



# Erasmus+ HEREs Seminar

Istanbul, Turkey, 10-11 March 2015

“Higher education and Vocational Education & Training in the Erasmus+ Partner Countries neighbouring the EU: Partnership for socio-economic development”

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Erasmus+



# **Conclusions of the Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts seminar**

## **"Higher education and Vocational Education & Training in the Erasmus+ Partner Countries neighbouring the EU: *Partnership for socio-economic development*"**

**University of Istanbul, Turkey, 10-11 March 2015**

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*This report reflects the views only of the author, the European Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.*



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# 1 About the seminar

On 10 and 11 March 2015 the European Commission and the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency organised a seminar for the Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) (see Programme in Annex 2) on current challenges and trends in the links between Higher Education (HE) and Vocational Education & Training (VET) in the Erasmus+ Partner Countries neighbouring the EU, and in particular on partnership options between both sectors to support VET and socio-economic development.

The seminar was the first HERE event organised under Erasmus+. It gathered more than 170 participants involving 25 Partner Countries from Central Asia, Eastern Europe, Russia, the Southern Mediterranean and the Western Balkans, including professionals working at higher education institutions, business representatives, public authorities and National Erasmus+ Offices (NEOs).

The seminar offered the country representatives a possibility to exchange information and experiences about on-going developments in their countries. It also provided opportunities for sharing outcomes of projects funded under the previous EU Tempus programme that are implemented in the different countries. The great variety of higher education and VET systems, cultural contexts, and stages of economic development covered by the participating countries were both a challenge and a source of inspiration and allowed for a direct comparison of very different approaches to HE and VET.

## 1.1 Background

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VET systems are defined and organised according to different social, economic and political traditions and realities. These have an impact on their purpose, functions, status and scope.

Traditionally, VET prepared individuals for well-defined technical or manual occupations. There was a strict separation between blue collar and white collar workers and the provision of education and training for blue collar workers was closely linked to the labour market.

Today, this distinction has become largely obsolete, both in the EU and in the countries neighbouring the EU. VET is becoming more and more synonymous with lifelong learning. In scope, VET is broader than higher education. It has to respond to the learning needs of individuals and to the broader skill needs for economic development. It can prepare individuals for specific occupational activities with a view to immediate employment or self-employment. It can and should also prepare for more sustainable employment and for continued education and training, as occupations continue to become more diverse and complex and change ever more rapidly and profoundly.

The importance of VET on the policy agendas of national and international organisations has therefore increased. At European level, within the European cooperation framework in VET (the Copenhagen process – see Annex 1), the Bruges Communiqué from 2010 defined a modernisation agenda for VET until 2020 as a contribution to the EU growth and jobs agenda. In this broad context, most of the Erasmus+ Partner Countries neighbouring the EU

have also recently demonstrated great interest in and commitment to launching reforms of their vocational education sector. Furthermore, all of these countries (except Syria) are involved in the Torino process (see Annex 1), a biennial voluntary review of VET reforms coordinated by ETF, that draws upon the experience of the Copenhagen process but focuses on national reform agendas.

In order to address the challenges of sustainable and inclusive development worldwide, some countries have opted to widen the coverage of their VET systems, for example by expanding VET to tertiary level after a general upper secondary phase. Others are rapidly improving their arrangements for VET provision at the end of compulsory schooling and in the upper secondary phase, as well as in higher education.

In the countries neighbouring the EU, the main subject of reform has been secondary VET while post-secondary and higher VET have not yet received the same attention. And yet, higher non-academic qualifications have become increasingly sought after in their countries' labour markets. The increasing need for education and training at the intersection of VET and higher education appears to be a general trend and responding to it is generally perceived as a challenge.

Another, related, challenge has been to reconnect VET to the labour market. It has proven to be difficult to establish effective working relationships and a dialogue on VET development between VET providers, employers and social partners, both locally and at the policy level.

Given the variety of educational system structures around the world, it is difficult to formulate standard recommendations, but comparing and exchanging experiences makes sense and can be very beneficial. The challenges are diverse and can sometimes appear overwhelming, but the occasion to discuss with peers helps to put them into perspective.

## 1.2 Objectives

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The aim of the seminar was to discuss the role that HE and VET can play to support economic and social development in the countries concerned and how they can better work together to exploit their synergies and complementarities.

For more than 20 years, EU cooperation programmes (and in particular the Tempus and Erasmus Mundus programmes) have encouraged higher education reforms in countries neighbouring the EU. The launch of the new Erasmus+ programme, which looks at education in a more integrated way, appeared to be an opportune moment to discuss how lessons learned during the previous programmes can also impact on ongoing VET reforms in these countries.

Socio-economic developments require that both HE and VET adapt constantly to changing conditions, and both sectors can learn from each other in this respect. Due to political uncertainty and economic transition, VET systems in many of the EU's neighbouring countries lost their importance as pathways into employment and witnessed decreased interest and status during the 1990s when more and more young people entered higher education. Only during the last ten years has there been a gradual recovery in VET enrolments.



While higher education has expanded dramatically in most neighbouring countries, the employment opportunities for graduates have not improved at the same rate. Improving the relevance of both VET and higher education requires more interaction with stakeholders from industry and society.

The seminar aimed to raise awareness among higher education stakeholders of on-going challenges in VET and how these relate to challenges faced in higher education. The participants produced a set of recommendations and advice and came up with ideas and suggestions for the implementation of the new Erasmus+ programme and in particular the Capacity Building in Higher Education action.

The seminar focused on four main topics where partnership between HE and VET can be particularly beneficial:

- the training of VET school teachers and managers;
- developing post-secondary intermediate levels of qualifications for the labour market;
- ensuring portability of qualifications and permeability among education and training systems;
- fostering local development.

## 2 Conclusions and recommendations

The meeting in Istanbul demonstrated a great willingness of the Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) to support the development of VET in their countries, and a profound understanding of the nature of VET in transition societies, including the need to reinforce links with the higher education sector.

In many countries neighbouring the EU, graduates face difficulties to find appropriate jobs. The workforce is either overqualified or under-qualified, with not enough people being trained for skilled work at the intermediate level to replace retiring workers. This suggests that there is a need for more intermediate level programmes of professional or vocational (higher) education. This area would also appear to offer some of the strongest opportunities for closer cooperation between higher education and VET.

General trends can be identified when comparing international experience and an event such as this conference offered an excellent opportunity to do so. It appeared that decentralising the management of VET is almost universally deemed desirable for education to stand a chance of remaining responsive to changing needs in the labour market and society. VET should be responsive not just to labour market needs but also to learners' needs. It should be transparent and well-resourced. It must provide flexible and open pathways for young people and adults, and it must have the capacity to innovate and adapt to changing conditions.

The attractiveness of VET must be improved, primarily through improved quality and relevance and the development of pathways linking VET and higher education.

Education reforms need to follow a more comprehensive and integrated policy agenda, with synergy among different ministries and agencies and taking into account human capital development as a whole, not just individual components (such as primary, technical, vocational or higher education) of it.

