

Germany

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National context

Population, economic and social characteristics

Germany officially the Federal Republic of Germany is a federal parliamentary republic in western-central Europe. The country consists of 16 states and its capital and largest city is Berlin. Germany covers an area of 357,021 square kilometres (137,847 sq. m.) and has a largely temperate seasonal climate. With 80.3 million inhabitants, it is the most populous member state in the European Union. Germany is the major economic and political power of the European continent and a historic leader in many theoretical and technical fields.

Description of the types of education and training (formal and informal) that occur in a country

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is divided between the Federation and the Länder. The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law (Grundgesetz). Unless the Basic Law awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the Länder.

In addition to the division of responsibilities described above, the Basic Law also provides for particular forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder within the scope of the so-called joint tasks (Gemeinschaftsaufgaben). Early childhood education and care is not part of the state-organised school system in Germany but almost exclusively assigned to the child and youth welfare sector. On the federal level, within the framework of public welfare responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ), on the level of the Länder, the Ministries of Youth and Social Affairs and, in part, also the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, are the competent authorities. As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to attend primary school. All pupils in Germany enter the Grundschule which in almost all Länder covers grades 1 to 4. Following the primary school stage, secondary education in the Länder is characterised by division into the various educational paths with their respective leaving certificates and qualifications for which different school types are responsible. Once pupils have completed compulsory schooling they move into upper secondary education. The range of courses on

offer includes full-time general education and vocational schools, as well as vocational training within the *duales System* (dual system). The tertiary sector encompasses institutions of higher education and other establishments that offer study courses qualifying for entry into a profession to students who have completed the upper secondary level and obtained a higher education entrance qualification. As part of lifelong learning, continuing education is assuming greater importance and is increasingly becoming a field of education in its own right. In response to the vast range of demands made on continuing education, a differentiated structure has been developed.

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Unless the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz*) awards legislative powers to the Federation, the *Länder* have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the *Länder*. Detailed regulations are laid down in the constitutions of the *Länder* and in separate laws of the *Länder* on early childhood education, on the school system, on higher education, on adult education and on continuing education. Responsibility for the remuneration and pensions of civil servants (e.g. teachers, professors and junior professors) also lies with the *Länder*. The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law, according to which the Federation bears responsibility particularly for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

- In-company vocational training and vocational further education
- Admission to higher education institutions and higher education degrees (here the *Länder* may enact laws at variance with the legislation of the Federation)
- Financial assistance for pupils and students
- Promotion of scientific and academic research and technological development, including the promotion of up-and-coming academics
- Youth welfare (in particular early childhood education and care in day-care centres and child-minding services)
- Legal protection of participants of correspondence courses
- Regulations on entry to the legal profession
- Regulations on entry to medical and paramedical professions
- Employment promotion measures as well as occupational and labour market research
- Furthermore, the Federation has legislative authority over the status-related rights and duties of civil servants, as well as the legislative authority over foreign affairs.

Early Childhood Education and Care

Early childhood education is provided by institutions catering for children from a few months to six years, the age at which they usually start school. Children of school age who have not yet attained a sufficient level of development to attend a school have a further option in some *Länder*, namely *Schulkindergärten* and *Vorklassen*. These institutions are either assigned to the early childhood or the primary sector according to the particular Land. Attendance is usually voluntary, although in most of the *Länder* in question the authorities are entitled to make it compulsory.

Compulsory education

As a rule, general compulsory schooling begins for all children in the Federal Republic of Germany in the year in which they reach the age of six and involves nine years of full-time schooling (ten years in Berlin, Brandenburg, Bremen and Thüringen; in Nordrhein-Westfalen, the duration of full-time compulsory education is nine years for the Gymnasium, and ten years for other general education schools). Those young people who do not attend a full-time general education school or vocational school at upper secondary level once they have completed their period of compulsory general schooling must still attend part-time schooling (compulsory Berufsschule attendance – Berufsschulpflicht). This usually lasts three years, according to the duration of training in a anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf (recognised occupation requiring formal training). For pupils who do not attend a general education school at upper secondary level or enter training, some Länder have regulations under which pupils are required to remain in full-time education and attend some sort of vocational school. Disabled children and young people are also required to attend school and complete their compulsory education. On the basis of their sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf (special educational needs), they are either taught in mainstream schools together with non-handicapped pupils, or in Förderschulen (special schools). Compulsory schooling involves regular attendance of lessons and other compulsory school events. Both pupils and parents are responsible for seeing that this obligation is met and training companies are also responsible for ensuring that their trainees fulfil their obligation to attend vocational school. The school head checks on attendance records and can, if necessary, enforce attendance through various measures against the pupil, parents or the training company.

Primary education

As a rule, in the year in which children reach the age of six, they are obliged to attend primary school. All pupils in Germany enter the Grundschule (primary school) which covers grades 1 to 4. In Berlin and Brandenburg, the Grundschule covers six grades. For pupils with sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf (special educational needs), whose development cannot be adequately assisted at mainstream schools, a range of Förderschulen (special schools) exists, which are also known as Sonderschulen, Förderzentren or Schulen für Behinderte in some Länder.

Transition from primary to secondary education

The transition from the Grundschule to one of the different lower secondary school types where pupils remain at least until the completion of their full-time compulsory education is dealt with differently depending on Land legislation. The vote of the school which the pupil is leaving is taken as a basis for the decision or as guidance in the decision regarding the pupil's future school career. This is accompanied by detailed consultations with parents. The final decision is taken either by the parents or the school or school supervisory authority. For certain school types, it is dependent on pupils demonstrating a certain level of ability and/or on the capacity available in the desired school. For an overview of regulations specific to the various Länder with regard to the transition from the Grundschule to lower secondary education, see the website of the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder (Kultusministerkonferenz). Secondary education Following the primary school stage at which all children attend mixed-ability classes (grades 1 to 4, in Berlin and Brandenburg grades 1 to 6) the structure of the secondary school system (grades 5/7 to 12/13) in the Länder is characterised by division into the various educational paths

with their respective leaving certificates and qualifications for which different school types are responsible, namely

- Hauptschule
- Realschule
- Gymnasium
- Schularten mit mehreren Bildungswegen

The Hauptschule, Realschule and Gymnasium are school types usually offering one course of education in which all teaching is channelled to a specific qualification. Schularten mit mehreren Bildungsgängen (schools offering more than one type of course of education) bring two or three courses of education under one umbrella. For pupils with sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf (special educational needs) whose development cannot be adequately assisted at mainstream schools, various types of Förderschulen (special schools, also known in some Länder as Sonderschulen, Förderzentren or Schulen für Behinderte) have been set up within the organisational framework of general and vocational education. Once pupils have completed compulsory schooling – generally when they reach the age of 15 – they move into upper secondary education. The type of school entered depends on the qualifications and entitlements obtained at the end of lower secondary education. The range of courses on offer includes full-time general education and vocational schools, as well as vocational training within the duales System (dual system). The majority of the Länder offer the following general education and vocational schools, with some forms specific to individual Länder: General education schools:

