. Some of them focus on career progression and to advanced training specialists' positions. Some of them develop new frameworks for promoting professional development of different persons involved in training activities. From the conceptual point of view these initiatives have emphasised both *vertical integration* (i.e. integration of different levels of qualifications) and *horizontal integration* (i.e. integration of different areas specialisation).

Vertical integration: From the year 2005 onwards several regional chambers (in collaboration with Social Partner organisations and government bodies) have launched pilot projects to educate training specialists for enterprises. The aim of these pilot schemes was to establish an intermediate qualification (between the AEVO certificate and the Bachelor's degree). These schemes have led to chambers' certificates with the profile of VET pedagogist (*IHK-Berufspädagoge*) and they have been targeted for training coordinators' or training managers at enterprises.

Horizontal integration: Parallel to these regional pilot projects the BIBB has had a joint expert group with the Social Partners and other stakeholders. The work of this group has provided the basis for an integrative professional profile to be established as an advanced training specialist's profession (*Fortbildungsberuf Berufspädagoge*). In the context of this work the currently separate training-related profiles have been related to a common framework.

In the context of the TTplus policy analyses it is possible to characterise these initiatives as **an emerging change agenda** to promote professionalization of trainers beyond the AEVO certificate. Already the pilot projects have involved several public bodies, Social Partner organisations, training providers and regional chambers. In a similar way the expert group has involved different actors. However, so far the initiatives have been taking shape and have not reached the point of being confronted with the established qualification frameworks and the given terms of recognition. In this respect the next step – the designed national project for supporting the nation-wide implementation and the related articulation with the qualifications of the Higher Education system – is more likely to bring into picture contradictions and conflicts of interest.

4.4. The role of power structures and control mechanisms

In addition to the above discussed public responsibilities it is essential to specify, what kind of role examination authorities and control mechanisms can play in the shaping of new training models.

Traditionally the regional chambers of industry and commerce (*Industrie- und Handelskammer - IHK*) or chambers of craft and trade (*Handwerkskammer*) have been the examining authorities for the VET-related qualifications. This has also been the case with the AEVO certificate and with the pilot projects for the intermediate qualifications for the training specialists. In this context it is worthwhile to emphasise that the related regulations have put the main emphasis on the mandatory examination and related training provision has had a supporting role. However, if the training of advanced training specialists is to be upgraded to the Bachelor-level, this will give rise to a debate, whether and to what extent chambers can maintain their role as examination authorities.

Due to the Bologna process the German universities (and other Higher Education Institutes) are adjusting their traditional degree programmes to the Bachelor/Master -structures and to the related requirements. As a part of this process each Bachelor- and Master programme has to go through the required accreditation process and to obtain the approval of external reviewers. This pattern has been developed on the basis of traditional academic peer review processes but in the context of the Bologna process this task has been given to specific accreditation agencies that cover a wide range of degree programmes. Regarding the initiatives to upgrade the training of advanced training specialists, it may appear problematic for the accreditation processes, if university programmes tend to accept prior learning that is recognised under external examination authority.

4.5. Reflective commentary

In the light of the above it is possible to characterise the German training policy context as a *constellation* of mutually complementing training policies. Also, the empirical studies of the TTplus project tend to confirm that the policy environment of the training activities is perceived as a systemic constellation:

- i) The policy analyses and the expert interviews indicate that the dual system of VET appears to be the main systemic framework for training activities in Germany. Also, in the case studies all interviewees refer to the dual system as the main framework for training activities in Germany.
- ii) In spite of the boundaries between initial VET, CVT and higher education, it appears that the trainers' qualifications are mainly promoted with the help of the AEVO certificate.
- iii) In spite of their criticism on the current AEVO model, the promoters of new training models (for advanced training professionals) try to involve the main stakeholders of the dual system in the developmental initiatives. In addition to this the expert interviews of the TTplus project indicate that the interviewed experts favour the participation of universities and the training departments of enterprises.

