

**A Pilot Action on Entrepreneurship  
Education: High Level Reflection Panel -  
Fourth Cluster Meeting.**

**Rome, Italy: 15<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> October 2009.**

# **A Pilot Action on Entrepreneurship Education: High Level Reflection Panel - Fourth Cluster Meeting**

Rome, Italy: 15th-16th October 2009

30<sup>th</sup> November 2009

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# 1.0 Overview of the Series of High Level Reflection Panels on Entrepreneurship Education

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## 1.1 Introduction

This conference paper presents the proceedings of the fourth EU High Level Reflection Panel (HLRP) on Entrepreneurship Education which took place in Rome, Italy over 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> of October 2009. The Panel was jointly organised by the European Commission and the Italian Authorities - the Ministry of Economic Development and Ministry of Education. The Italian Authorities also hosted the event which brought together senior representatives from the national departments of education and economy/enterprise from across the Mediterranean, Bulgaria and Romania and a number of relevant stakeholders. This report provides a record of the event proceedings (the agenda is attached at Annex One) and highlights the main points covered in the discussions.

## 1.2 Aims and objectives of the High Level Reflection Panels

The Rome HLRP represents the last in a series of four High Level Reflection Panels that took place between March and November 2009<sup>1</sup>. The purpose of the series has been to act as a catalyst to cooperation and the development of policy and practice, building on the thinking developed in the Oslo Agenda<sup>2</sup> on Entrepreneurship Education. It forms part of the European Commission's pilot action on Entrepreneurship Education Implementation taking place under the Competitiveness and Innovation Programme (CIP) 2008 Work Programme. The Directorate-General for Enterprise and Industry (DG ENTR), in cooperation with the Directorate-General for Education and Culture (DG EAC), has taken the role of designing, implementing and evaluating the pilot action, with support provided under contract by ECOTEC Research & Consulting Ltd.

The aim of each Panel has been to bring together a regional cluster of national level decision makers from across the education and entrepreneurship fields, along with key stakeholders, in order to address four questions:

- How can effective cooperation amongst ministries and between ministries and other stakeholders be built to deliver better EU Member States' (MS) strategies in Entrepreneurship Education?

<sup>1</sup> A brief summary of these previous events is attached at Annex 5.

<sup>2</sup> Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe -

[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support\\_measures/training\\_education/doc/oslo\\_agenda\\_final\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/policies/sme/files/support_measures/training_education/doc/oslo_agenda_final_en.pdf)

- What should be the key components of coherent and effective MS strategies to introduce a more systematic approach to the teaching and learning of entrepreneurship within education systems?
- What should be the key principles and mechanisms to support sustainable structured dialogue at EU level?
- What should be the prioritised elements and main focus of a wider and more systematic approach?

In the rest of this report, we provide a record of the discussions that took place around these broad topics and draw out the main messages which emerged.

## 2.0 The Rome Panel Proceedings – Day 1

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### 2.1 Introduction and Welcome

Within the opening session, a welcome was extended to the delegates and stakeholders by the Italian Authorities, represented by the Director General for SMEs and cooperatives, Piero Antonio Cinti, and the Director General with responsibility for education and technical vocational training and for relations with training systems of the regions, Maria Grazia Nardiello. On behalf of the European Commission representatives from DG Education and Culture and DG Enterprise and Industry laid out the aim and purpose of the meeting.

### 2.2 Plenary Session 1: Entrepreneurship Education in Italy - progress in the host country

This session summarised the status quo of Entrepreneurship Education in the host country. The presentation, given by Liliana Borrello focused on Impresa Formative Simulata (IFS) which is a training firms network in the Italian education system. In the context of the European Qualifications Framework, IFS has developed a focus on the following areas:

- Key citizenship competencies;
- Pathway flexibility;
- Dialogue with the geographical area; and
- Laboratory teaching.

From this process, a new organisational model and training model has resulted which is focussed on the development of innovation skills within schools. The IFS network is lodged within the innovation strand of the Italian system and presents a new form of training path for Italian students. The network was outlined as being characterised by the following approach:

- It espouses a learning strategy which is based on alternating the world of school and work in teaching.
- It uses a simulation laboratory to bridge the classroom and enterprise – this laboratory approach simulates a real firm in terms of division of functions and structure and comprises a meeting place for teachers and experts.
- It is implemented with a single class at a time and presents a 'tutor firm'.
- The approach has required co-operation between schools and enterprises in establishing educational paths following particular objectives.
- Establishment of a National Centre as well as a structure of regional centres, forming part of a structure of support for individual IFS projects in the regions.

Overall, the strategy of the IFS is to develop a learning place with interaction developed between the classroom, real enterprise and the IFS lab. The real-life application of the learning is achieved through launching companies within the structure of the existing Italian state legislation. In this way IFS allows students to learn within a structure akin to that of the real world market place (albeit with no real money or goods) and has promoted 'learning by doing'. A main learning point from the IFS programme was that securing a school's positive willingness to engage in the process was a central success factor.

## 2.3 **Plenary Session 2: Round the table – Entrepreneurship Education in Member States**

This session provided an overview of the position of Entrepreneurship Education within the participating Member States. The main areas presented related to the **position** of Entrepreneurship Education and its current **institutional framework** within each Member State. This was based partly on the pre-event questionnaires returned by Member States. The main areas covered were:

- i. whether countries have any strategic documentation (such as a national level strategy or action plan) to underpin or foster Entrepreneurship Education at a national level; and
- ii. the types of policy activity undertaken in the field at different governmental/territorial levels.

### 2.3.1 **Strategy development and types of activity**

Current progress across the represented Member States is varied, with Entrepreneurship Education incorporated into schools to some degree in each country. However, not all Member States have national adopted plans or strategies which support Entrepreneurship Education through government policy.

Those countries found to have a **national level strategy** or action plan in place to foster Entrepreneurship Education were Portugal, Bulgaria and Romania. In Bulgaria's case, the National Innovation Strategy has laid out two measures, namely education in entrepreneurship at the secondary level and the establishment of Centres for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship (CPEs) in higher education institutions. Spain, Malta and Slovenia were found to be making progress toward a national strategy. Whilst Malta does not currently have a national strategy in place, a national curriculum framework is due next year. In Spain, the objective of developing entrepreneurship is included in national level basic education legislation. In Slovenia, the National Agency for Entrepreneurship (JAPTI) elaborated a comprehensive National Strategy for Entrepreneurship Education for all levels of schooling in 2006 but it has not been adopted.