Different channels of cooperation between higher education and VET exist, both in reality and potentially. These are, however, not always obvious and visible.

Two of the most obvious channels of cooperation are VET teacher training, which in many countries is the responsibility of universities or other higher education institutions, and the development of short-cycle intermediate programmes that can fill the void, bridge the gap and break the glass ceiling between VET and higher education that still exists in many countries.

Universities and technical and vocational schools in cooperation with representatives of the world of work can explore these channels with support from the Erasmus+ programme and notably its Capacity Building in Higher Education action. Numerous participants called for more projects in this field and expressed a need for support and encouragement.

## Proposed suggestions for moving VET and Higher Education closer together

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The recommendations reported below are a summary of the recommendations expressed in the working groups. More details can be found in the workshop reports below.

### - Reinforce cooperation between Higher Education and VET

From the lively discussions emerged a strong consensus and a broad agreement that the barriers between VET and higher education must be taken down. In some ways the two subsystems should even integrate, with overlapping levels recognised accordingly.

A recommended option was to increase the permeability between the two systems in order to benefit all stakeholders, including students, employers and society as a whole. Such an approach is expected to increase the attractiveness of VET by taking out the dead ends that still exist in VET in many countries. It will also benefit universities by opening new opportunities for short-cycle courses at bachelor level and by better preparing students for specific tracks in higher education.

### - Suggested areas for cooperation between Higher Education and VET

Different areas for cooperation were identified and recommended for further investigation:

- Policy development of both sectors in view of reinforcing links and synergies  
In particular, there is a need to develop monitoring strategies of public policies including information systems and performance indicators to measure the efficiency of programmes (notably intermediate qualifications) and ensure that adequate action is implemented as follow-up.
- Cooperation with companies exploring in particular the role of companies as training actors (learning at working place, etc.)  
Such cooperation should also help strengthening career guidance and providing information (in particular, accurate labour market information) to show families and learners the benefits of vocational education.
- Partnering for fostering local development  
Such a strategy requires much more than just collaboration between VET and higher education. It requires intense and continuing consultation through permanent structures or networks with authorities, local industry and businesses, and all others that have a stake in local development and can promote it. Trust among stakeholders is vital for local development and time invested in thinking creatively about how such trust can be (re)gained locally would be well-spent.
- Training of VET school teachers and managers  
Capacities in VET should be strengthened and actors in higher education should be engaged to help raising awareness among VET teachers and trainers of the mission of

VET in the overall education system. This should also include raising awareness about public policies and national education strategies.

Both categories of actors should work together to develop continuous professional development programmes in specific technical subject areas.

- Recognition of prior learning

A system of recognition of prior learning is a powerful instrument to support permeability among education sectors, forcing recognition of other learning achievements than traditional schooling, which in turn can also impact the way education and learning are designed and delivered.

In particular, it was suggested to increase the role of higher education in:

- Developing short-cycle higher education programmes as intermediate levels between post-secondary VET and higher education. These should be embedded in the local and regional environment and be relevant to socio-economic development. They should be student-centred and focus on learning outcomes.
- VET-related research, notably in the field of labour market research and the development of quality assurance mechanisms in VET

There is a virtually universal need for quality-assured sector qualification systems that are based on occupational standards and national qualifications. Curricula must be revised according to these standards. Aligning qualifications with the European Qualifications Framework would greatly benefit international cooperation and mobility. Developing national qualifications frameworks where these do not exist yet would also visualise how the borders between VET and higher education are fading in practice.

- Developing and implementing computer-assisted learning technologies in VET.

- **Action lines for Erasmus+**

Erasmus+ was identified as a major tool to support the abovementioned strategies and the Capacity Building in HE action was particularly highlighted as one of the most appropriate mechanisms.

Three main recommendations were made:

- The results of the projects carried out under the previous Tempus programme (notably those supporting interaction between higher education institutions and VET institutions) should be better used and best practice should be disseminated.
- Priority should be given to projects that involve vocational schools and industrial partners, for example for improving VET teacher training. Higher education institutions should be encouraged to cooperate with the VET sector.
- The HERE network and its experts should be mobilised to tackle the topic of VET and disseminate in their own countries international good practice in this field.

## 3 Proceedings

### 3.1 Plenary sessions

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#### 3.1.1 DAY I

The event was opened by the Turkish hosts, who demonstrated Turkey's remarkable progress in human capital development in the past two decades. **Abdullah Çavaşoglu** from the Council of Higher Education used his personal experience to illustrate how important it is to overcome stigmas created by past education politics, and to take VET seriously by building permeable education and training systems connecting VET and higher education. Turkey's VET system, including the vocational colleges providing short cycle higher education, are an important pillar for its economic success.

**Jan Varchola**, from the European Commission's Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, focused on the main challenges in vocational education and training in Europe, the policy responses provided within the European policy framework and the links between VET and higher education.

He named as the main current challenges of VET the great differences in the quality of VET provision among different countries, the low status and attractiveness of VET pathways compared to general/higher education, the lack of quality and labour market relevance, the low share of work-based learning, the high rates of early leaving from VET as compared to higher education, and the low levels of international mobility in VET.

The EU level cooperation is framed within the so called Copenhagen process, launched with a Declaration of Ministers in charge of VET, EU level Social Partners and the Commission in 2002 with the aim to modernise VET, support mobility for work and learning, make access to lifelong learning easier through more transparency, easier recognition and transfer of qualifications and competences, and better information and guidance. The Bruges Communiqué from 2010 defined an ambitious modernisation agenda for VET until 2020, including a vision, a set of strategic objectives and also short-term deliverables to be achieved in the period 2011-2014.

The current socio-economic context (particularly youth unemployment) has turned the attention of policy makers to VET, particularly to the promotion of work-based learning, apprenticeships and dual VET as a way to ensure labour market relevant skills and ease transitions from training to labour market. Additionally, with a more long-term perspective, promotion of excellence in VET is becoming increasingly important.

Currently, the priorities of the EU VET agenda are under review. A new set of the so called medium-term deliverables for the period 2015-2020 were endorsed in June 2015 under the Latvian Presidency. The discussion so far has shown a focus on 5 areas: work-based learning, quality assurance and feedback loops, access to qualifications through both continuing VET and initial VET, strengthening key competences and professional development of VET teachers and trainers. The overarching aim addresses one of the baseline problems discussed

throughout the conference: *increasing the attractiveness of VET* through improved quality and relevance.

In terms of links between VET and higher education, Jan Varchola outlined the policy context related to the promotion of permeability, higher VET (VET beyond upper secondary level) and the excellence agenda in vocational education and training.

**Madlen Serban**, Director of the European Training Foundation (ETF), argued that youth unemployment data illustrate that countries with more than just short-term human capital development visions seem to do better than those that don't. Strategic planning pays off.

