

# Leonardo da Vinci Awards 2004

32 Success stories





## Success Stories from the Leonardo da Vinci programme



### Ján Figel,

Member of the European Commission responsible for Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism.

We wish to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge based economy in the world in 2010 “capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion”. That, indeed, is the ambitious goal that European Union endorsed in March 2000 in Lisbon.

We also want our education and training systems to become a “world quality reference” by 2010. That is the second major ambition that the Union set itself in Barcelona in March 2002.

To reach these two ambitious goals, the education and training ministers of 31 countries, the social partners and the European Commission adopted in November 2002 the Copenhagen Declaration to strengthen European cooperation in vocational education and training. Fresh impetus was given to that cooperation in December 2004 by the Maastricht communiqué which identifies the key strategic areas for national implementation and European cooperation in the field of vocational education and training over the coming years.

The Leonardo da Vinci programme, the main European Union instrument in the field of vocational education and training, actively supports transnational cooperation among all relevant stakeholders in vocational education and training. One of its key missions is to contribute to transforming our training systems by co-funding transnational innovative projects. The programme contributes also to making the most of this investment by exploiting programme and project experiences, good practice and results, and making sure that they are taken up, developed and integrated into local, regional, national and European training systems and practices.

I am very pleased to present this catalogue of thirty-two Leonardo “success stories”. They have been selected from 165 innovative and successful Leonardo projects put forward in the summer of 2004 by the Leonardo da Vinci National Agencies and invited to the Leonardo da Vinci exhibition in Maastricht in December 2004. These “success stories” are an example of best practice in the development of practical, sustainable and innovative products and results. They have also been singled out for the transferability of their products and results and their potential interest and usefulness to other new users. These success stories are in many ways a showcase of the Leonardo da Vinci programme and will serve as an example and an inspiration to others. I very much that they will be taken up, adapted and transferred to new publics and into new contexts as a result of this initiative.



# Mastering the mysteries of international business communication



## CHALLENGE

When working closely with foreign clients, (technical) managerial staff often face linguistic and cultural challenges. Today simply having a good command of foreign languages is no longer enough: people doing business abroad must speak foreign languages but also have a solid grounding in and understanding of foreign cultures.

To help the growing number of people with these needs, the Leomep-Multi 2000-2003 project has developed a range of new and innovative language-learning modules. These modules are based on the typical needs of language-learners, while integrating key aspects of multicultural and multilingual communication.

## AIM

The self-directed – interactive and multimedia – modules were devised specifically for (technical) managerial staff who are in (or who are preparing for) regular contact with foreign business partners.

Besides focusing on a number of important linguistic aspects, the project paid special attention to the intercultural differences which influence the process of negotiation and to other types of conversation in technical or business-related-subjects.

The starting point for the modules was the development of self-directed learning packages, which allow easy use of the chosen language and culture as true communication tools.

The project promoters, Limburgs Universitair Centrum and Centrum voor Taaldidactiek en Toegepaste Linguïstiek (Belgium), combine field expertise (engineers' associations, chambers of commerce) with the experience of a large consortium of scientific partners (universities, high schools).

## RESULTS

The Leomep-Multi 2000-2003 project created 18 multimedia foreign language and culture learning modules, intended for senior officials in technical services and engineers. The modules – each one is based on around 100 hours of study, levels B2-C1 of the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages)– are available on CD-Rom and on the Internet. They have been conceived for (semi-) autonomous learning and e-learning (blended learning) and are available in seven source languages

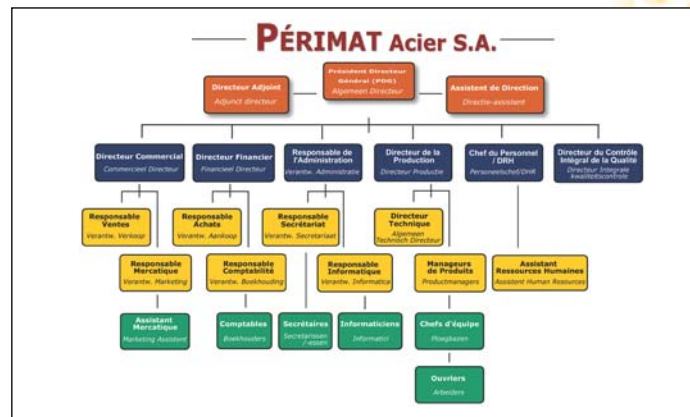


(French, Dutch, Spanish, English, German, Hungarian and Polish) and three target languages (French, German and Dutch).

The 18 CD-Roms have been produced in a user-friendly, interactive multimedia learning platform for the Internet, and are therefore accessible to a broad audience. Each of the modules is based on concrete case studies linked to real working-environment issues. Examples include negotiating offers, handling complaints, introducing and marketing the company, or describing the technical requirements of a product. These modules can be used in several learning environments (individual or classroom), and will contribute to both promoting communication in the area of technical services and increasing the mobility and integration of young graduates starting a European or international career.

The innovative pedagogical value is evident in the structure of the modules and in the variety of the exercises. In total there are 12 types of exercise used, each CD-Rom offering 500 varied multimedia exercises and more than 30 authentic dialogues. There is also a clear European dimension to the project, with no fewer than seven languages involved and every module containing references to the cultural background of the selected languages. The project was perfectly suited for enlarging to other European languages. A new, follow-on project, by the name of COM-I-N-EUROPE, has been started up, covering two new target languages/cultures (Polish and English) and two new source languages/cultures (Czech and Slovak).

The target group was reached by means of seminars, articles and publications from consortium partners in different countries. The project's communication campaign was based on a carefully thought-out international marketing and sales strategy. All the module marketing activities (online sales) and demonstrations have been placed on the site. Project leaflets are available and the website provides additional information and a discussion forum for users of the CD-Roms. ■



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#### Partners

Vlaamse Ingenieurskamer (B), VKW – Limburgse Werkgeversorganisatie (B), Brainlane (B), Haute Ecole de Bruxelles (B), Universität Paderborn (D), Landesverband des Sächsischen Gross- und Aussenhandels/Dienstleistungen e.V. Dresden (D), Universidad Europea de Madrid (ES), Asociación Española de Ingenieros de Telecomunicación (ES), Université du Littoral - Côte d'Opale (F), Chambre de Commerce et d'Industrie de Dunkerque (F), University of Limerick (IRL), Chamber of Commerce - Limerick (IRL), University of Debrecen (Hungarian Language School) (H), Business-Net Bt (H), Wy\_sza Szkoła Handlowa we Wrocławiu (PL), Dolnoslaska Izba Gospodarcza (PL).

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