Table 2.1 below illustrates the state of policy development in each participating country:

**Table 2.1 Entrepreneurship Education policy/strategy development**

Member State	Policy development
<b>Bulgaria</b>	<p>Entrepreneurship Education in all vocational track schools.</p> <p>Cross-curricula approaches best developed in economics, existence of mini companies, activity devolved to schools.</p> <p>New education act currently being designed to embed an increased role for entrepreneurship.</p>
<b>Italy</b>	<p>The education system is shifting its focus from subjects to competences, and there is a plan to reform the later years of secondary education.</p>
<b>Malta</b>	<p>Entrepreneurship Education is embedded across the curriculum with no discreet strategy in place. National policy /curriculum framework is in development.</p> <p>Primary Level: National Curriculum Framework.</p> <p>Secondary Level: Variety of Activities; Cross-Curriculum e.g. Design and Technology, selling products.</p>
<b>Portugal</b>	<p>Currently building a national initiative (previously separate initiatives) that will be applied using the principle of 'bottom up' development. Development of competences within schools – and focus on lifelong learning.</p> <p>Common initiatives run between Ministries (Innovation 2007, Contests 2008).</p> <p>After a pilot phase where 25 schools were selected for developing entrepreneurship programmes, information on results has been disseminated and the number of schools participating in the second cycle has substantially increased. A national strategy is now being considered.</p>
<b>Romania</b>	<p>Distributed either on a cross-curricula, integrated or extra-curricula basis. Main focus is secondary education delivered as specific modules. Special programmes delivered for adults. National Strategy to develop human resources that includes Entrepreneurship Education and is supported by the European Social Fund (ESF) – 201.127.040 EURO allocated for 2007-2013 SOPHRD programme, including the major domain of intervention "Transition from School to Work".</p>

<b>Slovenia</b>	The current National Action Plan excludes Entrepreneurship Education. A new policy is not yet adopted and further cooperation is required for this to be formalised.
<b>Spain</b>	<p>Entrepreneurship Education is an objective of basic education</p> <p>Every vocational course incorporates aspects of business and entrepreneurial initiative.</p> <p>Some specific issues of concern – e.g. early school leavers</p> <p>The law introducing entrepreneurship in the school curriculum adopted in 2006 will start to be implemented in 2009 at local level by the autonomous regions (a report on regional activities will be soon published).</p>

With regard to the **types of policy activity** for Entrepreneurship Education carried out at different levels of governance, various examples of activity at the national as well as regional and sub-regional levels were reported. Table 2.2 summarises the activities reported<sup>3</sup>.

**Table 2.2 Examples of activity to support Entrepreneurship Education**

National Level
<b>Type of Activities</b>
National curriculum development
Defining and reviewing educational standards
Definition of key educational competences including entrepreneurship
Raising awareness regarding and highlighting importance of entrepreneurship education amongst policy stakeholders and business entities.
Training programmes for teachers and support materials.
<b>Examples</b>
<i>Projecto Nacional de Educacao para o Empreendedorismo (National Education Project for Entrepreneurship Education) launched in 2007 (Portugal).</i>
<i>Developing entrepreneurship is an objective of basic education legislation at the national level (Ley Organica de Educacion) (Spain).</i>

<sup>3</sup> It is important to note that whether an activity is carried out at national or regional/sub-regional level depends in part on the overall governance arrangements in a given country.

<i>Establishment of Centres for Promotion of Entrepreneurship in universities. (Bulgaria).</i>
<i>SOPHRD Programme 2007-2013 has specific objectives to promote entrepreneurial culture and improve quality and productivity at work (Romania)<sup>4</sup>.</i>
<b>Regional and Sub-Regional Level</b>
<b>Type of Activities</b>
Regulation in the territory and implementation
Curriculum definition and development
Extra-curricular activities – business weeks, events, awards
Regional partnerships – networking schools, companies, NGOs.
<b>Examples</b>
<i>Developing strategic planning mechanisms for better correlation between education and training offer and labour market needs (Romania).</i>
<i>"Entrepreneurial Culture" is an optional course in some regions (Spain)</i>

Table 2.3 below provides **examples of activities** or coverage afforded to Entrepreneurship Education at different levels of education systems across the participating Member States.

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.fseromania.ro>

**Table 2.3 Examples of entrepreneurship activity across different levels of education**

Primary Level
<p><b>Many examples of Entrepreneurship Education are seen to have been introduced at primary level both as a core competence and as an introduction for children to the world of business and work. Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• “Starting a business in my school” (EME), Entrepreneurial Culture and Solidarity Programme (JES), Awards. (Spain).</li> <li>• Carrying out class discussions and assuming responsibilities in school councils; eco schools; mini-parliaments. (Malta).</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship Circles (Slovenia).</li> <li>• "Programme for the development of entrepreneurial culture and creativity among young people" carried out by the Small Business Development Centre since 2000 (Slovenia)</li> <li>• Optional modules (e.g. “My Family”, “My Community”) integrate basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills (Romania).</li> </ul>
Secondary Level
<p><b>At secondary level, the focus tends to shift to running businesses (practice companies) and being entrepreneurial in the market place; in other words, practising skills necessary to run a successful enterprise. Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young European Business (EJE), Awards, Seminars (Spain).</li> <li>• Centres for Entrepreneurship established in 4 secondary professional schools (Bulgaria).</li> <li>• Mini companies, virtual enterprises, training firms (All).</li> <li>• Studies in business management practices (All)</li> <li>• Integration of Entrepreneurship Education into work-place based vocational learning (All)</li> <li>• Entrepreneurship taught as (compulsory) module for all qualifications (Romania).</li> </ul>
Post-secondary/ Non-Tertiary/ Vocational level
<p><b>Training modules are introduced specifically leading to qualifications in – for example – business, commerce, tourism, and training related to specific sectors. Examples include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vocational training: Modules “Entrepreneurial project” and “Business and Entrepreneurial Initiative” (Spain).</li> <li>• Practical activities e.g. Young Enterprise where students team up and create ideas for products and services that they can sell (Malta).</li> </ul>

### **2.3.2 The roles of different ministries: contributions made and challenges faced**

Contributions were elicited from the delegate countries as to the respective roles played by different ministries and the challenges faced. The main challenges identified by participants were in the areas of:

- bringing together a wide group of stakeholders to support the development of a coherent strategy;

- achieving broad-based support from teachers (and the provision of specific teacher training to them);
- involving business in education activities; and
- networking and communicating information with schools.

