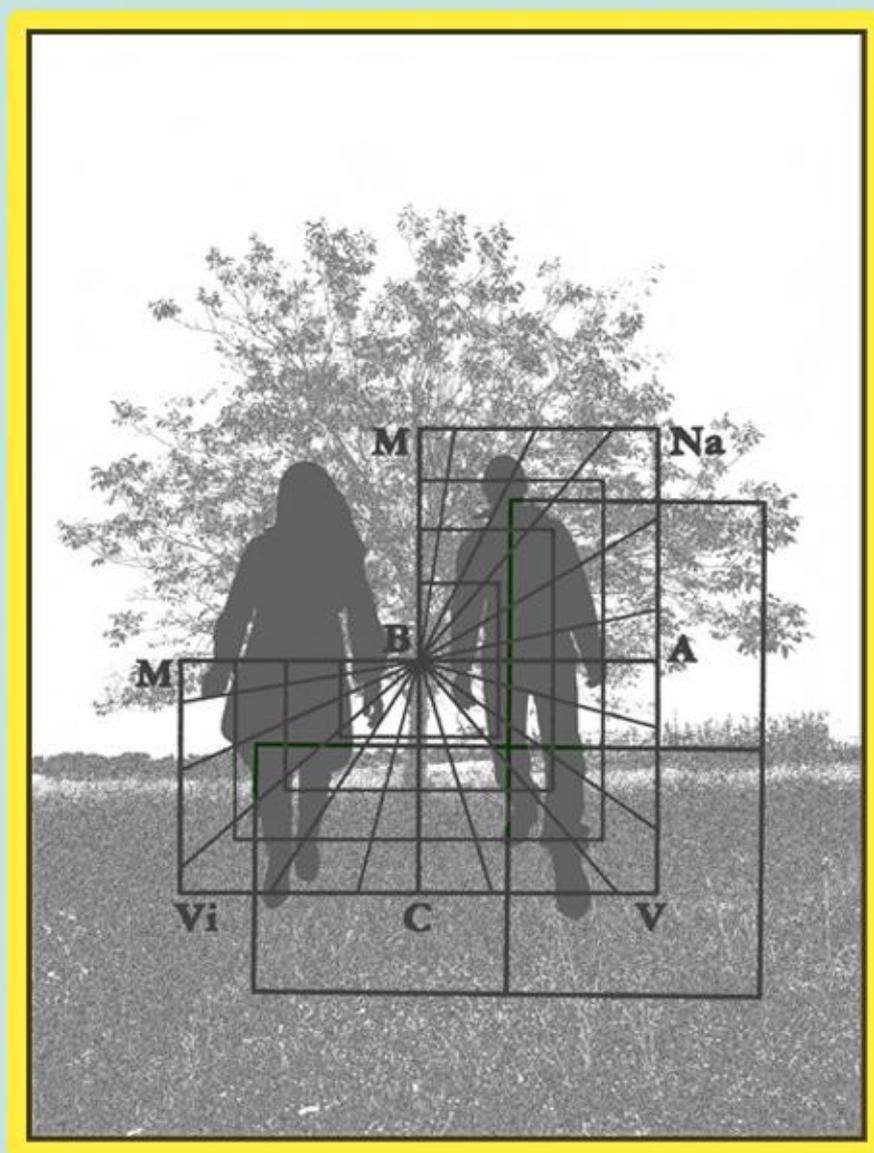


Mapping European Tertiary Lifelong Learning Landscapes of 7 European Countries

Discussion paper 2012/4.1.

Csaba Makó – Péter Csizmadia – Miklós Illéssy





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Discussion Paper 2012/4.1

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1. Introduction

The European Union in general and the Eurozone in particular, are strictly and deeply integrated areas sharing an increasing amount of common institutions. Yet the current international crisis opened a series of questions concerning the further direction of the convergence and integration. The newly actual debate on the viability of a specific European social or social-economic model is related to both the issues of the structural reforms and the possibility of the convergence to a single or “new-one-best” model, identified with such labels as the “Anglo-Saxon”, “market-based”, “neo-liberal” version of the capitalism. As Amable (2005:7) noticed, *“According some analysts, this convergence would be more than welcome since the most advanced knowledge-based economy is considered to be the US, and the source of its competitive and innovative advantage is usually traced back to its specific institutional structure... the institutions of the European model are supposed to be obstacles to the achievement of the Lisbon strategy. The bad performance of Europe in comparison to the US would be due to the lack of adaptation of the European model to the demands of the contemporary capitalism...In this respect, the ‘indispensable reforms’ would consist in favouring the mobility of workers both within the firm and across firms and industries, to foster education and training and thus workers’ employability, to increase labour market flexibility ...”*.

Olivier Blanchard (2004) and James Wickham (2004) represent the same approach regarding the importance of the institutions in the worldwide competition with the US and the emerging Asia. According to them the European model is in crisis because of the inefficient regulation. But as Blanchard noticed ‘Europe’s economy has done better than is often perceived’. (Blanchard 2004:23) As for the possible way the authors emphasize the reforms of (labour) market institutions, the importance of firm level, and that *“Europe may be converging to a more efficient European model rather than to the U.S. model”*. (Blanchard 2004:24)

1.1 Theoretical models of capitalism

1.1.1 Dichotomous models

The first systematic concepts on the various social-economic models appeared in the early 1990s (Esping-Andersen, Albert, Amable,). There are two remarkable streams of the concepts: the dichotomous and the multidimensional models. One of the formers is the concept elaborated by Albert (1991). In his argument, Europe is a political entity and has its specific institutions; therefore it is more than a large free trade (note: or euro) zone. The model, which is close to this thinking – as Amable (2005:14-15) notes is the so-called “Rhine” model of capitalism,

represented by Germany/Austria and in Asia, Japan. The opposed model is the neo-American or Anglo-Saxon, which is represented by such countries as USA and within Europe, the UK. In spite to the fact, that in Albert (1991)'s view, there is no single "European" model because of the country specific institutional diversity in the EU, in many respect he supposed the superiority of the "Rhine" model to the neo-American. Beside the fact that the "Rhine" model globally better suited to the European societies, he did not shared the views according them the neo-American model will win in a free competition among the varieties of capitalism. However, he believed in the dissemination of the "Rhine" model via the political process of the EU integration.

The other emblematic work reflecting the dichotomy view is the contribution of Hall and Soskice (2001). The central actor of the theory, labelled as "Varieties of Capitalism – VoC", is the firm as an agent actively seeking to develop dynamic capabilities in order to solve coordination problems related to its activities. Firms are doing so under various institutional circumstances represented by different models of capitalism. The concept calls attention to the importance of the following fields in determining the room of manoeuvre of firms in the different institutional models:

1. *Labour or industrial relations system* (e.g. system of both individual or collective coordination with the participation of the employers and employees' representatives on the working and employment conditions)
2. *Corporate governance* (e.g. the patterns of ownership relations, which have decisive impacts of financing various projects within the firms)
3. *Vocational training and education* (e.g. the role of the company and sector level skill formation system, "high" skill and "low" skill equilibrium, etc.)
4. *Inter-firm relations* (e.g. co-operation versus competition driven relations between firms, roles of the formal versus or formal networking among the firms)
5. *Intra-firm relations* (e.g. one of the main problems of coordination the relations between employers and employees, how to get access to the non-coded or tacit knowledge of the employees, how to share it with the management and across occupational groups, etc.)

Based on the five issues presented briefly above, Hall-Soskice (2001) developed a "binary classification" of the capitalism models: the liberal market economies (LME) and the co-ordinated market economies (CME). The nature of co-ordination makes a fundamental

distinction between the two models. In the LME, the mode of coordination between the firms is based on market mechanisms and on dominant role of investment in transferable assets. In the CME, non-market institutions play a decisive role in coordination, as well and the investment in specific assets is dominant. According the differences in the forms of economic and social coordination, as Amable (2005:15) writes “LME are thus characterised by short-term finance, deregulated labour markets, and emphasis on general education, and strong product market competition. CMEs are characterised by long-term finance, co-operative industrial relations, high-level of vocational training, weakened production market competition, and strong information exchanges through more or less formal professional associations favouring the establishment of common industrial standards. The differences extend to the pattern of innovation and technological change as well as industrial specialization, the so-called comparative institutional advantage.” Regarding the dichotomy-based approaches, besides that pure ideal types cannot be found, two open questions may be identified. Firstly, classifying all countries into two broader categories has the risk of ignoring essential country characteristics and emptying the meaning of the classification itself. Secondly, the two broad categories have rather little information on the country characteristics bringing them either into the category of LME or CME. . It is better to consider the idealtypes as the two ends of a scale, and each country is located between them. To overcome these shortcomings of the binary classification, it is worth to present the other views, having the ambition to go beyond the dichotomy approaches.

1.1.2. Multidimensional Approach of the Variety of Capitalism

Several attempts tried to overcome the shortcomings of the above briefly outlined dichotomy views. For example, Esping-Andersen 1990, Boyer 1996, Amable 2005, Sapir 2005a, Composto 2008, Martin 2008, Greskovits 2010. These authors tried to identify a variety of institutional complementarities which generates a diversity of models of capitalism. Among the authors listed above, Amable (2005, 1997) and Sapir (2005a) approaches represent – in our view - a suitable analytical tool to better understand the relations between the performance of the higher education system and the social models. Both authors went beyond the dichotomy and made an attempt to identify four or five versions of the European social models. In his original work on “Globalisation and the Reform of European Social Models (2005a), Sapir’s main goal is to compare the performance of the “Four European Models” in terms of “efficiency” and “equity”. Firstly, we present Sapir’s (2005a) four models and then Amable’s five types of capitalism. Before presenting these views on the European Social Models, we have to admit that,

unfortunately, these models do not cover the New Members States (NMS))¹, therefore in the case of Hungary and the Czech Republic we rely on less systematically elaborated analysis and assessment. There is a variety of the social models and development trajectories in the emerging post-socialist economies in Central Europe; however, only very recently we assist an effort of economists to study the institutional arrangements or specialisation and their impact on the competitiveness in these economies. (Lane 2006, Berlou-Carrincazeux, 2005)

According to Sapir (2005:2) such notions as “European social model”, “Social Europe” or “European model” are rather misleading, “... *in fact, there is no such thing. Europe is home to different social models, with different features and different performances in terms of efficiency and equity. In this perspective a model is considered as efficient if it provides sufficient incentives to work and generates relatively high employment rates. Equity is the model’s capability to keep the risk of poverty relatively low*”.