She explained the relevance of the Torino Process to VET in the Partner Countries involved (a large group of countries neighbouring the EU). The Torino Process is a kind of Copenhagen Process for Partner Countries, with an emphasis on issues that are most relevant to these countries, such as vision and strategy, social inclusion, changing demands in a changing labour market, internal efficiency and governance issues (Annex 1).

Madlen Serban pointed out that the crisis has had a polarising effect. Youth unemployment in the Partner Countries is higher than the EU average. The situation is particularly bad in the south-eastern Mediterranean and the Balkans. However, countries with a clearly formulated vision for economic development, such as Morocco, Israel, Kazakhstan and Turkey, are doing better.

The general trends in Partner Countries are:

- increasing youth unemployment
- increasing participation in higher education
- postponed entrance to the labour market.

Participation in higher education has increased in all Partner Countries, postponing entrance into an uncertain labour market. However, people do not necessarily opt for profiles that really offer them better job opportunities. Many aim for public sector jobs, which simply are not available. Now, several countries show persistent problems with 'over-education', and some 'under-education', suggesting a demand for the lacking qualifications: intermediate level VET graduates.

On the whole, VET enrolment is now stable, but often below the level needed to replace people retiring. However, enrolment in higher education is still increasing, while job prospects for academically trained graduates are getting worse.

Throughout its activities, the ETF has learned that successful human capital development requires the involvement of all key actors. Not just VET and higher education, but also local businesses and governments.

Partnership groupings that have been successful cover and include entrepreneurial communities, local development, lifelong learning networks and regional development networks. Sectorial approaches have been used a lot recently. Together, higher education, VET and other national, sectorial and local stakeholders can build strategic partnerships in

order to address the needs for human capital development. Good examples can be found in Serbia and Turkey.

**Gentjana Sula**, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Youth of Albania explained that, in Albania, growth had not translated into more jobs. Drivers of growth had been privatisation, loans and remittances. These have largely been exhausted now. The official unemployment figures of 13% appear acceptable, but the reality is different. If hidden unemployment is calculated in, the figure is estimated to be close to 22%. Youth unemployment stands at almost 40%. One in three young people is not in employment, education or training (NEET). Moreover the majority of the Albanians still live at the subsistence level.

This calls for new ways of thinking in education and training. A new political agenda stretching over five years was launched in 2013. It aims at transforming the economy from being consumption-based to being production-based.

One problem is that half of the Albanian VET students still continue into higher education, while businesses complain that they cannot grow because of a lack of technical skills. Thousands of people take continuing VET courses every year, but these mostly cover languages and computer skills, not other technical skills.

VET provision is very fragmented. It is not yet fully aligned to a qualification framework, its infrastructure needs to be improved and its financing increased. The number of students in higher education has tripled but financing has not followed the trend.

The aim is now to create 150,000 jobs, formalise informal work, create incentives for start-ups, and develop entrepreneurship programmes. TVET and employment have been put under the same ministry. Vocational training and vocational education have been merged. The dual system has been embraced. At the same time an effort has been made to improve labour market information and cooperation with the social partners.

The network of VET providers is being rationalised and decentralised. A media awareness campaign has increased the number of enrolments by no less than 40% in the 2014/2015 school year. Sector committees have taken preparatory steps for the development of a full set of qualification standards and respective curricula that are in real demand in the labour market. Post-secondary VET programmes and short-cycle courses are now on the agenda.

In higher education, there is a considerable non-public provision (private institutions) catering for a high demand for diplomas, but offering little in terms of employment. Quality assurance is being improved through better monitoring, diversification and better financing. Higher education degrees must be linked to the national qualifications framework and thus to actual occupations. Post-sec VET and lifelong learning must be expanded.

Now VET and higher education must be brought closer to each other. VET should become more attractive if young people would receive realistic information on their job prospects. A tighter NQF law could also help here, demanding line ministries as well as higher education institutions to consult sector committees. Also, higher education and VET should share quality assurance structures and processes. More short-cycle courses linked directly to the labour market are needed and higher education institutions should report their public impact on the employability of their students.

**Hany Helal**, Professor at Cairo University, introduced the concept of integrated technical education clusters in Egypt as a reform tool of the Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) system.

The two key benchmarks for reform in Egypt are the World Bank Barometer for Work Force Development and the European Training Foundation's Torino Process.

The World Bank Barometer is a new measurement tool that assesses how prepared a country is for development on a scale from 1 to 4 of three assessed areas: the strategic framework, system oversight and service delivery. Level 1 represents "limited engagement" while 4 represents "systemic good practice meeting global standards". By this standard, Egypt is more or less in line with the average of the surrounding countries, at around 2 ("emerging"), trailing slightly behind countries such as Jordan and Morocco.

Meanwhile, outcomes of the Torino Process have demonstrated that the Arab Spring has placed new demands on governments and pushed TVET up the policy agenda. But there is considerable demographic pressure on education systems and on labour markets. The economies of the region have so far not been able to create sufficient jobs for their growing populations. This affects other countries through migration flows. Implementation of reforms in the region is slow and hampered by fragmentation, a lack of coordination among key actors and, in many cases, a lack of resources.

These problems are far from being resolved, considering that the region is still sitting on a demographic time bomb, with a percentage of the population between ages 15 and 24 that is almost 50% higher than the average in the EU.

In Egypt, it is not TVET that has poor reputation, but the non-technical lines of VET. There is a lot of money for TVET. This money, however, needs to be used much better.

Egypt had a closed TVET training system, with aspiring teachers taking three years of technical secondary school followed by teacher training to become teachers in their own system. As such they lack real exposure to the labour market, making it difficult to transfer the realities of working life to students. For many students in TVET, their diploma is a dead end.

This situation changed in 2007 when technical secondary school could be followed by two years in a technical college and two more years in an advanced technical college, leading to a bachelor in technology.

MBAs introduced in higher education raised the bar even further for non-academic higher education and finally master and doctorate degrees were introduced in technology. Only now are students from the academic path beginning to shift towards the vocational paths.

This represents a new university model that is similar to what Turkey has introduced: the integrated technical education cluster, which stands independent from the traditional universities as a full technical and vocational education structure spanning all the way from post-secondary technical colleges to technology doctorates.



While the structures are still being piloted, there are now two Integrated Technical Education Clusters in Cairo and one (in progress) in Fayoum. Two more are under construction.

Success with similar reforms in China allows for careful optimism. China started vocational universities (offering technical bachelors) in the 1990s. Their student numbers almost tripled between 2000 and 2004 (from 2.2 million to 6 million). What is more important: the reputation of the technical and vocational pathway has increased considerably since.

Hany Helal highlighted the main lessons learned from the Egyptian case:

- The status of VET in society is low. This affects its attractiveness negatively.
- Better pathways are needed: vertical and horizontal pathways upwards and across the education system and to and from the labour market.
- VET systems in the region are heavily supply-oriented and there is very limited private sector participation.
- The transition from education to work is a critical area. There are currently too few training and retraining opportunities.
- Many different initiatives in the region are at the level of pilots and never become mainstreamed in the system.
- TVET reforms need a more comprehensive policy agenda, with synergy among different ministries and agencies.