**Table 2.4 Contributions and challenges as offered by Member States representatives**

Ministry	Main Contributions and Challenges Faced
<b>Bulgaria</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>New Education Act.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>Teacher Training.</p>
<b>Economics Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>Drivers: low % of businesses and reliance on young people to form more businesses.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>Encouraging business involvement.</p> <p>Developing political will, energy – Entrepreneurship Education needs to be in public debate.</p>
<b>Malta</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>National Curriculum – Learning Outcomes.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>Focus on objectives.</p> <p>Stronger focus on those aspects of entrepreneurship that are not specifically about business growth.</p>

Ministry	Main Contributions and Challenges Faced
<b>Enterprise Ministry</b>	<b>Contributions:</b> Small Business Act provided a strong stimulus for action. Organised a conference in May 2009 for upper secondary and university level.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Desire to involve Chambers of commerce. Teacher Training. How to integrate entrepreneurship education across the Ministries of Education and Enterprise.
<b>Portugal</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<b>Contributions:</b> Building national initiative aiming for cross-curricular treatment of EE within Science, Technology and Home Economics. Development of Youth Institute and Enterprise Association.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Spreading experiences and learning.
<b>Economics Ministry</b>	<b>Contributions:</b> Sponsor schools, provide online resources, links with universities via Regional Platform/Network established for sharing good practice.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Combining inputs from wide variety of sources.

Ministry	Main Contributions and Challenges Faced
<b>Romania</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>Primary to post secondary level. Universities are autonomous. Delivery of adult initiatives by Chamber and Ministry of Commerce. Attempt to involve other Ministries in the process.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>How to go about teacher training.</p> <p>Developing good learning activities.</p> <p>Involving enterprises (inherent difficulties in economic crisis).</p> <p>Measuring the impact of the intervention.</p>
<b>Slovenia</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>Well developed Entrepreneurship Education in secondary schools, less in vocational schools although some projects exist.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>Not in the curriculum for primary schools.</p> <p>Reliance on enthusiasm.</p>
<b>Economics Ministry</b>	<p><b>Contributions:</b></p> <p>Contribution to Action Plan.</p>
	<p><b>Challenges:</b></p> <p>The need for increased Ministerial cooperation (Ministry of Schools/ Ministry of Higher Education and Technology).</p>

Ministry	Main Contributions and Challenges Faced
<b>Spain</b>	
<b>Education Ministry</b>	<b>Contributions:</b> Legal responsibility but implementation is the responsibility of the regions.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Focus on university entrance for students by teachers. Regional variations (entrepreneurship education is compulsory in only some regions). Putting in place appropriate opportunities for Teacher Training.
<b>Economics Ministry</b>	<b>Contributions:</b> Follow up of Small Business Act: collaboration over law and dissemination of good practices. Monitoring regions.
	<b>Challenges:</b> Sharing information between regions and localities within regions. Regional co-operation is difficult because of variances in administrative processes.

## 2.4 **Group Session 1 and Plenary Session 3: Practical Examples of Collaboration in Action by Country:**

The first group session focused on sharing practical examples of collaboration/co-operation in Entrepreneurship Education at national level within Member States. It also addressed the question of whether there is an ideal way to incorporate Entrepreneurship Education into teaching and whether approaches vary depending on the age group being taught, aiming to draw out some references to best practice in this respect. Feedback from these discussions was shared in Plenary Session 3. The following themes and points emerged from the discussion:

## 2.4.1 Collaboration and Co-operation

- *The challenge of handling multiple stakeholders...*

The issues of ministry and stakeholder collaboration was given some attention as being a difficult matter to execute to maximum effect given the large number of stakeholders implicated. These were identified as including Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), businesses, teachers, national ministries, NGOs and delivery organisations, amongst others. The co-ordination of stakeholder contact and communication was regarded as key in enabling effective exchange of information and collaboration.

### Good Practices identified

At the sub regional/local level in **Romania**, local partnerships are established to develop Entrepreneurship Education programmes and actions involving schools, companies, local authorities and NGOs. The purpose is to develop local action plans for human resource development to better match education and training with labour market needs.

- *Involving representatives from the business world...*

There was a realization that Entrepreneurship Education needs to be promoted to business, involvement of which is crucial to ensuring that creativity and innovation can be linked to the emergence of start-up businesses. This link was also deemed necessary given that most new jobs being created at the present time are within SMEs. The involvement of businesses can help communicate a mindset as well as the specific skills that are required for such employment.

In general, the involvement of businesses needs a strategic and systematic approach. Businesspeople and their associations need to be supported in learning how to work with education given that they do not have the time to learn by trial and error.

### Good Practices identified

In **Italy**, the employers' association (*Confindustria*) launched a project whereby entrepreneurs became part of school boards in 16 Italian provinces.

In **Spain**, at the University of Valencia business owners finance and manage a chair on entrepreneurship education. Teachers / lecturers are also only entrepreneurs.

- *Involving Higher Education Institutions...*

The input from the **University of Valencia** was testament to the value of links with Higher Education Institutes in supporting Entrepreneurship Education through expertise, facilities and demonstrating the knowledge transfer associated with spin-off businesses. However, the autonomous nature of Universities was recognized as a key challenge by delegates and there was a discussion around how the involvement of HEI's in Entrepreneurship Education for primary, secondary and vocational education can be levered, for example through national or regional government involvement/policy.

Good Practices identified
Centres for Promotion of Entrepreneurship established with technical universities, <b>Bulgaria</b> .

