

European pathway 1



Europass Training
Final Report

EUROPASS

Europass Training Final Report

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I. Introduction

This report will summarize the activities of the National Board of Education concerning the Europass Training initiative from 2000 to 2005. This report is based on the official final reports to the European Commission by the National Board of Education. The report is chronologically organized, from one budget period to the next one. The activities on the behalf of the National Board of Education are divided into the three key issue areas: 1. Promotional activities, 2. Information materials 3. Review of the follow-up and distribution systems. As a part of the follow-up on the Europass Training the students using the document have been asked to give feed-back on the Europass Training document and the training period itself. One such study was conducted based on the statistics gathered from the feedback responses and statistical data for the period of 2000-2002; and for the purpose of this report, another study was conducted based on the statistics from the 2003-2005 period.

II. Background

The Europass Training was launched in Finland in January 2000. In practice the implementation of the Council Decision of 21 December 1998 (1999/51/EC) could not start until early spring, when the Commission finalized the country specific documents and they were forwarded to the member states. In Finland, the coverage of the Europass Training document was defined so that the European training period was to include learning-on-the-job, apprenticeship training, practical training or other such training which is in connection with practical working life or learning-on-the-job. Vocational further training which leads to a qualification could also be included in a training period using the Europass Training document.

The Europass Training is based on European Union Council Decision (1999/51/EC) which was to promote *European pathways*. A European pathway is a period of training which a person undergoing work-linked training (including apprenticeship) has followed in a

member state other than one in which his or her training is based. The Europass Training is a Community information document which certifies that the European pathway has been undertaken and describes its contents in the languages concerned. The goal is that it includes learning-while-working, work experience or such theoretical training which includes practical work as well.

The following quality measures were required for the use of the Europass Training:

1. The sending institution acknowledges the European training as a part of the training that the applicant is completing in one of the European Union member states.
2. The sending institution and the foreign partner establish a contract on the duration, goals, content, implementation and follow-up of the European training period prior to the training taking place.
3. The sending Finnish institution and the foreign partner appoint a contact person, who guide the student during the European training period and who will monitor that the contract is implemented.

1. 2000-2001

The Finnish National Board of Education (NBE) was appointed by the Ministry of Education as the national coordinator of the Europass in 2000. To support the work of the NBE, a Steering Group was established. The participants of the Steering Group represented those studying towards a vocational qualification, quarters promoting international mobility and labor market organizations.

The ordered Europass training documents were sent to the institutions and the organizers of training by the NBE. In addition, the NBE reported to the Ministry of Education and the Commissions Directorate-General for Education and Culture on the use of the Europass. From the Commission, the NBE received 3000 Europass documents in Finnish, 600 in

Swedish, 300 in English and 20 in each European Union language (8), a total of 160 documents.

1.1. Promotional activities

By the end of March, the National Board of Education had sent more than a thousand Europass documents to different institutions. Most of these were upper secondary vocational institutions but included also a number of polytechnics, one university and one apprentice traineeship center.

A project manager, an assistant and two experts were involved in the information and promotion work. In addition, two people working at the training and consultancy services of the NBE provided technical assistance for the organization of the launching information seminar. The launching seminar was held on 15 December and it gathered 260 participants. Represented were – among others – polytechnics, vocational institutions, universities, institutions offering additional and further training, private institutions, and representatives of the field of apprenticeship training, companies, social partners, student associations as well as organizations promoting international mobility. A 4-page brochure was printed for this occasion describing the document and its use.

After the seminar the creation of an online version of the seminar brochure was begun. Information on the Europass Training was published in three newsletters and one newspaper article was published. In addition, information on the Europass Training was on presented in three radio programs. Inquiries were answered via telephone and email. Info on Europass Training was mediated via the email list of the Leonardo Centre. An Advisory Board was created for the dissemination of Europass info among social partners connected with work-linked training. The Advisory Board comprised of representatives of the Ministry of Education, the National Board of Education, higher education institutions, student unions, social partners and the Apprenticeship Training Centre in Helsinki as well

as coordinators of international mobility, local and regional authorities, rectors of vocational institutions and training inspectors.

1.2. Information material

Information on the Europass was displayed on both the National Board of Education website (<http://www.oph.fi/europassi>) as well as the European Commission website (<http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/Europass/index-en.html>). An e-mail box for questions concerning the Europass Training document was established (europassi@oph.fi). It was made possible to order Europass documents from the above mentioned e-mail address, via the web pages, by phone or fax.

1.3. Review of the budget year

Along with the Europass Training documents, follow-up forms were sent to the institutions. The person responsible for the distribution of the Europass document was to fill in the form; the students were able to, if they so wished, give feedback by describing their experiences on the use of Europass.

The questions that the educational institutions most frequently had dealt with applicability of the document to their students, whether or not the Europass was free of charge and whether or not it could be filled in retrospectively. In many cases, directions for filling in the form were asked. A noteworthy number of questions concerned language issues.

Amount of participants attending the launch seminar of December 1999 surpassed all expectations: the 260 participants came from a geographically large area and represented a wide range of organizations. The number of inquiries increased in January and February 2000 after the seminar. Greatest interest was from the vocational non-university sector.

2. 2001-2002

In 2001, the National Board of Education signed the European Commission grant agreement, which concerned the information and promotion campaign. The permanent project staff included a project co-coordinator, a project planner and two secretaries whose duty it was to ensure and see to the arrangements of information and promotion activities as well as dissemination of the Europass Training documents and follow-up at the national level. The following activities were listed in the grant request for 2001:

1. Promotion of the use of Europass Training through direct contacts with educational institutions and employers, as well via seminars and conferences linked to international mobility.
2. The further development of the already existing information material
3. Review of the follow-up and distribution systems.

2.1. Promotional activities

During 2001-2002, the Europass Training was introduced in three national seminars on the internationalization of vocational education. Two of the seminars were targeted to the providers of upper secondary vocational education in general and the third one to the organizers of apprenticeship training in particular. These events were organized by the Ministry of Education and National Board of Education and they gathered 60 to 150 participants each. In addition, the Europass Training was promoted at a number of information seminars organized by the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO) and the Finnish Leonardo Agency, as well as at the launching seminar of the *Pro Europass Leonardo da Vinci* project.

In addition, the Europass Training was promoted by distributing information material by means of mailings from the NBE, as well as via the NBE partners. The NBE website (www.oph.fi/europassi) – found in Finnish, Swedish and English – provided the users

with basic information and links related to the Europass Training arrangements. The e-mail lists of CIMO and the Finnish Leonardo Agency were also used in the promotion of the Europass.

