

Human resources

Miroslav Vasin,
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In the year to come, we stay on the right track!

John McGrath,
National Skills Unit, Ireland
Can Serbia Learn from the Celtic Tiger?!

Prof. PhD Peter Stanovnik,
Institute for Economic Researches,
Ljubljana, Slovenia

Innovation-driven economies and competitiveness of human resources



comparative advantages of Vojvodina, in comparison with other regions in the environment.

Second, an area that is by no means less important refers to the improvement of the labor supply. There are two key mechanisms. First, the use of active labor market measures, which are aimed at training and re-training the workforce in order to adjust the current to the required skills. Within the active measures, special attention should be paid to women's employment. In fact, women are in social risk group that has the greatest potential for productivity growth. Increased employment of women would significantly reduce the poverty rate, which would translate unemployed female workforce from the category of beneficiaries of social welfare into the category of taxpayer. In addition, it is important to note that sectors that traditionally absorb female labor force are among those that are least capital intensive sectors (such as manufacturing, com-

merce and catering), where Vojvodina can build competitive advantages even in times of the crisis. Second, unlike the active labor market measures that improve results in the short term, it is necessary to undertake long-term measures to increase the level and quality of human capital. It is necessary to truly reform, at first place, secondary vocational education, whose curricula should be more professional than theoretical. The importance of reforms of that particular segment in the education system is proven by the fact that nearly 90% of the unemployed in Vojvodina has lower and middle level education. In addition, it is necessary to institutionalize the system of lifelong learning. Only this way will it be possible to establish an effective link between the education system and the labor market.

the complete presentation can be found at: <http://www.vojvodina-cess.org/index.php?mediumid=2&pageid=145&stukid=783>

CESS Interview

Written by: Maja Sokic,
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Anton Aufner,
Institute for Economic Promotion - WIFI Austria

The know-how secures success

Success doesn't happen by chance - nobody knows that better than the companies that are daily keeping their position in the market. An important precondition is continuing and further vocational education and training. Studies show that it contributes crucially to the increase of productivity. It is an engine for innovations that make businesses competitive and it therefore substantially secures jobs.

In Austria continuing and further vocational education and training has as name - WIFI (the acronym for "Wirtschaftsförderungsinstitut" in German which in translation means The Institute for Economic Promotion). The Institute for Economic Promotion of the Austrian Federal Economic Chamber is the number one of Austrian businesses when it comes to training and continuing vocational education. For over 60 years the WIFI has been a competent partner of the Austrian economy.

This tradition commits to innovation. The WIFI stands for applied knowledge and the dialogue between business and learning. All across Austria, 560,000 customers attend 30,500 courses and training programs every year in WIFI. Course offers a wide range, from Management and Corporate Leadership to Personality, Languages, Applied Business Administration, Applied Data Processing and IT, Technology, Sectors of Industry as well as to Vocational Matriculation Examinations and Private Schools.

12,000 top trainers and experts from the business sphere teach in those courses "from the practice - for the practice". In Austria, there is one main WIFI office in each of the 9 provinces, with altogether 80 WIFI Austrian branch offices. These facts show the importance of the role WIFI plays in the Austrian further education and how Austrian entrepreneurs value the continuous improvement of their and their staff's know-how and skills. Also, during the previous difficult years Austrian businesses understood that it pays off twice to invest into training: for one thing there is more time to upgrade skills and know-how and, for another, companies will be more competitive when the economy goes up again.

WIFI - educational partner of the Austrian and international businesses in international HR management

WIFI doesn't limit its activities to Austria. 8 WIFI already exist in Central and Southeastern Europe (CEE/SEE), among those one in Serbia. Why? Austria is estimated to be among the main winners of the EU eastward enlargement. In most Central and Southeastern European countries Austria is among the top foreign investors. Approximately one fifth of the Austrian export goes to the countries in CEE/SEE. Austrian companies have seized the opportunities offered to them by the fall of the Iron Curtain and by the EU enlargement. One of the areas of business that were and still are especially challenged

by this expansion is the development of Human Resources. Many companies use the WIFI Network's training offers for this purpose. For good reasons, as Anton Aufner, director of WIFI International explains in the interview with the CESS Magazine:

CESS Austrian companies, expanding to the markets in CEE and SEE are facing new challenges, especially in the management of Human Resources. How did WIFI react to this development?



Anton Aufner

Anton Aufner: Like business, education also knows no borders anymore. WIFI started in 2002 to open up to the markets in Central and Southeastern Europe through WIFI International. Austrian companies already based in this region or currently expanding there can count on the support of the local WIFI-Partner Institutes. In Slovakia, Czech Republic, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Bulgaria, Croatia and in Serbia Austrian companies are already profiting - as in their home country - from the familiar, practical WIFI know-how of high standing quality. Of course WIFI addresses local businesses, as well as authorities and international companies. The whole economic zone covered by the Partner Institutes of WIFI International comprises of approximately 100 million inhabitants.

CESS In what way does WIFI contribute to the internationalization of Austrian companies?

Anton Aufner: Human Resources departments of Austrian companies in Central and Southeastern Europe are facing the task to internationalize this area. The 8 Partner Institutes in this region can train their local staff in the subsidiaries - on the reliably high and internationally recognized WIFI level and in the local language.

Our Partner Institutes offer - as the WIFIs in Austria - internationally recognized certificates. The pool of trainers of the WIFI Network comprehends more than 12,000 trainers; all of them experienced practitioners positioned in the economy.

CESS Why is continuing and further vocational education and training "on the spot" so important?

Anton Aufner: As it is well known, almost 40 percent of success of a company depends on the HR development and the motivation and qualification of staff. In order to stay competitive, to be successful on the market and to implement planned growth strategies, well trained people are a precondition. To offer Austrian local and international businesses high WIFI standards is of crucial importance since on the markets in CEE/SEE countries one can find uncountable education providers. But only a very small percentage of them meet the high requirements of international and Western European countries.

CESS How does the cooperation of the HR departments of companies with WIFI International look like from an organizational view?

Anton Aufner: Thanks to interconnectedness of the whole WIFI network, in Austria and abroad, the cooperation with HR departments is efficient and uncomplicated. In the communication triangle "HR department - WIFI expert in Austria - local WIFI partner" we can develop and realize training programs tailored to the specific and local needs of the companies. These can i.e. be individual training units, job-related trainings, management courses as well as transnational seminars and courses.

CESS You mentioned that WIFI is also active in Serbia. Can you tell us more about the activities?

Anton Aufner: WIFI Serbia started its activities in 2009 with the aim to provide top training for Serbian, Austrian and other international companies active in the country as well as for local authorities. More than 30 Serbian and Croatian trainers have already been recruited. Currently WIFI Serbia, based in Belgrade, participates in two qualification projects funded by the Austrian Development Agency (ADA). In the first one a qualification network of more than 10 companies has been established and trainings have been done for more than 550 participants in the areas of management, leadership, sales, etc. The second project focuses on the strengthening of the National Employment Service and the Guarantee Fund in Vojvodina through education of internal consultants for founding new businesses. 50 new consultants will be trained, 50 existing consultants will get an upgrade and 50 young entrepreneurs and 300 - 400 unemployed who want to establish businesses will be trained and coached. In addition to these training projects tailored courses are offered made to businesses in Serbia.

CESS What will in your opinion determine the international competitiveness in the future?

Anton Aufner: The factor of education and further education as well as the qualification level of the staff will be increasingly important on the markets of Central and Southeastern Europe when it comes to product and service quality, market success and, finally, to international competitiveness.