### 3.1.2 DAY II

**Subron Ashurov**, Dean of IT Faculty at the Technological University of Tajikistan, spoke about the situation in Tajikistan, where there is a large surplus of labour, leading to emigration in numbers that now approach one-third of the entire potential Tajik work force. The economy cannot provide work for all, not least because an estimated 90,000 young people enter the labour market every year without even VET qualifications.

Returning migrants in turn have created a new demand for accreditation of foreign qualifications.

Work is underway to reform VET in Tajikistan. An important step was the decision, in 2014, to bring governance of different parts of the VET system under one single umbrella, the new Ministry of Labour, Migration and Employment.

There is a VET strategy which is supported by recently approved legislation. It aims at increasing enrolment in a reformed VET system that is better matched to the needs of the labour market. It incorporates a new generation of educational standards and mandatory participation of employers. It calls on private sector engagement in support of education at all levels and on strengthening the financial provision and material technical base of VET institutions. Modularisation should improve the flexibility and variability of new VET programmes. These will also incorporate entrepreneurship and leadership training. More short training courses for youth and adults are envisaged, and the modularised approach is well suited for this purpose.

The VET strategy should be implemented with Asian Development Bank support between 2015 and 2019, but development is impeded by the poor capacity of VET, both human and

material. A national qualifications framework will hopefully be established in a not too distant future.

VET has been poorly harmonised with higher education, but recently colleges have been included in universities, which has improved the situation.

Resources are limited, therefore the roles of the Asian Development Bank and the EU are important. The European Training Foundation supports VET staff capacity development through the establishment of communities of practice. The EC Delegation in Tajikistan is currently drafting a proposal for technical assistance to support the implementation of the adopted national VET strategy.

**Elene Jibladz**, Director of the Centre for Enhancement of the Quality of Education in Tbilisi spoke of progress and challenges in Georgian VET.

Higher education reform in Georgia was launched in 2004 with great fervour. Looking back, said Ms Jibladze, it may seem today that too much was uprooted and that some of what was changed may need to be reversed. That sentiment was echoed by other countries participating in the conference.

The concept for VET reform was formulated in 2005. It was revised in 2012 with a new strategy for the period 2013-2020.

Georgian education is very fragmented. There are 72 higher education institutions for just four million people. Of these, only 20 are public universities and 50 are in the capital Tbilisi. There are 89 VET providers of which 16 are public. For these, there is a slightly better geographical spread. Higher education institutions can also provide VET, if they are accredited for it.

The Georgian VET reforms are quite clear in their stated aims. VET is to represent a bridging segment in lifelong learning, from education towards work, from one job to another or from anywhere into higher education. The involvement of social partners and business sectors in VET is to be improved and permeability of the learning pathways is to be ensured so as to eliminate educational dead-ends.

Georgian VET has traditionally been more about education than about vocational training. The formal link to the labour ministry was established only two years ago.

To date, under the reforms, 170 occupational standards have been drafted against difficult odds since the social partners are not very well organised. Another 100 more standards are expected to follow in the near future. Programmes have been modularised.

The main current challenge is to develop the pathways. There are still some serious dead ends, particularly and most problematically after EQF level 4 (VET) which has no obvious connection to EQF level 6 (higher education).

Several concrete ideas for better connecting VET and higher education have been put forward in Georgia. Until now the NQF is divided into three sub-frameworks for general education, VET and higher education that are not connected. At the policy level, the connection between

VET and higher education is now being made. The revision process of the national qualifications framework involves representatives from both education sectors. The decision to introduce higher vocational education at EQF level 5, the critical interface of VET and higher education, was also reached together. Upcoming changes in VET legislation are also being developed with higher education representatives in the working group.

In practice, higher education can also contribute to much needed data gathering, for example for labour market monitoring. Much closer collaboration could also be achieved in teacher training for VET.

The main challenge appears to be that in the transition from strategy to action, too much was done too fast. This made it hard to convince people (companies in particular) that these changes were good. Constant changes also threaten the sustainability of the reforms.

The law of 2007 established the idea of community colleges, similar to those in the US. They would be in a better position than traditional VET schools to fill current voids and bridge the gap between (local) labour markets and the current provision of education and training as well as between VET and higher education.

Policy makers wanted VET to be more autonomous but this thought was controversial, because to others it defeated the purpose of VET (which, they argued, should serve the labour market). This view can be contested. Education has first and foremost to respond to individual people's needs. It can nudge people to contribute to a changing labour market but not change this labour market by design, particularly in an economy that is primarily steered by market forces. Also, companies do not want to employ machines. They increasingly need employers who can learn, think and develop.

## 3.2 Workshops

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For each workshop, a total number of four sessions were carried out during two days, each session lasting for 1 hour 45 minutes.

### 3.2.1 Workshop 1: Higher education and VET, partnering for training of VET school teachers and managers

In many countries, VET is considered as less attractive than general education. It is seen as a second choice. VET institutions and schools often lack updated equipment and sufficient human and financial resources. As a result, they find it difficult to achieve their objectives, most notably that of graduating employable students.

Few young teachers enter a career in VET. Even fewer of those actually have experience from the world of work. There is a need to ensure that VET school teachers and managers are familiar with the changing realities of the labour market and with modern, student-centred approaches to education and training.

Higher education institutions are often involved in initial training of teachers and only to a lesser degree in in-service training. They do not always provide specific training for VET teachers and managers.

The participants in Workshop 1 were asked to discuss the role of higher education institutions in modernising the training of VET teachers and school managers.

#### *Workshop discussions*

Training of VET teachers and trainers was generally considered the area with the highest potential for fruitful cooperation between higher education and vocational education and training.

In many countries, VET schools lack sufficiently trained teachers and trainers. There are still VET teachers without pedagogical experience and VET trainers without specific industrial experience. Both groups have limited opportunities for continuous professional development. Developing this is a challenge that can be tackled jointly by higher education and the VET sector.

The workshop presented different models of such interaction, with different effects on the position and training of VET teachers and trainers. In the two examples of the case studies presented in the workshop, higher education and VET are positioned in different institutional settings (i.e. private and public), but participants also presented examples of VET and higher education operating as public services under one ministry.

The first case study presented the Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology (MCAST) which is a public institute that was established in 2001 and is the main leading VET school in the country. It provides full-time initial VET and part-time continuous VET. MCAST offers courses at Levels 1,2, 3 (which address specific needs preparing learners for further education), at Level 4 which prepare learners with the right knowledge, skills and competences in order to take up technical positions within industry or progress to higher

education) and Level 6 courses which cater for higher education programmes and vocational degrees. It follows a holistic approach based on cross-curricular and multi-disciplinary courses, entrepreneurship and work-based learning.