Altogether, it appears that the key actors in the field see the future of training policies in terms of renewal and improvement of the dual training system. Therefore, (at least in the short term) the reviewing of the current AEVO certificate is seen as the first step in the renewal of the training of trainers. The more far-reaching initiatives tend to gain support inasmuch as they provide new learning opportunities and stronger recognition for trainers and training specialists who otherwise would fall between the systems.

5. Insights into training-related policy contexts in other countries

The case of Germany has been presented in greater detail firstly because of direct access to the empirical materials produced for the TTplus project. As a contrast, this paper can only present insights into other policy contexts on the basis of secondary analyses of materials that have been produced by other TTplus partners. Therefore, it is not possible to go into detailed analyses or conceptually well-grounded groupings. However, taking into account the limits of the information sources, it is possible to give brief overviews on other training-related policy contexts and on the emerging policy issues.

5.1. Insights into the training-related policy context in Greece

The background information on the Greek training policies gives a picture of parallel government policies to promote quality of training with the help of central monitoring arrangements. For the public and private (including para-public) training centres there are umbrella organisations that have launched quality processes and related registers or measures for self-certification. However, distribution of authorities and the related patterns of monitoring reproduce the patchwork-like system architectures and the dispersed mode of policy development. Therefore, the enterprises that develop their own training activities seem to be reluctant to join in any closer cooperation with government bodies. Moreover, the commitment of the enterprises to organise training (and to promote professional development of trainers) varies strongly from case to case.

In the light of the above the Greek focus group meetings have considered that a further discussion on the TTplus framework and the proposed awarding body could provide a new starting point for policies that bring together different public bodies and stakeholders. In this respect the policy mobilisation for promoting Information Society has served as a predecessor model. In addition, the Greek focus groups draw attention to the need to analyse more closely the sectoral factors that have an influence on the organisational commitment to training and to utilisation of learning outcomes.

5.2. Insights into the training-related policy context in Portugal

In a similar way as above, the grouping of the policy context of Portugal is based on the information that has been provided by the country report and complemented with the mapping instrument. Concerning the system architectures, the VET courses can be developed by education and training providers integrated in the SNQ (System of National Qualifications). All entities that are entitled to deliver VET training have to be accredited by a national agency (the IQF – Institute for Training Quality). However, educational establishments under the Ministry of Education are accredited by a Department of the own Ministry of Education.

In addition to this there is a network of training centres that are directly linked to the IEFP (Institute of Employment and Vocational Training). The IEFP is the national agency that coordinates and supervises all the VET programmes offered as employment promotion measures. The IEFP is the entity responsible for the certification of the trainers' pedagogical ability (CAP). In order to offer a "Pedagogical Vocational Training Course", the training provider must be accredited by the IQF (Institution for the Training Quality) and examined by the IEFP with a focus on the domain for training. The approval by the IEFP is given if the training provision meets the necessary quality criteria and the current requirements of the labour market in the said domain. No training providers can give publicly supported and recognised training without having CAP-certified trainers. However, internal training schemes of private companies are exempted from the formal requirement of the CAP certificates for their trainers.

In the Portuguese focus group meetings the role of the CAP certificate was discussed as a critical issue. At present the CAP certificate is appreciated as a basic measure to ensure certain pedagogic quality in publicly supported training. However, the current patterns of delivering the training for general CAP courses (and requiring CAP-conform curricula of other training provisions) tend to restrict the dissemination of new pedagogic and curricular models. Therefore, the use of the TTplus framework was discussed from the perspective of introducing new pilot activities (that would make the CAP more open for new pedagogic innovations and for professional development of trainers).