- Gymnasium
- Schularten mit drei Bildungsgängen
- Kolleg

Vocational schools:

- Berufsschule
- Berufsfachschule
- Fachoberschule
- Berufsoberschule
- Berufliches Gymnasium/Fachgymnasium

Tertiary education

The tertiary sector encompasses institutions of higher education and other establishments that offer study courses qualifying for entry into a profession to students who have completed the upper secondary level and obtained a higher education entrance qualification. The Federal Republic of Germany has the following types of higher education institutions:

- Universitäten, Technische Hochschulen/Technische Universitäten, Pädagogische Hochschulen, Theologische Hochschulen
- Kunsthochschulen and Musikhochschulen (colleges of art and music)
- Fachhochschulen

Additionally there are a number of special higher education institutions which only admit certain groups, e.g. higher education institutions of the Federal Armed Forces and

Verwaltungsfachhochschulen, and are not considered below. Those with a higher education entrance qualification may also choose to enter a Berufsakademie offered by some Länder as an alternative to higher education. At state or state-recognised Studienakademien (study institutions) and in companies students receive academic but, at the same time, practical career training. The Fachschulen and the Fachakademien in Bayern are also part of the tertiary sector. Fachschulen are institutions of vocational continuing education that, as a rule, call for the completion of relevant vocational training in a anerkannter Ausbildungsberuf (recognised occupation requiring formal training) and relevant employment.

Practices and organisations

Within the Federal Government, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) is primarily responsible for the Federation's areas of responsibility. The Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ) is responsible for the instruction, education and care of children in day-care centres and in child-minding services.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research was created as the Federal Ministry of Education and Science in 1969 in connection with the amendment to the Basic Law (Grundgesetz), which gave the Federation additional responsibilities in the educational sector. It was then merged in 1994 with the Federal Ministry of Research and Technology. Wherever necessary, consultations between Federation and Länder take place in the Bundesrat, the Joint Science Conference (Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz – GWK), the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) and the Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat). The Federal Ministry of Education and Research is organised in one Central Directorate-General and seven Directorates-General:

- Directorate-General 1: Strategies and Policy Issues
- Directorate-General 2: European and International Cooperation in Education and Research
- Directorate-General 3: Vocational Training; Lifelong Learning
- Directorate-General 4: Science System
- Directorate-General 5: Key Technologies – Research for Innovation
- Directorate-General 6: Life Sciences – Research for Health
- Directorate-General 7: Provision for the Future – Basic and Sustainability Research

The purview of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research embraces the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB). It is a major instrument for cooperation between employers, trade unions, Federation and Länder at the national level. The Vocational Training Act (Berufsbildungsgesetz) defines the institute's responsibilities as follows:

- to carry out vocational training research under a pre-defined research programme;
- in accordance with the instructions of the competent federal ministry, to take part in the drafting of Ausbildungsordnungen (training regulations) and other ordinances, to take part in the preparation of the Report on Vocational Education and Training (Berufsbildungsbericht), to take part in the compilation of vocational training statistics, to promote pilot schemes, to take part in international cooperation in the

field of vocational education and training, as well as to assume further administrative tasks of the Federation for the promotion of vocational education and training;

- in accordance with general administrative provisions of the competent federal ministry, to implement the promotion of intercompany training centres and support the planning, establishment and further development of these facilities;
- to maintain and publish the register of anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe (recognised occupations requiring formal training);
- to carry out the tasks described in the Law on the Protection of Participants in Distance Education (Fernunterrichtsschutzgesetz) and to contribute to the improvement and extension of vocational distance learning through the promotion of development projects.

With the consent of the Federal Ministry of Education and Research, the Federal Institute for Vocational Training may conclude contracts with other parties outside the Federal Administration for the assumption of further tasks. Vocational training in Germany is based on the consensus principle. Whenever major decisions on structure and substance have to be taken, such decisions are reached in a joint effort by Federation and Länder, employers and employees. These groups – as well as a representative of the municipal associations, of the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit) and of the Research Council acting as advisors – are members of the Federal Institute for Vocational Training's board, which thus represents the Round Table of vocational education and training. The Research Council is intended to control, assure and evaluate the quality of the institute's research efforts.

The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and the Ministries of Science in the Länder (which have different titles in the various Länder) in their capacity as highest authorities of a Land are responsible for education, science and culture. Their scope of responsibilities generally includes schools, higher education, libraries, archives, adult education, arts and culture in general, relations between the state and religious or ideological communities, (known as Kultusangelegenheiten), the preservation of monuments and sites and, in some Länder, also sport and youth welfare.

The Ministries of Education, Cultural Affairs and Science develop policy guidelines in the fields of education, science and the arts, adopt legal provisions and administrative regulations, cooperate with the highest authorities at national and Land level and supervise the work of authorities under their purview and of subordinated bodies, institutions and foundations. To assist the ministries in their work the Länder have established their own institutes for school education, higher and continuing education. The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs (in Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg: Senate department) are headed by a Minister/Senator who is answerable to parliament. The Minister is usually represented by a State Secretary (Staatssekretär) or Director-General (Ministerialdirektor). In 9 Länder separate Ministries for science and research have been established in addition to the Ministries for schools.

Pre-school institutions

The education, upbringing and supervision of children from the age of a few months to school age is almost exclusively assigned to the child and youth welfare sector. On the federal level, within the framework of public welfare responsibility lies with the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für

Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ), on the level of the Länder, the Ministries of Youth and Social Affairs and, in part, also the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, are the competent authorities. In some Länder, Vorklassen (pre-school classes) for children who are ready for school but are not yet of school age, or Schulkindergärten (school kindergartens) and Vorklassen for children of compulsory schooling age who are not yet ready for school exist. As a rule, these institutions are accountable to the school supervisory authorities.

Public supervision (operating licence) to protect children in day-care centres maintained both by public and non-public bodies is generally exercised by the youth welfare offices of the Länder (Landesjugendämter) which are the responsible bodies at Land level for the public child and youth welfare services. This covers compliance with the framework guidelines applicable to group size or staff-to-child ratios, staff qualifications, the space required, and standards relating to equipment, hygiene and safety. The principles of education policy in the elementary sector are laid down in the Common Framework of the Länder for early education in the early childhood sector (Gemeinsamer Rahmen der Länder für die frühe Bildung in Kindertageseinrichtungen) which was resolved by the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz) and the Youth Ministers Conference (Jugendministerkonferenz) in 2004. On the level of the Länder, education plans specify the basic notion of education and describe the day-care centres' independent responsibility for education. The responsibility for the actual educational work performed in the individual day-care centres lies with the maintaining body.