2.2. Information material

The most important individual project during the budget period was the development of new information material during summer 2002. The aim of the project was twofold. First of all, to support the institutions, individual students and employers in the use of the Europass Training with the objective of ensuring the proper use of the document and the quality of *European Pathways* and secondly, to increase the visibility of the initiative.

The information material was designed by an outside expert and in close cooperation with the permanent project staff during June and July of 2002. The feedback received from the users was closely examined in the planning phase of the new information material. The information material package comprised of a folder, an information leaflet and a sticker. The folder had information on the Europass Training system in general, on the use of the Europass Training in Finland thus far and on the background of the Europass documents. In addition, the folder included a leaflet and model Europass Training documents with detailed directions on how to use and fill in the document.

The information material comprised of 500 folders, 15 000 leaflets and 10 000 stickers was printed during August. By the end of September, the material had been sent to its intended recipients, comprising of upper secondary vocational institutions, organizers of apprenticeship training, polytechnics and the partners of the National Board of Education in the implementation of the Europass initiative (student organizations, social partners, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor, CIMO and the Finnish Leonardo Agency).

2.3. Review of the budget year

The organizers of education were able to order the Europass Training documents from the National Board of Education by completing and signing an order form or via e-mail. User feedback was arranged to be sent by either e-mail or regular mail. In addition, an internal database SPSS was created in 2001 to gather user feedback. There were talks of developing a new database for the purposes of both the distribution and the follow-up of the initiative. After discussions with the Steering Group, it was decided that the development of the existing tools was the preferred option. In practice, this meant updating the online order and feedback forms.

3. Assessment of the Budget Periods 2000-2001 and 2001-2002

The National Board of Education had authorized the training bodies to control each individual pathway and to report on the use of the documents. Feedback was collected continuously through direct contacts during the promotion activities. Systematic feedback from the training bodies was collected at the end of two terms (December 2001 and May 2002). The students were asked the following information: the year when the training period was completed, the sending institution, age, the level, field and form of education of which the training was a part of, the status of the host partner, destination, funding, the usefulness of the training period and Europass, the quality of supervision and the usability of the Europass. The data was analyzed in order to assess the results of the activities and to improve the overall organization (see Annex, Tables for the 2000-2002 period).

3.1. Completed European Training Periods

By the end of the autumn semester 2002, 1168 students had completed a European Training period. 85 educational institutions were involved in the initiative. The mean age of the participants was 22. However, all age groups were represented, the youngest

participant being 16 and the oldest 55. More than half of the students were under 20 and circa 7 per cent over 30 years of age. Almost all of the participants were in upper secondary vocational education. Students in the fields of tourism, catering and domestic services, technology and transport and health and social services had used the Europass Training document most actively.

While the aim of Europass Training had been to facilitate the international mobility of those in apprenticeship training in particular, the results in Finland were quite modest. Only approximately 4 per cent of the participants so far had been apprenticeship trainees.

According to the quality criteria, the receiving host partner could be either an educational institution or representative of the business sector. In about half of the cases, the receiving organization has been an educational or training establishment and the other half a representative of a business sector. The training period included working periods in most cases, even if the receiving organization was an educational institution.

The Finnish students used the Europass Training document in training periods in countries that represented a wide array of the countries participant in the Europass Training initiative. In fact, the only participant country in which no training period was completed was Lichtenstein; the most popular destinations were Great Britain, Germany, Spain and Sweden. In some cases, the students were given the Europass Training Document for a training completed in other countries than the participating EU/ETA countries. In most of the cases, this meant the European Union applicant countries but the Europass had traveled as far as Namibia and Vietnam. These training periods, naturally, do not fulfill the criteria set for a European training period and thus, they are not included in the statistics. Presumably the fact that the Leonardo program covers more countries than the Europass Training system, had been at the root of the confusion as the document was used in close cooperation with the Leonardo programs.

The European training period was not tied to any one form of funding. The National Board of Education has been inquiring after the use of different forms of funding since

2001. By the end of May 2002, the information gathered disclosed that 38 percent received funding from the Leonardo da Vinci, 24 per cent from Nordplus Junior Funding and 21 percent from the National Board of Education. In 15 per cent of the cases, the students provided the funding themselves.

3.2. Feedback

The National Board of Education gathered feedback from the Europass users, students as well as educational institutions. The feedback concentrated on how the students perceived the Europass and the training period they had completed. Out of the students, who answered the free form survey, 60 per cent found the Europass training period useful, 35 quite useful and 5 found it not useful at all. When asked of the quality of student supervision, most felt that their supervision during the training period had been sufficient, while 9 per cent found it insufficient or lacking entirely.

The Europass Training document was a watershed in terms of opinions of its usability. 33 per cent found it difficult to use, 34 per cent easy. Considering the value for future purposes, 33 per cent felt that the Europass was useful, 48 per cent quite useful and 20 per cent useless. Many respondents pointed out that the value of the document can only be assessed in the future and it will be dependent on how well the Europass is known. In terms of considering whether or not the Europass Training document was useful, the key issue was the counseling prior to the training period. Out of those that felt the Europass to be useless, most did not really know what the Europass was for and did not know from the very beginning what to do with it.

Some problems were reported in terms of filling in the document. The receiving institutions were not always sure whose responsibility was to fill in the document and what kind of information was to be included. As the Europass was a new concept to both the receiving institution and the student, some of the passports were insufficiently filled in and thus will not provide the full intended benefit for the student.

Albeit in general, the Europass was felt to be a good instrument, some persisting practical problems were pointed out. In addition, the following changes were suggested: an electronic format of the Europass, a more narrow selection of languages, the removal of overlapping sections and more space for student assessment, clearer instructions for filling in the Europass and the extension of Europass user zone to include the EU applicant countries. The contact persons of the educational institutions felt the Europass to be beneficial to the student although it had not radically changed the international activities of the institutions. Some, however, said that the planning of training periods and the cooperation with the foreign host partners was improved by the use of the Europass Training document and, in some cases, had motivated the students to taking training periods abroad.

3.3. Conclusions

Some good points for further improvement were suggested in the feedback. The form of the Europass and the contents of it are something that cannot be dealt with at the national level as they are a matter of a higher level decision making. However, they are worthwhile findings and ought to be put forward as they could contribute to making the Europass Training document more user friendly. In addition, even though the feedback concerned the Europass Training, which by now has been replaced by the Europass Mobility, some of the points raised can easily be applied to the new Europass Mobility as well.