5.3. Insights into the training-related policy context in Romania

In general the picture of the training-related policy context in Romania is characterised by the (re)distribution of powers and by the emergence of new agencies after the transition period. In this context the making of National Qualification Framework (based on the European Qualification Framework for Lifelong learning) plays a major role. Furthermore, the introduction of major pilot projects funded by European Social Funds provides a basis for promoting new training initiatives. In the Romanian focus group meetings central attention was given to the potential of the TTplus framework to support these developments. In this respect the two groups set different accents regarding the role of the framework as a support tool for pedagogic development initiatives and/or as support tool for quality assurance and related monitoring.

5.4. Insights into the training-related policy context in the United Kingdom (Wales)

The general picture of the training-related policy contexts of the United Kingdom (Wales) is based on the secondary analyses of

- i) earlier government documents on the education of teachers for FE colleges (which tend to blur the distinction between teachers and trainers),
- ii) the NVQ regulations for trainers' competences and to a related statement of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI),
- iii) studies of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) on the distribution of training functions and their integration to the professional profiles of HRD specialists and to
- iv) newer government reform policies concerning the promotion of training- and facilitating-related competences in the reformed Initial Teacher Training (ITT) – a policy that is to be followed later on in other areas of teacher education and training of trainers.

Concerning the analysis of the policy landscape, the country report and the mapping instrument give a general idea on the role of the NVQs and the GNVQs as central governmental instruments. Yet, it is difficult to relate the UK-level information to the current devolution of government powers between the central government (of the United Kingdom) and the regional governments in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Since the Welsh government is only introducing its own policies for education and training, it has been difficult to use more specific information to update the picture. Consequently, the focus group meetings in the United Kingdom and in Wales have approached the trainers and the client organisations that were involved in the case studies. In these discussions the trainers themselves started to develop ideas, how to promote their own professional development of trainers and how to get appropriate support. This led to a further reflection on the possible role of professional associations, industrial bodies and government bodies as promoters of new initiatives.

5.5. Insights into the training-related policy context in the Netherlands

The picture of the training-related policy context of the Netherlands is mainly based on information provided by the mapping instrument. The country report of the Netherlands provides also some

background information on the development of Dutch VET and CVT systems (including a nutshell description on the education of teachers, trainers and HRD professionals). The information provided by the mapping instrument gives indications on the distribution of powers between public bodies and division of labour between operative agencies.

The expert interviews that were organised in the Netherlands drew attention to the possibilities of the particular organisations (that were presented in the Dutch case studies) to make use of the TTplus framework. In this context the organisations considered themselves as free players in the training markets. Thus, the expectations on the usability and future development of the framework were related to benchmarking and quality assurance at the organisational level.

5.6. Reflective commentary

As has been indicated above, the time frame of the TTplus project didn't make it possible undertake detailed policy analyses in all participating countries. However, already on the basis of this limited information it is possible to draw some preliminary conclusions on the role of current policies as support for (or hindrance to) professional development of trainers. On the basis of *grounded* policy analyses it is possible to review the nutshell pictures with a focus on the following questions:

- In what way are current policies addressing the issue 'professional development of trainers'?
- To what extent the interviewed organisations perceive that their needs and interests (regarding the quality of training or development of trainers) are considered?
- To what extent do the organisations bring forward needs for interventions (or points of interest concerning their own participation) in further policy development.

Below, some indications are given on the **relative distance between public policies and the training contexts** that have been studied. On the basis of the experienced distance the respondents have presented different views and expectations concerning the future role of public policies regarding the professional development of trainers

