14. ONGOING REFORMS AND POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

This chapter provides a thematic and chronological overview of national reforms and policy developments since 2014.

The introduction of the chapter describes the overall education strategy and the key objectives across the whole education system. It also looks at how the education reform process is organised and who the main actors in the decision-making process are.

The section on ongoing reforms and policy developments groups reforms in the following broad thematic areas that largely correspond to education levels:

- Early childhood education and care
- School education
- VET and adult learning
- Higher education
- Transversal skills and employability.

Inside each thematic area, reforms are organised chronologically. The most recent reforms are described first.

Finally the section on the European perspective provides links to European strategies in which education and training have a prominent role.

Overall national education strategy and key objectives

There is a consensus that, in light of demographic changes in Germany, and with a view to the emerging need for skilled workers, but also because of the challenges posed by digitisation and the ongoing migration of refugees, great efforts must be made to develop the German education system in the years ahead. As early as October 2008, the Federation and the Länder, with the Qualification Initiative for Germany “Getting ahead through education” (Aufstieg durch Bildung), had agreed a common catalogue of objectives and measures which addresses all areas of education from early-childhood education through to continuing training:

- Education is to have top priority in Germany
- Every child should have the best possible starting conditions
- Everyone should be able to gain school-leaving and vocational qualifications
- Everyone should have the opportunity to get ahead through education
- More young people should take a degree course
- More people should be filled with enthusiasm for scientific and technical vocations
- More people should take advantage of the opportunity for continuing education

Within the framework of the implementation of the measures agreed in the Qualification Initiative, the Federation and the Länder have also stepped up their financial commitments in the education sector. They have agreed the target of increasing the share of expenditure on education, science and research to 10 per cent of GDP by 2015. In 2013 this share amounted to 9.2 per cent of GDP.

The success of the Qualification Initiative for Germany is reflected amongst other things by the fact that the agreed goal of a 40 per cent share of new students was not only reached but greatly exceeded: in 2014 the share of new students for one age cohort was around 50 per cent. And the goal of a 50 per cent participation in continuing education
has also been reached in the meantime; in 2014, 51 per cent of the working population took part in continuing education measures. Great progress has also been made in lowering the dropout rates: the number of school-leavers without a *Hauptschulabschluss* in 2014 was only 5.8 per cent, those of young adults without a vocational qualification 13.7 per cent. Nonetheless, efforts to reach these two core goals have to be continued. The plans are to halve these from 8 per cent to 4 per cent and from 17 per cent to 8.5 per cent respectively.

Each year the Federation and the Länder publish a joint report on the status of implementation of the Qualification Initiative for Germany “Getting ahead through education”. Furthermore, the heads of the Federation and Länder governments asked the specialist departments in December 2015 to work together to proactively strengthen the educational system and deal with current challenges, in particular digitisation and the integration of refugees through education and science.


**Overview of the education reform process and drivers**

In the Federal Republic of Germany responsibility for the education system is determined by the federal structure of the state. Unless the Basic Law (*Grundgesetz* – R1) awards legislative powers to the Federation, the Länder have the right to legislate. Within the education system, this applies to the school sector, the higher education sector, adult education and continuing education. Administration of the education system in these areas is almost exclusively a matter for the Länder.

The scope of the Federal Government's responsibilities in the field of education is defined in the Basic Law, according to which the Federation bears responsibility particularly for the regulations governing the following domains of education, science and research:

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

More detailed information on the distribution of legislative competences in the education sector is available in chapter 2.7.

In addition to the division of responsibilities described above, the Basic Law also provides for particular forms of cooperation between the Federation and the Länder within the scope of the so-called joint tasks (*Gemeinschaftsaufgaben*). Joint tasks in the field of science and education are regulated in Article 91b of the Basic Law. Pur-
suant to Article 91b, the Federation and the Länder may mutually agree to cooperate in cases of supra-regional importance in the promotion of science, research and teaching as well as for the assessment of the performance of educational systems in international comparison and in drafting relevant reports and recommendations.

