

The term “employability“ stands for the ability to move independently on the labour markets as well as to find a permanent job. It is closely related to knowledge, skills and attitudes of individuals and the way they are using and presenting these kinds of "assets" to potential employers. Employability outlines three issues:

1. the ability to find a job, i.e. to join the working life on the basis of key qualification, career planning skills and knowledge about the working environment;
2. the ability to keep a job, i.e. to switch between different tasks, to meet new requirements, and to acquire new skills;
3. the ability to find a new job, i.e. to have the will and the competence to organise professional change independently and to be able to move freely on the labour markets.

Within these three areas, employability goes beyond the concept of workability. Workability is defined as the ability of work at a specific workplace. Employability instead is focussed on the value-adding capability of individuals.

This yields the requirements specification of professional competence, individual responsibility, the willingness and the ability to learn as well as skills in teamwork and communication, and finally the open-mindedness to new things. Therefore learning becomes a pivotal element when it comes to employability. (see in detail <http://www.wip-online.org/lexicon/en/index/23/index.html> [german])

„This concept is one element in the European Employment Strategy first adopted by the Member States in 1997. The first of the four pillars established in 1997 is ‘employability’, which aims to prevent long-term unemployment and facilitate access to the labour market, including employment guidelines aimed at developing training and skills, combating age barriers and reviewing tax and benefit systems.“ (Eurofound, 2007: <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu/areas/industrialrelations/dictionary/definitions/employability.htm>)