Vocational subjects are also being introduced in secondary education in Malta. The role of a Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Centre for VET teachers was explained, as well as the quality assurance procedures that have been implemented with support from foreign universities. Specific training is developed by the Continuous Professional Development Centre and a Curriculum Department. The CPD Centre works within a robust MCAST's Quality Assurance Department. External verifiers from foreign universities and HEIs and external higher quality assurance agency ensure the implementation of quality procedures and processes while providing support for effective improvements. Erasmus+ scholarships provide MCAST staff with good opportunities for skills and knowledge upgrading abroad.

The second case study introduced Kasipkor Holding, established in 2011 and representing a large group of 820 technical VET schools of Kazakhstan. Supported by the government, it introduced an innovative approach in TVET to be rolled out later throughout the country. In the last four years, Kasipkor Holding has consulted industrial and foreign partners and developed a new four-level long-term training course that incorporates new ICT competences, new TVET strategic development, basic pedagogy and psychology.

Both cases are examples of an institutional setting where the different actors are not supervised by the same authority. They may operate under different ministries or be a mix of public and private actors.

In the discussions that followed, Uzbekistan was brought in as an example of a situation where both VET and higher education are the responsibility of the same ministry, the Ministry of Higher and Secondary Specialised Education. This ministry coordinates activities of the higher education institutions as well as secondary specialised vocational education. The latter is a compulsory and free three-year secondary programme that was introduced in 1997 by the National Programme for Personnel Training. It is offered through two types of educational establishments: academic lyceums and vocational colleges. More than 70% of public expenditure on education is allocated to this segment of the education system.

Uzbek teachers in general subjects are trained at pedagogical institutes and universities. Technical trainers of vocational colleges are trained in specialised departments of sector-specific higher education institutions. These also handle their continuous professional development.

Three Tempus projects also helped to strengthen the links between higher education and VET in Uzbekistan.

## *Conclusions*

Different channels of cooperation between higher education and VET were identified during the workshop discussions but it was noted that these are not always obvious and visible. On the whole, the workshop found it easy to identify links between VET and the labour market and between higher education and the labour market, but the links between higher education and VET were more difficult to describe.

The following suggestions were made for closer collaboration between VET and higher education:

- If cooperation between higher education and VET does not exist yet, universities and VET schools should initiate such cooperation, first and foremost for renovating and modernising training and retraining of VET school managers, teachers and trainers.
- There is no one single model for interaction between higher education and VET in professional development of VET teachers and trainers, therefore countries have to develop models that are tailored to their own needs and context. That said, much can be learnt from partners abroad through study visits and structural cooperation.
- Higher education partners can help to raise the awareness among VET teachers and trainers of the mission of VET in the overall education system and of public policy and the national education strategy.
- Together, VET and higher education institutions should strive to guarantee internships for future VET teachers and trainers during VET training programmes.
- Both should work together in developing continuous professional development programmes in specific technical subjects.
- Recruitment and initial preparation of VET teachers and trainers, improving their pedagogical foundation and maintaining their continuous professional development should be a shared task of VET and higher education institutions (in cooperation with employers).
- Higher education can assist in developing and implementing computer-assisted learning technologies.
- Higher education can be involved in research and surveys through which structured feedback can be gathered from employers, companies and other stakeholders as part of general quality assurance.
- The impact of Tempus projects which have provided support in interaction and strengthening the links between higher education institutions and VET establishments should be studied and any best practice found in these regarding the modernisation of the training of VET teachers and trainers should be disseminated.
- Higher education institutions should consider initiating or engaging in future Erasmus+ projects that involve vocational schools and industrial partners with a view to improve the training of VET teachers and trainers.

### **3.2.2 Workshop 2: Higher education and VET, partnering for developing post-secondary intermediate levels of qualifications for the labour market**

Many of the Partner Countries neighbouring the EU still face considerable economic, political and social challenges. High youth unemployment rates are the norm rather than the exception and qualifications that poorly match the actual needs of the labour market do little to alleviate this.

One of the challenges is to ensure a balanced distribution of skills and flexibility in the labour market. Another is to establish mechanisms that promote technology transfer between the worlds of learning and work. Many countries still lack post-secondary intermediate level qualifications whereas these are in high demand in the labour market. At the same time, the

number of students enrolled in higher education continues to rise, leading to increasing problems with graduate unemployment.

Discussions during Workshop 2 focused on how these issues can be addressed, most notably: how higher education and VET can work together to contribute to the development of those intermediate levels of qualifications that are most needed in industry and in society.

The participants in Workshop 2 were asked to share information and local, regional and national good practice, and to formulate recommendations for future action at all levels.

### *Workshop discussions*

Of the two case studies presented in Workshop 2, one came from the education sector while the other presented the employer's perspective. The first gave a full overview of Slovenian short-cycle higher education programmes, their characteristics, achievements, advantages and challenges. The second looked at the Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries, which is one of the biggest employers' associations in Turkey (with 209 members) and which is authorised by the (Turkish) Vocational Qualifications Authority to prepare 75 national occupational standards and 46 national qualifications in the automotive and metal sectors.

The workshop discussions revealed very diverse states of play in the different countries. On the one hand there is Turkey, which is very advanced with the preparation of its national vocational qualifications system, and Slovenia which operates a successful programme of short-cycle higher education degrees that sees 97 % of its graduates employed. But on the other hand, there are countries like Armenia and Kosovo, where there are no EQF level 5 programmes at all, Jordan where there is no national qualifications system and many countries that have no occupational standards developed yet.

### *Conclusions*

Beyond the high rate of graduate unemployment, the labour markets in most countries increasingly need highly skilled technicians and lack workers with matching qualifications and certification. At the same time, the skills and competences of fresh graduates from VET schools are typically inadequate. There may be skills mismatches or skills gaps in addition to the ever-increasing need for embracing a lifelong learning culture

Education systems often respond slowly to new needs in the labour market. The latter change ever more rapidly while the bureaucratic and administrative procedures of many education systems do not allow them to respond swiftly and flexibly to these changing needs. It is difficult to involve industry partners in the development, delivery and assessment of post-secondary VET curricula.

Following from this, many education institutions lack the autonomy to respond swiftly and flexibly to emerging needs from the labour markets in which they operate. This affects both curriculum development and continued training of staff.

The academic world is not always open to the need for newly emerging qualifications, such as short-cycle programmes. Partly as a result of this, the lack of vertical pathways discourages students from seeking access to (VET in general and) short-cycle post-secondary

intermediate programmes as they may block their further progress into more traditional forms of higher education. This negatively affects both attractiveness and prestige of these programmes.

By contrast, the supply of VET programmes is often fragmented, with little overall coordination. Moreover, VET teaching staff with pedagogical qualifications as well as experience in the industry, are in short supply and too few international joint degrees exist in post-secondary VET.