Federalism has proved successful as a state structure which encourages diversity and competition. The Federal Government and the Länder will introduce the appropriate measures and initiatives within their respective areas of responsibility. At the same time, there has been an increase in the common responsibilities of the Länder and the need to agree objectives and coordinated measures on the part of the Federal Government and the Länder in fields of national relevance.

**Ongoing Reforms and Policy Developments**

The following account includes measures resolved by all Länder in the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs of the Länder in the Federal Republic of Germany (*Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK*) and measures by the Federal Government. Within their own areas of responsibility, the Länder take various and far-reaching measures which cannot be separately described. The reform measures of the Länder particularly concern the following areas:

- Expanding full-day offers with the aim of extended educational and support options
- Raising the educational level of disadvantaged people
- Measures to improve linguistic competence
- Measures to improve dovetailing of the pre-school sector and primary school
- Measures to improve school education, reading competence and the understanding of mathematical and scientific correlations
- Vocational orientation measures and measures to improve transition from school to work
- Measures to strengthen the link between vocational and higher education
- Laws to improve the identification and recognition of professional qualifications acquired abroad by the Federation and the Länder
- Measures to increase the higher education graduation rate and that of comparable qualifications

The list of reform measures since 2014 is largely based on the National Reform Programme 2015 and the 2015 report on the implementation of the Qualification Initiative for Germany “Getting ahead through education” (*Aufstieg durch Bildung*).


**14.1. National Reforms in Early Childhood Education and Care**

**2016**

**Language-Kitas**

The programme of the Federation Language-Kitas: Because Language is the Key to the World (*„Sprach-Kitas: Weil Sprache der Schlüssel zur Welt ist“*) further develops the successful approaches of the former programme Focus Kitas Language and Inte-
gration („Schwerpunkt-Kitas Sprache & Integration“ – 2011 to 2015) in terms of content and structure. The programme supports the imparting of linguistic education in everyday life. Other focuses are inclusive education and the cooperation with families. Language-Kitas are supported on the one hand through the employment of additional specialists for linguistic education. On the other hand they are continually accompanied by specialist advisors. The programme is directed at day-care centres for children with an above average share of children with particular needs for linguistic education and support. From 2016 to 2019 annually up to Euro 100 million are provided for the implementation of the programme.

http://sprach-kitas.fruehe-chancen.de/

2015

Initiative Education through Language and Writing

To further develop quality in the field of language promotion and language diagnostics following a phase of intensive development and expansion, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK), the Conference of the Ministers of Youth and Family Affairs (Jugend- und Familienministerkonferenz – JFMK), the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung – BMBF) and the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (Bundesministerium für Familien, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend – BMFSFJ) agreed in October 2012 to implement a joint initiative to develop language promotion, language diagnostics and reading promotion. In the research and development programme Education Through Language and Writing (“Bildung durch Sprache und Schrift“ – BISS), the linguistic education of children and those schemes introduced in the Länder on language development, language diagnostics and the promotion of reading from the elementary sector through to lower secondary level are examined and developed further with respect to their efficacy and efficiency. Within the framework of BISS networks of day-care centres for children or schools will work closely together to exchange their experiences in the field of language diagnostics and promotion, and to implement and optimise promising measures. Their work will benefit from scientific accompaniment. The programme also promotes the necessary further and continuing qualification of state-recognised youth or child-care workers and teaching staff in this field. The initiative is based on the recommendations made in an expert report commissioned by the BMBF in coordination with the BMFSFJ and the Länder, and is being implemented from autumn 2013 in day-care centres for children and in schools. In order to perform the planned evaluation project correctly as well as to secure and distribute the results of the programme in the long term, the Federation and Länder agreed to extend BISS up to the end of 2019 in March 2015. The Federation and the Länder are each providing around Euro 4.3 million annually for the programme.

http://www.biss-sprachbildung.de/ (German only)

