

# Crossing borders: skills, learning and development

Conference: 'Launch of the  
European Defence Skills Partnership'.

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# Problem statement? Alarming messages!

- **know-how is eroding** in many important industrial and technology areas of the defence sector
- The number of **experts, specialists, mechanics and scientists** in the defence sector is **shrinking dramatically**
- **Engineers are predominantly middle-aged as the younger generation is less attracted to apply for engineering jobs** in the defence industry and research institutes

*Source: European Défense agency: key skills and competences for defence*

# 1. The increasing turnover of knowledge requires rethinking education systems

- Educational reform does not match the **speed of change**
- Rethinking ‘traditional’ teaching towards integrating learning at **the work floor**
- Critical factors for effective **work-based learning**:
  - Characteristic of the organisation
  - Workplace conditions
  - Personal characteristics of the learners

*Good practice: peer learning in the defence sector (using You Tube)  
(NL)*

## 2. Knowledge production and learning in interaction with the private sector, research, and training providers

- Uncertainty and limited communication on equipment requirements makes it **difficult to plan skills** in the supplying defence industry
- Increasing **dependence on the private sector** (development /maintenance of defence technology and equipment by private companies)
- Increasing provision of **learning in civil / private sector**
- Multidisciplinary challenges in defence, require **multidisciplinary approaches**
- **lack of a strategic approach** to the management of skills across government, industry and the education sector

*Good practice: Defence Growth Partnership (UK); Finmeccanica's Higher Technical Institutes (Italy)*

# 3. Facilitating labour mobility and continuing learning of workers

- High **turnover of staff** in defence
- **Recruitment challenges** (image working for defence; competition with other industries; more visibility)
- **Upward mobility** (capturing prior learning and working experience; use of e-portfolio etc.)
- **Flexible layer of specialists** and increasing cooperation between uniformed professions
- **Outflow** (accreditation of prior learning; civil effect; permeability and access to formal education)

**Good practice: *Purple Partnership Defence and VET schools / One step (qualification) up / hybrid education trajects in the last 2 years (NL)***

## 4. Skills crossing border (between disciplines and countries)

- **Myriad of qualification frameworks**, occupational standards and learning provision between countries (as well in related uniformed sectors)
- **Lack of transparency** of capacities, making international cooperation / missions less effective (interoperability)
- **Cross border learning** is hampered by language and recognition of training certificates across borders
- Security and nationality considerations hinders development and **cross-fertilisation of skills**
- Need for more **peer learning and creative collisions** between countries

*Good practice: NATO work on competence framework; Sectoral Qualification Framework (SQF) for all levels of Military Career (EC); classification of four defence training programmes in the NLQF / EQF (NL)*

# 5. Governing skills needs

- **Limited information** on sector wide (changing) skills needs, hampering **governance and strategic planning** of skills at European level
- Therefore, it is important to;
  - explore the existence of **labour market intelligence data** infrastructure
  - ensure that the information produced **informs the policy making process** and steers the **educational offer**
  - have clear **institutional mechanisms** in place and cooperation between stakeholders is paramount
  - Establish an **implementation roadmap** with policy actions, setting goals, and monitor implementation

# To conclude: Need to work on partnership IQ as well

- Do you look to the future with a **clear vision**?
- Do you **welcome change**?
- Do you **creatively resolve conflicts** when they arise in your organisation?
- Do you value **interdependence** more than independence?
- Do you take every opportunity to **create trust**, both through words and actions?
- Do you openly disclose information and **offer feedback**?

*Source: Lekanne Deprez & Tissen, 2002*

Thanks for your attention!