#### 2.4.2 Delivering Entrepreneurship Education

- *A wide variety of activities deployed...*

Input from **Romania** emphasised that an attempt had been made in the national education system to utilise a wide variety of activities in order to support entrepreneurship activities within educational institutions. A number of delegates recognised that the interest of young people in the area of enterprise could be developed and sustained through the use of a range of different techniques and engagement tools. The value of informal activities (such as awards) as well as formal learning activities were both recognised in the discussions.

Good Practices identified
Quality Mark annual award for all training firms functioning in Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) schools, <b>Romania</b> .
Business Plan Competition annually organised for students from TVET schools in the framework of a partnership between the Ministry of Education and Raiffeisen Bank, <b>Romania</b> .

- *The importance of local focus...*

There was agreement amongst a number of delegates that entrepreneurship learning should build on 'real life' situations, relevant to the geographical locality in which the learning is taking place. The representatives from **Italy** advised that from their experience, a dialogue between local entrepreneurs and educationalists was central to ensuring that learning delivery was relevant and that teachers were aware of key issues. More widely, it was recognised as important for any student to emerge from Entrepreneurship Education with an awareness of what enterprise activity was being progressed in the local vicinity or region.

#### Good Practices identified

"In-school simulated firm" (Impresa Formativa Simulata), **Italy**. Here, business environments are simulated by means of computer software in the school environment and the students take part in activities within this virtual working environment. 731 Schools and 370 firms have participated so far in this initiative.

- *Creating a learning environment culture...*

The discussions highlighted the need for Entrepreneurship Education to develop or change mindsets. Given that mindsets are formed at a young age, early intervention to create appropriate conditions within the classroom can be critical. In the view of the representative from the **European Trade Union for Teachers**, it was especially important in this regard to bear in mind that 'entrepreneurial spirit' cannot be taught but is, rather, 'learnt' through real-life experience, i.e. enterprise becoming part of the everyday life of the school: competencies such as taking responsibility are learnt through enabling students to practice this quality themselves. In view of this, there was a general consensus amongst delegates that there should be an emphasis on the creation of an appropriate school environment to enable learning.

#### Good Practices identified

Optional modules such as "My Family", "Our Community" and "Our City" integrate basic entrepreneurship knowledge and skills; implemented in partnership between the Ministry of Education and Junior Achievement, **Romania**.

Starting a business in my school (EME), Entrepreneurial Culture and Solidarity Programme (JES) – both delivered at primary level in **Spain**, and continuing into lower and upper secondary levels.

Programme for development of entrepreneurial culture and creativity among young people carried out by the Small Business Development Centre, **Slovenia**.

- *A central role for teachers...*

The group sessions argued that effective Entrepreneurship Education required a shift in paradigm away from the existing structure of education delivery and its associated policy framework. It was identified that current policy aims to improve education within a short term indicator framework and is built around the requirements of tests. However it was appreciated that effective Entrepreneurship Education and linked indicators must be applied across a longer term period of around 10-15 years.

Feedback from the **European Trade Union for Teachers'** representative was that teachers feel that their role in delivering Entrepreneurship Education is likely to be stifled by the prevailing 'teach to test' culture which is felt to dominate the teaching agenda. It was considered that the teaching profession was generally happy to adopt a broader definition of Entrepreneurship Education which focussed on a wide set of competencies for managing oneself and one's own

life, not just business skills, but that resourcing needed to be targeted through curriculum reform.

#### Good Practices identified

Catalogue of training programmes for teachers, supported by pedagogical material, ranging from developing entrepreneurial attitudes and skills to more specific business courses, **Slovenia**.

- *Internal and external provision of services...*

There was discussion as to whether Entrepreneurship Education is best incorporated into learning through external provider organizations such as **Junior Achievement** or through the provision from an overarching governmental institution such as the national Ministry of Education. Delegates generally recognized the merit of both vehicles for service provision although it was noted that political will was required to underpin interventions from national Ministry programmes and budgets

Where this is lacking, providers such as Junior Achievement may have a role to play in facilitating learning and raising the profile of Entrepreneurship Education to the point where provision can be mainstreamed into the national agenda. The degree to which NGO-run activity can be integrated with the wider curriculum and school life was questioned if it is provided on an extra-curricular basis. However, it may be quite possible to integrate such NGO activity within a coherent strategy – such as has happened in Romania where the Ministry of Education has signed an agreement for service delivery with Junior Achievement Romania to support entrepreneurship programmes in schools and universities.

#### Good Practices identified

In **Spain**, the regional government of Asturias has asked an external organisation (Valnalon) to implement entrepreneurship education, which is now part of the regional curriculum: the model is being transferred to other regions of Spain.

- *A focus on employability...*

The representative from **Romania** stated that practical activities for furthering Entrepreneurship Education need to be focused primarily on generic employability, rather than on preparing people to enter specific occupations. The point was made that learning needs to go beyond soft skills to enable graduates to adapt themselves to the world of work. In this case, activities deployed as part of Entrepreneurship Education need to have a focus on the development of the entrepreneurial mindset, and to this end, flexibility and training within the teaching profession was emphasised as being of great significance.

## Good Practices identified

Establishment of funds for the support of start-up business emerging from tertiary entrepreneurship programmes, **Bulgaria**.

### 2.5 Evening Presentations

Two presentations were given during the evening session designed to demonstrate best practices from the host country:

An evening presentation was delivered by **Carlo Spagnoli** of the Italian Ministry of Economic Development and **UNIONCAMERE**, a public institution representing the general interests of the Italian Chambers of Commerce in respect of all institutional stakeholders at local, regional, national and supranational levels<sup>5</sup>. The institution has been involved in developing innovative responses to the issues arising from business transfer processes, and is specifically focussed on micro, small and medium sized enterprises. The intervention has been specifically tailored to the Italian context where 97% of SMEs employ fewer than 10 people. In particular, the intervention responded to the particular issue of needing to formalise the transfer of knowledge between senior and junior staff, and especially within 'family' businesses to ensure that knowledge and experience are not lost from enterprises when family owners retire.