The feedback also revealed points that could and should be dealt with nationally. As the most important point was that the student should feel that he or she has benefited from the training period abroad, the crucial issue is counseling before the intended training period. The student should be familiarized with the document and aware of how to use it in the future. This is can easily be achieved by organizing an orientation day for those going abroad or sitting down with the student for a few minutes and explaining the idea behind the document. In other words, this is something that can be arranged by the

sending institution and/or the person in charge of the international affairs of that institution.

The second point that came up in the feedback results was the fact that the usefulness of the document depends on how well it is known. Naturally, the institutions themselves can promote the document with their dealings with businesses and other partners but most of all, this fell under the activities that the NCPs were responsible for. Via information materials and promotional activities, the information on the Europass Training should reach the crucial recipients, especially the business sector and the employers. Ensuring that those in charge of employing people recognize the document and understand what it is for, facilitates the value of the document and the usability of it from the (future) employee point of view.

One last thing that the feedback revealed was the need for clearer instructions. This can be dealt with fairly easily; it requires rewriting the existing instructions in a very unambiguous and clear manner to aid the work of the institutions.

4. 2002-2003

The budget year of 2002-2003 was most prominent in the number of seminars that were organized by the cooperation partners and organizations of the National Board of Education.

4.1. Promotional activities

Information on the Europass Training was distributed in events organized by cooperation organizations of the National Board of Education. These events were organized, among others, in Helsinki 19th of November, 3rd of December, 2002 and 25th of September, 2003; in Jyväskylä 31st, 2003 of January and in Sodankylä 3- 4, 2003.

The most important were the four seminars organized by the National Board of Education, the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO), the Finnish Leonardo Centre and the Ministry of Labor. The target groups were the rectors, teachers and international coordinators of the organizers of vocational education and training, as well as employment counselors. In addition, the Europass Training document was promoted at a national fair on vocational education and training (*Next Step*) thus enabling direct contact with students and study counselors.

From the beginning, the cooperation with other organizations, in particular CIMO and the Finnish Leonardo Centre, has been essential. Meetings were organized on a regular basis to share information and to facilitate communication between the organizations. Furthermore, an annual meeting with the Steering Group was organized.

4.2. Information materials

The printed information and promotion material by the National Board of Education included pocket size leaflets, sample Europass documents as well as a folder with thorough information on Europass. A reprint of 200 copies of the Europass folder was taken during the budget period of 2002-2003. The leaflet was translated to and published in Swedish. In addition, the NBE website was updated and in 2003, and an updated version of the website was published in Swedish. The website provided instructions for the use of the Europass, statistics, an electronic order form as well as links for further information. Information was sent via the National Board of Education e-mail list as well as via the lists and publications of CIMO and the Finnish Leonardo Centre. The National Board of Education is, in addition to being the national contact point for Europass, the Finnish representative of the National Reference Point for Vocational Qualifications (NRP) and European Network for Information Centres/National Academic Recognition Information Centers (ENIC/NARIC) networks. This increased the possibilities for the promotion of several instruments of transparency substantially. An example of this is the inclusion of information on the Europass on the National Board of Education NRP leaflets

and linking between the different websites of the unit to increase visibility and wider dissemination of information.

4.3. Review of the budget year

The number of ordered and reported Europass documents Training was on the rise which seemed to have indicated rising awareness of the Europass as result of the promotion activities. The project coordinator, in addition to the above mentioned activities, took part in the European and international cooperation within Europass and education and training in general including study visits to other NCPs.

5. 2003-2004

In December 2003, the Commission gave its approval on the proposal for a decision by the European Parliament and the Council. This proposed decision was to introduce an enlarged Europass with wider applicability and new groups of users. For the time being, the focus was still on the Europass Training. The Parliament and Council Decision was anticipated to be passed late 2005 and come into effect at the earliest in the beginning of 2005.

5.1. Promotional Activities

The most important promotional seminar, the *Pro Europass – Apprentices Across the Border*, was organized in cooperation with the Leonardo da Vinci Centre and as a part of the pilot project of the Centre and of the National Board of Education. The seminar took place in Helsinki on April 16th, 2004. The target groups were the organizers of the apprenticeship training and different organizations dealing with the international mobility of students and workers. Speakers of the seminar included representatives of the European Commission, the Ministry of Labour, UNICE (Union of Industrial and Employers'

Confederate of Europe) and different organizations, employers and students all over Europe. The seminar drew a crowd of more than 150 participants, mostly those organizing apprenticeship training and vocational education, employers, social partners, national authorities and Europass Centres from other European countries. An informal meeting between NCPs was organized in connection with the seminar and it was participated by Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, Norway and Sweden. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the future of the Europass. Closer cooperation concerning good practices and follow-up of the initiative was agreed upon. The Nordic NCPs, furthermore, met during the budget period in Brussels and Reykjavik. In Reykjavik, the launch of Europass in spring 2005 was agreed upon.

In addition, the Europass Training was promoted in NRP events such as the CIMO and Ministry of Labour *International Affairs' Conference* in December 2002, *the Next Step –fair (on education and job opportunities)* in January 2003, *Upper Secondary Vocational School Rectors' International Affairs' Conference* in April 2003, *National Board of Education in-house open doors day*, *Seminar on the Experiences and Results of the Leonardo Program* in September 2003, *Joint Conference of Finnish and Estonian Upper Secondary Vocational Education* in October 2003, *Centre for International Mobility Briefing on Leonardo Mobility Projects* in November 2003 and so forth.

The increase in the use of the Europass in higher education institutions was a specific target for the budget period. This was pursued by improving the cooperation with student organizations and higher education institutions via meetings and seminar presentations. A seminar directed at higher education institutions was planned to be held in October 2004.

5.2. Information material

The Europass web pages were updated in already in autumn 2002 and new web pages in Swedish were launched in spring 2003. The structure and the content of the web pages were modified according to feedback. Information material was disseminated to the

organizers of vocational education, various authorities, CIMO, labor administration and the Leonardo Centre. The National Board of Education also took part in seminars, educational conferences and in other occasions of a smaller-scale.

Little new promotional material was published during the budget period because of the future transition from Europass Training to Europass. For the purpose of the seminars *ad hoc* material was published instead, with the focus on the future Europass. New material included a slightly updated version of the leaflet in Finnish and the Europass pen. The Web pages were constantly updated and the English language pages were renewed.

As the NBE is also the contact point for the ENIC/NARIC and NRP networks, one important aspect was the synergy possibilities created by this situation. This was realized in print and electronic material by linking web pages and supplying information by cross-referencing the different networks and contact points in the NBE information materials.