- In **Greece** the public policies were perceived as fragmented interventions that did not address explicitly the training activities that were developed by individual companies (based on their own initiatives). Emerging initiatives to support the professional development of trainers would have to overcome the current particularisation.
- In **Portugal** the public policies have an impact via mandatory training certificate and via public monitoring activities (IEFP). Emerging initiatives to promote pedagogic and social innovations in training would require changes in the mandatory certificate and in the pattern of monitoring.
- In **Romania** the role of public policies is being reshaped alongside the introduction of European Qualification frameworks and the European Social Funds. There are some expectations on the integration 'training the trainers' to national qualification frameworks and related interests to launch pilot projects on training (including professional support for trainers).
- In **the United Kingdom** (and in particular in **Wales**) the relation between public policies and the training contexts was considered more distant due to devolution, lack of policies regarding training (within companies) and due to the mode of intervention (focus on assessment). Thus, the emerging initiatives were discussed as matters for professional communities and networks.
- In **the Netherlands** the relation between public policies and the case studies was not examined in detail. Thus, the usability of the TTplus framework was discussed from the perspective of the specific companies (and their interest to use training-related benchmarks).

6. Conclusions and discussion

6.1. Summary of the key points of the paper

The paper above has been started with a brief clarification of the policy background of the European project TTplus. In this context the task ‘policy analyses’ has been indicated as a supporting task vis-à-vis the main task of the TTplus project. Thus, the main thrust was to analyse the professional situation of ‘trainers’ in different training cultures and to draw conclusions for professional development of trainers. In addition to this the project sought to specify, how the diverse (mainly national) policies can provide a support for measures professional development of trainers.

Consequently, the task ‘policy analyses’ was not considered as a completely separate activity but as an attached measure that helps to relate the empirical findings to a policy context. The paper has discussed the methodological foundations for the empirical studies of the TTplus project (the ‘contextual image’ approach) and presented the outline for related policy studies (the ‘grounded policy analyses’). Then, the paper has presented insights into the German policy context (based on the authors’ own reporting for the project) and into other policy contexts (based on the analysis of the other partners’ reporting for the project).

The approach ‘grounded policy analyses’ has been developed in the course of the TTplus project and as a response to problems that have been encountered during the work. Due to practical reasons the approach has been used in greater detail with the German material. For other countries it was only possible to use the approach for secondary analyses based on the policy mapping sheets, case studies and the country reports produced for the TTplus project. Therefore, the above presented results can only be considered as preliminary findings. For further use of the ‘grounded policy analysis’ approach it is necessary to design the research process in such a way that the policy analyses and the empirical analyses can be undertaken parallel to each other (without mutual interference). Also, it is worthwhile to note that this paper does not cover the analysis on the role of the TTplus project vis-à-vis the introduction of the European Qualification Frameworks for Higher Education (the Bologna process) and for Lifelong Learning (the Copenhagen process). These analyses are reported in a separate discussion paper.

Given the above mentioned reservations it is possible to present the preliminary results of the grounded policy analyses in a more systematic way. Below, the findings of the country-specific analyses of training-related policy contexts have been integrated into a contextual map. Then, some cross-cutting issues, tensions and contradictions have been listed and discussed. Finally, based on these analyses, some concluding remarks are presented concerning the role of the common framework that is being prepared by the TTplus project.

6.2. Analyses of *diverse* training-related policy contexts

The main point of the grounded policy analyses has been the shift of emphasis from policies as such (that may or may not have an impact on training) to training-related policy contexts. By changing the perspective the TTplus project has made it possible to analyse the role of policies as support environment for training-related measures and initiatives. The starting point is clarification of the relative distance between training-oriented policies vis-à-vis the field *and* of the responsiveness of key actors in training vis-à-vis policies. This provides the basis for specifying the role of emerging change agendas and key issues for actors in the field. This makes it possible to anticipate the need for policy interventions and the readiness for participation.

Below, the table 1 brings together the above presented preliminary results as a *contextual map* for analysing current policies on training and on promoting the professional development of trainers.