2014

Quality Development in Early Childhood Education and Care

At a conference on education, support and development in early childhood in November 2014, the Federation and Länder agreed on a process to develop joint quality
goals for day care for children. A study group was formed with representatives from the Federation, Länder and local authority organisations that is to work out proposals for concrete operational objectives for the further development of quality in day care for children and on its funding base. The study group on further development of early education and ensuring its funding (Frühe Bildung weiterentwickeln und Finanzierung sicherstellen) addresses various fields of action such as improving staff-child relations, the qualification of staff, strengthening the management or the professionalisation of day care for children. Associations and organisations that operate in the field of day care for children are also involved in the dialogue on quality. At the end of 2016, the BMFSFJ and the specialist ministries of the Länder will present an initial interim report.

Expansion of Day-Care for Children

Since 1 August 2013 all children from the age of one have had a legal right to early-childhood education in a day-care centre or child-minding service. From 2006 to 1 March 2015 the number of children under three years of age in child-care increased from 287,000 to around 693,300. The day-care uptake rose from 13.6 per cent to 32.9 per cent.

The Federation made a total of Euro 5.4 billion available to the Länder up to 2014 to create additional places in day-care centres and child-minding services for children under the age of three and to finance their operation. Since 2015 the Federation supports the long-term operation of these newly created places with a total of Euro 845 million. To enable the Länder and municipalities to cope more easily with the challenges of funding crèches, day-care centres for children and child-minding services, the existing “Kinderbetreuungsaufbau” (childcare development) fund has been topped up with a further Euro 550 million from 2015, bringing it to Euro 1 billion, and the Länder share of turnover tax has been increased against the Federal shares in 2017 and 2018 by Euro 100 million each year.

14.2. National Reforms in School Education

2016

All-day schools

The Federation and Länder support the continuation of the nationwide Study on the Development of All-Day Schools (Studie zur Entwicklung von Ganztagsschulen – StEG) (2016–2019). Key topics are the nationwide monitoring of all-day schools with representative surveys on the development of all-day schools in Germany and studies on the quality and effects of the all-day offers.

http://www.bmbf.de/de/18357.php

http://www.ganztagsschulen.org/

2015

Refugees

The significant rise in the number of refugees of school age poses a huge challenge for the Federation and Länder, a problem that can only be overcome by using a considerable number of resources. This relates to additional funds to create spatial capacities and the employment of teachers, social workers and integration helpers.
The integration of young refugees in schools also calls for special support measures, socio-educational and psychological care as well as a complex cooperation between all persons and institutions involved in caring for and supporting refugees. Furthermore, the Länder are greatly expanding their schemes for teacher training as well as continued education and training for teachers in the field of inter-cultural education and German as a second language or German as a foreign language. The Federation and the Länder hold regular talks to coordinate the responsibilities, the organisation and the financing of these schemes.

**Comprehensive Strategy for Educational Monitoring**

In June 2015, the Standing Conference revised its comprehensive strategy on educational monitoring from the year 2006. The various elements of the comprehensive strategy should not only describe developments in the education system but also create applicable knowledge. From the empirical data, the right conclusions should be drawn and put into action.

The comprehensive strategy provides for the following methods and instruments:

- participation in international school performance studies (PIRLS/IGLU, TIMSS primary school, PISA)
- monitoring and implementation of educational standards for the primary sector, the lower secondary level and the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*
- methods to ensure quality at the level of schools
- the joint report on education of the Federation and Länder

More detailed information is available in chapter 11.2.


**Recommendations on Work in the Primary School**

In the light of the altered social and school framework conditions, the Standing Conference resolved a revised version of its Recommendations on Work in the Primary School (*"Empfehlungen zur Arbeit in der Grundschule"*) in June 2015. According to the recommendations, the task of the primary school is to enable basic school education in a joint educational programme for all children. The goal is to acquire and extend basic and adaptable competences. These include above all the key competences of reading and writing as well as mathematics, which form a basis for not only all other educational areas in the primary school but also for continuing education as well as lifelong learning and independent appropriation of culture.