5.3. Review of the budget year

During the budget period 2003-2004 much of the attention was directed towards the new Europass concept in anticipation of the forthcoming European Parliament and Council decision on already approved proposal by the European Commission. Following this theme, several meetings and presentations were held on the future of the Europass. The future of the Europass in transition, much of the activities as well as promotional approaches, at least material wise, were very much on ad hoc basis and directed towards the upcoming events and changes in the Europass concept.

In addition to the above mentioned activities, the project staff took part in EAIE seminar in September 2004. This seminar along with cooperation between the different National Contact Points was intended to update information on European educational systems and their latest developments, crucial to the promotion of the Europass.

6. 2004–2005

The European Commission approved the proposal for the European Parliament and of the Council on the new Europass arrangements on 17th of December 2003. On the 15th of December, 2004 a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council (2241/2004/EC) was passed on a single Community framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass) which repealed the 1999/51/EC Decision. This Decision established the single Community framework for achieving the transparency of qualifications and competences by means of the creation of a personal, coordinated portfolio of documents, to be known as 'Europass', which citizens can use on a voluntary basis to better communicate and present their qualifications and competences throughout Europe. (2241/2004/EC, Article 1)

The Europass documents would include the Europass Curriculum Vitae, Europass-Mobility (which was to take over the Europass Training document), Europass Diploma Supplement, Europass Certificate Supplement and Europass Language Portfolio.

In addition, to implement this decision, National Europass Centres (NECs) were to be established. These Centres would be responsible for the coordination at the national level, the promotion of the Europass, setting up a national information system, facilitating and ensuring cooperation between national bodies and institutions, participation in the European network of the NECs and manage the Community financial support for all activities related to the Decision.

6.1. Promotional Activities

Seminar for higher education institutions and student organizations was held on 19th of October 2004 in Helsinki. The seminar concentrated on the Diploma Supplement and the new Europass framework. It collected 130 participants mainly from higher education institutions. Speakers of the seminar included representatives of the Finnish National

Board of Education, the Ministry of Education, individual HEI's as well as the Finnish coordinators for European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) and Diploma Supplement (DS). Feedback was collected during the seminar on the Diploma Supplement instructions and new improved instructions were prepared and published on the web pages.

6.2. Information materials

The material printed was on *ad hoc* basis due to the future changes that were taking place within the Europass framework. The web pages have been constantly updated in three languages (Finnish, Swedish, and English). The updated website includes e.g. a PowerPoint presentation of the Europass framework in three languages and links to relevant CEDEFOP websites. Articles written by the staff of the National Board of Education were published in the newsletters of the Centre for International Mobility (CIMO).

6.3. Multilateral International Cooperation

The closer cooperation by the Nordic NCPs agreed upon last budget period was followed-up on. This cooperation established was to share experience and good practices in the promotion and follow-up of the initiative. From the beginning of 2005 the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania) were included in the cooperation. The representatives of the Nordic NCPs met in connection with the seminars and meetings hosted by the commission and had a Nordic Meeting in Copenhagen in February 2005.

6.4. Establishing the Finnish National Europass Centre

In the beginning of January 2005, the Ministry of Education nominated the National Board of Education as the Finnish National Europass Centre (NEC). Towards the end of the budget period (January through April 2005), preparations for launching the Europass

framework were begun. Meetings with the representatives of important stakeholders were held and the representatives of the National Board of Education took part in seminars and events organized by the stakeholders in order to disseminate information about the new Europass framework. Preparations to update the Europass web pages were taken. Preparations for the new framework included the employment of a new full-time project planner and planning for new projects and initiatives within the new Europass.

6.5. Review of the budget year

The objective of the budget year 2004-2005 was to increase the use of the Europass in higher education institutions. This was pursued by increasing cooperation with the student organizations and higher education institutions via meetings with individual institutions and organization and presentations in seminars by other organizations and this work continues to-date. The new Europass documents were introduced and implemented in autumn semester 2005.

Of great importance was also the continued cooperation between the Nordic countries and, later, also within the Nordic-Baltic framework. Presentations were also held within the context of study visits of the new European Union member states, Lithuania and Hungary, to the National Board of Education

The budget year was also one of considerable changes the most important being the establishment of National Europass Centre and organizing work to respond to the new tasks ahead.

7. Overall assessment of the Europass Training

For the purpose of this report, a similar kind of statistical analysis was conducted as was for the budget years 2000-2002. The data is explored in two parts: first we will compare the budget periods of 2000-2002 and 2003-2005. The second part is a based on statistics on the

entire Europass Training ranging from 2000 to 2005. The reason for this is that there was rather some variation between the budget periods from 2000-2002 to 2003-2005 and the overall statistics (2000-2005) will not stress these changes enough. For the purpose of exploring the user assessment of the Europass Training document, a progressive aspect gives a more accurate description. This report will not go through every single aspect explored in the previous report as on most areas, the changes were not significant. The most interesting elements here are the student assessments on the different aspects of their training period. Therefore, in this report the changes in the reported student assessments are grouped into 2000-2002 and 2003-2005 assessment analysis groups accordingly.

7.1. Review of the student assessments 2000-2002 and 2003-2005

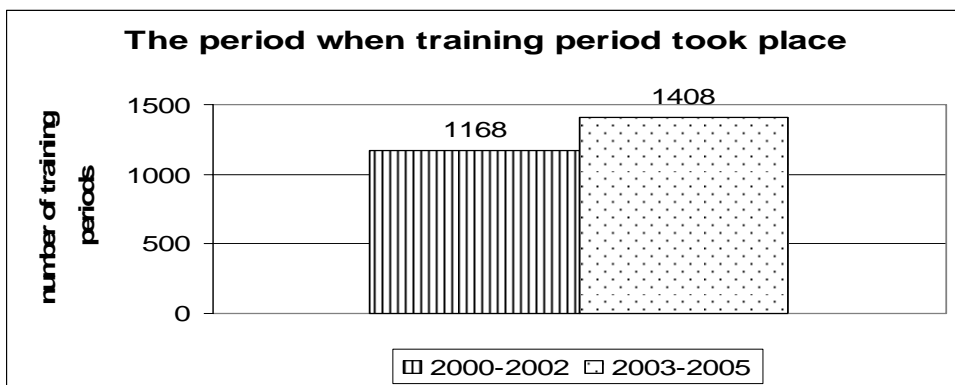


Fig. 1

The assessment division line follows the time line of the span of use of the Europass Training document. During the budget years 2000-2002 a total of 1168 training periods were completed out where as in 2003-2005 the number of completed training periods The total of number of Europass Training periods was 2576.