The intervention has its roots in the Small Business Act for Europe which aims to “*create an environment in which entrepreneurs and family businesses can thrive and entrepreneurship is rewarded*”. The programme, whilst following the EC recommendations on supporting entrepreneurs through simplifying the conditions for business transfer, was also derived from the following baseline characteristics:

- Between 2002 and 2012, 1/3 of European companies will face business transfer issues.
- 2/3 of all the companies that run a business transfer risk closure within 5 years.
- About 6 million entrepreneurs are due to retire in the next 10 years.
- Within the Italian Veneto region, 64% of businesses face the process of business transfer currently or within the next 3/5 years (“Fondazione NordEst” survey conducted in 2007).
- In 2008, closing business outweighed new business start-ups in some craft sectors
- There was found to be insufficient awareness amongst businesses about the business transfer risk.

On the basis of UNIONCAMERE’s experience, business transfer was highlighted as being influenced by factors such as know-how, business culture and Italian business competitiveness.

<sup>5</sup> [www.unioncamere.it/](http://www.unioncamere.it/)

In addition, progress was dependent on the involvement of public administration institutions, trade associations, training centres, secondary schools, entrepreneurs, and business transfer experts. The institutional basis, history and independence of the UNIONCAMERE network was outlined as lending itself to coordinating collaboration and engagement.

Activity recognised as resulting from the initiative were:

- Working in partnership with the national Ministry for Innovation and Economic Development to run national initiatives such as stakeholder Panel meetings, seminars, presentations of good practice and focus groups.
- Devising a transnational level project; Mentoring Business European Transfer to support SMEs in association with Eurochambres and 50 European Chambers of Commerce. This project provided assistance to 889 European SMEs in total and 200 Italian SMEs.

The second evening presentation came from the Italian Ministry of Education and was given by **Antonella Zuccaro of ANSAS** (The Italian Agency for Innovation in education)<sup>6</sup>. The presentation focussed on the agency's activities which seek to support and promote an entrepreneurial culture within schools, and also the delivery of vocational/professional training. The programme exposes students to the theory of entrepreneurship and then provides activities to help students develop practical skills.

The three main programmes to support and promote entrepreneurial education in Italy were also presented and can briefly be summarized as follows:

- 1) **Field of specialisation:** Entrepreneurship Education in Italy is included in the regular post-secondary educational stream. Students enrolled in a technical school must choose a "field of (technical) specialisation" (*Area di Professionalizzazione*) for the last two years of "higher education" (so-called "*Formazione Superiore*") in all Technical Colleges (*Istituti Tecnici di Formazione Superiore*<sup>7</sup>). Under the standard scheme it is possible to alternate learning in school with practical experiences in firms according to the following indicative allocation of time: in-school activities (47%), Internships (40%), Practical Assignments (10%), School visits (2%), Other (1%).
- 2) **School-Firm Rotation** - The rotation between periods of activities in school and periods of activities in the firm ("*Alternanza Scuola Lavoro*") is an additional learning/teaching method. It mainly consists in allowing for rotation between learning at school (32%) and learning in the workplace (firms) – through internships (60%), practical assignments (5%), laboratory work (3%) - during the last two years of post-secondary education. Quality assurance mechanisms (reporting requirements, advisor, framework agreements, etc...) are in place.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.indire.it/>

<sup>7</sup> Students normally enter the "Istituto Tecnico" at 13/14 and graduate at 18/19. Programmes last for five years.

The number of students, firms and schools involved in the "*Alternanza Scuola-Lavoro*" has increased throughout the period from 2004 to 2009.

- 3) **In-school Simulated Firm** - A relatively new method of "Entrepreneurial Education" consists in the "In-school simulated firm" (*Impresa Formativa Simulata*). In this case the business environment is simulated by means of a purpose-made software in the school premises and the students take part in activities within this virtual working environment. Examples of "Virtual Rotation" have included Government Agencies, Banks and Chambers of Commerce. 731 Schools and 370 firms have participated so far in this initiative. Fifteen regional centres have been established in cooperation with an equal number of Italian Regions in order to support the implementation of the "Virtual Rotation" at the local level.

A key feature of the overall programme is that the methodology has sufficient flexibility to incorporate variations between different geographical areas. For instance, in simulated training firms there is a preference in Southern Italy for businesses to be formed with around 5 students, whilst in Milan in the north of Italy there is a trend towards smaller numbers.

A key benefit of the programme's cross-curricular approach has been the development of lifelong learning skills and attitudes amongst students.

## 3.0 The Rome Panel Proceedings – Day 2

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### 3.1 Introduction and Summary of Proceedings

The second day of proceedings started with a summary of the challenges and contributions encountered by represented Member States, as expressed at the previous days' plenary session.

#### 3.1.1 Contributions

In terms of the contributions of **Education Ministries**, the following activities or roles had been taken on:

- Development of national curriculum frameworks
- Teacher training delivery and orchestration
- Development of teaching materials,

It was noted that given the autonomy of universities, Education Ministries generally had little leverage as to the contribution and roles of Higher Education in Entrepreneurship Education.

On the other hand, contributions to Entrepreneurship Education from **Economics Ministries** were largely characterized by the fact that they do not have legal responsibility over developments in the area. It was seen that a route into involvement had been through the Small Business Act but that there was a tendency for Ministries to be consulted rather than involved, There were examples of where Economics Ministries had played a promotional role for example to universities or where they had sponsored extra-curricular activities or competitions,

Other stakeholders involved were seen to include related Ministries (for example, those charged with responsibility for higher or vocational education specifically or separately), Chambers of Commerce and Teachers organisations.

#### 3.1.2 Challenges

The challenges experienced by Ministries largely related to the following:

- Having support in the form of sufficient political will to push through legislation.
- Managing to bring together and communicate with a wide set of stakeholders was seen to be a challenge, along with the ability to replicate national cooperation at the regional level.
- Successfully involving the business community (especially in an economic downturn).
- Specification of learning outcomes and how to measure these.
- Substantial local variations in delivery – with an over-reliance on enthusiasm at this level.
- The development of good practice learning activities.

- Implementing effective teacher training.

Most of the country representatives identified with challenges presented in terms of gaps in knowledge or existing practice in terms of teacher training, co-ordination of communication with stakeholders and the involvement of businesses. The issue of political will was largely felt to be a barrier to progress in some countries (e.g. Slovenia) where pursuing and adopting a national strategy was dependent on first achieving Government support across the relevant Ministries.