**Educational Standards for the Allgemeine Hochschulreife**

In June 2015, a collection was published of exemplary *Abitur* tasks that was to provide schools with an orientation for the implementation of educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife*. In October 2012 the Standing Conference had adopted educational standards for the *Allgemeine Hochschulreife* (general higher education entrance qualification) in German and Mathematics and in follow-on courses in the foreign languages English and French. In these subjects, from the 2014/2015 school year onwards, the educational standards form the basis of the
support specific requirements for the Allgemeine Hochschulreife. The Standing Conference had already decided, in March 2012, to develop a shared pool of standards-based Abitur examination tasks which is to be offered to the Länder from the 2016/2017 school year.

It is also planned to develop educational standards for the Allgemeine Hochschulreife in the natural science subjects Biology, Chemistry and Physics from 2017 onwards.


Support Strategy for High-Achieving Pupils

In June 2015 the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) for the first time resolved a Support Strategy for High-Achieving Pupils (“Förderstrategie für leistungsstarke Schülerinnen und Schüler”). The aim of the support strategy is to create learning conditions for high-achieving pupils that allow them to develop their potentials in an optimum manner and gives them the best possible education corresponding to their individual performance. The support strategy recommends consolidating the measures in the field of diagnostics and in the promotion and support of pupils with the potential for high achievement both in and out of school. Greater efforts are needed in all phases of teacher training to extend the skills and competences of teachers in the field of encouraging high-achieving pupils. Special emphasis is being put on the role of teaching staff in identifying high performance potentials and thus determining the initial learning situation in classes. Apart from the primary encouragement of general intellectual abilities, what is also important is particular support for the musical, artistic, sports and emotional abilities. The support strategy relates to the primary and secondary level and also draws attention to the design of the transitions.

More detailed information is available in chapter 12.4.


Teacher Training for a School of Diversity

In March 2015, the Standing Conference and the German Rector’s Conference (Hochschulrektorenkonferenz – HRK) resolved a joint recommendation Teacher Training for a School of Diversity („Lehrerbildung für eine Schule der Vielfalt“) on the topic of inclusion. The teacher training courses should be further developed so that the future teachers are better prepared for the challenges of a diversified body of pupils.

In 2012 already, the Standing Conference had stipulated that special attention be paid to the “basic pedagogical and didactic qualifications in the subject areas dealing with heterogeneity and inclusion as well as the fundamentals of assessment
practice" in training for all teaching professions by resolving the amended framework agreements on training and examination for the different types of teaching careers from 2012. With this in mind, the specialist profile for special education and further specialist profiles of the common content requirements for subject-related studies and subject-related didactics in teacher training which apply to all Länder ("Ländergemeinsame inhaltliche Anforderungen für die Fachwissenschaften und Fachdidaktiken in der Lehrerbildung") was also updated in 2014 and the Standards for Teacher Training: Educational Sciences ("Standards für die Lehrerbildung: Bildungswissenschaften") amended with respect to the requirements of inclusive teaching. The agreements of the Standing Conference on inclusion will be gradually adopted by the Länder in specific state regulations.

The change of perspective towards inclusive teaching was formulated in 2011 with the basic recommendation of the Standing Conference "Inklusive Bildung von Kindern und Jugendlichen mit Behinderungen in Schulen" (inclusive education of children and young people with disabilities in schools). The recommendation defines the framework conditions for an increasingly inclusive pedagogical practice in general education and vocational schools. Starting from a different understanding of disability and the principles of participation and accessibility, the responsibility of general education schools for all children and youths with or without disabilities is emphasised.

More detailed information on inclusion is available in chapter 12.


2014

Recommendations on a Culture of Remembrance in Schools

In December 2014, the Standing Conference passed the resolution Recommendations on a Culture of Remembrance as a Subject of Historical-Political Education in Schools ("Empfehlungen zur Erinnerungskultur als Gegenstand historisch-politischer Bildung in der Schule"). The recommendations take up earlier resolutions on individual topics from the field of political education and have been developed with the involvement of pertinent institutions and associations. A culture of remembrance in schools should empower young people to describe and evaluate historical developments and to understand that the world can be shaped and changed by one's own actions. The recommendations are aimed at teaching staff as well as responsible persons in education administrations, in training and continuous education as well as in extracurricular places of education and learning.