Table 1: Contextual map on policy environments for professional development of trainers

Country	Policy context(s)/ Responsiveness	Change agendas/ Key issues	Need for interventions/ Case for participation
Germany	National alliance for training opportunities; Temporary suspension of the mandatory trainers' certificate (AEVO) vs. continuity of AEVO-based <i>training of trainers</i> and related training cultures in companies that provide dual training.	Re-introduction & partial renewal of the AEVO. vs. local piloting with complementary training models: - horizontal integration (diverse training functions), - vertical integration (progression to higher position)	Re-establishment of the AEVO agreed by key stakeholders; Designed umbrella project on higher trainers' qualifications vs. lack of concept for recognition of prior learning within trainers' career models.
Greece	Fragmentation of public training policies & monitoring of trainers' quality (registers) vs. adaptation of training centres and 'opting out' strategies of private companies.	Concerns of public bodies on the EU-compatibility of parallel registers vs. concerns of associations of HRD professionals' and trainers.	Overarching body & stakeholder support needed to overcome fragmentation vs. sectoral and organisational expertise needed to involve the private companies.
Portugal	Trainer's certificate (CAP) and monitoring by the employment authority (IEFP) as key instruments of public policies vs. use of CAP precondition for public support and EU-funding	CAP and the monitoring pattern are stabilised; no policy debates and major change agendas vs. interest to pilot with new pedagogic approaches.	Revision of CAP and the patterns of delivery and monitoring needed for curricular initiatives vs. interest to launch new regional pilot projects
Romania	Public policies models shaped with external policy advice during the transition period vs. organisational and sectoral training cultures have been shaped with diverse ideas.	Current policies are being mainstreamed on the basis of the EQFs and NQFs vs. regional and educational actors willing to launch ESF-funded pilot projects.	Policy makers' interest in following the EU models and related policy advice vs. training-related actors' interest to gain free space for innovations and piloting.
United Kingdom (Wales)	Devolution of government powers, policies mainly targeted to school-based settings and to assessment of outcomes vs. companies' interest in outsourcing training functions and in assessing the service providers.	Current policies focus on assessment processes and on accreditation of the awarding bodies vs. trainers' interest in shaping support services for their own professional networks.	Difficulties in addressing trainers' professional development via public education and training policies vs. trainers' interest in finding context-specific platforms for innovations and piloting
the Netherlands	Particularisation of public powers, policies mainly targeted to monitoring/ benchmarking of educational institutions vs. companies' interest in outsourcing training functions and in assessing the service providers.	Current policies focus on accreditation of educational institutes and accountability of training services vs. companies' and training providers' interest in benchmarks that are usable in the training markets	Ongoing pilot schemes for continuing professional development of teachers without teacher education vs. difficulties in addressing <i>trainers'</i> professional development via public education and training policies.

The contextual map has been firstly developed to present the results of grounded policy analyses. In this respect the map serves as an instrument to present country-specific information on training-related policy contexts in a European group picture. However, the instrument does not merely repeat the bits of country-specific information that have been presented earlier. Instead, the instrument draws attention to the interplay between given policy contexts, emerging key issues (on trainers' professional development) and on possible interventions or initiatives. In this respect the instrument helps to put questions on trainers' professional development into the centre and consider the policy contexts, change agendas and interventions as possible support environments. Equally, the instrument helps to create comparative discussion between different country-specific samples and related policy environments – not between system architectures and policy frameworks as such.

In addition it is worthwhile to note that the instrument doesn't present the policy contexts as linear chains between policy-preparation, decision-making and policy-implementation. Instead, the instrument makes it possible to portray the relations between policy contexts or policy processes (on the one hand) and the activities and initiatives in the context of training (on the other hand) as fields of interaction. On the basis of empirical material it is possible to highlight mutual adjustment, conceptual tensions and eventual conflicts of interest.

6.3. Analyses of cross-cultural issues, tensions and contradictions

The analyses of diverse training-related policy contexts emphasise country-specific samples, related policy environments and context-specific fields of interaction. However, the grounded policy analyses of the TTplus project draw attention to some *cross-cultural* issues, tensions and conflicts of interest that are characteristic of such fields of interaction:

1. Issue: Training as a domain of its own or as an interface area

In many cases current policies tend to treat training competences as a separate domain of expertise. However, the empirical studies demonstrate that training-related expertise is often linked to interfaces between domain-specific knowledge, work process knowledge and pedagogic know-how on promoting context-specific learning processes. Therefore, an *overly training-centred approach* may draw attention from the interface character of trainers' professional competences.