### **3.2 Plenary Session 4: Developments in Entrepreneurship: Best practice from Valencia, Spain**

This session presented good practice from Spain in the field of entrepreneurship which had been undertaken by the Institute for Small and Medium-sized Enterprise of Valencia - IMPIVA and Valencia Foundation for University and Enterprise - ADEIT. Collaboration between the agencies had been pursued in the first instance in order to offer particular Technical and Educational Institutes improved access to the business world. The model presented involves a consortium of Valencian business people which has the aim of promoting entrepreneurship in the University, with the particular aim of developing entrepreneurial spirit amongst students. The model has aimed to develop this through fostering co-operation between the university and its economic environment, and the key to the success of the intervention has been the business owners' joint responsibility in the active training of future business owners.

This is primarily achieved through the delivery of training and funded activities to university by a consortium of entrepreneurs. The entrepreneurs fund and manage the chair for entrepreneurship and also provide the lecturers from among their own ranks. At this chair, only entrepreneurs are teaching and lecturing. An example of the activity undertaken is a summer school which aims to train university teachers to motivate students in entrepreneurship. This programme features a classroom 'workshop' as well as online training. The programme was devised to address and reflect the following features of the Valencian system and economy which meant that the training was especially relevant and practical for teachers of the region:

- The reduction in the number of graduates entering the teaching profession (most teachers in Valencia are within the 40's age range);
- The ERASMUS scheme which Valencia University participates in;
- The key employment sectors within the City and wider region (metals, mechanics, food and beverage).

The intervention was highlighted as having an important role in terms of developing Valencia's economy and sustaining its contribution to the national economy. At present over 12 % of the exports from Spain to the rest of the world have their origins in Valencia which is, as a region, responsible for generating 10% of the national GDP. The regional economy was described as

being based on micro-enterprises, and it is this sector that the collaboration in Valencia is designed to support and develop for the future prosperity of the region.

Over the ten years that the programme has been running, 250 business projects have been developed as a result of the programme. A key output of the venture has been the acquisition of business values amongst students (risk assessment, weighing up successes and failures).

### 3.3 **Plenary Session 5: Incentivising Young Entrepreneurs – pathways from education to entrepreneurship.**

Guiseppe Antonaci from **IISS 'De Pace'** (a school in Lecce, South Italy which incorporates a technical institute) shared with participants the process involved in rolling out business simulation activities within the school. The starting point of the initiative had been the desire to enhance learning and teacher competencies in the area of problem solving which had been identified as a gap in teaching coverage. The key features of the programme were outlined as including:

- employment of active teaching methods, with the focus shifted from teachers to students;
- adopting a thematic focus of legality, justice and fiscal systems through which simulated companies provided learning across various competencies. In this way, simulated activities were aimed at developing active citizenship and moral responsibility as outcomes of learning;
- leveraging all available resources including support from Structural Funds and European Social Funds;
- school and business partnerships forged to help deliver entrepreneurship teaching; and
- addressing issues of taxation, even amongst 1st grade pupils, through the use of cartoons and through involvement of Tax Revenue Officers from the 'real-life' world of work.

A student that had taken part in the programme presented his positive experience of having operated simulated businesses through a web-based portal (I.F.S 'Full-Service'). The on-line facility had allowed the management and co-ordination of a number of business functions including car leasing and accounting. This had increased his knowledge as to the contractual responsibilities, the business operating environment and the taxation/ rate issues facing businesses operating in real markets. The experience had left him keen to continue his learning of the wider business world and closer to participating in the real-world employment market in the future.

Sandro Pettinato of **UNIONCAMERE** then briefly summarised the institution's contribution to the Entrepreneurship Education agenda through the structure of the Italian Chamber of Commerce . This built on the previous day's presentation relating to business transfer processes. The public institution was outlined as having the task of representing and looking after stakeholders needs in relation to the Chamber of Commerce in Italy. Mr Pettinato advised that every region of Italy benefited from a Chamber of Commerce and outlined the development of an agenda through

which each Chamber aimed to influence SMEs through acting as an intermediary between central government and business. Key contributions to developing entrepreneurship competencies and skills included conducting research with academia and the formation of case studies. It was highlighted that in delivering activities within Universities and HEIs, there had been an emphasis on globalisation processes and the skills required to compete in a global market.

### 3.4 **Group Session 2 and Plenary Session 6: Future developments in Entrepreneurship Education**

The second group discussion session took as its focus future developments in Education Entrepreneurship. This covered the components of the ideal strategy, and national level developments required to support entrepreneurship activity over the coming years. There was also consideration as to how good communication channels with employers and business could be established and how a European framework could be set up.

- **Country level actions**

Discussion centred around what activity would be forming the basis of national progress over the next few years. National level responses were as follows:

**Malta** and the **Czech Republic** outlined that work was to be progressed on identifying and developing entrepreneurship education learning outcomes. Malta anticipated incorporating entrepreneurship education within the new national curriculum with a view to strengthening coverage within the primary and secondary levels of schooling.

**Bulgaria** proposed that key to progressing their agenda was ownership – with the development of a small body designed to bring stakeholders together but critically to own the process of strategy development and to drive the complex set of activities forward. There was a specific aim to develop a policy in vocational track schools. In addition, the representatives from Bulgaria outlined a recognised aim of training all teachers in entrepreneurial culture. A further priority is to link Entrepreneurship Education with the development of active citizenship in students.

**Spain** outlined that whilst the Ministry of Education had established good levels of communication with businesses, the main priority to develop with a view to informing the national strategy is teacher training. A key action in this respect in order to support future development of entrepreneurship activity was the use of European Social Funds to develop teacher training programmes within the regions.

**Romania** stated that specific modules at secondary level were to be deployed to progress entrepreneurship education learning, and also to develop a focus on entrepreneurship in the development of adult education. The current 20% free curriculum offers an opportunity through

which teacher's can incorporate entrepreneurship education into the curriculum and there is potential for this to develop. There was also the agenda of deepening collaboration between institutions, particularly between Ministries and agencies as well as the Chamber of Commerce and the universities in a bid to strengthen the links between the classroom and the 'real economic world'. Specifically, centralised support for schools and training firms with respect to entrepreneurship education was identified as a key area for development. Increased cooperation between stakeholders and Ministries was indentified as shaping the forward agenda in Romania. It is hoped that this will inform the law on educational pathways which is presently being developed in the country.