For children under three years of age, moreover, since 2005 child-minding services have gradually been upgraded as an equal-ranking, alternative form of care and the quality of these services developed. Permits for child-minding services are issued by the local youth welfare office [Jugendamt] and are dependent on the establishment of the personal suitability of the childminder and also, as a rule, on evidence of a basic qualification. The legally enshrined educational mandate also extends to child-minding services.

School supervision and administration

Under the Basic Law (Art. 7 Paragraph 1) and the constitutions of the Länder, the entire school system is under the supervision of the state. Supervision of the general and vocational school system is the responsibility of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder in their capacity as the highest educational authorities. The duties of the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder and of the subordinate education authorities include the organisation, planning, management and supervision of the entire school system. The Länder sphere of influence also includes the detailed regulation of the school's mission and its teaching and educational objectives (internal school matters) within the framework of the education acts. The educational objectives presented in school legislation are given concrete shape in the curricula for which the Minister of Education and Cultural Affairs of the respective Land is responsible. In order to implement the curricula for the various subjects in the different types of school, textbooks are used as learning material in the classroom. These books must be approved by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, and a list of approved books is published regularly. While the State is responsible for internal school matters, the school-maintaining bodies assume responsibility for external school matters. The public maintaining bodies of schools are, as a rule, the towns and cities [Städte] and municipalities [Gemeinden] and rural districts [Landkreise] or municipalities with the status of a district [kreisfreie Städte], and to some

extent also the Länder. Generally speaking, the school-maintaining body is responsible for external school matters, i.e. school buildings, interior fittings, the procurement and provision of learning and teaching materials, administrative staff and ongoing administration, and also bears the non-personnel costs. The school-maintaining body is also, as a rule, re-sponsible for school organisation measures such as setting up, changing and shutting down schools. The supervision of schools includes Rechtsaufsicht (legal supervision), Fachaufsicht (academic supervision) and Dienstaufsicht (supervision of the staff at public-sector schools). Rechtsaufsicht (legal supervision) involves monitoring the lawfulness of the administration of external school matters, which is usually carried out by the Kommunen (local authorities) in their capacity as Schulträger (maintaining bodies). External matters include the establishment and maintenance of the school building, and the procurement and provision of textbooks and other learning or teaching materials.

Fachaufsicht (academic supervision) over teaching and educational work (internal school matters) in all public-sector schools is another responsibility of the school supervisory authorities. Academic supervision over primary schools and Hauptschulen, Förderschulen (with the exception of residential special schools) and to some extent over Realschulen is exercised by the Schulämter (lower-level school supervisory authorities). The Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs, sometimes the middle-level school supervisory authorities and the lower-level school supervisory authorities, supervise all other types of school and schools of particular importance.

Land authority to carry out academic supervision is derived from the state sovereignty over schools enshrined in the Basic Law. This states that the entire school system is under the supervision of the state. The supervisory authorities are awarded the power to check that schools are keeping to the prescribed curricula and Prüfungsordnungen (examination regulations) by visiting the school and sitting in on lessons, and to take necessary steps. The Fachaufsicht is limited by the individual pedagogical responsibility of the school and the pedagogical responsibility of the teacher. In several Länder, the school supervisory authorities are legally required to respect the individual pedagogical responsibility of the schools. With increasing institutional independence of schools, the role of school supervision changes as well. In some Länder, the school supervision is supplemented by mandatory external evaluation (Schulinspektion, Schulvisitation) which is intended to provide the individual schools with information regarding their quality development. The state's influence on schools is increasingly exercised via the approval of Schulprogramme (school-specific programmes) and the determination of target agreements with the individual schools or head teachers, respectively. During this process, the personal supervision by the school supervisory authorities tends to lose importance compared to the duties of supporting and advising school development and quality management in schools. In this respect, school counselling prepares schools for new tasks and encourages them to promote the pedagogical responsibility of teachers and schools, particularly by instigating a binding agreement that governs pedagogic aims and focal points of the work involved, as well as in the development of school-specific programmes.

Pedagogical responsibility – also termed pedagogical freedom or methodological freedom – includes the right of teachers to teach lessons on their own authority within the framework of the applicable legal provisions. The teacher is guaranteed this freedom in the interests of the pupils, as pupil-oriented teaching can only take place if the teacher has an adequate amount of freedom in selecting the content of lessons, teaching methods and assessment. As the case may be, the pedagogical freedom of the teacher is to be seen in relation to the requirement of

acting in a professional manner, and to the pedagogical responsibility of the school. For example, the teachers are bound by the basic pedagogical concepts laid down in the school programmes.

The school supervisory authorities in the Länder also supervise teachers and head teachers of public-sector schools. Staffing issues, management and the general behaviour of the individuals working in the school are subject to such Dienstaufsicht (staff supervision). In some Länder, due to the increasing responsibility of the schools, the Dienstaufsicht has been transferred to the head teachers.

In most of the Länder school supervision is organised on two levels and is performed by the Ministries of Education and Cultural Affairs in the Länder as the highest educational authorities and the school offices (Schulämter) as the subordinate school supervisory authorities. In Baden-Württemberg, Bayern and Nordrhein-Westfalen school supervision is organised on three levels. Here the general administration authorities (Regierungspräsidien, Regierungen, Bezirksregierungen) are at the same time middle-level school-supervisory authorities. In the city states of Berlin, Bremen and Hamburg, and in Saarland, there is just one school supervisory authority in each case.

Policy environment

Given the importance and specific structure of vocational education and training in the dual system of vocational education and training, Germany also counts ISCED level 4 qualifications among the tertiary or equivalent qualifications.

To reduce the share of early school leavers even further, in 2010 the Länder adopted a joint support strategy for poorer-performing pupils (Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und Schüler) which includes prevention, intervention and compensation measures. The same year the Federal Government launched, in addition to the existing career-start advice, the initiative Abschluss und Anschluss – Bildungsketten bis zum Ausbildungsabschluss (Qualify and connect – educational chains up to the end of training), which helps young people to achieve a qualification, provides vocational guidance, and support in choosing a career and starting training, as well as during training. As part of the joint qualification initiative “Getting ahead through education” (Aufstieg durch Bildung) of the Federation and the Länder, a range of measures have been adopted and developed from early childhood support through to continuing education, involving in particular the achievement of a school-leaving qualification, the strengthening of vocational guidance in school curricula and the improved transition from school to working life. With a 41.3 per cent share of 30 to 34 year-olds with a tertiary or similar degree in 2010, Germany is well above the EU headline target of 40 per cent. The Federation and the Länder are together making considerable efforts to expand tertiary education. For instance, within the framework of the Higher Education Pact 2020 (Hochschulpakt 2020), the Federation and the Länder are creating study opportunities for an extra 327,000 new entrants in the period 2011 to 2015. Within the framework of the Teaching Quality Pact (Qualitätspakt Lehre) the Federation is providing funding up to the end of 2020 for measures to improve staffing, provide support for training academic teaching staff and safeguard and further develop the high quality of teaching at higher education institutions. This is intended to help increase graduation rates inter alia.