Sapir grouped the European countries into four different social policy models, in order to assess relative performance of each models using the two key dimensions: of efficiency and equity.

Nordic countries (Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Netherlands) dispose the highest level of social protection expenditures and universal welfare provisions. There is extensive fiscal intervention in the labour market in the forms of rich variety of “active” labour market measures. Still, strong trade unions guarantee highly equal wage structure.

Anglo—Saxon countries (Ireland and the U.K.) characterised with a relatively large social assistance of the last resort. Cash transfers are primarily oriented to people in working age. Activation measures are important as well as schemes conditioning access to benefits to regular employment. As concerning the actors of the labour market, this model is featured by a combination of weak trade unions, comparatively wide and increasing wage dispersion and relatively high incidence of low-pay employment.

Continental countries (Austria, Belgium, France, Germany, and Luxemburg) rely heavily on insurance-based, non-employment benefits and old-age pensions. In spite the declining membership rate, trade unions remain strong as regulations extend the coverage of collective bargaining to non-union members, too.

¹ It is worthy to note that several attempts on classifying NMS can be found in the literature, but most of them rather emphasize the economic indicators. Therefore in our point of view - the education - Composto’s analysis is more illustrative. In a working paper he attempts to classify also the NMS, using Sapir’s (2005a) methodology. He clusters the following types: Continental-Conservative, Northern, Anglo-Saxon – Liberal, Mediterranean and Central-Eastern countries The CEE category represents the NMS (namely Hungary, Slovakia, Poland and Czech Republic), and actually - in the sense of Sapir’s classification - CEE is a variety of the Mediterranean type.

Mediterranean countries (Greece, Italy, Portugal and Spain), direct their social expenditures on old-age pensions and allow for a high segmentation of entitlements and status. Social welfare systems in these countries basically draw on employment protection and early retirement provisions to exempt segments of working age population from participation in the labour market. The wage structure is, at least in the formal sector, covered by collectively bargaining and strongly compressed.

Finally, Sapir (2005:6) notes: “*This familiar grouping now used by many economists based on earlier political sociology work by Esping-Anderson (1990) which partitions welfare system into three regimes: a liberal regime (encompassing Anglo-Saxon countries), a conservative regime (encompassing continental and Mediterranean countries), and social-democratic regime (encompassing Nordic countries)*”.

The different social models which to four broad categories illustrated by the Table 1.

Table 1.			
The Four European Social Models: The Typology			
EQUITY		EFFICIENCY	
		Low	High
	High	“Continental” (AT, BE, CZ , DE , FR, LU)	“Nordic” (DK, FI, NL , SE)
Low	“Mediterranean” (ES , HU , GR, IT , PT, PL)	“Anglo-Saxons” (IE, UK)	

Source: Sapir (2005:9)

Note: “Bold” letters indicate the countries participating in the THEMP project.

The Table 1 has at least two types of interpretation. The first one is about the “trade-off” between efficiency and equity. From this static point of view, in the case of the countries classified into the Nordic and Mediterranean country cluster, there is no such kind of trade-off. As Sapir notes (2005:15): “Nordics enjoys an envious position, with a social system that delivers both efficiency and equity, whereas Mediterraneans live in a social system that delivers neither efficiency nor equity. On the other hand, Anglo-Saxon and continental countries both seem to face a trade-off between efficiency and equity. Anglo-Saxons have an efficient but inequitable social model, while continentals enjoy for more equity but far less efficiency.”

The other possible reading of Table 1 concerns the “sustainability” of the social models. Models that cannot supply appropriate answers to the challenges of decreasing public finances, increased competition from the globalisation and the fast technological and organisational innovations are not sustainable. In the opinion of Sapir, the less efficient Continental and Mediterranean models have significant sustainability constraints. For example, the share of the public debts in the GDP is visible higher in the Continental (73 %) and Mediterranean (81 %) countries in comparison to both Anglo-Saxon (36 %) and Nordic (49 %) countries. The perception of globalization is more favourable in the Anglo-Saxon and Nordic countries than in case of the Continental and Mediterranean ones. According to the recent Eurobarometer survey, the share of opinion that globalization has either threat or negative effects on employment is higher in the continental (52 %) and Mediterranean (45 %) countries than in Anglo-Saxon (36 %) and Nordic (37 %) countries. However, the non-equitable social models can survive, if they are efficient. Quoting Sapir (2005:10) “... *both Nordic and Anglo-Saxon models are sustainable, while Continental and Mediterranean models are not and must be reformed in the direction of greater efficiency by reducing disincentives to work and to grow. On the other hand, there is no reason a priori to assume that such reforms must go hand-in-hand with changes in terms of equity. It is perfectly possible for the continental model to become more like the Nordic one, and for the Mediterranean model to become more like the Anglo-Saxon model. Nonetheless, one cannot reject the possibility that a reform towards greater efficiency may also unleash a change towards more or less equity if the previous political equilibrium were itself affected by the drive towards more efficiency.*”

The other emblematic work representing the multidimensional VoC approach is elaborated by Bruno Amable. Amable (2005) in his efforts to develop typology of capitalism focuses on the Social Systems of Innovation and Production (SSIP) and integrates into his model the role of education, too. The empirical data used to build the main types of the SSIP are related to scientific and technological fields, economic structure, the educational system and the labour market. Amable (2005:19), added the “Asian Capitalism” to the Sapir’s four distinctive social models. He distinguished the following five ideal types of capitalism:

1. the market based-economies, liberal market economies or the Anglo-Saxon model,
2. social-democratic economies,
3. Asian capitalism,
4. Continental European capitalism,
5. South-European capitalism.

In the liberal market economies or in the Anglo-Saxon model, the intensive product and service market competition makes firms more sensible to do adverse demand or sudden changes in supplies. As Amable (2005:19) notices, *“When price adjustments cannot fully absorb shocks, quantity adjustments matter, particularly concerning the labour force. Therefore, product market competition leads to a de facto flexibility of employment... Competition extends to the education system. A non-homogenised secondary education system makes competition among universities for attracting the best students and among students for entering the best universities more crucial.”*

The social democratic model creates flexibility not by numerical or labour market forms of it, but re-training or further training of the highly-skilled workforce play a key role in the developing adaptability of workers. *“Protection of specific investment of employees is realised through a mix of moderate employment protection, a high level of social protection and an easy access to training thanks to active labour market policy.”* (Amable, 2005:20).

The Asian version of Capitalism, due to lack of social protection and sophisticated financial market, is a “dual-economy”. Large firms play key role in providing solidarity through life-long employment, high wages etc. However, the micro- small and medium sized sector is characterised by the lack of employment stability and high-wages, too. This model of capitalism *“... hinges upon the business strategies of the large corporations in collaboration with the state and a centralised financial system, which enables the development of long-term strategies.”* (Amable, 2005:20.)

The so-called Continental European model has several common characteristics with the previously presented social democratic one. For example, the centralised financial system enables firms to develop long-term strategies, similarly to the social democratic countries. However, the *“... retraining of the work force is not possible to the same extent as in the social democratic model, which limits the possibilities for and ‘offensive’ flexibility of work force and fast restructuring of industries.”* (Amable, 2005:20).

In the case of the Mediterranean model, the strong employment protection based on the relatively weak market competition and the lack of the short term financial constraint due to the centralised financial system. *“... work force with limited skills and educational level does not allow for the implementation of a high wages and high skills industrial strategy.”* (Amable, 2005:20). The shift from the so-called “low-skill equilibrium” to the “high-skill equilibrium” strategies is, however, far from being a simple task, as it requires high commitments of the various social partners along with a radical transformation of the mental paradigms (way of thinking) of employers, employees and policy makers.

Regarding the briefly presented classifications of the various social models elaborated by Sapir and Amable, we have to note that no single developed market economy is accurately characterised by any of the four or five models. These are “stylised models” or “ideal-types”. As Amable mentions: “*They may possess characteristics which makes them close to one or the other model, without being fully identifiable with the model itself.*” (Amable, 2005:20.) As we mentioned earlier, Amable’s classification of capitalism contains the description of education by the following dimensions: (1) product market, (2) labour market, (3) financial system, (4) social protection.

Table 2 summarizes the relations between of various types of capitalism and the characteristics of the education system.

Table 2.				
Relation between education and institutional complementarities of VoC				
	Product market	Labour market	Financial market	Social Protection
I. Neo-Liberal or Anglo-Saxon Model				
Education system	Labour force with general skills favours structural change	Low specific skills investments, hence no hold-up problems. Less need for high employment protection	A private higher education system requires an easy supply of credit to students	No strong demand for specific skills protection
II. Social-Democratic Model				
Education system	High levels of education and skills make sophisticated consumers on the domestic market	Demand for specific skills protection, i.e. employment protection. Skill levels allow for (offensive) flexibility	-	Demand for specific skills protection even with a high competitive pressure, hence the need for the welfare state
III. Asian Model				
Education system	A highly educated workforce makes sophisticated consumers	An efficient secondary education system provides an homogeneous labour force ready to acquire skills within corporations	-	A workforce with general skills does not need so much a high level of welfare expenditure
IV. Continental European Model				
Education system	Labour force with specialised skills allows to follow stable industrial strategies	Demand for specific investments’ protection	-	High demand for specific skills protection
V. South European Model				
Education system	The skill level of the work force prevents to engage in high-tech activities	The education system does not allow a large highly-skilled workforce	-	Low specific investments lower the demand for protection
<i>Source:</i> Revised version of the Amable (2005: 27-31)				

Comparing the various approaches, we may note the following. There are differences between the views of Amable (2005) and Sapir (2005), but not only in the number of types of social models of capitalism (five versus four) but on other aspects, too. For example, Sapir (2005) has an intention to measure both “social” (i.e. equity) and “economic” (i.e. efficiency) performances of the various models of capitalism, while Amable focuses on the interrelatedness of and complementarities between the various elements of the different institutional settings.

