



MATCHING EDUCATION WITH THE NEEDS OF PUBLIC SERVICES OF THE FUTURE

Policy recommendations

INTRODUCTION

The European employers' organisations CEEP and EFEE jointly undertook a research project entitled: *Matching education with the needs of public services – challenges for policy and practice*. This document aims to highlight the policy recommendations that CEEP and EFEE would like to present to policy-makers and social partners at European, national and local level.

This project started early 2013 with the strong ambition to get a better view on the competences necessary to deliver effective public services and to answer to the challenges that Public Services providers are facing in order to respond to growing demands and new needs from the citizens.

The Europe 2020 Strategy has set an ambitious target of a 75% employment rate to be achieved by 2020. Today, the shortages of persons with specific skills and competences have become a serious problem in many sectors and an obstacle to growth in some enterprises.

According to the CEEP “Pulse of Public Services”¹ published in November 2013, “finding the workforce with the appropriate skills” is among the top three challenges identified by leaders of public services and the first challenge not linked to the effects of the crisis. On a broader perspective, the cost to the European Union of youth not finding work is enormous: one estimate puts the annual cost of the NEETs group (People Not in Education, Employment or Training) at €153 billion in 2011².

CHALLENGES FACED BY PUBLIC SERVICES PROVIDERS

Public Services employ around 65 million people and serve more than 500 million citizens in Europe. To provide these services, they invest more than €500bn into the economy, some 22% of the total investment in 2010. Public Services providers contribute significantly towards not only the economic activity but also the wellbeing of EU citizens.

These services face challenges that have strong impacts on Human Resources Management including:

- Financial challenge: Public services are under strong pressure “to do more with less”;
- Demographic change and diversity: public services are increasingly required to serve ageing and

¹ CEEP, Pulse of Public Services, Autumn 2013, www.ceep.eu

² EUROFOUND, NEETs Young people not in employment, education or training: Characteristics, costs and policy responses in Europe, 2012

more diversified citizens;

- Technical progress and innovation: The services being provided are much more complex and technical than they used to be;
- Increasing competition: Sectoral liberalisation has led to the opening up of markets to new entrants with different practices and obligations;
- The changing nature of technology and environmental concerns are changing the ways services

are provided to the citizens;

A case of best and innovative practice focusing on this issue has been implemented successfully by the Pipers' Hill College in Ireland. It combines the provision of new competences with changes in the method of learning and teaching by switching roles through meetings among teachers (peer learning)

As such Public Services employees need to be able to adapt to new environment, to new working methods and to ensure that they acquire the competences and dispositions required in the workplaces they are likely to enter. Workers therefore also have an important responsibility to foster their own employability; if necessary and possible, they should be innovative, creative and

flexible.

Education and training institutions also need to provide their graduates with the capacity to be effective lifelong learners so that they may be able to continually update their knowledge, skills, competences and dispositions as the needs of the workplace go on changing over time.

Having an effective and efficient workforce is not only beneficiary for citizens using Public Services in Europe, but also provides employees with increased job satisfaction and interesting career perspectives

It is also important to better anticipate skills need in the future. In a world where change is constant; it is not possible neither for education and training providers or enterprises to predict accurately what specific competences will be required in the workplaces of the future. Consequently, the emphasis has switched to the provision of key competences, and the inculcation of attitudes that provide workers with the capacity to go on learning for the whole of their lives so that they may be able to adapt effectively to the changes that will affect their lives.

Currently, the following key competences have been identified as critical to ensuring this ongoing adaptability.

- Communication in both first language and another language.
- Mathematics and information technology.
- A willingness to accept change and to change the way we work.
- A willingness and capacity to go on learning throughout life so they may be able to continuously adjust to new circumstances.
- A willingness to work cooperatively and collaboratively with colleagues and users.
- A willingness to take responsibility in the workplace.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Recognising that the quality of human capital in an organisation is the key driver of organisational effectiveness, EFEE and CEEP recommend to policy makers at all levels and commit their members as appropriate to the following points:

The Ministry of Portugal stimulates that individual agreements are signed between vocational school and enterprise/s. They guarantee in-company training for secondary vocational school pupils. *Purpose:* to ensure that graduates from vocational schools have the hands-on experience required by employers.

- To ensure close cooperation between public services providers and education and training providers;
- Public Service employers to develop career paths for their workers and, when possible, provide training for the employees and development programmes that ensure that all employees have the competences essential both to meet the citizens' needs and to the professional

satisfaction of the workers themselves;

- Employers to give consideration to establishing work-based programmes such as apprenticeship programmes; In this regard the dual system of education/training that operates in countries such as Germany has some merit;
- Employers to have a particular regard for their older workers as they can contribute enormously to the organisation in terms of knowledge and work experience. In this respect, re-skilling and up-skilling are important measures;

E-mentoring, NHS, United-Kingdom

A mentoring web provision for young people to develop awareness of and support access to roles and job opportunities in the NHS was created. The objective of this activity is to make young people aware of the range of NHS jobs and provide mentoring support for those with a particular interest.

- Public Services providers and education/training providers to fully support and implement, as appropriate, the 2006 European Framework for Key Competences for Lifelong Learning, as it marks a paradigm change in teaching/learning from the provision of a static body of pre-defined knowledge to a more dynamic and holistic development of competences – an approach that is consistent with the development of lifelong learners;
- To work on the promotion of Public Services as an attractive career opportunity offering interesting and modern jobs for young people. This can be enhanced by activities such as offering opportunities for schools to bring groups of students on workplace visits or to promote activities in schools;
- Education providers to highlight the important role that teachers play in preparing future citizens and workers for a world that is constantly changing, initial teacher education is no longer a sufficient preparation for a teaching career. All teachers need to have their vocational and pedagogical competences regularly updated through their participation in appropriate professional development programmes;
- Education providers and public services employers to link the curricula of education and training with the needs of the modern labour market, with a particular emphasis of promoting the link between VET/IVET and work placements;
- Overall, there is the need to develop stronger communication channels between public services providers and education providers to enable both sides to further cooperate while preserving their respective strengths;

What is CEEP?

CEEP gathers enterprises and organisations from across Europe, both public and private, at national, regional and local level, which are public employers or providers of services of general interest. CEEP members employ more than 30% of the EU workforce and invest for more than €500 bln a year into the real economy.

CEEP is one of the three general cross-industry European Social Partners.

What is EFEE?

EFEE is an organisation created to represent the interests of employers in the strategic and highly diverse education sector. We represent education employers from all levels of education, from pre-school to higher education institutions, including different national organisations (education councils, ministries, local and regional authority employers' organisations).