Investment

Within the framework of the implementation of the measures agreed in the qualification initiative “Getting ahead through education”, the Federation and the Länder have stepped up their financial commitments. They have agreed the target of increasing total government expenditure on education and research to 10 per cent of GDP by 2015. In 2009 and 2010 expenditure on education and research totalled 9.5 per cent of GDP. Especially by continuing the three academic pacts adopted by the Federation and the Länder – the Higher Education Pact 2020 (Hochschulpakt 2020), Excellence Initiative (Exzellenzinitiative), and Research and Innovation Pact (Pakt für Forschung und Innovation) – the Federation and the Länder are making a substantial contribution to achieving the ten per cent target. The share of total government expenditure on education in GDP increased between 2009 and 2010 from 6.9 per cent to 7.0 per cent. Absolute expenditure rose from Euro 153.9 billion in 2008 to Euro 164.6 billion in 2009 and Euro 172.3 billion in 2010. For the years 2010 to 2013 the Federal Government has agreed to increase expenditure on education and research by Euro 12 billion. In total as much as Euro 13.3 billion has been made available. These increases in expenditure will be implemented in the annual Federal budget.

New skills and jobs

The Ausbildungsordnungen (training regulations) for currently around 350 anerkannte Ausbildungsberufe (recognised occupations requiring formal training) are continuously reviewed and adapted to new requirements in the working world. Significant impetus for the re-structuring of occupations requiring formal training within the dual system comes from the changing skills requirements of the economy. To take account of the complex requirements of the different occupations, modern training regulations are action-oriented, i.e. they lay down not the contents of learning but what skills should be acquired at the end of a training programme. The drafting of new or modernisation of existing training regulations and their coordination with the Länder framework curricula (Rahmenlehrpläne) for teaching in the Berufsschule (vocational school) takes place in a multistage process involving employers, trade unions, the Federation and the Länder.

Lifelong Learning Strategies

In Germany the design of lifelong learning focuses on increasing permeability between and dovetailing of the educational sectors, expanding educational counselling, more effective integration through education, and recognition of qualifications obtained abroad, and the validation of non-formally and informally acquired competences. In their endeavours the Federation and the Länder regard lifelong learning as a key political and social challenge in Germany, which demands great commitment from all social forces. Its realisation is viewed as vital to ensuring equal opportunities for individuals and to social participation, economic success and the future of society. Since the school-leaving certificate forms the basis of every educational biography, it should be possible for everyone to achieve this qualification or to acquire it later in life. Continuing education should remain attractive to people at every stage of life, enabling them to maintain and develop their knowledge and skills and to participate fully in society.

In their spheres of competence the Federation and the Länder are implementing, within the framework of the lifelong learning concept, measures in the following areas:

- improving educational opportunities for children under six years of age,
- improving the training situation,
- helping disadvantaged young people to integrate into the labour market,
- facilitating transition from school to higher education and access to higher education without the Abitur for vocationally qualified applicants,
- making learning paths more flexible,
- admitting up to 327,000 extra first-year students until 2015 within the framework of the Higher Education Pact 2020 (Hochschulpakt 2020),
- increasing interest in mathematics and the natural sciences,
- improving opportunities for women,
- improving opportunities for people with a migrant background,
- taking account of the interests of people with disabilities in participating in lifelong learning
- structural improvement of education offers at all stages of life at local level.

By 2015 participation in formal continuing education is to be increased from 43 per cent to 50 per cent, while participation in continuing education by the low-skilled is to be raised from 28 per cent to at least 40 per cent. It is therefore important to strengthen the motivation for lifelong learning still further and thereby initiate educational activities, facilitate access to continuing education, improve continuing education courses, increase the permeability and integration between the educational sectors and consolidate knowledge of and insight into the processes and effects of lifelong learning.

The measures proposed by the Federal Government are also part of the qualification initiative for Germany “Getting ahead through education” which was adopted in October 2008 by the Federation and the Länder. The qualification initiative for Germany comprises a catalogue of measures which refers to the overall educational biography. The aim is to enable all people to participate fully in society through education.

Learning Mobility

In May 2010 the Standing Conference adopted a declaration on mobility in the education sector in Europe (Erklärung zur Mobilität im Bildungsbereich in Europa) in which it emphasises that the mobility of pupils/students and teachers/lecturers forms a key element of education policy collaboration in Europe and represents a core task of the Bologna Process and of the European Union in the education sector. The Standing Conference considers the main obstacles to mobility in the school sector and in higher education to be insufficient information, financial difficulties and problems in recognising credits obtained abroad. Young people are, moreover, to be given an understanding of the many advantages of undertaking mobility and informed about funding opportunities, while the above obstacles to mobility are to be dismantled. Against this background the Standing Conference welcomed the diverse initiatives of the European Union and of the Bologna Process to promote cross-border mobility in the education sector. It particularly welcomed the Lifelong Learning Programme of the EU and the European Qualifications Framework for the Higher Education Sector and Lifelong Learning.

According to the November 2011 Conclusions of the Council of the European Union on a benchmark for learning mobility of November 2011, by 2020 an EU average of at least 20 per cent of higher education graduates should have a period of higher education-related study

or training (including work placements) abroad, representing a minimum of 15 ECTS credits or lasting a minimum of three months.

As suitable instruments for increased mobility the Standing Conference and the Federal Government support the establishment of a mobility window in the curriculum, financial support for periods abroad and recognition of the study courses and examinations completed abroad. In an international comparison, German students are already more mobile than the average student.

The November 2011 Council Conclusions defined for the first time a reference level of European average performance for vocational training. Accordingly, by 2020 an average of at least 6 per cent of 18-34 year-olds with an initial vocational education and training qualification should have had a VET-related study or training period (including work placements) abroad lasting a minimum of two weeks (ten working days), or less if documented by “Europass”.