**Portugal** laid out an impressive trajectory of development. On the basis of a national pilot following the Oslo conference, the country is now in the position of delivering Entrepreneurship Education within one third of secondary schools. Whilst national guidelines have been issued, there has been the flexibility for these to be refined by individual educational institutions which has enabled approaches to be tailored to the local level. The forward looking agenda features plans to put a national action plan in place and create a national steering committee to support progress in Entrepreneurship Education.

For **Slovenia** the representative stated that the priority was to regain national level political will to support the development of Entrepreneurship Education. The requirement for a supporting framework as well as fostering good cooperation and communication amongst stakeholders was identified as a requirement to develop in the immediate future. In particular, there was a degree of commitment expressed to developing a network for teachers. As in Romania, the 20% open curriculum means that there is potential space for teachers to implement entrepreneurship education.

Representatives from **Italy** identified that the development of a supportive Strategy for Entrepreneurship Education would be focussed on the structure and needs of small business. There was a focus on the need to identify and collate good practices in teacher training and for these to form the basis of further study and model development, as to how schools could be linked with the economic world. The use of mentoring and the support of Eurochambres to ensure such business transfer was identified as a priority.

The creation of a national level steering group to bring stakeholders together on a country basis was flagged up as a key developmental aim for Member States, with **Portugal** and the **Czech Republic** both working towards this. Such a structure was recognised as providing a platform for good practice and challenges to be shared so that priorities and mechanisms for future support of Entrepreneurship Education could be developed.

In particular, this platform would be the ideal place to grapple with issues relating to developing the framework for implementation of Entrepreneurship Education, for example in relation to defining key competencies, identifying appropriately resourced training and support mechanisms, developing core objectives and identifying success factors for evaluation purposes.

Whilst a number of stakeholders supported the proposition of national stakeholder groups as being a helpful forum for coordinating views, some countries did not think this would help. For instance, in **Spain**, delegates thought that such a structure would complicate matters given the existence of 17 regional administrations.

There was also reference made to the role of initiatives which have been progressed that do not involve government. The representative from the **European Trade Union for Teachers** highlighted the opportunity for Entrepreneurship Education to be addressed and disseminated through such initiatives.

- **Desired forms of support from the European Commission:**

The discussions identified an extensive 'wish-list' of how delegates saw the Entrepreneurship Education agenda being supported by the European Commission, particularly identifying the following forms of intervention;

- ▶ **Dissemination of the knowledge base** - whilst it was recognised that Entrepreneurship Education has embodied a paradigm shift in the culture of teaching approaches, delegates were aware that there exists a foundation of existing knowledge and learning examples which could be shared. The Commission was seen as having a potential role in communicating this to Member States. The creation of an **observatory on good practice** was suggested as an option here, as was a **MS Steering Group** comprising a small number of 'enthusiastic' country representatives to identify good practices and work towards the creation of a web-based platform. The contributors from Valencia considered that a good practice database should focus on relatively small number of examples in order to be accessible for users.
- ▶ **Entrepreneurship Education Platform** - a possible key initiative at European level would be the creation of an institutional **platform for the dissemination of knowledge** about teaching methods and materials, exchange between practitioners and teacher training. This would work as a European “hub” for spreading knowledge and good practice, and as a centre of expertise to assist those who want to start or expand activities in this area. This idea needs to be further explored and carefully assessed.
- ▶ **Awards for Entrepreneurship Education** - it was recommended that **awards** should be launched at European level to recognize Entrepreneurship Education initiatives, with different categories relating to varying areas of practice. These might be related to the existing European Enterprise Awards.
- ▶ **Quality assurance** - the EC could have a role in monitoring Entrepreneurship Education approaches and learning methodologies in Member States with a view to ensuring quality is maintained and outcomes realised as a result. Related to this was the need seen for the

Commission to be **tracking progress** in Entrepreneurship Education, both in terms of national level progress and in terms of collaborative developments.

- ▶ **Investment in Teachers** - the European Trade Union for Teachers representative highlighted that there was a need to invest in raising the standards within the teaching professions and to attract high calibre graduates into the profession. This reflected an appreciation that active citizenship amongst students is most likely to be encouraged by those teachers which practiced active citizenship themselves. In this respect, there was reference to an OECD Study; 'Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers' (2005). It was thought that the European Commission could play a role in disseminating the findings of such research in order to raise the knowledge base of Member States in terms of retaining and improving quality amongst teachers. Teacher mobility programmes were suggested as a mechanism to support the exchange of information and learning between professionals (peer learning) by visiting institutions that have implemented good practice in the area.
  
- ▶ **Peer-to-Peer learning** – the Commission was regarded as having the ability to support the exchange and study visits of teachers and stakeholders to promote peer-to-peer learning. This was thought to be a valuable way to support the development of teachers and policy makers.
  
- ▶ **Information Exchange** - an EU level Panel could be created to support the exchange of information between EU level and national stakeholders and also practitioners both virtually and physically. If any future events similar to the HLRPs were planned by the EU, it was suggested that it might be a good idea to change the composition of the clusters of countries, to enable improved exchange of practice.
  
- ▶ **Exchange of Best Practice** amongst Universities - Spain proposed that the Commission should consider focusing upon the University sector to add value to the existing debate on Entrepreneurship Education, specifically to bring together players at a conference to exchange best practices and to investigate how activity at the tertiary level ties into and supports activity at secondary (and primary) levels.
  
- ▶ **More effective use of the ESF/access to European funding** – whilst it was recognised that the ESF is already playing a role in funding activity related to Entrepreneurship Education, it was suggested that it should be tailored to allow for the teaching of teachers and development/provision of specific materials for teachers to teach Entrepreneurship Education. A number of delegates saw this as having a role in 'sending the right message' to Member States. It was highlighted that there exist a number of programmes and funding streams which the Entrepreneurship Education agenda should tap into, for progress to be maximised. It was recommended that Member States should make full use of existing EU programmes, especially with respect to teacher training and the production of pedagogic material. It was also noted that the Commission could help in translating

existing didactic material into different languages. Streams of potential support included the Lifelong Learning Programme, the European Enterprise Awards, the European Social Fund and Erasmus for Entrepreneurs.