Relating the previous thoughts it is useful to consider the different institutional conditions within a country, as well. Martin (2008) adapts the Variety of Capitalism approach in the post-socialist Hungarian economy. His ‘Segmented Capitalism’ theory is an empirical attempt in order to separate the different clusters in the Hungarian private sector. State, Privatized, ‘De novo’ and International segments are identified by the following variables: asset ownership, access to capital, access to the product market and the degree of role division between politics and economy. In terms of our study this theory emphasizes the importance of diversity. Since the actors in each segment operate in unique institutional framework – not only between countries but also within a country.

If we want, however, compare the different institutional settings, which is the core aim of this report, we have to be aware that “mechanistic” comparison of the social and economic performance of the various country groups may lead to misinterpretation of reality.

Therefore we intend to apply a more reflexive approach, reclining upon the contribution of the THEMP team members. The next section intends, however, to provide a comparative analysis that is based on available statistical sources, in order to identify the measurable similarities and differences in performance of the various countries representing different institutional models.

1.1.3 Beyond dimensions: production versus employment regimes

Analysing the impacts of the various institutional settings on the job quality, in his eminent work Duncan Gallie makes a distinction between two streams of theories explaining the differences of the capitalist societies’ performances. The first theoretical approach is labelled as *production regimes* and is rooted in the corporatist tradition but putting the analytical focus on the company or meso level instead of investigating national economies. (Gallie, 2007) An emblematic representative of this stream is the Varieties of Capitalism (VoC) approach elaborated by Soskice and Hall. (Hall – Soskice 2001) As we have presented earlier, the theory explains the differences between capitalist societies by the various efforts companies make in order to solve their coordination problems where their room of manoeuvre is strongly influenced by the quality and internal logic of such institutions like industrial relations,

vocational education and training system, corporate governance, and inter- and intra-firm relations. The VoC distinguishes between liberal and coordinated models of market economies (capitalism) where in case of the first one the dominant coordination mechanism is hierarchy and market competition (e.g. the UK or Ireland), while in the latter case non-market forms of coordination play crucial role (e.g. Germany and the Nordic countries)².

Gallie refers to the other approach as *employment regimes*. (Gallie, 2007) This theoretical stream is rooted in the ‘power resources’ perspective, which approaches the modern welfare state as a result of the compromise between the main social actors, namely the employers and organised labour, mediated by the state. In terms of the employment and industrial relation policies Gallie makes a distinction between three basic types of employment regimes: inclusive, dualist and market regime. Inclusive regimes develop policies that aim to extend employment and employment right as widely as possible. The dualist employment regimes guarantee strong rights to the core workforce at the expense of the peripheral employees, while market regimes provide minimal employment regulations assuming that the market forces will automatically lead to high level of employment. (Gallie 2007)

In a rather simplified way one may say, that production regime theories focus on the interplay between institutional factors that influence the way of production of resources in the modern capitalism, while employment theories focus on those institutional characteristics of the welfare state (e.g. social dialogue, welfare protection, the role of public sector, etc.) that basically determine the way of (re)distribution of resources. A common feature of the two theoretical lines is that they attribute a central role to the skill formation system in preserving the dynamics of modern capitalist societies.

The above briefly presented VoC theory represents the production regime approach, while the theories elaborated by Sapir or Amable are closer to the view of the employment regime theories.

² It is worth, however, noting that the authors differentiates variants of the Coordinated Market Economies (centralized egalitarian model of the Scandinavian countries and flexibly coordinated model of German speaking countries) and the group of Mediterranean Market Economies. (Hall – Soskice 2001)

2. Country comparison

The core aim of this report is providing a comparative analysis of the institutional environment of TLL in the countries participating in the THEMP project, focusing on both differences and similarities. The various approaches presented briefly above provide a solid theoretical basis for the comparison, although the different models are only ideal-types and can be used only as proxies in evaluating the institutional environment of single countries or country groups. In the comparison we will rely on the model typology elaborated by Sapir, where the author makes a distinction between Continental, Nordic, Mediterranean and Anglo-Saxon social models. In doing so we try to overcome one of the greatest shortages of both production and employment regime theories, namely that post-socialist European countries remained out of their scope. As mentioned we particularly focus on THEMP countries: the Czech Republic, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain and the UK.

The United Kingdom is held to be the very best example for the Anglo-Saxon social model (or for the Liberal Market Economy in the VoC theory). In Sapir's typology Germany is the typical example for the Continental model (as well as it is for the Coordinated Market Economy in the VoC theory). The Netherlands represents the Nordic model (still CME in the VoC theory), while Spain and Italy belong to the Mediterranean social model (just like in the VoC).

Defining the position of the European post-socialist countries is far from being an easy task. At the end of the 1980s most of the countries showed lots of similarities with the Nordic social model but the collapse of the state-socialist political and economic regimes brought radical changes. After the changes both in the Czech Republic and Hungary, neo-liberal reforms have been introduced, although in a different way in the two countries³. These reforms were based, among others, on liberalisation of the labour market, mass privatization and the increasing role of FDI, and resulted in a radical decline of the GDP and in a labour market crisis (e.g. the dramatic increase of unemployment level. After the changes radical employment decline took place in both countries but while in Hungary the employment level stagnates at a very low level, in case of the Czech Republic we have witnessed a significant improvement.

³ In Hungary very radical reforms took place, while in case of the Czech Republic they have been introduced in a more consolidated way.

In an interview Andre Sapir gave to the Hungarian economic weekly HVG (Sapir 2005b), he evaluated the Czech Republic as a country that belongs to the Nordic model, while Hungary as a representative of the Continental one. In the followings we will test this hypothesis.

In the next session we will examine more closely how these countries fit to the theories above. In doing so, we will focus on the similarities and differences between the examined countries in terms of the key institutional factors that shape the practice of TLL. The analysis includes three different fields: firstly we will describe the labour market situation of those middle-aged, then the relevant aspects of the skill formation systems and finally the factors that influence labour market demands for mid-life learners.

2.1 Labour market

In order to gain a detailed picture about the institutional environment of the TLL policies and practices of the countries representing the various social models, in this session we try to describe very briefly the labour market position of those in middle-age. We will draw attention on the labour market participation of the investigated age group as well as on the stability or instability of their employment conditions.

2.1.1 Labour Market Participation

Employment is at heart of the modern welfare state. It is a mean of the social integration and the economic growth, in the same time. Employment contributes to social cohesion and the integration of potentially marginal social groups, like disabled people, ethnic minorities and elderly people, etc. According to Sapir's theory Nordic and Anglo-Saxon countries are predicted to have high employment rates, while Continental and Mediterranean countries lag behind.

In general it can be stated that the employment rate is the highest in the Netherlands, followed by Germany and the UK. Spain and Hungary are in the relatively worst position and the Czech Republic is somewhere behind. These data support our expectations concerning the employment characteristics of the different social models. For our purpose it is worth, however, narrowing the focus on those in middle-ages. If we do so, the picture becomes somewhat more complex. In case of the age group of 40-64 the employment position is better than the national average or is around it. There are, however, particular differences between the THEMP countries in case of the age group of 55-64. It is a general tendency that the employment rate of this age group is significant lower than the national average, but in those countries, where early retirement is dominant, the employment rate of this group is very low. Summing up the employment

situation, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK can be characterised as countries with high and employment rates both in general and in particular in case of the people in middle-ages, which is accompanied relatively late exit from labour market. Hungary, Italy and Spain share in low general employment level, but in the case of Spain the employment rate of the 55-64 year olds is relatively higher than in the other countries that can partly be traced back to the higher exit age.

	Employment rate of 15-64 years old	Employment rate of 40-64 years old	Employment rate of 55-64 years old	Employment rate with tertiary education of 15-64 years old	Employment rate with tertiary education of 40-64 years old	Employment rate with tertiary education of 55-64 years old
Czech Rep.	65,1	70,1	46,5	60,5	87,2	71,1
Germany	71,1	74,7	57,7	62,2	86,1	73,2
Hungary	55,4	57,9	34,4	59,3	77,0	53,9
Italy	56,9	60,2	36,6	60,1	83,0	66,6
Netherlands	74,7	72,7	53,7	63,5	83,6	68,1
Spain	58,6	60,9	43,6	62,3	79,9	64,4
UK	69,5	72,3	57,1	63,0	82,3	66,1

Source: Eurostat – LFS-series

If we have a look at the labour market position of those with tertiary education degree, we may say their employment rate is above average in each THEMP-country, but in the case of the two post-socialist country and the two Mediterranean ones they are in more favourable position. In other words, in these countries the inequalities in terms employment between the social groups with different educational background are higher than in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

2.1.2 Social status

In order to gain a more detailed picture on the social situation of the people in middle age, it is also worth examining their income position. The differences of the net income distribution are quite large *between* the THEMP countries, but not between the different age groups within the single countries. Other possibility to capture income differences is to include risk of poverty into the analysis. In each country there is a general tendency of diminishing poverty risk in line with the decrease of educational background. The extent of these differences varies, however,

between the countries. This indicator reflects the income inequalities between the differently educated social groups; therefore it indirectly indicates the degree of social cohesion. The biggest differences can be found in the post-socialist countries, especially between those with primary or lower and those with tertiary education. The more “egalitarian” country is the Netherlands representing the Nordic social model.