Federation and Länder also advocate including a greater share of the financially or socially disadvantaged and those with special needs or with a migrant background in mobility programmes, and considering additional support in the form of increased rates of funding. A study published in 2012 by the National Agency Education for Europe (Nationale Agentur Bildung für Europa) at the Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung – BIBB), which received funding from the BMBF, recorded the specific acquisition of competences by people with special needs through trips abroad. Trips abroad benefit this group of people in particular by building their personal and social skills and improving their employability. In the LEONARDO DA VINCI sub-programme five per cent of those in receipt of scholarships have special needs. Also within the framework of the Bologna Process the Federation and the Länder are committing themselves to strengthening the international mobility of students. At the eighth ministerial conference on the Bologna Process, in April 2012 in Bucharest the higher education ministers adopted the Mobility Strategy 2020. This took up the 2009 mobility resolutions from Leuven/Louvain-la-Neuve and underpinned them with specific measures. One of the targets set in Bucharest is that, by 2020, 20 per cent of all higher education graduates should have completed a period of study or a work placement abroad representing a minimum of 15 ECTS credits or lasting a minimum of three months.

Improving the Quality and Efficiency of Education and Training Basic Skills (Literacy, Mathematics, Science and Technology), Languages

A good command of the German language is viewed as the key to a successful education and career and forms an important prerequisite for participation in society. The many language-promotion initiatives in the Länder range from procedures to establish language levels prior to enrolment at school, to measures supporting language development through language promotion at primary level and in lower secondary level, and career field-related and subject-integrated language promotion at Berufsschulen and Berufsfachschulen. Parents of children with a migrant background are deliberately involved in language promotion. To further develop quality in the field of language promotion and language diagnostics following a phase of intensive development and expansion, the Federation and the Länder agreed in October 2012 to implement a joint initiative to develop language promotion, language diagnostics and reading promotion. The joint programme “Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift (BISS)” (education through language and writing) is being implemented at the start of the 2013/2014 school year in day-care centres for children, primary schools and

secondary schools. The programme will serve to develop language promotion, language diagnostics and reading promotion in such a way that the existing language skills assessment processes and measures to promote language and reading in day-care centres for children and schools can be further developed through research, and their effectiveness or validity examined. In the programme “Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift (BISS)” networks of day-care centres for children or schools will work closely together to exchange their experiences in the field of language diagnostics and promotion, and to implement and optimise promising measures. Their work will benefit from scientific accompaniment.

In December 2011 the Federation and the Länder presented a national strategy for literacy and basic education for adults in Germany, designed to tackle adult reading and writing skills which are not sufficient for full participation in society. As a broad social alliance the strategy is to include, among others, the local authorities (Kommunen), trade unions, churches, and Volkshochschule associations. Industry associations and chambers of industry and commerce are also invited to participate.

As their contribution to developing the joint national strategy for literacy and basic education for adults the Länder will be implementing the following measures inter alia:

- the establishment of coordination agencies or contact points for literacy and basic education for those affected, their environment and the specialist public;
- active participation in public relations work to combat functional illiteracy together with the Federation and other partners, to help remove the taboos surrounding the subject of illiteracy in society;
- working for the establishment or continuation of individual funding areas for the subjects of literacy and basic education in the European Social Fund (ESF) 2014-2020 programming period;
- annual reporting on the status of implementation of the measures, commencing in autumn 2013.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) has launched a new initiative on workplace-oriented research and development in the area of literacy and basic education for the period from 2012 to 2015. The funding priority is divided into three spheres of activity:

- Concepts and measures for workplace-oriented literacy and basic education
- Counselling and training for players in the working world and in the daily life of those concerned
- Continuing training programmes for trainers and lecturers in education programmes

In December 2011 the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) adopted recommendations to strengthen foreign language skills (Empfehlungen zur Stärkung der Fremdsprachenkompetenz). As a forward-looking foreign language concept the recommendations have the following objectives:

- expanding language teaching into multilingualism,
- strengthening Europe’s cultural diversity,
- promoting mobility and integration,
- preparing for an internationally-oriented business sector and world of work.

These objectives are being achieved through language-learning opportunities coordinated between the Länder, starting with nationwide high-quality foreign language teaching in the primary sector and ranging up to a variety of languages offered in secondary schools. Particular importance attaches to English as a lingua franca and the use particularly of the first foreign language in bilingual subject teaching (Content and Language Integrated Learning – CLIL).

The strengthening of foreign language skills is being carried out in line with the following guidelines: With the development of functional multilingualism the Länder are facilitating a consistent and integrated foreign language learning offer from the primary to the tertiary sector taking account of the mother tongues.

The development of pupils' intercultural ability to act is one of the core tasks of all teachers. Accordingly, promoting the ability to structure the teaching and learning of languages against the background of intercultural challenges, taking the mother-tongue aptitudes of the pupils into account, is an important part of a future-oriented education, training and continuing training of foreign language teachers.

Foreign-language teaching is standards-based and skills-oriented. Its didactics and methodology accommodate different learning styles and the heterogeneity of learning groups. In courses at vocational schools professional requirements are emphasised in foreign language acquisition and the expansion and consolidation of language skills. The basis for defining the attainment level for foreign-language learning from the primary sector to the upper secondary level is the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) with its reference levels. The attainment level for each course described according to the CEFR should appear on the certificate.

Foreign-language learning oriented towards specific applications takes place through foreign-language teaching and increasingly also in bilingual subject teaching. Different forms of bilingual work guarantee a variable offer for as many pupils as possible. Foreign language teaching uses and reflects contemporary media. It is supplemented through full-day courses and visits to places of learning outside school inter alia, and through exchange programmes, trips abroad (including within the framework of vocational education and training), work placements, language trips, competitions and through the preparation for school and non-school certificates.

The Standing Conference regards the learning of foreign languages as a prerequisite for access to other language communities and for acquiring key dialogue and communication skills. Multiple language acquisition by as many pupils as possible is therefore one of its objectives. More information on foreign-language teaching can be found in the articles on teaching and learning in primary education, lower secondary education, general upper secondary education and vocational upper secondary education as well as in the article on other dimensions of internationalisation in early childhood and school education. A diversified network of private training providers is, moreover, available to adults in the field of general adult education and vocational further education to improve their language skills. The Länder support structures and measures in these areas through state funding.

**Professional Development of Teachers, Trainers and School Leaders
Pedagogic staff in early childhood education and care**

In 2010 the Standing Conference and the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK) adopted a common orientation framework “Education and Upbringing in Childhood” (Bildung und Erziehung in der Kindheit) to develop the education, training and continuing training of child-care workers. In this context the Länder have

- made practical experience an integral part of training;
- undertaken a quantitative expansion of study courses in the field of early childhood education in order to increase the number of academically trained qualified employees in day-care centres for children;
- improved vertical permeability between Fachschulen, Berufsakademien and higher education institutions;
- increased the number of occupational training places for target groups with professional experience.

In May 2011 the Conference of Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs approved state recognition of Bachelor’s degrees in the field of day-care for children and passed a resolution with regard to the job title. In this resolution the Conference advocates, inter alia, combining the organisation of the state recognition procedure and the procedure to accredit courses of study. As a standard national job title the Conference recommends the title “Staatlich anerkannter Kindheitspädagoge/Staatlich anerkannte Kindheitspädagogin” (state-recognised childhood educator).