Quality Development in Teacher Training

In July 2014, the funding proposal for the Quality Offensive for Teacher Training was published. The Federation will support institutions of higher education from 2014 for a period of ten years with up to Euro 500 million to develop innovative concepts for teacher training courses in Germany and to further improve their quality. Furthermore, the position of teacher training courses at higher education institutions is to be consolidated through this programme. Through more intensive in-
clusion of everyday school reality, study will, moreover, become more practice-oriented. The Federation-Länder programme also takes more account of the challenges of heterogeneity and inclusion. The programme involves dismantling barriers to mobility, so that future teachers are free to choose, without disadvantage, where to move during study and which Land they wish to work in after qualifying. Moving from one Land to another is therefore being facilitated in a sustainable manner for students and graduates of teacher training courses or of preparatory service. The Standing Conference has developed corresponding common implementation guidelines for all Länder which have been incorporated as binding elements into the Federal Government-Länder agreement on the Quality Offensive for Teacher Training. Guaranteeing mobility will be dealt with within the framework of annual reporting in the Standing Conference, possible obstacles to mobility should hereby be identified and recommendations made to the corresponding Länder. The first report on the implementation of the guidelines to increase mobility was published in March 2015. In this report, the Standing Conference established that nationwide mobility is in principle warranted by all Länder. The Standing Conference recommends that Länder in which there are still obstacles to mobility improve the state regulations and administrative actions in the spirit of the resolution on mobility.

The Quality Offensive for Teacher Training had been adopted by the Federation and the Länder in the Joint Science Conference (Gemeinsame Wissenschaftskonferenz – GWK) in April 2013. In the two tenders for the first funding period 2015 to 2018/2019, 59 teacher training institutions of higher education from all 16 Länder were successful with a total of 49 individual and joint applications. A total of 85 institutions of higher education took part in the tenders.

www.qualitaetsoffensive-lehrerbildung.de

http://www.gwk-bonn.de/themen/vorhaben-an-hochschulen/qualitaetsoffensive-lehrerbildung/


14.3. National Reforms in Vocational Education and Training and Adult Learning

2016

Novelle des Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz (AFBG, sog. AufstiegsBAföG)

On 1 August 2016 the amended Upgrading Training Assistance Act (Aufstiegsfortbildungsförderungsgesetz – AFBG – R168) came into force. The most important changes, apart from significant improvements to the benefits, are the extension of the support options as well as numerous structural modernisations. More detailed information is available in chapter 3.4.
**2015**

**Assisted Training**

With the temporary instrument of assisted training that was introduced in May 2015 as a key measure of the Federation and the Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018 (Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung 2015–2018), disadvantaged youths and their training establishments receive intense and continuous support before and during vocational education. In 2015, more than 4,900 young people began their assisted training with professional and/or socio-educational support. Three more age cohorts will begin assisted training up to the end of the Alliance for Training and Continuing Education. Furthermore, the aids accompanying the training have also been extended.

**Framework Agreement on the Berufsschule**

In March 2015 the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs adopted a new framework agreement on the Berufsschule ("Rahmenvereinbarung über die Berufsschule"). In order to be able to better react to the requirements of a globalised working world, the opportunities to spend time abroad during education and training were greatly improved. This includes the extension and deepening of foreign language competence according to its significance in the relevant Ausbildungsberuf (recognised occupation requiring formal training). In addition, the Standing Conference's foreign language certificate is an opportunity to demonstrate the acquisition of foreign language competences on the basis of the "Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" (CEFR).


**2014**

**Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018**

The Federal Government, the Federal Employment Agency (Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA), the economic sector, trade unions and Länder signed the „Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training 2015–2018“ (Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung 2015–2018) at the end of 2014. This replaces the National Pact for Career Training and Skilled Manpower Development in Germany (Nationaler Pakt für Ausbildung und Fachkräftenachwuchs in Deutschland – Training Pact) and will be in force until the end of 2018.