	Median equivalised net income in Euro		Risk of poverty of social exclusion from 50 to 64		
	18-64 year olds	50-64 year olds	Pre-primary, primary and lower secondary education	Upper secondary and post-secondary non-tertiary education	First and second stage of tertiary education
Czech Rep.	10365	10429	34,8	13,5	4,6
Germany	18858	19121	42,7	25,6	14,2
Hungary	6899	7271	47,3	27,7	12,3
Italy	16290	17736	29,9	14,3	8,3
Netherlands	19922	20855	19,1	15,4	10,6
Spain	14203	14384	30,9	21,4	12,6
UK	18832	19410	31,5	19,2	13,7

Source: Eurostat – Social statistics

2.1.3 Employment conditions

Flexible employment forms, like part-time jobs, are tools of expanding and/or stabilizing employment. There remarkable differences between the THEMP countries in terms of prevalence of part-time jobs among those in middle-age. The rate of part-timers is the highest in the Netherlands, followed by the UK and Germany. The rate is relatively low in the two Mediterranean and very low in the two post-socialist countries. Other aspect of the employment conditions of the stability of employment, which is captured here with the proportion of temporary employment contracts. Temporary employment, however, can also be interpreted as a tool that contributes to labour market dynamics, if it is amended by other active employment means, like for instance vital training system.

The share of temporary jobs within the total working population is the highest in Spain, followed by the Netherlands, Germany and Italy and the lowest rate is to be found in the Czech

Republic and Hungary. The position of the middle-aged employees is somewhat different. The prevalence of temporary contracts among those employees in middle-age is in all countries significantly lower than among the total working force, but follows the same pattern than in case of the latter.

The third indicator is the share of training expenditures within all labour market policy interventions (LMP) that reflects to the improvement of the employability of labour. Somewhat surprisingly, the highest proportion of training expenditures within LMP is in Germany and Italy. In order to be able to interpret these data, we will amend it with the training expenditures of firms in the followings.

	Part-Time employment of 40-64	Temporary employment of the groups between 15-64 in percentage of total employment	Temporary employment of the groups between 15-64 in percentage of employees in the same age	Expenditure on training in percentage of total LMP intervention
Czech Rep.	5,1	8,2	5,2	6,0
Germany	27,5	14,7	5,7	13,4
Hungary	5,8	9,6	6,9	6,0
Italy	13,4	12,8	7,4	9,8
Netherlands	45,7	18,3	8,2	4,4
Spain	11,2	25,0	16,3	4,6
UK	26,0	6,0	3,9	2,5
Source: Eurostat – LFS series, own calculations				

2.2 Skill formation system

2.2.1 Higher Education institutions

Skill formation system plays a crucial role both in the production regime and the employment regime theories as it should provide skilled labour as a necessary input of production and as a distribution channel of social inequalities plays a key role in social integration and cohesion. According to the OECD statistics (OECD 2011) there are remarkable differences between the investigated countries in terms of the different age cohorts' participation rates in formal education. The highest participation rates are observable in the UK, the Netherlands and Spain, while Hungary holds a weak position.

Participation rates in tertiary courses provide us a picture about the share of higher education (HE) institution in education and training of those in middle-age. In that case, the situation is somewhat different than it is in the case of participation in education and training in general. The HE institutions in the UK seem to be very active, especially in the training provision for the age group over 40. In case of this age group Hungary and Spain are also in a relatively good position.

	Participation rate in education and training of 35-44	Participation rate in education and training of 45-54	Participation rate in education and training of 55-64	Participation rate of 35-39 years old in Higher Education in percentage of all HE participants	Participation rate of 40-years old or over in Higher Education in percentage of all HE participants	Proportion of 45-54 year-olds with tertiary education (ISCED 5/6)
Czech Rep.	8,1	6,0	2,6	4,2	4,6	16,0
Germany	6,6	5,3	3,0	3,2	2,7	26,0
Hungary	2,5	1,2	0,3	5,0	5,1	18,0
Italy	5,3	4,3	2,5	7,4	n.d.	12,0
Netherlands	17,2	14,4	8,2	2,4	4,7	31,0
Spain	10,6	7,9	5,0	5,4	5,8	25,0
UK	21,2	18,4	13,0	6,7	15,7	31,0
Source: OECD (2011), Eurostat – Education statistics						

2.2.2 Training activity of the firms

There are very convincing arguments in the literature (Finegold – Wagner 1999) that restricting the investigation of skill development to the formal training providing institutions provides a misleading picture about the issue. The globalisation, the accelerated changes in both technical and organisational environment led to a highly competitive international economy, where continuing skill development, mainly provided by the firms, is of crucial importance. Related to our research topic continuing training and skill renewal may diminish the risk of labour market marginalisation of the people in middle-age.

The following table provides a brief overview of the training activities of the firms in the THEMP countries. The table is based on two different sources; therefore it should be handled with considerable care. Having a look at rate of companies providing Continuing Vocational Training to their employees, the following broad pattern emerges. The UK, the Netherlands, Germany and the Czech Republic have relatively high level of CVT. Spain and Hungary are around the European average and Italy lags far behind. In the interpretation of these data, however, it should be taken into account the differences of the various initial training system seriously influence the company training practice.

	Rate of CVT providing Companies	Participation in CVT in % of all employees	Participation in IVT in % of all employees	Rate of companies paid training for their employees (both internal and external course)
Czech Rep.	72,0	59,0	3,0	22,1
Germany	69,0	30,0	55,0	23,4
Hungary	49,0	16,0	6,0	15,4
Italy	32,0	29,0	40,0	16,1
Netherlands	75,0	34,0	41,0	31,4
Spain	47,0	33,0	14,0	17,0
UK	90,0	33,0	51,0	37,7

Source: Eurostat – CVTS, EWCS

In order to gain a more detailed picture CVT participation rates have to be taken into consideration, as well. Taking together the prevalence of CVT provider companies and the participation rate in CVT courses an interesting pattern emerges. In the UK the share of CVT participants equals the European average (33%), albeit 90% of the companies provide CVT courses. This indicates a high polarisation in terms of access to CVT opportunities, e.g. company training possibilities are restricted to a limited number of employees. Spain and especially Italy represent a reverse pattern; the rate of CVT providing companies is relatively low (60%) but the share of participants is around average. In other words, relatively little number of companies provide CVT opportunities besides a relatively high participation rate. The two post-socialist countries have to be mentioned here, as well. In the Czech Republic the high share of training provider companies is accompanied with high participation rate. In case of Hungary both indicator is far below the average.

The European Working Condition Survey provides us an opportunity to illustrate the spending of companies on training activities of their employees. On average 27.9% of the European companies contributed financially to the training of their employees. In the UK and the Netherlands this ratio was significantly higher, while Spain, Italy and Hungary hold a weak position in this respect.

2.3 Labour market demand

Tertiary life-long learning activities of the middle-aged people are determined by the knowledge and skill demand of firms. Identifying the demand side of the labour market in its complexity is far beyond our purposes and possibilities, but we suggest using some proxy indicators that can help us to capture the changing skill needs of the companies in the THEMP countries. In doing so, we will lean on the results of a French-Hungarian research team. (Valeyre et al. 2009) The research was based on the secondary analysis of the data stemming from the various waves of European Working Condition Survey (EWCS). The EWCS is an, employee-oriented survey that aims to collect systematic information on work and working life (e.g. physical and psycho-social working conditions, wages, training issues, work organisation, working time, health and safety issues, etc.) at European level. In the analysis 15 binary variables was used that capture the following dimensions of the labour process: cognitive dimensions of work (learning and problems solving capabilities), autonomy in work, constrains determining the pace and rate of work, complexity of work tasks and the role of quality in work. After multi-variable four work organisation clusters (models) emerged. The *learning organisations* can be characterised by increased autonomy in work, task complexity, intensive learning and problem solving capability and individual responsibility for the quality of work. The *lean organisation* can be described with the important role of team work and job rotation, the quality issues and the restricted autonomy of employees. This work organisation model also ensures learning possibilities and relies on employees' contribution to problem solving. The *taylorist* work organisations represent a model with low task complexity and autonomy and minimal learning possibilities. The fourth model is the *traditional* work organisation where labour process is organised in an informal and non-codified way.

The first two models ('learning' and 'lean') display strong learning dynamics, albeit to a different extent and in a different way. Contrarily, the latter two ('taylorist' and 'traditional') are characterised by low learning and problem solving capability. The prevalence of the different work organisation models indirectly mirrors the firms' knowledge-use patterns within the various national economies. The rate of the organisation models with high learning capability is above average in the Netherlands, while in the UK and Germany this proportion is around the

European average. Hungary and the Czech Republic are close to each other lagging behind the average by around 10%, whilst the two Mediterranean countries show the lowest rates.

	Work organisation models		Cognitive factors labour process (in % of all employees)		
	Work organisation with high learning capability (learning and lean)	Work organisation with low learning capability (taylorist and traditional)	Learning new things in work	Problem solving skills in work	Self-assessment of quality
Czech Rep.	54,7	45,4	63,0	75,3	68,1
Germany	64,2	35,8	63,7	75,9	63,9
Hungary	56,5	43,5	56,3	79,4	47,2
Italy	48,7	51,3	66,2	75,3	69,9
Netherlands	75,9	24,1	83,2	93,9	74,3
Spain	45,2	54,8	58,8	79,4	63,5
UK	64,1	35,9	68,3	77,3	72,3
EU-27	64,1	35,9	70,3	80,0	71,8

Source: Valeyre et al 2009, Eurostat - EWCS

We have also examined the incidence of some cognitive factors of the labour process: learning possibilities, problem solving capabilities and the role of self-assessment in quality issues. In respect of the first variable the Netherlands holds the most favourable position, followed by the UK, Italy, Germany and the Czech Republic. Hungary and Spain are in a relatively weak position. In case of problem solving activities the Netherlands outperform the other THEMP countries representing an around-average pattern. The rate of self-assessment in quality control is very low in Hungary, low in Germany and Spain and is around average in the rest of the examined countries.

3. Institutional environment, current policies and initiatives on TLL⁴

3.1 Czech Republic

Institutional environment:

In the Czech Republic several actors are providing further trainings: schools, including universities, employers, public administration and self-governing bodies and their educational institutions and non-governmental non-profit organisations, including professional and commercial organisations.