Based on the common orientation framework the Länder have developed a qualifications profile based on competences for all areas of work of the child-care workers in Fachschule training. The qualifications profile defines the professional requirements for the job and describes the occupational competences which a qualified professional must have in order to exercise the profession at the required level. Generalist training qualifies for employment in the socio-educational fields of work at day-care centres for children, child and youth work, educational assistance, and for social and education activities in the school. The qualifications profile also aims to facilitate the crediting of qualifications acquired at Fachschulen and Berufsakademien to a university degree course and vice versa.

The Länder will be expanding the continuing training offers for lateral entrants to qualify as youth or child-care workers. The Federation has introduced measures to significantly raise the share of men working as skilled personnel in day-care centres for children.

Teachers

Due to the principle of cultural sovereignty (Kulturhoheit) and for historical reasons teacher training in the Federal Republic of Germany displays a high degree of diversification per levels and types of schools. Teacher training has to combine subject-related studies, educational science and subject-related didactics as well as to provide for a meaningful relation between theory and teaching practice during preparatory service. Furthermore, the subjects of the first phase of teacher training have to be adjusted to the subjects of the second, predominantly practical phase.

In all Länder, currently efforts are being made to reform teacher training for all types of schools. With regard to the reforms considered necessary, the efforts of many Länder, with particular emphasis on their individual priorities, aim to focus on the following measures, amongst others, to reform teacher training:

- a more extensive practical orientation during teacher training
- intensification of the relations between the theoretical and practical phases of training
- particular significance of the induction period for newly qualified teachers
- the introduction of examinations taken alongside courses of study
- measures to improve teaching practice with regard to diagnostic and methodical competence

The basis for the current reform initiatives are the findings of the 1999 committee set up by the Standing Conference comprising experts from science and from educational administration (Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung) and the 2001 recommendations of the Science Council (Wissenschaftsrat) on the future structure of teacher training. The positions of the Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung were supported in a joint declaration by the Standing Conference, the teachers' unions and other unions in the field of education of October 2000 regarding the actual duties and responsibilities of today's teachers (Aufgaben von Lehrerinnen und Lehrern heute – Fachleute für das Lernen). According to this declaration, the core responsibility of teachers as experts for learning is to plan, organise and reflect processes of teaching and learning. It is the responsibility of the teacher to impart basic skills and knowledge of methods which enable the individual to master the process of lifelong learning on his own. Teachers carry out the task of education in school and cooperate closely with the parents in promoting positive values, attitudes and actions of the pupils. They assess the performance of the pupils and give advice to pupils as well as to parents. Teachers are to continually develop their competences by participating in in-service and further training courses. With regard to school development they are increasingly asked to participate in committees and institutions on a regional level as well as to carry out administrative tasks and take over responsibility within the school administration.

In December 2004 the Standing Conference adopted Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences (Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften). In doing so, it oriented itself around the outline of a profession as described by the Gemischte Kommission Lehrerbildung and in the declaration passed jointly with teachers' unions and other unions in the field of education of October 2000. The educational sciences include the scientific disciplines concerning educational processes, education systems and their basic conditions. The standards describe requirements for the actions of teachers. They refer to competences and thus to the abilities, skills and attitudes that a teacher must possess in order to meet professional requirements. They formulate competences in educational sciences that are particularly important for initial teacher training and everyday working life and that can be linked to further and continuing education. With regard to the improvement of diagnostic and methodical competence, the introduction of the standards for teacher training provide an additional foundation for a teacher training aimed at enhancing professionalism. The Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences were adopted by the Länder at the start of the 2005/2006 academic year as the basis for the specific requirements of teacher training courses, including practical training components and the Vorbereitungsdienst or preparatory service in the Länder. In October 2008 the Standing Conference adopted common content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training (Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung) which apply to all Länder, in which, by laying down so-called subject profiles (Fachprofile), it has agreed a framework for the common content requirements for subject-related courses of study (Fachstudium). Within this framework, the Länder and universities may set priorities and define their own specialisations, and also lay down additional requirements. The subject profiles include a description of the competences

to be acquired through study and the key individual content requirements. The subject-related skills of future teachers are to be established and developed primarily through courses of study. The requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics, in conjunction with the Standards for Teacher Training, form a basis for the accreditation and regular evaluation of teacher-training courses. At the same time they are an important element of efforts towards quality assurance and quality development in school education and training.

In December 2012 the Standing Conference adapted the framework agreements on training and examination for the different types of teaching careers with a view to the requirements of inclusive education. The aim is to better prepare future teachers to deal with heterogeneity and inclusion and for the requirements of support diagnostics. Courses for the teaching career in special education at universities and equivalent higher education institutions are to be geared to the requirements of inclusive education at all school types. Also in December 2012 the Standing Conference adopted common requirements of the Länder for the preparatory service (the practical placement at schools known as the Referendariat) and the concluding state examination in teacher training (Ländergemeinsame Anforderungen für die Ausgestaltung des Vorbereitungsdienstes und die abschließende Staatsprüfung). The resolution is to take account of more recent developments in the school sector and to further enhance uniformity and mobility in the education system. The focuses of the resolution are:

- structural minimum requirements for the preparatory service
- qualitative requirements for the structure and contents of the preparatory service
- admissions criteria for the preparatory service
- principles for the concluding state examination
- personal responsibility for teaching
- dovetailing the first and second phase of teacher training.

Equity and Diversity

With the National Integration Plan in 2007, the Federation and the Länder and other integration policy stakeholders committed in their respective spheres of competence to measures to improve the integration of migrants into the education system. The Integration Plan has now been updated. At the 5th Integration Summit in January 2012 the Federal Chancellor presented the National Action Plan on Integration, developed by the Federation and the Länder together with immigrant organisations, the social partners and other civil society stakeholders, and incorporating specific, binding and measurable targets in practically all areas of action with relevance to integration. In this context the Länder are prioritising in particular language support for children and young people, implementation of the Standing Conference's support strategy for poorer-performing pupils (Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und Schüler), cooperation with parents and migrant organisations, and the intercultural opening of day-care centres for children and of schools. The Federation is prioritising the transition from school to in-company vocational training, improving the training success of young people from a migrant background, increasing the share of students from a migrant background, language promotion, and educational research and education reporting.

