

## PROJECT CONTEXT

The project is geared to the guidelines of the revised Lisbon Strategy in 2005 which aimed at putting a greater focus on economic growth and employment within EU-member states. In this context a major objective targets the improvement of regional competitiveness having regard to the use of information and communication technologies (ICT) in conjunction with an enhanced institutional cooperation.

The daily cross-border cooperation of labour administrations and social partners is characterised by obstacles which hinder cooperation and – related with that – complicate cross-border mobility of labour (e.g. lack of knowledge about activities/motivations of social partners and labour offices in the neighbouring country, difficulties in judging qualifications of foreign job seekers etc.). It is essential to face these challenges with an alliance of institutions and interests in order to gain a comprehensive view on the common economic area and on these grounds to vitalise it with regard to regional interests and needs. Often, merely national media, portals and information centres cannot cope with the exigencies and efforts of a common cross-border marketing area and its mobile labour force. Already existing stocks of information are therefore often limited, both as regards their content and extensiveness and their geographical coverage and availability of different languages. Thus, an information portal designed and promoted on a cross-border scale can help to systematically supplement national data and to meet the demands of a growing trans-national supply of information. Thereby, the intended project strives for two **primary goals**:

- ▶ **Development of a multilingual online-information portal to compare job profiles as well as vocational and advanced training on both sides of the border.**
- ▶ **Initiation of cross-border network activities between labour market and educational institutions and social partners.**

As a first step the project partners compile and coordinate **research activities** concerning the occupations most required on the common labour market, in order to contrast their demands on a cross-border level. Simultaneously the creation of the **web site structure** is realised including **graphic design** (logo, appearance, programming, content-management-system etc.), **contents** e.g. job title, job description, vocational training (duration, curriculum, practical and theoretical contents), **modalities of recognition of qualifications** (contact persons, necessary documents, time limits). Supplementary links to detailed job descriptions (training regulations of responsible ministries or administrations) are offered. The collected data will be constantly fed into the web site, which will be evaluated and/or adapted continuously. Parallel activities promote the project in terms of **workshops** and **conferences** involving labour market institutions and professional experts. The following institutions and special interest groups from Bulgaria and Romania will collaborate in this project as strategic partners:

- ▶ **Chambers of commerce and marketing boards** (Regional Statistical Offices – Bulgaria; Bulgarian Construction Chamber, Bulgarian Craftsmen Chamber, Bulgarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry - regional offices in Vratza, Vidin, Montana, Ruse and Silsitra, Chamber of Commerce and Industry - Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti, Regional Agency for Statistics - Craiova)
- ▶ **Labour administrations** (Regional Employment Service – Lovech, Montana, Ruse, AJOFM- County Agency for Labor Trade - Dolj, Olt, Mehedinti),
- ▶ **Institutions of education** (Regional Inspectorate on Education – Bulgaria, Medical University of Pleven, Medical College for laboratory assistants, rehabilitation therapist and social workers - Pleven, “St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo” – Pleven Branch, Pedagogical College of Pleven, St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, University of Ruse “Angel Kanchev”, Academy of Economy “D.A.Cenov” – Svishtov, University of Shoumen “Episkop Konstantin Preslavski”, University of Craiova)

These organisations do not dispose of an own budget within the project, but assume accompanying responsibilities in the promotion of the project, give advice on the way of implementing certain modules (e.g. workshops), assist by know-how and professional expertise or act as an interface to target groups. On that score, members of each national EURES network and their associated services will also be involved.