The main recommendations that emerged from the exchanges can be grouped as follows:

- Increase the cooperation between the worlds of education and work and raise the responsiveness of higher education institutions towards the labour market. Make sure that both partners speak the same language.
- Intermediate qualifications should emphasise user-oriented research and innovation, gradually move work-based learning from isolated internships towards dual training, introduce contracts with companies, promote student work that solve concrete problems in companies, use models of awards such as national or international competitions, and explore the potential of EU and other programmes for job placements.
- Raise awareness among school managers and curriculum designers of the needs of the labour market. Develop their capacity to respond to these. Diversify the mechanisms for gathering feedback from labour market partners, e.g. through round tables, field trips and questionnaires. Introduce performance indicators for education institutions to measure the efficiency of intermediate qualifications programmes and act on their results, closing programmes that do not live up to their expectations and thus freeing resources for new programmes.
- Ensure, on the other hand, the continuity of valuable programmes and improve pathways between the different levels of secondary VET, post-secondary VET and higher education.
- Embed intermediate qualifications programmes into the local and regional environment and into socio-economic development.
- Intermediate qualifications programmes should be based on the labour market demands and tailored to the needs of the students. They should focus on learning outcomes and student-centred learning.
- (Framework) legislation is needed to ensure that post-secondary VET programmes have governance mechanisms that involve industry partners on more than an ad-hoc basis. An adequate level of autonomy of education institutions should be supported legally and methodologically, if this can improve their ability to respond flexibly to labour market needs.
- There is a virtually universal need for quality-assured sector qualification systems that are based on occupational standards and national qualifications. Curricula must be revised according to these standards. Aligning qualifications with the European Qualifications Framework would greatly benefit international cooperation and mobility. Introducing post-secondary intermediate qualifications without (or outside) a national qualifications framework makes little sense.
- Improve the mechanisms of initial and in-service teacher training so as to introduce new methods of delivery and assessment and up to date industry practice.



- Improve permeability among intermediate short-cycle programmes and other degrees and avoid dead-end education pathways.
- Diversify the range of the institutions providing post-secondary intermediate programmes. These could include universities, colleges and VET secondary schools, but also independent institutions and even employers.
- Make use of Erasmus+ opportunities, especially under the Capacity Building in Higher Education action, to build structural or joint projects to establish new intermediate programmes or revise the existing ones, to exchanges best practices, and to bring all stakeholders on board.

### **3.2.3 Workshop 3: Higher education and VET, partnering for ensuring portability of qualifications and permeability among education and training systems**

A culture of lifelong learning is widely acknowledged to be an indispensable prerequisite for the development of a knowledge society. Adult learning is one of the key drivers of employability in a society that develops fast and in directions that are not always easy to predict.

Lifelong learning is greatly supported by permeability among the different parts of an education and training system. Permeability means that systems do not force people into a single track, but let them follow their interest and build their own learning pathways, moving either towards a higher level of learning or changing direction in their career to different areas. This flexibility in systems facilitates mobility and career development and requires the portability of learning achievements. As such, it increases the attractiveness of intermediate sections in an education system, which is where many forms of VET typically reside, because it transforms what before were dead-end avenues into valuable intermediary steps in a learning progression.

The participants in Workshop 3 were asked to discuss how to develop flexible and innovative pathways and bridges between secondary VET, post-secondary education and higher education (vocational as well as academic). The discussion included aspects related to the validation of prior learning, qualification frameworks and the development of a more flexible higher education provision.

#### ***Workshop discussions***

The workshop discussions gave an opportunity to exchange different approaches and experiences. The two examples presented as case studies contributed to feed the debate and illustrating success stories and difficulties met when systems are in transition.

The Finnish case covered the country's success with dual education based on equal opportunities, comprehensiveness, encouragement of assessment and evaluation, and increasing permeability. It highlighted the structures that made progress possible and other measures needed, including core and individual counselling and guidance, nurturing a culture of lifelong learning. The close cooperation between companies and schools was also presented as a typical feature of the Finnish VET system.

Reforms in Finland largely target competence-based education, individual choices and the permeability between VET and higher education.

In Finland, there are three ways to acquire VET qualifications. These target different groups of learners:

- school- based education (initial VET and training),
- apprenticeship training,
- competence-based examination (for adults).

The Finnish experience shows that in this country:

- VET is not a second choice, it can be first,
- There are gifted and excellent students in VET schools,
- Skills competitions and preparation for them can be included in the curricula,
- VET is promoted at a young age as a real career option, students from primary schools acquire skills competitions and get career counselling,
- Teachers learn motivating pedagogical components,
- There are no fragmentary and narrow core subject units but integrated and broad-based units with relevant objectives for assessment,
- It is possible to exchange learning units across different parts of the education system.

Crucially, companies are also responsible for the assessment of students, not only the schools. The role of the local labour market is indeed very important as it helps to decide how many students are needed, a decision which also impacts curricula in Finland.

The Ukrainian case presented in the workshop focused on the dilemmas for improving permeability between VET and higher education spheres in Ukraine from an employer's perspective, outlining the differences between Junior Specialist (JS) and Junior Bachelor (JB) programmes and the introduction of the Validation of Non-Formal and Informal Learning.

Participation in higher education in Ukraine has increased exponentially, with more than 80% of young people entering higher education, and many continuing to a master's degree. Employers are very concerned about this development, as they need workers with practical skills and now have to retrain university graduates in their companies to prepare them for these jobs.

Junior specialist programmes were popular among students as well as employers, because their learning credits were readily transferable to the higher education sphere. In practice, however, most students used it more as a backdoor entrance into university bachelor programmes than for entering the labour market, avoiding the university entrance exams.

Junior specialists were trained at 540 higher education institutions. The latest Law on Higher Education changed this. It abolished the junior specialist as a higher education degree, obstructing its use as a backdoor entrance into higher education. At the same time a new junior bachelor degree was created, without consulting the employers. There is the fear that junior bachelor programmes will start multiplying in many universities without any relevance to the labour market needs and demands.

This case too showed that lifelong learning should be the mainstream of higher education and VET development. The need for proper assessment centres increases as the employment implications of certification increase, while at the same time the differences between parts of VET and higher education qualifications remain unclear. For this type of assessment, there is a clear role to play for professional business associations, whose expertise can also be called upon in relation to occupational standards development and the professional accreditation of curricula.

In the past three years, the Federation of Employers in Ukraine has started the development of occupational standards and has piloted the validation of non-formal and informal learning following a new law on professional development of workers that opened the door for validation. While on paper, everything is ready to start this new system, there are a number of obstacles to implement the validation of non-formal and informal learning. The main obstacle is the lack of standards that are based on learning outcomes and can be used to assess the skills of adults. Another obstacle is the lack of competent assessors.

## *Conclusions*

The barriers between VET and higher education must be broken down, increasing permeability between the systems through improved pathways and credit transfer options.

Indeed, improving permeability can positively affect the image of VET. In some ways the two subsystems should even integrate, with overlapping levels (most notably bachelor) recognised accordingly.

It was also underlined that some of the required development strategies should be initiated by governments.