1 April 2012 saw the entry into force of the Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Act (Gesetz zur Verbesserung der Feststellung und Anerkennung im Ausland erworbener Berufsqualifikationen – Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetz –

BFG). The so-called Recognition Act introduces a legal entitlement to an assessment procedure for foreign vocational qualifications in the occupations regulated under Federal law, and extends existing recognition procedures for qualifications obtained in the European Union or the European Economic Area to qualifications obtained in third countries. The question of whether the qualification obtained abroad is equivalent will in future be assessed on the basis of standard criteria in a standardised procedure. This will help to decouple the access to a profession from origin and nationality for the most part. The new standardised and transparent procedure serves to develop the employment potential of migrants and thus improve integration into the labour market and society as well as increase Germany's attractiveness for foreign experts.

In February 2012 a working group of members of the Conference of the Ministers of Labour and Social Affairs (Arbeits- und Sozialministerkonferenz), the Conference of Integration Ministers (Integrationsministerkonferenz), the Conference of Ministers of Economics (Wirtschaftsministerkonferenz) and the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs presented a model regulation coordinated and agreed in the Standing Conference for the Recognition Acts required in the 16 Länder. The model act for an umbrella act of the Länder safeguards uniform legal entitlements, procedures, deadlines and equivalence criteria between the Federation and the Länder, but does not neglect the specific circumstances in the individual Länder. At the same time the Prime Ministers of the Länder have called for the procedures which establish the equivalence of foreign vocational qualifications not to be anchored in the Länder legislation for the individual professions (and thus differently in each Land) but in principle to be implemented on the basis of the Länder Assessment and Recognition of Foreign Professional Qualifications Acts (Berufsqualifikationsfeststellungsgesetze). Uniform implementation of the Federal rules by the Länder should also be guaranteed.

Recent years have seen a growing number of different organisational forms of support in which disabled and non-disabled children learn together in different ways from the elementary sector onwards. In order to ensure children with an existing or an impending disability have an equal role in social life, each child with a disability is to be given the opportunity to attend a day-care centre close to home in which he or she will be supported as well as possible in accordance with his or her individual needs. One option is setting up multiprofessional teams in day-care centres for children e.g. through greater involvement of primary school teachers, motor activity specialists, speech therapists, psychologists and remedial therapists. This will allow each child to be supported in accordance with his or her individual skills, talents and abilities without having to leave their social context or limiting exchange with other children.

Since the 1980s disabled pupils have been increasingly integrated into mainstream schools under school pilot projects, some of which have assumed the status of a standard type of schooling since 1990. Also, various forms of cooperation between mainstream schools and special schools have emerged and approaches to inclusive teaching have been developed in educational science. A focus on institutions has given way to a focus on the needs of the individual. Formerly, the prevailing concept when making choices for a child's school career (i.e. the decision in favour of a mainstream school or a special school) was the need for education at a special school. This has since been superseded by the concept of sonderpädagogischer Förderbedarf (special educational needs), meaning education, instruction, therapy and care requirements depending on an individual's individual preconditions as far as the institutional setting allows. This development has been influenced

by a new understanding of disabilities and educational needs, improved diagnostic techniques, more effective early detection and prevention as well as better overall conditions at mainstream schools (e.g. improved pupil-teacher ratios), more open approaches to instruction and education and, finally, a greater appreciation of the benefits to children of attending a school close to their home.

Within the context of the ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities by Germany and the equality legislation in the Länder, offers of integration into mainstream schools for pupils with special educational needs are currently being extended. In a position paper of November 2010 on the teaching and legal aspects of the implementation of the UN Convention the Standing Conference found that interaction between general teaching and special teaching is essential to achieving inclusive education. Teachers at all school types are to be trained in the various stages of training in teaching all pupils together. In October 2011 the Standing Conference adopted the decision on inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities in schools (Inklusive Bildung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Behinderungen in Schulen). The recommendations are guided by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. They build on the basic positions of the 1994 Recommendations on Special Needs Education in the Schools of the Federal Republic of Germany (Empfehlungen zur sonderpädagogischen Förderung in den Schulen in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland) and set out the framework conditions for increasingly inclusive educational practice in general education and vocational schools. The aim of the recommendations is to enable children and young people to be educated and trained together and to guarantee and develop the standards achieved in special education teaching, advisory and support services. This is to stimulate the development of inclusive education programmes. In all planned amendments and developments care must be taken to ensure that

- children and young people with and without a disability can learn in line with their needs and requirements at any place of learning,
- the necessary quality and the required extent of support is provided for all children and young people,
- cooperation is guaranteed between all persons and institutions involved in support,
- special education learning, advisory and support services facilitate high-quality integrative learning.

The above-mentioned Standing Conference's support strategy for poorer-performing pupils (Förderstrategie für leistungsschwächere Schülerinnen und Schüler) is specifically aimed at pupils with special educational needs. It is intended in particular to improve the opportunities for suitable pupils who benefit from the support priority Learning to obtain, in addition to their own specific school leaving certificate, the Hauptschule school leaving certificate. In this context the attendance by pupils with special educational needs of general education schools is being increasingly promoted. Permeability between Förderschulen (special schools) and general education schools is to be improved, for instance by adapting the curricular requirements or introducing English as a subject at special schools. In the higher education sector measures for learners with special requirements include:

- making higher education institutions aware of the specific needs of students in special circumstances, such as for instance students with children, students with disabilities or chronically ill students,

- developing and securing the quality of the advisory and care services for all students, especially for students in particular life situations; student services play an important role here,
- taking the requirements of students in particular life situations more into account in admission, workload and examinations, inter alia in the framework of the accreditation of study courses or the accreditation of higher education systems,
- securing financing for the additional study expenditure incurred by students with a disability by adapting the social law regulations to modern education paths.

Enhancing Creativity and Innovation, Including Entrepreneurship, at all Levels of Education and Training

Partnerships with Business, Research, Civil Society

In the school sector there are partnerships with employment agencies, foundations, companies, trade unions, and other local stakeholders among others promoting vocational guidance at general education schools and Förderschulen (special schools). As part of the qualification initiative for Germany “Getting ahead through education” (Aufstieg durch Bildung) local partnership networks are increasingly being promoted in vocational guidance. As part of the National Pact for Training and Young Skilled Staff in Germany (Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs in Deutschland) initiative ‘career planning is planning for life’ (“Berufswegeplanung ist Lebensplanung”), in order to provide targeted support for young people in their choice of career German industry’s umbrella organisations plan inter alia to

- arrange partnerships with companies for each interested school,
- help young people gain an insight into working practice,
- support mentoring and sponsorship programmes which help, in particular, disadvantaged young people in the transition from school to training,
- support the continuing education of teachers and head teachers through suitable offers from companies.

The Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz –KMK) decided in October 2010 to join the National Pact for Training and Young Skilled Staff in Germany in Germany as a full member. The Länder also concluded complementary regional pacts. These are training networks with a wide variety of regional actors ranging from business and administration to the media and employment agencies.