As before the students were asked to assess different elements of their training: the usability of the Europass, the quality of the supervision during the training period, the usefulness of the Europass and the usefulness of the European training period.

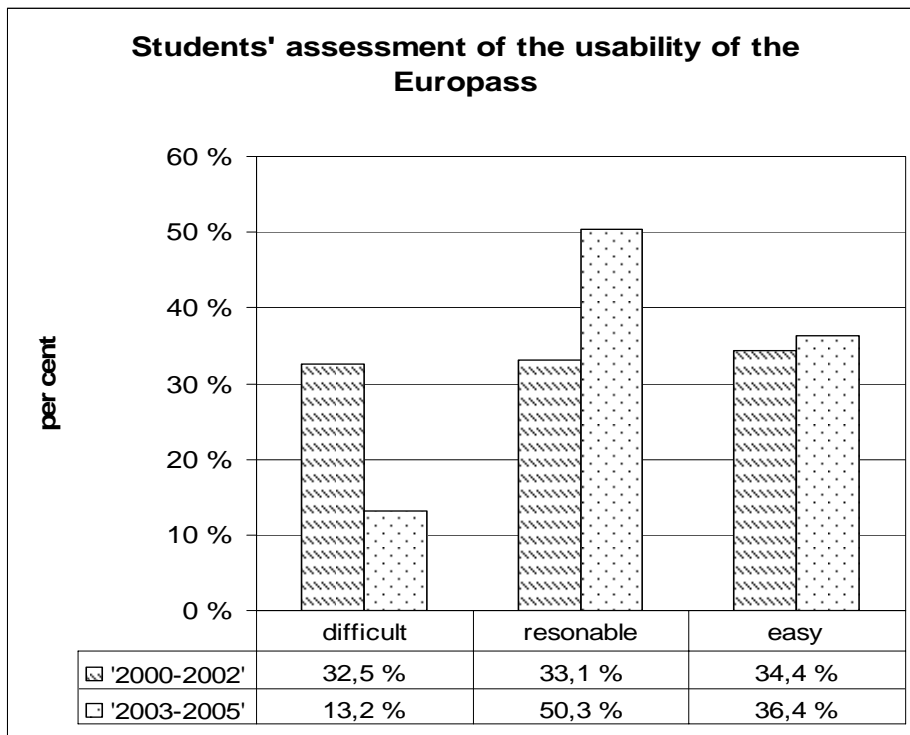


Fig. 2

During the two periods there was considerable change in the students' assessment of the usability of the Europass. In 2000-2002 review, the opinions on the usability of the Europass were divided roughly into three groups of about the same size; the Europass seemed to be a watershed in terms of user friendliness. In 2003-2005 the amount of those who felt that the Europass was difficult to use declined from 32,5 % to 13,2 %. Most likely, the fact that the Europass document had been in use for longer and had become more familiar is at the source of these results.

The number of students who felt that the Europass was a useful tool remained roughly the same but with some movement between those who found the Europass not useful at all towards the reasonable usefulness group from 2000-2002 to 2003-2005.

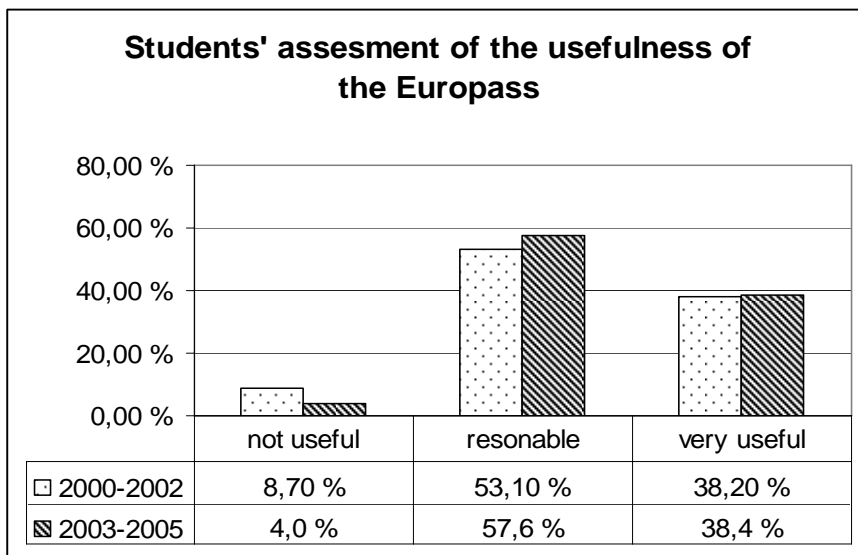


Fig. 3

The number of those who felt the European training period to have been useful remained also much the same with slightly more considering the usefulness of the European training to be good and slightly less considering it reasonable compared with 2000-2002. The percentage of those who felt the usefulness of the training period to be poor remained the same.

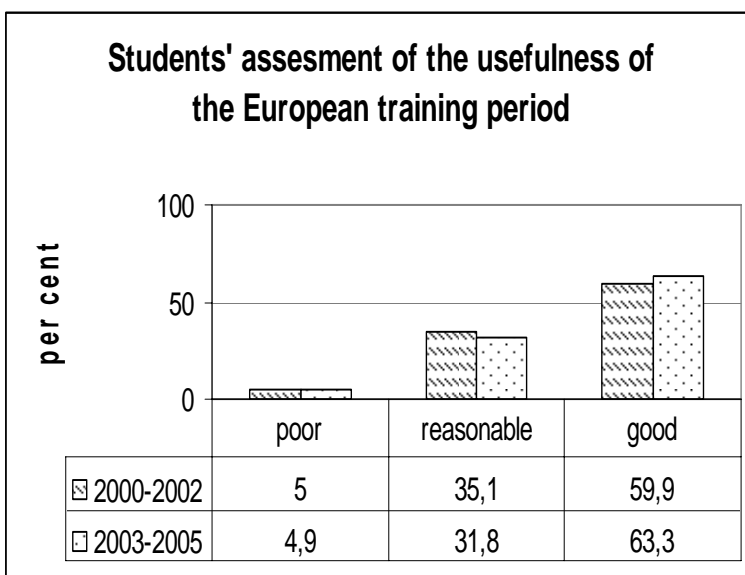


Fig. 4

The assessment on the quality of the supervision of the training period also remained along the lines of the survey done in 2000-2002. Slightly less felt that the supervision had been poor and slightly more felt it had been good than in the 2000-2002 survey.