Concrete recommendations were formulated, drawing the attention to the following aspects:

- Career guidance and counselling are crucial and must start very early in elementary schools. Skills competitions can play a role in this. So can role models and more broadly promoting vocational excellence.
- Traditional views on education are part of the problem and should be addressed. Are people interested in a degree or in education?
- The lack of proper communication between the relevant stakeholders is a serious problem in most Partner Countries which should be addressed in priority.
- It is necessary to rethink not only the mission of VET but also the mission of higher education. In higher education, the ideal is often that of a very academic and scientific approach, but is producing scientists the only mission of higher education? Most graduates end up in other occupations.
- A system of recognition of prior learning can greatly support permeability, forcing recognition of other achievements than traditional studies, which in turn also can start a change in the way education and learning are conceived.
- It is necessary to view certification and recognition from novel angles. Certification and recognition by and from others than education establishments can greatly improve the international recognition of VET diplomas and degrees.

- A culture of adult learning needs to be developed in many countries. How can people be motivated to embrace the philosophy of lifelong learning? What are the roles of VET and higher education in a lifelong learning perspective?

### **3.2.4 Workshop 4: Higher education and VET, partnering for fostering local development**

In the last decades, the vision that education is an integral part of policies and strategies designed to support equitable and sustainable growth has gained prominence. Education is increasingly regarded as a key element in job creation and tackling unemployment. Education has slowly moved towards the top of the political agenda in many countries.

As a result, education providers are called upon to play a leading role in addressing the economic and social agendas in their communities and countries. Higher education institutions and VET providers are invited to revise their mission statements and contribute more actively to the development of communities, regions and countries. Many policymakers also stress their social roles. Their joint role in multilevel governance of human capital development appears more crucial than ever.

The discussions in Workshop 4 focused on the strategies needed to enforce such approaches and in particular on collaborative mechanisms that can find and exploit synergy and complementarity between higher education and VET.

The participants in Workshop 4 were asked to share information and local, regional and national good practice and formulate recommendations for future action at all levels.

#### ***Workshop discussions***

Two case studies were presented, referring respectively to experiences in the Netherlands and Israel.

In Israel, The Amal Network of Schools is a network of 100 schools and colleges that aims to train graduates outside the box. Two projects were presented in this case. The first is a project on biotechnology research with 11th grade biotechnology students. The project's main objective is to expose the students of the school to all the stages of research. The students work very closely with researchers and PhD students and actually perform some of the research tasks within the project.

The second is an electronics engineering project, where students from practical engineering schools have their curricula divided between the school and a college. VET students join the higher education college. They work in the market for two or three years and then have the opportunity to come back to the college and continue their studies towards an electronic engineering certificate.

In the Netherlands, the Centres of Expertise of VET contribute to the human capital agenda through the development of highly qualified labour and by improving the match between industry, education and innovation, especially in STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) jobs. The case study presented concerned the CHILL Project, which matches labour market needs and promotes innovation in the chemical sector through excellence in

vocational education. The ambition is to connect education and professionals on all levels. Students work closely with experienced professionals, who are their coaches as well as their assessors.

The model is appreciated by both VET students and industry partners. It appears to smooth the transition between education and the labour market while helping very autonomous VET institutions to respond rapidly to changing needs.

The two cases led to lively discussions, notably about the implementation modalities of these approaches.

## *Conclusions*

Throughout all discussions, many participants mentioned the need for a definition or alignment of various programmes to the NQF, and also the need to have an accreditation body for quality and skills. National qualification frameworks are extremely powerful instruments for avoiding micro-management of schools, and granting the necessary balance of autonomy and accountability to training providers.

The issue that returned most frequently throughout the discussions was the need for more dialogue, cooperation and alignment among various stakeholders. Complementarity is what is needed here, not competition. Trust among stakeholders is vital too.

Other challenges that must be faced before VET can unfold its potential in local development are its poor reputation and the poor status of its graduates in many countries, weak labour market structures and a lack of development economy.

The discussion also focused on the role of the ministries in developing such programmes. Whereas in many countries there is a tradition of continuous informal dialogue with the line ministry, this is not the case everywhere.

Different scenarios were mentioned, knowing that what is suitable in one environment or country may not be in another. In the first scenario, approval is granted before development. In the second scenario, development takes place before approval is sought. There is however a third option, in which a "blanket approval" for programme development is granted to an appropriate and representative consortium of stakeholders and semi-autonomous training providers. The workshop found it difficult to agree on which model is preferred.

In this context, different suggestions were formulated with regards to the modalities of launching such initiatives:

- Leaving the initiative to the employers, who could approach the education institutions, which would consult the ministry for approval and then start design and implementation.
- Creating a board with representatives from ministries and those responsible for the NQF in a given country. Such a board could give directions and mandates to schools.
- Establishing so-called technopoles, connecting schools to high-tech industries to define and fill the gap between local learning and work environments.

- Using the so-called triple helix model, where industry, government and education providers work together closely intertwined. For some participants this would arguably be the best model to be adopted.
- Relying on chambers of commerce and NGOs to initiate such programmes.
- Relying on the authorities responsible for defining the needs at regional level and propose to schools and industries.
- Defining the needs by policy makers, with chambers of commerce developing the programmes. Local governments could adopt the model through public-private partnerships, and then companies could be solicited for implementation through higher education and VET institutions.

# ANNEXES





## Annex 1 - Definitions

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### **The Copenhagen Process**

The European ministers for vocational education and training and the European Commission adopted in 2002 the Copenhagen declaration, which underlines the contribution of VET to achieving the Lisbon goals and sets priorities for VET reforms through enhanced European cooperation.

This so called Copenhagen Process coordinates technical and political support for voluntary cooperation on common objectives, priorities and benchmarks for vocational education and training. The process is bringing together the European Commission and participating countries (28 European Union Member States, Norway, Iceland and 5 candidate countries: Turkey, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Montenegro, Serbia and Albania) and European social partners. Progress has been regularly reviewed and the policy direction set by a series of communiqués, the latest adopted in Bruges in December 2010.

The Bruges Communiqué reflects objectives of the Education and training 2020 framework:

- making VET more attractive and relevant and encouraging quality and efficiency;
- making lifelong learning and mobility a reality in VET;
- encouraging creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship in VET;
- making VET more inclusive.

### **The Torino Process**

The Torino Process launched in 2010 is a biannual participatory analytical review of the status and progress of vocational education and training in the Partner Countries of the European Training Foundation in Turin. The objective of the Torino Process is twofold: to acquire up to date knowledge about the policies and their results in a country; and to strengthen the ownership, participation and evidence-base of policy making to improve the performance of policies.

The Torino Process involves multiple stakeholders at different governance levels and functions and is a vehicle for:

- developing a common understanding of a medium-term vision, priorities and strategy for VET development, exploring possible options for implementing this vision and/or making further progress;
- designing and evaluating home-grown and affordable VET policies, based on evidence or knowledge and collaboration;
- updating the analyses and achievements at regular intervals;
- providing opportunities for capacity development and policy learning within and among Partner Countries and with the EU;
- empowering countries to better coordinate the contributions of donors to achieving agreed national priorities.