Universities provide tertiary lifelong learning opportunities, mainly in the form of accredited bachelor, master and doctoral programmes. The number of such programmes is increasing, especially in private universities. Three distance learning university programmes are accredited and supported now by the National Network of Distance Education. . It consists of the National Centre for Distance Learning at the Centre for Higher Education Studies in Prague and many centres at 24 higher education institutions. (Navreme boheme 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

The Strategy of Lifelong Learning in the Czech Republic (Strategie celoživotního učení ČR) was implemented in 2007. Among others, the strategy aims at supporting alternative forms of adult education. The programme also facilitates more intensive ICT use in adult learning, and promotes and finances TLL among universities and the academic staff. (Navreme boheme 2011)

3.2 Germany

Institutional environment:

In Germany there are around 15 thousand organisations that provide further training: private organisations (commercial or non-profit), community colleges (Volkshochschulen), education institutions run by churches, unions, political foundations, vocational schools and vocational higher schools, and other providers. They are financed by the training participants' or companies' contributions, state or federal supports and employment agencies, as well. Higher

⁴ The next two chapter are heavily based on the contributions elaborated by the THEMP consortium members.

Education institutions are also involved in continuing vocational training activities; they run 348 further training centres altogether. They provide various programs with different content, duration, degree and target group.

Nevertheless, LLL activities are at the beginning phase in Germany universities, because of the following reasons: 1., low reputation of training activities within the academic community, 2., strong competition by the private training providers, 3., lack of flexible and transparent programmes tailored to the fast changing demand.

Higher education institutions, therefore, play only a minor role in the continuous training market, although in the recent years the share of distance learning has been increased within the HE system. In order to ensure matures students' participation in tertiary lifelong learning activities, a central question is recognition of their prior learning experiences. Although the legislation allows explicitly the recognition of prior experiences, the share of adult learners in non-traditional training courses offered by German universities is still very low. (IAT 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

In 2004 the Strategy for Lifelong Learning in the Federal Republic of Germany was formulated with the aim of promoting LLL activities among different age groups in Germany with a special attention to those who have low qualifications. According to the strategy financial incentives have been created to support people with low income in participating in further education and training. In addition educational counselling and on-site learning activities at the local level have been improved.

In order to achieve the strategic goals, several attempts have been made in order to open universities for people with vocational training and experience. Recognising prior learning experiences is the competency of the federal states, since there is no unified education system in Germany. Other important issue is the recognition of prior professional experiences. Several initiatives have been introduced in order to achieve this goal (ProfilPASS, ANKOM) but federal level of the regulation of education has led to restricted results. (IAT 2011)

3.3 Hungary

Institutional environment:

There are five important tendencies that have shaped the current position of TLL in Hungary. The first one is the higher education expansion that is often labelled as 'massification process'.

The second important characteristic is the structural reforms of higher education within the framework of the Bologna process. The third tendency is the increasing share of part-time programs within higher education. The fourth is the radical change in university management structure and the fifth is the restructuring of the relation between HE institutions and the economic actors.

Evaluating the structural reforms of the Bologna process in Hungary, we can state that the Hungarian HE system is dominated by the institutional characteristics of the centralised education model.⁵ The Bologna reform for instance was initiated by the government but the effective implementation was delegated to the different actors of the HE system without involving other social actors (enterprises, trade unions, etc.). As a result the creation of the programmes' content remained supply-driven, e.g. the number and content of the programmes reflects the existing capacities of the universities and polytechnics and does not correlate to the real labour market demands.

As for the massification tendencies, in the last decades there has been a dramatic shift from vocational training to the general education, accompanied by the radical increase of the number of students in higher education. The distribution of the Hungarian pupils/students between the various levels of the education system in 2009 was as follows. 15,14% of student were in pre-primary educational institutions (ISCED 0), 18,45% of them in primary education (ISCED 1), 20,17% in lower, 24,88% in upper secondary education (ISCED 2,3), 3,07% in post-secondary education (ISCED 4) and 18,49% of them participated in tertiary education (ISCED 5,6). 90,13% of tertiary education participants were in academic-oriented programmes, while 8,12% of them in occupational-oriented courses that shows a relatively modest practical orientation of the tertiary education system. (Eurostat – Education statistics)

The increase of the HE system in terms of number of students was 334 % between 1990 and 2011. In the public discourse this expansion process is mainly associated with the radical decline of the level of both public and tertiary education performance. Beside the questionable quality of large number of diploma issued by the higher education institutions, the massification process had several other negative effects:

- 1) The increase of the number of students was not accompanied by the necessary growth in human, financial and infrastructural resources. Since the collapse of the state-socialist political-economic regime the teacher/student ratio has been tripled.

⁵ In this model the educational institutions work separately from each other and the setting of skill standards remains the duty of the state. The academic and practical skills are not integrated. The model is dominated by the “classical”, teacher-oriented training methods, where students are passive objects. (Raviola et al 2001)

2) Teaching technology was consistent with the characteristics of an elitist higher education system where only 10% of the population could participate in the courses offered by polytechnics and universities. The shift from this elitist to a mass-education was not followed by an appropriate transformation of the pedagogical and didactical methods.

3) The massification unequally affected the various disciplines. The proliferation was observable in such disciplines as economics, law, communication, human resource managers, etc. This increased number of fresh graduates in the earlier-mentioned fields did not meet the demands of the labour market (enterprises, public institutions). Thus, the supply side growth of the higher education system was driven by the needs and expectations of 'students and their parents' instead of the labour market regulation.

The third tendency influencing the position of TLL within the Hungarian HE system was the increasing share of part-time students. There was a growth in the number of part-timers between 1990 and 2005 and since then this tendency has reversed. According to the statistics the vast majority of part-time students are under 30 attempting to acquire their first or second degree. Those in mid-life are represented in this group only to a lesser extent.

As for the changes in university management, after the collapse of the state socialism, the governance system of the Hungarian HE institutions has been changed. The most important development was the increase of autonomy at the university level, but this process took place in a rather inconsistent way. The most important characteristic of the recent governance model is the rigid decision making process at the university level and the institutions' very bad capability to be able to respond and adapt to the environmental changes. The other problem is that the increase of autonomy in academic matters was not accompanied by economic, financial and HRM autonomy which also considerably restricts the room of manoeuvre of the university management.

The relation between HE institutions and economic actors has been changed in the recent decades. Until 1989 practical training and intensive cooperation with the enterprises was integrated part of the HE system. In that period large state-owned companies dominated the size structure of the Hungarian firms. As a consequence, HE institutions could relatively easily build up relationships with these companies in order to organise traineeships for their students. After the collapse of the state-socialist system, the micro and small sized enterprises became the dominant form of business organisations and these relationships between the HE institutions and the business sector dramatically weakened.

Briefly summarising the tendencies presented above we may say Hungarian HE institutions suffering from the consequences of the badly prepared structural reforms and of massification,

the worsening financial conditions and structural governance problems are not very active in providing further training courses and not surprisingly the adult education market is dominated by private enterprises. The skill supply provided by the HE institutions does not seem hardly to meet with labour market demands, accompanied by the weak training needs of the Hungarian enterprises. (Makó – Csizmadia – Illéssy 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

At the strategic level the development of the employability of those in mid-life is an important goal but first of all in case of the poorly skilled people being in marginal labour market position. In reality, however, the Hungarian governments always have followed a „passive” policy in order to protect workplaces instead of increasing the employers’ and employees’ interest in skill development. The support of those in mid-life is restricted to special employment conditions that should be applied for employees over 55 which means, that the termination of their contract is allowed only in extraordinary cases.

In case of VET, however, in 2008 a publicly founded tripartite programme started with the aim of supporting the development of the Hungarian VET system at the regional level. The goal of the programme titled *Optimisation of the number of vocational trainees for the Regional Development and Training Committees* is to strengthen the demand orientation of the Hungarian VET system. In order to achieve this goal 9 employers’ associations and 5 trade unions’ confederations have been involved into the programme led by the Hungarian Chamber of Trade and Industry (MKIK). The task of the social partners is to determine the skill needs of the economic actors at the regional level and to adjust the regional skill supply to the real economic needs. A recent development concerning the programme is the possibility of the extension of it to the higher education, as well. (Makó – Csizmadia – Illéssy 2011)

3.4 Italy

Institutional environment:

In Italy adult education is coordinated at three different levels: national, regional and local. At the national level the coordination is in the hand of a joint committee that is composed by the representatives of several ministries, the representatives of the regions, local authorities and the social partners. The committee aims to set the strategic priorities, define general guidelines and available resources, defines the criteria of resource allocation, and the guidelines for monitoring and assessment of recognition of various certificates. Regions committees are responsible for

curriculum design. Based on the strategic guidelines elaborated by the national and regional committees, training activities are carried out by different types of providers: firms, training agencies and bodies or educational institutions.

As for the quality issues, at the moment there is no formal quality control in case of adult education and training, but the providers should be accredited. In the recent years several attempts have been made in order to ensure to introduce a unified and transparent competence recognition system, but most of Italian companies that provide training to their employees do not use any evaluation system. Other related issue is the recognition of prior learning. Albeit the legislation on higher education allows HE institutions to decide freely about the recognition of prior learning and professional experiences, this is not a widespread praxis among universities.

Also problematic is the social composition of those attending adult education courses. Men between 26 and 40 with HE degree are overrepresented at the expense of women and people with low education and/or social status. (Mariani (2011))

Policies and initiatives:

In Italy there is no general lifelong learning strategy, but in the several related documents the following issues are in focus: adaptation of degrees, development of concrete LL strategies and establish Continuing Education Centres, development of cooperation between providers and economic actors and reform university management structures and practices in order to achieve the aforementioned goals.