It is the joint objective of the partners to strengthen dual vocational education and training and promote the equivalence of vocational and academic education. Through concrete measures, the partners of the Alliance want to enable more young people for vocational education and training and facilitate taking up in-company training. The "Allianz für Aus- und Weiterbildung" also implements the training guarantee: anyone interested in training should in future be shown a way that leads them to the earliest possible vocational qualification. Vocational training is to take priority here.

With their declaration Together for the Prospects of Refugees ("Gemeinsam für Perspektiven von Flüchtlingen") in September 2015, the partners in the alliance also reacted promptly to the influx to Germany of mainly young people seeking protection. Together they agreed on concrete measures in the field of vocational prepara-
tion and education to support refugees. The Integration Act that came into force on 6 August 2016 also got key concerns of the partners in the Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training off the ground: asylum seekers and tolerated persons as well as their training establishments can be certain that trainees during and immediately after successful vocational training will be allowed to remain in Germany if they subsequently find employment. The age limits up to which qualified vocational training has to have begun have been abolished here.

With a view to the coming years, the Alliance for Initial and Continuing Vocational Training has agreed on ten key fields of work for a strong vocational education and training.

The goal for both German nationals and refugees is:

- to ensure a high number of company apprenticeships,
- to further strengthen the educational pathway with its supportive instruments,
- to address the adjustment problems on the training market,
- to further improve the quality of education and training in the dual system,
- to increase the appeal of vocational education and training with a view to high-achieving youths too,
- to make qualifications more visible and improve the data situation with a view to refugees,
- to expand post-qualification,
- to support vocational schools as places for language training too,
- to lead education and training in the dual system into a digital future and strengthen the exchange of experience as well as solicit education and training in the dual system.

Implementation of the EU Youth Guarantee

Coordinated approaches exist in the EU member states to promote youth employment in Europe. Through EU-wide recommendations on the implementation of a so-called Youth Guarantee, the member states are supported in their efforts, for example to fight the very high youth unemployment in certain EU member states by using the EU Cohesion Fund. In April 2014, the Federal Government resolved the national implementation plan to implement the EU Youth Guarantee in Germany to accept its responsibility for implementing the EU Youth Guarantee, even if Germany has a very low youth unemployment rate in an EU-wide comparison. The implementation plan is aimed at young people below the age of 25 to support them with their integration in education and training as well as work. The goal is to further develop the existing labour market instruments and achieve structural improvements during the transition from school to training and work. To this end it also includes concrete measures such as assisted training as a new instrument to promote employment, the further expansion of youth career agencies (Jugend-berufsagenturen) and the launch of the ESF co-financed mentoring system for the transition to the labour market (Berufseinstiegsbegleitung).


Training Assistance for Pupils and Trainees
Through the 25th amending law to the Federal Training Assistance Act (*Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz* – BaföG – R82), the Federation will assume the complete funding of financial allowances in accordance with the Federal Training Assistance Act as of 2015. The content of the Bafög will also be amended at the start of the school year 2016 or respectively the winter semester 2016/2017: the grant levels and exemptions will be raised by around seven percent each. As of 2017, when the content of these reforms becomes effective for the first time in a full calendar year, more than Euro 500 million more will be provided each year from the Federal budget. Together with the funds to be provided by the Reconstruction Loan Corporation (*Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau* – KfW) amounting to Euro 325 million for shares of students Bafög loans, the reform package means that a further Euro 825 million will be spent every year for the Bafög. The rises will also be transferred, as usual, to trainees in vocational education and training and participants in pre-vocational education measures with the amending law to the Bafög. The grant levels and exemptions for vocational education and training grants and the training grant for persons with disabilities will thus also rise by around seven percent on 1 August 2016. This rise also affects the remuneration during access qualification and grants for the training allowance in the case of external vocational education and training accordingly. An extra Euro 62 million will be provided each year.