## **The Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts**

The network of Higher Education Reform Experts (HEREs) was established in the framework of the Tempus programme and continues to be supported through Erasmus+.

These experts, appointed by the national authorities in the former Tempus Partner Countries, constitute a pool of expertise to promote and enhance the modernisation of higher education. They participate in the development of policies and reforms in their countries and contribute to the training of local stakeholders. Their activities consist, for example, in organising and participating in seminars, writing articles and reports, or providing advice to individual institutions and policy makers.

The current network includes around 250 experts, whose activities are managed at the local level by the National Erasmus+ Offices, in cooperation with the relevant national authorities. Furthermore, international meetings and training events for the network are coordinated by the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency, with the support of a service provider.



### PROGRAMME

#### Erasmus+ Higher Education Reform Experts Seminar

*Higher Education and Vocational Education & Training in the Erasmus+ Partner Countries neighbouring the EU: Partnership for socio-economic development*

University of Istanbul (Turkey), 10-11 March 2015  
Culture and Congress Centre - Besim Ömer Paşa Caddesi, Beyazıt

#### Monday 9 March 2015

18:30 – Registration

19:00 – Dinner offered to all participants of the conference  
(Grand Hotel Gulsoy, Kemal Paşa Mh., Şehzadebaşı Caddesi No:17, 34400 Istanbul)

#### Tuesday 10 March 2015

08:30 – 09:00 Registration

*Plenary session*

Chairman: **Klaus Haupt**, Head of Unit, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

09:00 – 09:10 Introduction by **Klaus Haupt**, Head of Unit, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

09:10 – 09:20 Welcome speech by **Mahmut Ak**, Deputy Rector of the University of Istanbul

09:20 – 09:30 Welcome speech by **Abdullah Çavuşoğlu**, Member of the Council for Higher Education (YÖK) in Turkey

09:30 – 09:45 Role of the Higher Education Reform Experts in the Erasmus+ programme by **Klaus Haupt**, Head of Unit, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)

### **Key note speech:**

- 09:45 – 10:05** Main challenges and trends in VET in the EU, partnering possibilities with Higher Education by **Jan Varchola**, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
- 10:05 – 10:25** Main challenges and trends in VET in the Partner Countries, partnering possibilities with Higher Education by **Madlen Serban**, Director of the European Training Foundation
- 10:25– 10:45** Discussion
- 10:45 – 11:15** *Coffee Break*
- Plenary session*
- Chairman:* **Ralf Rahders**, Head of Unit, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)
- 11:15 – 11:35** **Main challenges and trends in VET in the Western Balkans:** The case of Albania by **Gentjana Sula**, Deputy Minister of Social Welfare and Youth of Albania
- 11:35 – 11:55** **Main challenges and trends in VET in the Southern Mediterranean countries:** The case of Egypt by **Hany Helal**, Professor, Cairo University
- 11:55 – 12:30** Discussion
- 12:30 – 14:00** *Lunch*
- 14:00 – 15:45** **4 Parallel workshops (Session 1)**

### **Workshop 1: HE and VET, partnering for training of VET school teachers and managers**

- Chair:* **Maria Todorova**, Policy Officer, Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, European Commission
- Rapporteur:* **Aziza Abdurakhmanova**, Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office, Uzbekistan
- Case studies:*
- **Yelena Zigangirova**, Director of Academic Management Department, “*Kasipkor*” Holding, Non-commercial JSC, Kazakhstan and **Dana Kalenova**, Head of department for TVET strategic development, Ministry of Education and Science, Kazakhstan
  - **Veronica Sultana**, co-ordinator of the Vocational Teacher Training Unit at Malta College of Arts, Science and Technology MCAST, Malta

### **Workshop 2: HE and VET, partnering for developing post-secondary intermediate levels of qualifications for the labour market**

- Chair:* **Olga Oleynikova**, President, International Vocational Education and Training Association (IVETA)
- Rapporteur:* **Edit Dibra**, Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office, Albania
- Case studies:*
- **Alicia-Leonor Sauli-Miklavčič**, Project Manager, Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges, Slovenia (EURASHE, European Association of Institutions in Higher Education)

- *Fatih Tokatli, Director of External Affairs, Training and Projects, Turkish Employers' Association of Metal Industries, Turkey*

### **Workshop 3: HE and VET, partnering for ensuring portability of qualifications and permeability among education and training systems**

**Chair:** *Arjen Deij, Senior Specialist in Qualifications Systems, European Training Foundation*

**Rapporteur:** *Parviz Bagirov, Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office, Azerbaijan*

**Case studies:**

- *Seija Mahlamäki-Kultanen, Professor, Häme University of Applied Sciences, Finland*
- *Rodion Kolyshko, Head of Labour Potential Development and CSR Department, Federation of Employers of Ukraine*

### **Workshop 4: HE and VET, partnering for fostering local development**

**Chair:** *Hakan Coban, Manager, Training & Development Istanbul Chamber of Industry, Turkey*

**Rapporteur:** *Yasser Elshayeb, Coordinator of the National Erasmus+ Office, Egypt*

**Case studies:**

- *Véronique Feijen, Policy advisor international affairs, MBO Raad, the Netherlands Association of VET Colleges, the Netherlands*
- *Tami Atiya, Director of Technologies and Colleges, Amal School Network, Israel*

*15:45 – 16:15 Coffee break*

**16:15 – 18:00 4 Parallel workshops (Session 2)**

*19:00 Transfer by bus to the restaurant from the Grand Hotel Gulsoy*

*20:00 Dinner*

## **Wednesday 11 March 2015**

*Plenary session*

**Chairman:** *Ralf Rahders, Head of Unit, Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (EACEA)*

**09:00 – 09:20 Main challenges and trends in VET in Central Asia:** The case of Tajikistan by **Subron Ashurov**, Chair of the VET Support Foundation

**09:20 – 09:40 Main challenges and trends in VET in Eastern Europe:** The case of Georgia by **Elene Jibladze**, Director of the Centre for Enhancement of the Quality of Education, Tbilissi

**09:40 – 10:15 Discussion**

*10:15 – 10:45 Coffee break*

**10:45 – 12:30 4 Parallel workshops (Session 3)**

**12:30 – 14:00** *Lunch*

**14:00 – 15:45** **4 Parallel workshops (Session 4)**

**15:45 – 16:15** *Coffee Break*

*Plenary session*

*Chairman:* **Klaus Haupt**, *Head of Unit, (EACEA)*

**16:15 – 16:45** Feedback from working groups

**16:45 – 17:15** General discussion

**17:15 – 17:30** Final recommendations and closing remarks by **Klaus Haupt**, Head of Unit, EACEA

### Annex 3 – List of participants

Family Name	First Name	Organisation	Position	Email
<b>ALBANIA</b>				
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