2. Issue: Training-related competences as exclusive know-how or as bridging expertise

In many cases current policies tend to treat 'training competences' as the exclusive competences of established and recognised 'trainers'. However, the empirical studies of the TTplus projects demonstrate that training activities are often based on cooperation between trainers and other training-related actors. Therefore, an *overly trainer-centred approach* may draw attention from the distribution of training functions and of collaborative training/learning activities.

3. Issue: Trainers' certificates as minimum requirements or as milestones in continuing professional development

In many cases current policies require some formal qualifications or certificates as entry qualifications for occupying a post of 'trainer'. However, the empirical studies of the TTplus project bring forward several contradictions regarding the use of such certificates. Equally, the empirical studies bring forward other arrangements for involving both certified trainers and other actors in training activities. Therefore, an *overly qualification-centred approach* may put an overemphasis on entry qualifications and marginalise the role of promoting training-related competences via continuing professional development.

4. Issue: Quality development via external control or via internal learning activities

In many cases the policies introduce databases and registers for monitoring the training competences of organisations and their staff members. The empirical studies have brought into picture several other patterns for promoting quality of training and work-related learning with the help of peer learning and related knowledge sharing. Therefore, an *overly control-centred approach* may lead to an overemphasis on monitoring the documentary evidence and leave to margin the role of shared learning for quality development.

5. Issue: Ownership of training-related expertise by external authorities or by the actors and organisations involved

In many cases the policies tend to highlight the role of external authorities as owners of supreme training-related expertise (and as competent bodies to recognise trainers' qualifications and competences). The empirical studies bring forward the need to take into account the context-specific requirements for learning, facilitation and related feedback. Therefore, an *overly centralised approach* may lead to the marginalisation of the needs of organisations in which training competences are being developed and utilised.

6.4. Implications for the common framework

Above (see section 2), two critical questions have been raised for the policy analyses of the project:

- i) the question, whether '*teachers and trainers*' can be considered as a homogeneous target group for European policies or whether there is a need to develop a specific approach for '*trainers*';
- ii) the question, whether joint European frameworks can be used effectively to promote '*training of trainers*' or '*continuing professional development of trainers*' in different training cultures?

The results of the policy analyses of the TTplus project do not support a conclusion that overarching European policies for 'teachers and trainers' could successfully cater for the target group 'trainers'. Already the initial policy mapping gives indications of particularised policies, fragmentation of measures and essential gaps vis-à-vis specific groups of trainers. The results of the grounded policy analyses bring into picture a dispersed landscape of policy contexts with different critical issues and with different preconditions for successful interventions and initiatives. Thus, the picture is clearly different from the policy landscape for improving the quality of teacher education or for promoting the professionalization of teachers.

Likewise, the policy analyses of the TTplus project do not support a conclusion that European policy frameworks could effectively support training of trainers or continuing professional development of trainers. Firstly this is related to the particularised and fragmented landscape that does not provide a basis for similar intergovernmental agreements that have supported the Bologna process and the Copenhagen process. Secondly this is related to the relative distance between public policies and the actual training contexts (that has been demonstrated by the grounded policy analyses). However, this conclusion has to be linked to further analyses on European qualification frameworks and on their role in promoting the professional development of trainers.

The TTplus project has drafted a proposal for a common developmental framework with a view on different training cultures and policy environments opportunities. Instead of setting fixed target groups, competence profiles or minimum qualifications the project has outlined an open space for learning and professional development. In this context the framework invites trainers, companies, trade unions, intermediate bodies and public authorities to specify their commitments to the development of training. This proposal tries to open a new avenue for European cooperation.

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