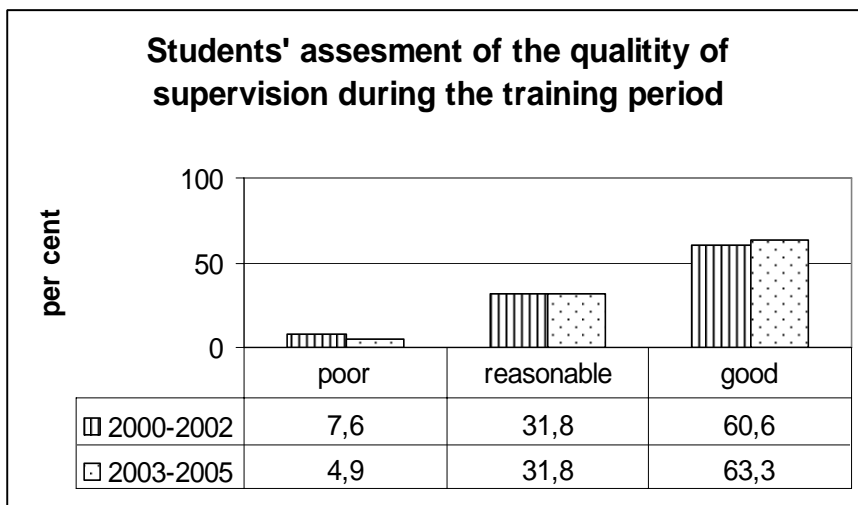


Fig. 5

The funding of the European training period changed during the years 2003-2005 as well. Especially the number of those who had their training period finance by Nordplus declined significantly and the amount of those who either had funding from their own institution or those who spent their own money on going abroad for a training period increased significantly. A slightly bigger portion was also allocated to the Leonardo programs and the percentage of those who went abroad to complete the training period on Erasmus or Socrates funding declined from 3,1 per cent to only 0,5 per cent of the total funding.

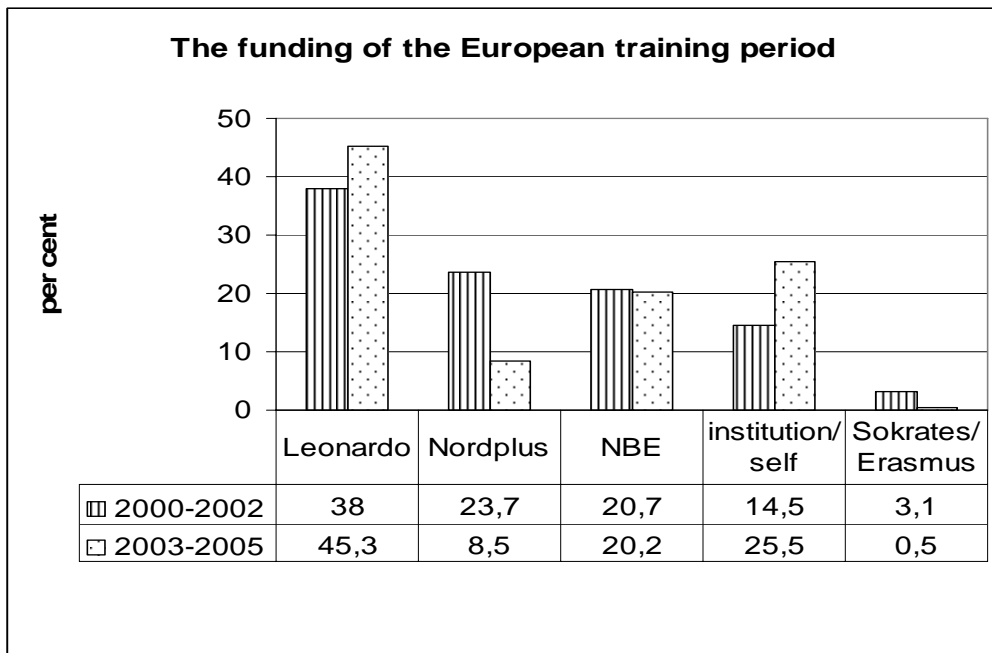


Fig. 6

7.2 The assessment of the Europass Training 2000-2005

In the previous subsection, we looked at some statistical trends in terms of the student assessments of the Europass. Therefore, in this section I will concentrate on the other statistical issues that were also included in the 2000-2002.

The most active sending institutions were Jyväskylän palveluajon oppilaitos, Tampereen ammattiopisto, Mikkelin ammattiopisto, Turun ammatti-instituutti, Rovaniemen palveluajon oppilaitos and Vaasan ammattiopilaitos which accounted for nearly a quarter (24,1 per cent) of all included training periods (2576 training periods in all).

Females were much more likely to take up on the possibility for the training period abroad. Out of the 2576 training periods 1779 (69,1 per cent) were completed by females. This is an interesting point. It could be due to the fact that certain fields of education (where majority of girls study) are more prone to take up a training period abroad or is it just that girls are more interested in gaining international experience. Be as it may, this certainly could be an area of improvement and further discussion.

The students in the fields of tourism, catering and domestic services; technology and transport; and health and social services took most actively part in the European training period. If they are divided into groups by the degree that they were completing, the most active were hotel and restaurant services (11,4 %), social and health care (17,4%) , catering (7,4%) and tourism industry (5,3%) and electrical engineering (4,6%).

The host organizations' status was split; half of the host organizations were educational institutions and the half other businesses thus the situation was much the same it had been in 2000-2002 survey.

Most of the training periods were 2-3 months or 4-5 months in length (nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the total). The average length of a training period was X months and the median X months.

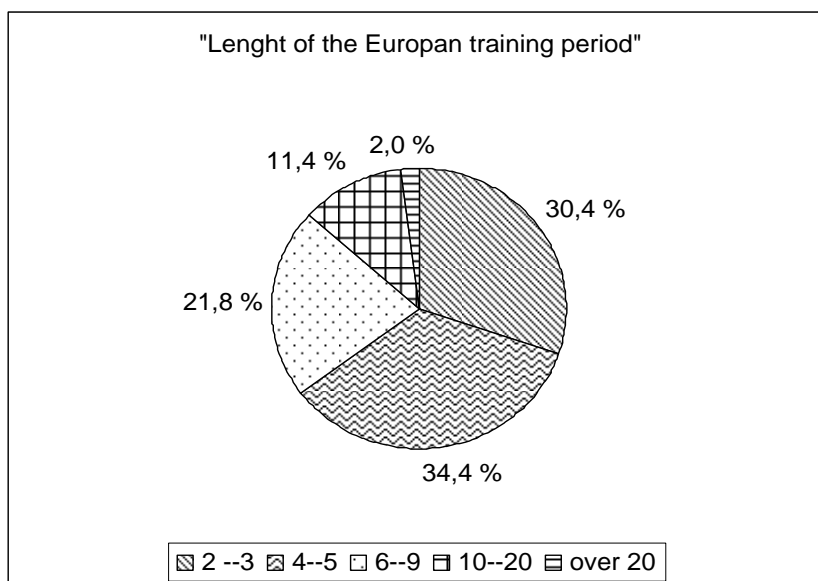


Fig. 7

As noted previously in this report, the Finnish European training period participants had already by 2002 been in all European Union countries excluding Lichtenstein. By 2005, there had also been 3 training periods in Lichtenstein. The most popular destinations were still Spain (19,4 per cent), Great Britain (17,7 per cent), Germany (12,6 per cent) and Sweden (9,4 per cent) which made up more than half of all completed training periods.