To give young refugees who will probably stay in Germany for a longer period better chances of vocational training in a company, the law to amend book twelve of the Social Security Code (*Sozialgesetzbuch XII* – SGB XII) and further regulations as well as the Integration Act, extend the support possibilities to promote training for persons granted asylum with good prospects of remaining in the country and for tolerated persons, albeit for a limited period in some cases.

### 14.4. National Reforms in Higher Education

#### 2016

**Package of measures of the Federation for refugees capable of study at a higher education institution**

Refugees who wish to study in Germany find a wide range of support. Although the concrete demand can only be estimated on account of the lack of educational data for the refugees, the Federal Ministry of Education and Research (*Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung* – BMBF) is providing the institutions of higher education with up to Euro 100 million over a period of 4 years through the German Academic Exchange Service (*Deutschen Akademischen Austauschdienst* – DAAD). The package of measures consists of three elements as a basis for successful access to a course of studies:

- **Recognise the competences and qualifications of refugees who want to study:** instruments include the academic and scholastic aptitude test TestAS and the service office for international study applications (uni-assist).
- **Help with the specialist and linguistic preparation for the course of studies:** refugees whose higher education entrance qualification is not fully recognised in Germany are made fit for a course of studies at Studienkollegs; in addition, the DAAD supports subject-related German courses at institutions of higher education,
• Support the integration of new arrivals on campus: voluntary buddy and mentor programmes or language training offers through teacher training students or students of German, help refugees and strengthen the practical relevance of the course of studies.

These are joined by information and continuing education offers from the DAAD specifically for refugees and improvements in student financing (BAföG). The extramural science organisations also have specific schemes for the integration of refugees, in particular scientists.

**Funding initiative „Innovative Institution of Higher Education“**

The Federation and Länder agreed on the funding initiative “Innovative Hochschule” (innovative institution of higher education) in June 2016. The initiative to support the research-based transfer of ideas, knowledge and technology helps institutions of higher education that already have a coherent strategy for their interaction with business and society to raise their profile in their so-called third mission “Transfer and Innovation”. The initiative has been endowed with Euro 550 million for ten years and is aimed particularly at small and medium-sized universities as well as Fachhochschulen.

**Programme to support up-and-coming academics**

The Federation and Länder agreed on a joint programme to support junior scientists in June 2016. The goal of the programme to support up-and-coming academics that has been endowed with Euro 1 billion over a 15-year period is to make the career paths of up-and-coming academics at universities easier to plan and more transparent. It should also improve the international appeal of the German scientific system and help the universities attract and permanently retain the best junior scientists from home and abroad as far as possible. More detailed information is available in chapter 3.3.


**Ways to reduce the costs of enrolment**

In view of the strong influx of people with a refugee background, the Standing Conference of the Ministers of Education and Cultural Affairs (Kultusministerkonferenz – KMK) discussed ways to reduce the costs of enrolment. The resolution of the Standing Conference from May 2016 on “Access and admission to higher education for refugees – possibilities for reducing the costs of enrolment” (“Hochschulzugang und Hochschulzulassung für Flüchtlinge – Möglichkeiten, die für die Immatrikulation fälligen Kosten zu reduzieren”) focuses in particular on those regulations that exist in the Länder that in principle enable the reduction of public fees, contributions and charges incurred in connection with attending an institution of higher education. With this in mind, the Standing Conference asked the Länder to work towards the institutions of higher education exploiting their option to facilitate the costs connected with enrolment in favour of the needy, with special consideration for the situation of refugees, in a reasonable manner and ensuring the principle of equality.

Verification of Higher Education Entrance Qualifications for Refugees

In December 2015, the Länder agreed on a joint procedure in cases where an applicant is unable or not completely able to provide evidence of a higher education entrance qualification obtained in their home country with documents, on account of their refugee status. To facilitate verification, a three tier procedure to determine the academic aptitude will be introduced. This comprises the determination of the personal premises resulting from the specific asylum or residency status, a plausibility check of the educational biography and an examination and/or assessment procedure based on quality.

