

# **SP2 – languages for enhanced opportunities on the European labour market**

**The project focuses on employability:**

- **new linguistic demands in the private and public sectors resulting from European integration and globalisation**
- **formal and informal linguistic and intercultural qualifications sought after on the national labour markets / the European labour market**
- **validation of learning, assessment, certification – what does the labour market recognise and value?**

## Consultation

- Questionnaires to employers in 15 countries – 236 responses
- Ditto to graduates – various types of graduates but not language graduates – 606 responses
- Probably not possible to draw firm conclusions but some trends seem to emerge

# What languages – English and other languages?

- Need for more languages a general tendency
- Need for English has increased everywhere
- Indication of needs for other foreign languages scores lower – often considerably so - than English in most of the countries surveyed
- Needs for other languages vary quite a lot across the countries and seems to be associated with geographic location and with trade flows

## **What employers indicate as regards graduates' preparedness for their work in terms of language qualifications**

- Employers generally seem to indicate that graduates are well or adequately prepared in terms of languages.
- What does this mean in concrete situations?

# The role of language qualifications in connection with recruitment of graduates

- With some notable exceptions language qualifications apparently play only a limited role in the recruitment decision in most of the countries/companies surveyed.
- Foreign-language proficiency tests are rarely used in the recruitment process.
- What does this tell us?

continued

is this

- because employers attach more importance to other qualifications which of course they will do, and thus give languages a low priority?
- because languages are taken so much for granted among graduates that employers 'forget' this in the recruitment situation?
- Responses indicate that 20% learn more languages after graduation but 80% do not

## **The importance of language qualifications as apparently judged by employers and employees**

- Foreign-language needs seem to permeate all levels in the corporate hierarchy.

## **Use of languages in work-related situations**

- In all responses, most of the types of work situations requiring foreign language qualifications receive the highest or next highest score both from employers and graduates.
- When it comes to understanding and interacting in informal social situations at work both employers and graduates give it a 2 on a four-point scale



## Questions and issues for discussion in SP2 and TNP3

- The status and role of various languages ? Professional mobility, commercial partners, multicultural teams, internal communication in multinational contexts...
- How to establish permanent consultation and dialogue with employers about the needs for languages in the business sector. Regular meetings, web-based fora...
- Modernisation of language study programmes and of language studies as part of other programmes – generic competences, life-long language learning competences, project management...
- Revision of recommendations in SP2 synthesis report on the basis of consultation results

One of the preliminary synthesis report recommendation:

- European integration and globalisation lead to increased linguistic needs – especially for non-language graduates. There is a perceived mismatch between the linguistic and intercultural competence of graduates and the real needs of the labour market. If these needs are not addressed there is a risk that Europe will lose out.