Recently there are initiatives within the HE system that support TLL issues. One example is the foundation of the Italian University Network for Continuing Education (RUIAP) that aims at promoting of continuing education culture and relevant innovative methodologies supporting atypical student pathways within tertiary education. At the University of Genoa a centre for continuing education was established under the name of PerForm. Its purpose is the development of high-profile training, structured so as to meet specific business needs. Its activity focuses on lifelong learning, post-graduate training aimed to develop specific high level competences and professional excellence. The University of Naples was the first Italian university that created a Lifelong Learning Centre that provides TLL courses and carries out research in the field. The FormArea Campus For Employability at the University of Bologna has also to be mentioned here, as it was established with the aim to redesign training and professional needs, according to the principles of lifelong learning and the European main guidelines. (Mariani 2011)

3.5 The Netherlands

Institutional environment:

In the Netherlands adult education consists of three different fields: general adult education, vocational adult education and socio-cultural adult education. General and vocational adult education is mainly the competence of secondary vocational education institutions, while socio-cultural adult education has been left to municipalities and private actors. All three forms of adult education is addressed to lower educated people in order to increase employability and protect them from labour market and/or social marginalisation. As a consequence, universities have little to do with lifelong learning activities.

As it has been presented before, Dutch companies are very active in the further training of their employees. According to a survey, in 2005 seven out of every ten companies with more than ten employees in the private sector facilitated some kind of continuing vocational training, in the form of formal courses (67%), workplace learning (OJT) (30%) or various forms of self-directed learning (41%). More than 1,3 million employees in the private sector took part in vocational courses, that is to say nearly 40% of the employees of the companies that offer some kind of education or training. In total they spent over 47 million working hours on courses. This means an average of 36 hours per employee. (Claessen & Nieuweboer, 2007)

Tripartite cooperation of the social partners also plays a crucial role in vocational training and education. A typical example of this kind of cooperation is setting up of the Expertise Centres for Vocational Education and Business (KBB). The Centres serves the need for knowledge development and qualified personnel of specific sectors of business, covering a group of connected branches.

As for the role of higher education (HE) institutions in adult training, it must be stated that the Netherlands has a binary HE system with a relatively sharp distinction between academic universities and schools for higher professional education that provide higher professional training courses (Hoger Beroepsonderwijs, HBO). The latter traditionally have strong connection with their professional fields and offer several continuing training courses. Because of this division of labour, universities mainly do not participate in adult professional education. An except is the Open University, that was opened in 1984 with the aim at providing higher education programmes for anyone, regardless of their former qualifications. Since the Open University focuses on lifelong learning, regular universities are not involved in LLL programmes. The case of accreditation of prior learning (APL) serves as a good example for

this. Except of the Open University, Dutch universities do not have any APL procedures. (Kats – van Lakerveld – de Zoete 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

In the Netherlands policies on vocational education and training are formulated and managed at three levels: national, sectoral and regional/local level. In 2004 an action plan for lifelong learning was implemented at the national level. Consequently several efforts have been made since then in order to bridge the gap between the secondary vocational education and higher education system. One of the measures is the introduction of associate degrees in the programmes of higher professional education. These degrees concern profession-oriented two years programs, established mainly for adults who have successfully finished secondary vocational education.

According to the recent policies and initiatives, there are some examples of academic lifelong learning/continuing professional development programmes:

- “Leiden University has established, next to the disciplinary faculties, a special faculty that is mainly geared to the education of professionals in the public sector. This faculty has its seat in The Hague, the residence of the Dutch Government and also the domicile of many institutes in the field of international law. The so-called Campus The Hague provides education and conducts research on subjects that are relevant to the organisations concerned and their employees. Although The Hague is at a distance of only twenty kilometres from Leiden, this new faculty is a border crossing initiative which is unique in the Netherlands. The initiative arose severe discussions both on the geographic and on the epistemological distance it takes from the original seat of pure science.
- The Technical University of Eindhoven has developed a so-called dual programme in chemical technology. This program is addressed to chemists who are schooled in higher professional education and who want to make one step up to university level. This is a clear but exceptional case of lifelong learning in university education in the Netherlands. The programme is completely geared to the professional practice of the participants. It is developed in close cooperation with the companies and organisations that employ them. Cooperatives of the social partners in the sector are also involved. The continued existence of this programme however is unsure.
- The ECBO is the expertise centre for the sector of vocational education and training of the national school system. Such publicly funded centres exist for all sectors of the

national school system on the basis of the National Education Support Activities Act (Wet Subsidiëring Landelijke Onderwijsondersteunende Activiteiten, SLOA). The ECBO develops, disseminates and synthesises scholarly and practice-based knowledge on vocational education and training. It conducts research and plays a bridging role between the academic world and practice in vocational education. Sharing and transfer of knowledge is an important aim. ECBO organizes lectures and conferences, publishes newsletters and handbooks, offers advice and consultancy etc. In this way ECBO contributes to the continuing professional development of educational practitioners in the sector.

- The SIOO is an inter-university centre for organisation studies and change management. The centre is connected to seven universities. It aims at a theoretical deepening in the knowledge fields of organisation studies and the management of change. SIOO offers opportunities for the development of competencies to professionals involved in the field. The centre organises master and other training courses with open registration. It provides coaching of change processes in organisations. It supports the design of programmes for professional development. It carries out research and development activities. And it organises forum activities (symposia, workshops, conferences and publications).
- The Dutch Police Academy is the recruitment & selection, training and knowledge & research centre for the Dutch police. The police force is an organisation that offers its staff the opportunity to continuing professional development. The academy offers education and knowledge at a high level, anticipates social trends and translates these into made-to-measure training.“ (Kats – van Lakerveld – de Zoete 2011: 21-22)

3.6 Spain

Institutional environment:

In Spain, the Ministry of Education is responsible for the planning, administration, monitoring and control of adult education, but autonomous communities also plan, manage and finance adult education activities. The management of continuing education is based on the cooperation between the central and regional administrations, but social partners and the state also plays a decisive role through sectoral level bargaining.

Universities also provide continuing education courses, mainly in form of unofficial postgraduate certificates and unofficial complementary training. The HE institutions enjoy

autonomy in providing such courses, the two levels of administration is responsible only for creating and monitoring legal background a minimum of legislation.

There are different models universities can follow in providing adult education course. In case of the first model, continuing education and training is carried out through departments, centres or institutes with little or without centralised support. In the second model the continuing training and education activities are supported by the central government, but organised still by the departments, centres or institutes. In the third model training activities are managed by an external unit (e.g. a foundation or an external training centre) that is nurtured by the departments, centres or institutes. The fourth model training activities are carried out by a specialized independent unit based on experience on one or few departments, centres or institutes. In the fifth model training is provided by an organization representing several institutions of the university. Public universities mainly use the centralised model and using external unit stands in the second place. (Alvarez – Duch – Krüger 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

In Spain the Strategy University 2015 aims to modernise the Spanish university system. The strategy is promoted by the Ministry of Education and the central government, the autonomous communities and the universities are involved in its coordination. Regarding tertiary adult education the strategy universities are incited to acknowledge and accredit prior learning experiences in forms of new certificates and degrees. Since universities offer very diverse adult training courses in terms of their content, degree and recognition, the strategy facilitates the universities to mutually recognise the trainings they provide at the different levels (bachelor, master, postgraduate diplomas, expert or specialist certificates, etc.). In order to ensure quality, universities can register their unofficial training for an official accreditation process. (Alvarez – Duch – Krüger 2011)

3.7 United Kingdom

Institutional environment:

Adult learning in the UK is provided by various institutions, such as sixth form, tertiary and further education colleges (FECs), community centres, libraries and museums, universities and other HE institutions, workplaces, trade unions, private training providers, voluntary organisations, etc. FECs provide a full range of academic, community and vocational courses for students over compulsory school leaving age in the form of full- and part-time education.

Adult and community education is provided by various institutions (from community centres and libraries to community colleges) and organised at the local or regional level. The providers offer both employment-focused and non-accredited courses (these are mainly for leisure of the learners). Universities are also involved into adult learning provision. Most of them provide non-accredited short courses and certificates, as well. This form of adult education, however, is in decline because the government stopped to subsidise the further tertiary training of those adults who have already received HE qualification.

Although in the late 1990s and early 2000s there was a rise in participation of adult learners in courses provided by HE institutions, this was followed by a decline. In addition there are significant inequalities in the system; participation of ethnic minorities and people in lower social status is restricted. Other problematic issue is the uncertainty of individuals regarding TLL participation. Participation of mature students is highly constrained because of emotional and financial burdens and their job responsibilities. (Osborne 2011)

Policies and initiatives:

In the UK policies related to adult education are part of broader lifelong learning policies that also incorporate general education, vocational education and training and higher education. In the policy orientation there are specified target groups, such as unemployed, low-skilled adults, offenders in custody and other groups threaten by social inclusion.

The two main issues within adult learning policies are raising awareness and creating flexibility in provision. There is a wide range of initiatives in the UK aimed at raising awareness. A good example for that is the University for Industry and its online brand, the Learndirect that aim is to promote courses for adults to gain the skills and qualifications they need in order to find a job or progress in their work. Besides their short courses Learndirect centres provide online and telephone guidance to adult learners (Learndirect Career Advice).

As for the flexibility issue, the terms in the UK includes a wide range of activities and structures related to adult education. By flexibility it is meant flexibility in admission, flexibility in mode, both of attendance and delivery, flexibility of location of education, flexibility in pedagogical and didactical practices, flexibility in course duration and flexibility in recruitment. In spite of the efforts that have been made recently in order to achieve greater flexibility in adult education, two main barriers still exist, namely disability and low socio-economic status. (Osborne 2011)

4. Financial aspects of TLL

Table 9 summarizes the financial expenditures on tertiary education in the THEMP countries. A common characteristic is that public sources play a dominant role in financing higher education. As for the extent of spending, the Netherlands is in a leading position, followed by Spain, the UK and Germany. The Czech Republic and Italy spend less and the worst position belongs to Hungary.