More detailed information is available in chapter 7.3.1.


Training Assistance for Students at Higher Education Institutions

Through the 25th amending law to the Federal Training Assistance Act (Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz – Bafög – R82), the Federation will assume the complete funding of financial allowances in accordance with the Federal Training Assistance Act as of 2015. This relieves the Länder to the tune of around Euro 1.17 billion each year so that they can better fulfil their funding responsibility for institutions of higher education and schools. Apart from the substantial rise in grant levels and exemptions, there will also be improvements to the content and structure as of the start of the winter semester 2016/2017. The rise and standardisation of the child care allowance will improve the compatibility of parenthood and education and training; various detailed regulations on closing funding gaps, in particular for the two-tier Bachelor’s and Master’s structure of studies, an extension of the entitlement to grants to non-German trainees as well as for periods of training abroad and other detailed improvements will accommodate the living and training situation of young people better than before.

Higher Education Pact

Through the Higher Education Pact the Federation and the Länder are creating a needs-based study provision and hence ensuring the quantitative expansion of higher education. In December 2014, the Federation and Länder resolved the third and final phase of the Higher Education Pact. Beyond the existing agreements, a range of courses for an additional 760,000 new students is to be provided by 2020 and financed up until 2023. The Federation and the Länder are providing additional funding of over Euro 19 billion for this, including Euro 9.9 billion from the Federation and Euro 9.4 billion from the Länder. The Higher Education Pact is in future also providing targeted financing of measures which lead students to a successful qualification. Moreover, the Länder pledge to grant more persons holding a vocational qualification access to the institutions of higher education.

http://www.gwk-bonn.de/index.php?id=192
14.5. National Reforms Related to Transversal Skills and Employability

2015

Decade of Literacy

In September 2015 the Federation and the Länder proclaimed the Decade for Literacy ("Dekade für Alphabetisierung") in Germany which continues the National Strategy for Literacy and Basic Education of Adults ("Nationale Strategie für Alphabetisierung und Grundbildung Erwachsener") and is designed to tackle adult reading and writing skills which are not sufficient for full participation in society. As a broad social alliance the strategy includes, among others, the local authorities ("Kommunen"), trade unions, churches, the Federal Employment Agency ("Bundesagentur für Arbeit – BA") and "Volkshochschule" associations. Industry associations and chambers of industry and commerce are also invited to participate.

https://www.bmbf.de/files/NEU_strategiepapier_nationale_alphabetisierung.pdf

More detailed information is available in chapter 8.5.

2014

Youth Strength

Under the auspices of the "Youth Strength" initiative the Federation is offering advice and support in the 2014-2020 European Social Fund (ESF) programming period to disadvantaged young people with and without a migrant background in transitioning from school into work. It is doing this through the new ESF pilot scheme "Jugend stärken im Quartier" (Youth Strength Locally), as well as the youth migration services programme and a project with industry ("Jugend stärken: 1000 Chancen" – "Youth Strength – 1,000 Opportunities").

For the first pilot phase from 2015 to 2018 around Euro 115 million are being provided by the European Social Fund. The pilot scheme follows on from the former "Youth Strength" initiative which in the 2007 to 2013 ESF programming period successfully promoted the social, educational and professional integration of young people with special support needs.

14.6. European Perspective

Education and training have a prominent place in the Europe 2020 Strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth. A headline target has been set for education which specifies twin goals on early school leaving and higher education attainment, while under the European semester of economic governance, the key messages of the 2016 Annual Growth Survey (AGS) as well as the Country-specific Recommendations have strong links with education and training. Moreover, the ‘Strategic framework for cooperation in education and training until 2020’ (ET 2020) and the ‘Rethinking education’ strategy focus attention on the major challenges facing European education systems, and highlight the areas that need to be improved.

For information on reforms in the EU Member States that are explicitly linked to the Europe 2020 Strategy see the 2016 National reform programmes.