As part of the expansion of work-related study and continuing training courses, higher education institutions are cooperating with the regional economy inter alia. The business sector has on a number of occasions reacted positively to the introduction of the tiered graduation system and, within the context of the ”Bachelor Welcome” joint initiative repeatedly expressed the willingness of companies to employ Bachelor’s graduates. The last measure within the framework of the “Bachelor Welcome” project was held in October 2010. More than 80 companies with several million employees have now taken part in the measures.

Transversal Key Competences, Entrepreneurship Education, e-Literacy. Media-Literacy, Innovative Learning Environments

Transversal key competences

In March 2009 the Standing Conference adopted a resolution on the strengthening of democracy education (Stärkung der Demokratieerziehung). Starting in primary school pupils are to be introduced to the basic principles of the democratic state and social order, and the differences with dictatorial forms of rule. In the secondary sector analysis of 20th-century Germany history is to be intensified as part of multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary teaching in particular.

An introduction to the professional and working world is a compulsory component of all courses of education at lower secondary level. The instruction is given either in a separate subject (Arbeitslehre – pre-vocational studies) or as part of the material covered in other subjects. Work experience placements, especially for pupils in the two last grades at Hauptschule and Realschule, aim to provide first-hand insight into the working world and guidance in choosing an occupation. The Länder have continuously developed their activities in order to convey a basic knowledge of the world of business and commerce. This has also taken place outside of lessons, for example, via model businesses set up by pupils (Schülerfirmen), information about entrepreneurial independence or cooperation projects between the schools and the world of business and commerce.

In the higher education sector the Länder support the expansion of work-related study and continuing training courses through target agreements with higher education institutions. New correspondence courses and online study courses, eLearning, eCampus initiatives, distance learning programmes and inter-higher education institution continuing education centres and networks are being promoted to this end among others. These provide, for example as Bachelor's degree courses which lead to a first degree qualifying for entry into a profession, academic expertise, methodological skills, qualifications related to professional fields and key qualifications such as social skills, communicative presentation skills, non-area specific competences and language skills. Competences and learning objectives are also defined with a view to the requirements of the labour market and are checked within the framework of accreditation.

General adult education and further vocational training provide, through a diverse network of privately-maintained bodies, further teaching and consolidation of transversal key competences. The innovativeness of educational institutions in the field of general adult education and further vocational education is supported by the Federation and the Länder through the promotion of measures and institutions.

Media literacy

The report “Kompetenzen in einer digital geprägten Kultur” (competences in a digitally influenced culture), which was drawn up by a commission of experts on media education set up by the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF), demonstrated the need to strengthen and promote media literacy as part of a comprehensive media education, and established inter alia that the promotion of media literacy should cover both children and young people and also their adult carers. In March 2012 the Standing Conference adopted a resolution on media education in schools

which aims to progressively anchor media education as a compulsory part of school education and provide schools and teachers with guidelines on media education in training and teaching. At the same time it highlights the possibilities arising through the didactic and methodological use of new media to shape teaching and learning processes. Media education in schools aims to help pupils acquire and develop media literacy, i.e. the knowledge, abilities and skills which allow appropriate, autonomous, creative and socially responsible behaviour in a world which is heavily influenced by the media. The declaration "Medienbildung in der Schule" (Media Education in Schools) explains the position of media education in schools using examples in five dimensions which concern:

- promoting the quality of teaching and learning through media
- the opportunities for social and cultural participation and involvement
- shaping the identity and personality of young people
- developing attitudes and value systems, and aesthetic discernment
- the necessary protection from the negative impacts of the media and media use.

To substantially promote media education in schools, the Standing Conference designates specific fields of action in the resolution, inter alia curricula and educational plans, teacher training, equipment and technical support, data protection and cooperation with partners outside of school.

In vocational education and training the study "Bestandsaufnahme zur Medienkompetenz in Förderprojekten des BMBF" (survey on media literacy in BMBF funding projects) also highlighted the importance of media literacy for vocational education and training. Connected with this, with the BMBF funding announcement "Stärkung der digitalen Medienkompetenz für eine zukunftsorientierte Medienbildung in der beruflichen Qualifizierung" (strengthening digital literacy for future-oriented media education in vocational qualification), since autumn 2012 the anchoring of media education in the different stages of vocational education and training (initial, further and continuing training) is being promoted through a total of 10 network projects (33 individual projects).

Specific Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments at National Level

Measures to develop and safeguard the quality of school education remain at the heart of education policy debate. In this process particular consideration is given to the results of the national and international comparisons of school performance as well as the comparative tests carried out across all Länder (VERA 3 and VERA 8). Great importance is attached in this process to the nationally applicable education standards as a reference framework for quality assurance and development at all system levels in the school sector. There is a consensus that, in light of demographic changes in Germany, and with a view to the emerging need for skilled workers, great efforts must be made to develop the German education system in the years ahead. This is especially true of the interfaces between early-childhood education, school, vocational education and training and higher education. Against this background, in October 2008 the Federation and the Länder agreed a common catalogue of objectives and measures in the Dresden declaration Getting ahead through education – The Qualification Initiative for Germany, which addresses all areas of education from early-childhood education through to continuing vocational training:

- education is to have top priority in Germany
- every child should have the best possible starting conditions

- everyone should be able to gain school-leaving and vocational qualifications
- everyone should have the opportunity to get ahead through education
- more young people should take a degree course
- more people should be filled with enthusiasm for scientific and technical vocations
- more people should take advantage of the opportunity for continuing education

Within the scope of the Qualification Initiative the Federal Government and the Länder aim to halve the number of adolescents leaving without vocational qualifications from a national average of 8 per cent to 4 per cent and of young adults without vocational qualifications who are capable of undergoing training from 17 per cent to 8.5 per cent by the year 2015. Furthermore it is the joint aim of the Federation and the Länder to increase the percentage of new students to a national average of 40 per cent of a year group.

To promote the dovetailing of the different education sectors and to establish the prerequisites for successful educational biographies, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) together with German foundations launched the initiative “Lernen vor Ort” (learning locally). At present this is helping 35 districts (Kreise) and municipalities with the status of a district (kreisfreie Städte) to develop integrated education management which coordinates the existing education offers at all levels with one another. To this end new forms of local control and cooperation in the education system are being created which cover all education sectors and dovetail with one another in such a way that people are provided with demand-oriented and efficient education opportunities. The funding initiative approach of addressing the structures of local or regional education systems, coupled with the introduction of systematic education monitoring in the participating local authorities, has also led to new incentives in the local landscape, as shown by the November 2012 “Münchener Erklärung” (Munich Declaration) of the German Association of Cities (Deutscher Städtetag). The results of the funding initiative are therefore to be made available to all interested local authorities (Kommunen) across Germany from 2014.