Table 9			
Expenditures on tertiary education in 2009			
	Expenditure in tertiary education as percentage of GDP		
	Public Expenditures	Private Expenditures	Total Expenditures
Czech Republic	0,9	0,2	1,1
Germany	1,0	0,2	1,2
Hungary	0,9	nd	0,9
Italy	0,8	0,2	1,0
Netherlands	1,1	0,4	1,5
Spain	1,0	0,2	1,2
UK	0,6	0,6	1,2
OECD average			1,5
Source: OECD (2011)			

In the following, based on the contribution of the THEMP consortium members, we provide a brief overview on the financing of TLL in the THEMP countries.

Czech Republic:

In the Czech Republic financial support of further education is based on three different sources:

1. Public sources (state or regional budgets)
2. Private sources (companies, individuals, social partners etc.)
3. Sources from EU (ESF)

Further education is provided mainly by large companies (54 % of employees are trained), while small- and medium-sized companies provide training to 21% of their employees. (Navrebohme 2011)

Germany:

In Germany financial resources for further education are provided by several institutions, such as the Ministry of Education and Research, Ministries of Labour at national and federal state level, the National Employment Agency, the European Union, companies and unions, local authorities, chambers and individual learners. According to estimations expenditures on continuing education amounts to 35 billion a year, are distributed as follows. Round half of the expenditures for the vocational further training is spent by companies (47,6%), followed by individuals (39,3%). The state has a share of 11,8% and 1,3% by the labour agency. (BIBB 2011)

Regulation of finance is significantly influenced by the appropriately chosen legal form of the provider. The costs for the implementation of training are covered almost exclusively by fee income. Therefore, most in the category of university education just cover the costs, there are rarely achieved any profits, which can be used for further investments. (IAT 2011)

Hungary:

Non-formal adult education (training outside the school system) is financed from three legally defined sources:

- The state budget,
- The Labour Market Fund,
- The compulsory training contribution from companies

Since 2003 two employment groups have been supported from the state budget:

- Those who participate in an accredited training scheme obtaining their first profession
- Disabled adults who participate in training

The Labour Market Fund is based on the payments of both employers and employees. The Fund finances various training activities. It can be used to support further training of unemployed or employees who are threatened of job loss. Companies are obliged to pay training contribution to

the state budget on the basis of their annual wage costs. One-third of their payment can be used for supporting of their own training activities. In 2007 the structure of the training contribution of the Hungarian enterprises was as follows: 9,5% of the contributions was expended to the continuing vocational training of companies' own employees, 20,4% to direct support of vocational schools or higher educational institutions, 56,8% was paid directly to the state budget and 20,4% was devoted to financing the cost of traineeship at the company level. There were substantial differences between the various sectors regarding their financial contributions to traineeship. Companies in mining, in electricity, gas and water supply and financial services spent on traineeship far above the average, while social and health care, education, hospitality and construction industry were lag behind. (Szép 2009)

Although the employment strategy of Hungarian government presented before emphasises the importance of actively supporting, the government decided to dissolve the opportunity of firms to finance their training activities at the expense of their Labour Market Found contribution which implies the further decrease of the training activities of the Hungarian companies.

As for the financing of HE activities there are three basic models:

- a) normative financing, which provides stability for the institutions, but does not deal with the differences in the university performances.
- b) financing by agreements, which is not effective without special incentives that are harmonised with the different institutional priorities.
- c) project financing, which is only effective if there are additional resources available and it requires special control mechanisms.

In Hungary HE institutions are financed in a normative way, e.g. they are supported on the basis of the number of their students. In this model financial contribution of the state is based on the so-called base-year budget ceiling and this amount of financial resource is distributed by a quota-method. There are three main quotas:

- a) the quota related to the number of the students represents the dominant source of finance.
- b) quota aimed to maintain the infrastructure (buildings, ICT, library, etc.)
- c) quota related to the research performance of the university (number and level of degrees owned by the teaching staff, number of PhD students, research performance measured by publications, conference participation, etc.)

Due to the demographic changes the number of students has increased in the last years in Hungary which led to the decrease of public expenditures on HE as a consequence of the normative financing model. The other pervasive effect of this type of financing is that it does not contribute to the motivation of HE institutions to increase their efforts in performance neither in teaching (transferring existing knowledge) nor in research (creating new knowledge). (Makó – Csizmadia – Illéssy 2011)

Italy:

In Italy adult education is financed from both public and private resources. Most of the training activities, however, are financed directly by the economic and social actors (mainly enterprises and employees), mainly based on their private sources. The main instruments supporting continuing training currently operating in Italy are the following:

- the European Social Fund 2007-2013;
- national Law 236/93, which set up a fund for vocational training;
- national Law 53/00;
- Inter-professional Equal Funds for continuing training, managed directly by social partners.

As for the two national instruments, the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies allocates the resources among the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces and distributes the funds to them, and they in turn issue notices and invitations to tender. The sources of Equal Funds mainly derive from the obligatory contribution of enterprises to the INPS (national welfare institute). These financial resources are drawn from the annual yield of the contribution of 0.30 % of business's contributions to the INPS as contribution for obligatory insurance against involuntary unemployment. Exemptions are represented by funds ex lege n° 144/1999 and n° 53/2003.

Currently, two main programmes are running to provide LLL at an individual level: i) educational vouchers (voucher formativi) and ii) Individual Learning Account (ILA). The experimentation of educational vouchers was introduced in Italy in year 1998. Vouchers are educational tickets released to single workers on the basis of individual proposals/projects. The economic value of each voucher ranges from 500 to 5.000 Euro. The main weakness of the 'educational voucher' action lies in the scarce availability of services that can provide a professional support in the design of the individual learning path, for example through individual counselling and the analysis/balance of competencies.

The ILA is related to the European Learning Account Project (ELAP network) and has been recently introduced as an experimental action in three regions of Italy (Toscana, Umbria and Piemonte). The ILA is a special credit card that beneficiaries can use to attend to LLL courses. Its value cannot exceed 3.000 Euros (to be spent in 24 months). An important advantage of the programme is that the ILA is specifically targeted to those that are generally ignored by the 'standard' company-initiated education and training actions. On the other side, the ILA suffers from the same lack of supporting counselling services.” (Mariani 2011)

The Netherlands

In the Netherlands post academic education is not financed by the state, so regular student grants are not applicable. In case of life-long learning there are several important implications for adult students in post initial higher education:

1. A rule is being introduced for fining students who study longer than the period that is allowed. When they exceed this period they have to pay a fine of 3000 euro extra tuition fees.
2. Students who want attend a second course in higher education, also have to pay extra money.
3. Students who are older than 30 years do not receive student grants.
4. On the other hand higher education institutions were until 2010 entitled to decide about the level of tuition fees of adults over 29 years of age. This age limit is however now skipped and tuition fees are harmonized for all age categories.

As a consequence, in the last few years the proportion of part-time students has intensively decreased. In 2010, 11.000 people attended a part-time course at a university. With respect to 2010, this year there was a decrease of 30 % in the number of applications of part-time students.

The financing of vocational training and professional development is primarily the responsibility of the companies and organisations concerned. This financial responsibility however is embedded in a large set of agreements between social partners and governmental facilities. Costs of training and development generally are tax-deductible. Individual employees are permitted to deduce their costs for vocational training and development from their income tax. Research in seven branches of SME however showed that only 60% of the investigated companies make use of the tax deduction. (Detmar & De Vries, 2006)

The social partners usually conclude Collective Labour Agreements (CAO's) that include agreements on the provision and funding of continuing vocational training and professional development activities for employees. The financial means that become available this way are

deployed by the Education and Development Funds (O&O fondsen). Companies and organisations can recover part of their costs through a subsidy of the Education and Development Fund of their particular sector or branch. However, not all branches and sectors have such a fund. (Kats – van Lakerveld – de Zoete 2011)

Spain

Resources to finance professional training for employment come from the companies' and employees' contribution for professional training that is collected by the Social Security System (85%, approximately) along with some funds stemming from the European Social Fund and the contributions of the Public Service of State Employment. The budget for the whole system in 2010 was of something more than 2.500 million Euros. Here, the resources of the contribution for professional training refer specifically to the volume of revenues resulting from applying a tax of 0.7% on the rate base for common contingencies that firms and workers contribute to the Social Security. Of that global tax, 0.6% corresponds to firms and the remaining 0.1% to the worker. Approximately 60% of the total funds collected is dedicated to workers' training of (1.545 million Euros in 2010) and 40% to the unemployed. The application of the funds corresponds to the Labour Ministry that determines how it is distributed between the different administration bodies and training initiatives. Firms that carry out tailored training will be able to benefit from some discounts in their contributions to the Social Security. This allowance is variable according to the size of the company.

University continuing education and training courses tend to be much more demand-oriented than bachelor's degrees. Since these courses are unofficial (they are not officially recognised) they are not publicly financed. Nevertheless, in practice, universities usually co-finance some of these courses by means of, for example, the use of infrastructure or financing the specific administrative units that manage this type of education. In contrast, the universities retain a percentage of the revenues of these courses (overhead). The availability of own university programs (master, experts, specialists) has shown recently an exponential growth, from 145 programs in 1987 to more than 4.500 twenty years later. In parallel, the number of students following these courses also increased, representing today almost 10% of total students of first and second cycle and bachelor degrees. In the same way, revenues coming from these unofficial training courses, self-financed, grew steadily representing today around 15% of the revenues raised through first and second cycle education. (Alvarez – Duch – Krüger 2011)

The UK

Much of the provision in Further Education Colleges is funded through the State according to agreed formulae. Until 2010 in England this was through the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) (England) and thereafter the function for the funding of adult learning was taken by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). In other countries of the UK this function is taken by the Department for Employment and Learning (DEL) (Northern Ireland) and by joint funding councils crossing FE and HE (Wales and Scotland).

Under the Learning and Skills Act 2000, ACL has been funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) for England (the SFA now has that role) and the National Council for Education and Training for Wales (National Council – ELWa), and is available to support all providers from which these agencies secure education and training services, of which there are many private providers. All providers have to be part of a Qualified Provider Framework to be eligible to tender for funds to run courses (see <http://skillsfundingagency.bis.gov.uk/>).