The majority (83,9 per cent) of the sending institutions was upper secondary vocational institutions and in 4,9 per cent of the cases the sending institution was an apprentice ship training center. The level of education was by and large upper secondary education (95 per cent).

This section will not go through the student assessments here because conclusions for the entire period can be rather easily drawn from the previous section. The student assessments were dealt with by comparing the two three-year periods, 2000-2002 and 2003-2005 namely. Two further studies were however, conducted for the entire time span of the Europass Training (2000-2005). The first meant looking at the correlations between certain areas of the questionnaire. Correlation is a measure of the relation between two or more variables. Two variables can have either positive, negative or no correlation what so ever.

The results show that there is significant correlation between certain areas (if the significance level is defined at $p \geq 0,05$). The strongest positive correlation is between the usefulness of the training period and the quality of supervision. This means that the better the quality of supervision the more the student undergoing the training period felt that the training period had been useful. Secondly, there is positive correlation between then usefulness of the training period and the usability of the Europass. Lastly, positive correlation (at the level $P \geq 0,05$) is found between the usability of the Europass and the quality of supervision. The last two are not as significantly correlated but as the usefulness-quality –pair but indicate, however, that the three subject areas are interconnected and needed for a thoroughly successful training period.

Fig.8

Pearson Correlation	Usefulness of the training period	Quality of supervision	Usability of the Europass	Age of the student
usefulness of the training period	1	0,359	0,192	0,021
quality of supervision	0,359	1	0,137	- 0,02
Usability of the Europass	0,192	0,137	1	- 0,079
age of the student	0,21	- 0,02	- 0,79	1

This is an important finding because it reaffirms the presuppositions made already in 2002. The quality of the supervision is crucial for the student to feel that the training period has been useful. This includes both counseling prior to and after the training period. It also includes a through planning by the sending institution and the host institution or organization.

Some cross tabulations were also calculated. Cross tabulations examine frequencies of observations that belong to specific categories on more than one variable. By examining these frequencies, relations between cross tabulated variables can be identified. Out of the cross tabulations calculated, the most interesting, the only one worthwhile noting, was the cross tabulation between the usability of the Europass and the level of education. There were significant differences in how easy or difficult the student found the Europass to use when the second variable was the level of education. Interestingly, the majority of higher education students (81 per cent) felt that the Europass was difficult to use whereas only 20,9 per cent of upper secondary, 33,3 per cent of college level and a mere 3,1 of those in further education found the Europass difficult to use.

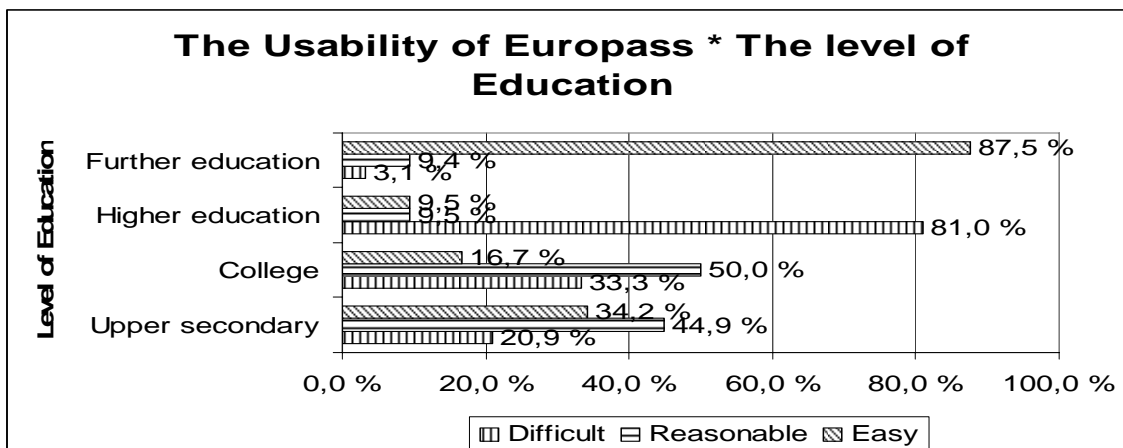


Fig.9

Reasons for this can only be speculated. Some hint may be provided by the other cross tabulation (quality of supervision/level of education). Higher education students were considerable most often only reasonably happy with their supervision (71,4 per cent found it reasonable) where has the majority of upper secondary, college and further training students found the quality of supervision most often to have been good (31,1 %, 80% and

60,6 % respectively). Of course, to say that higher education students received perhaps less or lower quality supervision is mere speculation but as indicated by the strong correlation between the quality of supervision and the usefulness of the training period, it may be a valid presupposition.

Cross tabulation quality of supervision * level of education			
	Upper secondary	Higher education	Further education
poor	7,1 %	0,0 %	3,0 %
reasonable	31,8 %	71,4%	34,6 %
good	61,1,%	28,6 %	60,6 %

Fig. 10

All in all, the purpose of this part was to give a brief overview of the Europass Training Document in light of statistics and previous reports to the European Commission. Before final conclusions, we turn to user experiences on the Europass Training.

8. Conclusions

The purpose of this report has been to describe the old Europass Training initiative and the activities taken by the Finnish National Board of Education. The awareness of the Europass concept has spread with each year and with the new Europass the trend should continue. The most important aspect of the use of the documents is, of course, the perceived use. In order for the Europass to be successfully implemented, it needs to be considered a useful and a valuable instrument by the users themselves. This depends, as the feedback revealed, on how well the Europass is known and how well the students has been explained the use and profits of the European Training period and the document itself. While these results were gathered on the old Europass, it can be concluded that the same will apply for all the five documents of the new Europass and should therefore be taken into careful consideration.