There are no separate adult education centres or institutes in Northern Ireland, where adult education courses (including academic, vocational and leisure courses) are provided by the 6 regional colleges which comprise the statutory further education sector. In Scotland, funding from the Scottish government is passed to the 32 local authorities to Community Learning Strategy Partnerships where local providers of adult learning have access to resources (SOEID, 1999). Strategic plans are submitted by all partnerships, which indicate how the funding will be used to build capacity and a wide range of learning opportunities across all sectors. Like in other parts of the UK, the government places an emphasis on literacy.

Universities are funded in various ways for activity that pertains to adult learning. Some is this is metric-based and a 'reward' for previous performance and some is directed at specific projects. For example, the Higher Education Funding Council for England's (HEFCE) Workforce Development Programme has been helping universities to develop their capacity to deliver employer and learner responsive provision. Between 2008 and 2011, some £150m has been committed across more than 90 HE institutions to support a diverse range of HE - employer engagement projects. The majority of these projects explore employer co-funding where employers share with the state the costs of provision. In 2008/09 employer co-funded provision supported an additional 9,200 learners. Part-time study was the main mode of delivery (90% of co-funded learners), with the majority of the overall total studying at sub-degree level. HEFCE are forecasting around a further 20,000 employer co-funded places for 2009/10. The Workforce Development Programme has also led to a range of other achievements including the development and introduction of new forms of provision – training at times, places and means to suit employers and learners.

In England, for those who are wishing to enter HE there are upfront loans available to cover tuition costs. Repayment begins at the end of study and this is income contingent. Recent HE reforms will bring significant increases to the charges universities may make for tuition from 2012/13, with loan levels rising accordingly. The reforms will also extend upfront loans covering tuition costs to part-time students (including mature students).

Individuals wishing to undertake post-graduate study, and FE learners seeking study that is not currently supported by public funds, may look to apply for a Professional and Career Development Loan (PCDL). Up to £10,000 is available for course costs, subject to eligibility and acceptance by the participating banks. Repayment begins at the end of study. Fee remission, for those seeking first lower-level skills, enables individuals to study when otherwise it may not have been possible to afford. FE learners most in need of financial assistance may be able to receive discretionary funding to continue study. As part of moves to re-balance investment in skills, the Government is to introduce FE loans with individuals further contributing towards their cost of learning. The role of PCDLs will be reviewed as a consequence.

In general, there has been an increasing trend to on the one hand make provision more responsive to potential student demand and for adult students to make larger contributions to cost. Although small in scale, part of putting purchasing power in the hands of students was the introduction of *Independent Learning Accounts* (ILAs). Individuals could claim up to £150 if they invested £25 or their own money in a virtual “account”. They could then use the total sum to buy vocational courses of specified types. Its success put too much pressure on available funding and there were administrative problems; therefore the scheme was withdrawn in England though continues successfully in Scotland. A new scheme, the Lifelong Learning Account, is being introduced in September 2011. This will build on an existing online tool, ‘myNextStep’, and enable users to log achievements and access information on learning and work. Following September 2011, further developments will enable users to signal demand for new courses and access vouchers representing entitlements which can be spent at an accredited learning provider of their choice as full or part contribution towards a course.

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Comparing the TLL financing systems of the THEMP countries is far from being an easy task, because of the diversity of the logics, traditions, stakeholders and institutions. However, there seems to be a general tendency emerging. In the recent years in almost all participating countries the share of individual spending, e.g. contribution of the employees to their own studies, have dramatically extended. According to this tendency, taking responsibility for the improvement of the individuals' employability has been increasingly delegated to the individuals themselves.

5. Concluding remarks

The core aim of this report is providing a comparative analysis of the institutional environment of Tertiary Life-long Learning (TLL) in the countries participating in the THEMP project, focusing on both differences and similarities. In order to do so, first we made a short account on the international institutional comparative studies. We made a distinction between dichotomous and multidimensional approaches as two main strands of the literature analysing various socio-economic models in Europe. After reviewing the main differences and similarities of them, we decided to use in our comparative analysis the model typology elaborated by Sapir (2005), where the author measuring both “social” (i.e. equity) and “economic” (i.e. efficiency) performances of the various models of capitalism, makes a distinction between Continental, Nordic, Mediterranean and Anglo-Saxon social models. In the literature the United Kingdom is held to be the very best example for the Anglo-Saxon social model. In Sapir’s typology Germany is the typical example for the Continental model, the Netherlands represents the Nordic model, while Spain and Italy belong to the Mediterranean social model. In contrast to these countries, the classification of the post-socialist countries remained almost completely out of the scope of the international comparative research project maybe because the social and economic transformation process of these countries is still under way. However, in an interview Sapir gave to the Hungarian economic weekly, he evaluated the Czech Republic as a country that belongs to the Nordic model, while Hungary as a representative of the Continental one.

After this first chapter of literature review, we tried to collect all available statistical data on the key institutional factors that shape the practice of TLL in the countries investigated. We identified the following fields and variables as being able to describe these institutional settings:

- 1) Labour market
 - a. labour market participation
 - b. income inequalities
 - c. employment conditions (flexible employment forms and training expenditures within all labour market policy interventions (LMP))
- 2) Skill formation system
 - a. higher education institutions
 - b. Training activity of the firms
- 3) Labour market demand
 - a. learning potential of the work organisations

For the analysis we used the different Eurostat data sources: Labour Force Survey (LFS), Social Statistics, Education Statistics, Continuous Vocational Training Survey (CVTS) and European Working Conditions Survey (EWCS).

5.1 Labour market

In general it can be stated that the employment rate is the highest in the Netherlands (74.7%⁶), followed by Germany (71.1%) and the UK (69.5%). Spain (58.6%), Italy (56.9%) and Hungary (55.4%) are in the relatively worst position while the Czech Republic is somewhere between these two group of countries. These data are conform to what the literature analysis suggested, that is the Nordic, Continental and Anglo-Saxon countries have the highest degree of labour market participation, while Mediterranean countries lag behind. Further segmentation of the population by different age groups shows that differences in labour market participation are similar for the age group 40-64, while they are somewhat bigger for those aged of 55-64 (however, the patterns remain by and large the same with the exception of Spain where labour market participation almost reaches the level of the Czech Republic). If we have a look at the labour market position of those with tertiary education degree, we may say that in the two Mediterranean countries and in the post-socialist ones, the inequalities in terms of employment between the social groups with different educational background are higher than in Germany, the Netherlands and the UK.

As concerning the income inequalities, we can say that there is a large gap between the THEMP countries. The highest earnings can be detected in Nordic, Continental and Anglo-Saxon countries, they are followed by the Mediterranean countries, while the post-socialist countries are lagging behind (with a relatively significant difference in favour of the Czech Republic). As concerning the differences in poverty risk rate according to the educational level, we can say that the biggest differences can be reported in the post-socialist countries, especially between those with primary or lower and those with tertiary education. The more “egalitarian” country is the Netherlands representing the Nordic social model. Germany – similarly to the post-socialist countries – can be characterised by relatively big differences, but we have to note, that the share of those with the lowest education level is much smaller in that country than either in the Czech Republic or in Hungary.

⁶ For those between 15-64

Not surprisingly, flexible employment forms are the most prevalent in the Netherlands, followed by the UK and Germany, while the rate is relatively low in the two Mediterranean and very low in the two post-socialist countries.

5.2. Skill formation

Participation rates of those in middle-age in tertiary courses show that the higher education institutions in the UK seem to be very active, especially in the training provision for the age group over 40. In case of this age group Hungary and Spain are also in a relatively good position but the differences between the remaining 6 countries are much lower.

Having a look at rate of companies providing Continuing Vocational Training to their employees, the following broad pattern emerges. The UK, the Netherlands, Germany and the Czech Republic have relatively high level of CVT. Spain and Hungary are around the European average and Italy lags far behind. In the interpretation of these data, however, it should be taken into account the differences of the various initial training system seriously influence the company training practice.

5.3 Labour market demand

The analysis of the European prevalence of work organisation models with learning capabilities show that the rate of the organisation models with high learning capability is above average in the Netherlands, while in the UK and Germany this proportion is around the European average. Hungary and the Czech Republic are close to each other lagging behind the average by around 10%, whilst the two Mediterranean countries show the lowest rates.

Summing up the results of the cross-country data analysis, we can say that the Netherlands, representing the Nordic model of Sapir's classification, outperform the other countries in most of the variables investigated both in terms of 'efficiency' and 'equity'. It is interesting to note however, that neither the expenditures on training in % of total labour market policy interventions, nor the participation rate of those 40 years old or over higher education is the country among the best performer. Instead, it seems that the largest share of the life-long learning is paid by the companies. UK, representing the Anglo-Saxon model, is performing well in the indices investigated. One of the key elements of this success is certainly the deep involvement of the population in the further training: the participation rate of those over 40 in

higher education is the highest among the countries investigated as well as the rate of CVT providing companies, while the state remains the less active in terms of supporting training through LMP interventions. The situation is quite similar in the case of Germany, representing the Continental model in Sapir's classification with the exception that state intervention through active labour market policies is the highest among the THEMP countries. Italy and Spain as the two Mediterranean countries participating in the project also show some similarities with the other two post-socialist countries of Czech Republic and Hungary. These countries underperform the leading three countries in most of the indices, with the exception of the employment rate where Czech Republic performs relatively well. However, the gap in labour market participation rates is much smaller in the case of those middle-aged having tertiary education. This proves that further development of TLL activities would have the biggest potential in Spain, Italy and Hungary. In Italy the state is the second most active in promoting training through LMP, while in the other three countries state performs about the average. In the case of companies providing training, again, Czech Republic is far behind the other three countries, while Italy lags behind. All these results show that Czech Republic succeeded to make significant efforts to come up to the EU-27 average (with the exception of net income per capita), while Italy, Spain and Hungary have lots to do.

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