Annexes

Tables for the 2000-2002 period

Time of the training period

	number of training periods	%
2000	272	23,3
2001	355	30,4
2002	541	46,3
total	1168	100,0

Sending educational or training establishment

	number of training periods	% of the completed training periods in 2000-2002
Jyväskylän palvelualojen oppilaitos	103	8,8
Tampereen ammattiopisto	91	7,8
Turun ammatti-instituutti	83	7,1
Mikkelin ammattiopisto	56	4,8
Vaasan ammattiopisto	52	4,5
Lahden ammatti-instituutti	48	4,1
Savonlinnan ammatti-instituutti	45	3,9
Rovaniemen palvelualojen oppilaitos	39	3,3
Tuusulanjärven ammattiopisto	37	3,2
Pirkanmaan ammattikorkeakoulu	34	2,9

The age of the students who completed a European training period

	number of training periods	%
16-20	551	47,2
20-25	359	30,7
25-30	67	6,4
over 30	72	6,9
no information available	119	10,2

The level of the Finnish education the European training period was part of

	number of training periods	%
upper secondary	224	90,8
college level	8	0,7
higher education	61	5,2
further education and training	38	3,3
total	1168	100

Field of education

	number of training periods	%
tourism, catering and domestic services	335	28,7
technology and transport	310	26,5
health and social services	257	22,0
business and administration	148	12,7
culture	66	5,7
natural resources	29	2,5
leisure and physical education/ humanities and education	23	2,0
total	1168	100,0

Form of education

institution-based	1070	91,6
apprenticeship training	49	4,2
other	49	4,2
total	1168	100,0

Foreign host partner

	number of training periods	%
educational or training establishment	578	49,5
business sector	513	43,9
other	77	6,6
total	1168	100,0

The country in which the European training period was completed

	number of training periods	%
The Netherlands	40	3,22
Belgium	15	1,21
Spain	166	13,37
Ireland	27	2,17
Iceland	22	1,77
Great Britain	217	17,47
Italy	88	7,09
Austria	48	3,86
Greece	65	5,23
Norway	27	2,17
Portugal	36	2,90
France	63	5,07
Sweden	132	10,63
Germany	185	14,90
Denmark	37	2,98
Other	74	5,96
Total	1242	100,0

Comparative student assessment tables for 2000-2002 and 2003-2005

Students' assessment of the usability of the Europass		
	% in 2000-2002	% 2003-2005
difficult	32,5 %	13,2 %
reasonable	33,1 %	50,3 %
easy	34,4 %	36,4 %
total	100,0 %	99,9 %
Students' assessment of the usefulness of the Europass		
	2000-2002	2003-2005
not useful	8,70 %	4,0 %
reasonable	53,10 %	57,6 %
very useful	38,20 %	38,4 %
total	100 %	100,0 %
Students' assessment of supervision during the training period		
	2000-2002	2003-2005
poor	7,6	4,9
reasonable	31,8	31,8
good	60,6	63,3
total	100	100
The funding of the European training period		
	2000-2002	2003-2005
Leonardo	38	45,3
Nordplus	23,7	8,5
NBE	20,7	20,2
institution/self	14,5	25,5
Socrates/Erasmus	3,1	0,5
total	100	100

Tables for the 2000-2005 period

Sending educational or training establishment

	number of training periods	% of the completed training periods in 2000-2005
Jyväskylän palvelualojen oppilaitos	193	7,5
Tampereen ammattiopisto	136	5,3
Mikkelin ammattiopisto	100	3,9
Turun ammatti-instituutti	99	3,8
Rovaniemen palvelualojen oppilaitos	94	3,6
Vaasan ammattiopisto	80	3,1
Keski-Uudenmaan oppisopimuskeskus	73	2,8
Rovaniemen terveyst- ja sosiaalialan oppilaitos	72	2,8
Ravintolakoulu Perho	72	2,8
Jyväskylän kauppaoppilaitos	64	2,5
Espoon liiketalousinstituutti	57	2,2
Lahden ammatti-instituutti	53	2,1
Pohjois-Savon ammatillinen instituutti	51	2,0

The age of the students who completed a European training period

	number of training periods	%
16-20	623	30,1
20-25	1027	49,2
25-30	257	12,4
over 30	164	7,9
total	2071	100

The level of the Finnish education the European training period was part of

	number of training periods	%
upper secondary	2448	95
college level	8	0,3
higher education	77	3
further education and training	43	1,7
total	2576	100

Field of education

	number of training periods	%
tourism, catering and domestic services	723	28,2
technology and transport	590	22,9
health and social services	616	23,9
business and administration	330	12,8
culture	127	4,9
natural resources	87	3,4
leisure and physical education/ humanities and education	100	3,9
total	2576	100,0

Form of education

institution-based	2379	92,4
apprenticeship training	111	4,3
other	8	3,3
total	2576	100,0

Foreign host partner

	number of training periods	%
educational or training establishment	1252	48,6
business sector	1178	45,7
other	146	5,7
total	2576	100,0

The country in which the European training period was completed

	number of training periods	%
The Netherlands	101	3,9
Belgium	47	1,8
Spain	500	19,4
Ireland	38	1,5
Iceland	29	1,1
Great Britain	456	17,7
Italy	142	5,5
Austria	90	3,5
Greece	85	3,3
Liechtenstein	3	0,1
Norway	58	2,3
Portugal	46	1,8
France	94	3,6
Sweden	243	9,4
Germany	324	12,6
Denmark	100	3,9
Other (new EU member states)	130	5,0
total	2576	100

The funding of the European training period

	number of training periods	%
Leonardo	921	42,7
Nordplus Junior	302	14
National Board of Education	441	20,4
students own funding or funding from the educational institution only	464	21,5
Socrates/Erasmus	31	1,4
total	2159	100

The students' assessment of the usefulness of the European training period

	number of training periods	%
poor	51	4,9
reasonable	328	31,8
good	653	63,3
total	1032	100

The students' assessment of supervision during the training period

	number of training periods	%
poor	70	6,8
reasonable	339	32,7
good	628	60,6
total	1037	100

The student's assessment of the usefulness of the Europass

	number of training periods	%
not useful	81	8,7
reasonable	492	53,1
very useful	354	38,2
total	927	100

The student's assessment of the usability of the Europass

	number of training periods	%
difficult	179	21,9
reasonable	349	42,6
easy	291	35,5
total	819	100

Length of the European training period		
months	number of periods	per cent
2 – 3	655	30,4 %
4 – 5	743	34,4 %
6 – 9	470	21,8 %
10 – 20	247	11,4 %
over 20	43	2,0 %
total	2158	100,0 %