- ▶ **Information on micro financing** – a key issue leading on from the embedding of Entrepreneurship Education is the need for prospective start-up businesses to have adequate access to finance and financing information. Questions were raised as to whether this is a role that DG Enterprise already plays and (if so) how it can be aligned to best support Entrepreneurship Education. Within the group session the point was raised that there may be merit in assessing micro-financing models which are the subject of private investment. In this respect there was reference to Kiva<sup>8</sup> which is an organisation which operates in the developing world and the US to provide capital support to start-up businesses. Such a model has the potential to address shortfalls in, or the future capacity of the public sector to support entrepreneurial activity. It was identified that a key difference between the entrepreneurial landscape in the EU compared to the US is that access to private capital has acted as a constraint to entrepreneurship in the past. The potential for private capital to be levered to support entrepreneurship education activity should be explored.

- **Next Steps**

There was recognition from delegates that the HLRP series was valuable in supporting the Entrepreneurship Education Agenda across the Member States. This was partnered with a realisation that decisive action was required to make further progress on a country by country basis. Just as the HLRP in Prague was referred to as having stimulated collaboration amongst stakeholders in the Czech Republic, so it was hoped that the HLRP in Rome would stimulate future action in this cluster of Member States.

There was a strong consensus amongst delegates that there was now a need for practical conferences, perhaps of a workshop style which could directly tackle the issues within Entrepreneurship Education that have been identified as bottlenecks, e.g., teacher training/engagement.

By contrary, there was limited support for a 'wrap up' conference which would draw all of the participating Member States together. However, there was a view that there would be merit in encouraging those Member States that had not participated within the same cluster to exchange practice and ideas through a workshop format, i.e. that workshops are held with a small enough number of separate groups of countries to ensure an environment in which all delegates could participate actively instead of listening to lectures.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.kiva.org/?gclid=CLHz9K-GhZ4CFVtB3godpFTqpQ>

### **3.5 Plenary Session 7: Summing-up and Conclusions**

The Italian Authorities closed the HLRP event by extending thanks to the participating Member States and referring to the value of the event for stimulating good practice working in Entrepreneurship Education. On behalf of DG Education and Culture, Elisabeth Bittner highlighted the value of creating a positive climate for entrepreneurship and the need for this to be underpinned by shared responsibility between stakeholders and the development of a long term strategy to guide progress. Her plea to Member States was to make use of the existing programmes and instruments available to build support activities within individual countries that would shift the focus from teachers to students. For DG Enterprise, Marko Curavić referenced the complexities of progressing the entrepreneurship agenda by virtue of the number of stakeholders involved. In this respect he highlighted the importance of cooperation in increasing the number of entrepreneurs in Europe - a trend which has the capacity to underline job creation and economic growth. The Commission representatives expressed commitment to supporting Member States and developing an agenda for future interventions to develop Europe- wide progress in Entrepreneurship Education primarily through:

- Highlighting the value of Entrepreneurship Education as a process which develops hard and soft skills and competencies through creating supportive learning environments;
- Collating and exchanging good practice across participating Member States; and
- Developing of initiatives from the basis of the HLRP series.

## 4.0 Key Conclusions and Implications for Subsequent Action

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### 4.1 Introduction

The Rome HLRP offered the opportunity to build on the previous events through drawing together a cluster of countries including **Bulgaria, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia** and **Spain**, with representatives from the **Czech Republic** and **Sweden** participating as observers. Some main reflections from the Panel are laid out below, whilst a set of more fully evolved conclusions will be aggregated along with the findings from the other Panels within an overall summary report of the Pilot series.

- **Building Entrepreneurial Competences for life and Inspiring Students to Become Entrepreneurs**

Entrepreneurial competences are useful to and needed by everyone, especially in today's globalised world with stronger competition and bigger challenges than ever before. Moreover, there is a need to encourage and inspire more students to become later in life entrepreneurs who will create wealth and new jobs. This is an important goal in the Lisbon Agenda, to be achieved by means of building entrepreneurial competences and through experiential learning, making students aware of how a project can be put together and managed in order to achieve the desired objectives. This learning will instil in young people a sense of accomplishment, will increase their self-confidence, their capacity to take calculated risk and their ability to innovate, thus providing a foundation for young entrepreneurs establishing a social or commercial activity.

- **National/Regional Level Progress**

This Panel showed - as have previous events - that Entrepreneurship Education is part of a national strategy or curricular reform in some countries, whilst in others, the policy area is yet to be formalised as part of a strategic pathway. Political will emerged as a key factor influencing whether policies or action plans actually come to be adopted at national level. For instance, in Slovenia, whilst national level work had progressed on policy development in entrepreneurship education, full support is yet to validate this agenda in terms of resourcing and/or adoption. The Commission's role in the dissemination of good practice and research findings may have the capacity to influence national level political support for Entrepreneurship Education and is a key driver of progress in this respect.

- **Context and Appreciation**

The cultural background of a country has a significant bearing on the focus that Entrepreneurship Education should take on, and the subsequent content and style of classroom delivery. For instance, in Italy the national context is informed by approximately

97% of its 5 million SMEs having fewer than 10 employees, many of which are family run. Here there is a threat of family businesses having their owners retire with no strategy in place to ensure the transfer of expertise to the remaining or junior workforce. A culture of knowledge transfer, especially from senior to junior colleagues is therefore a priority for national level progress. It emerged that whilst it is important for European Level guidelines and policy to be adopted to support the Entrepreneurship Education agenda at national level, it is important for initiatives to reflect national and regional market circumstances and characteristics. Thus, it is considered that appropriate levels of flexibility should be incorporated into European policy guidelines such that local level solutions can emerge in response to specific circumstances.

- **Engaging the Teaching Profession**

The culture of a teaching profession, which varies from country to country, was also deemed an important factor in the uptake and effective delivery of Entrepreneurship Education. For instance, several delegates considered that the traditional teaching methodology in Spain might have made teachers risk-averse and less entrepreneurial. Teacher training at the national level obviously needs to develop on the basis of trends and culture within the teaching profession. However, delegates drew attention to the importance of quality control in teaching – implicating national strategies for teacher development and retention - as well as attracting high-calibre recruits to the profession.

As with the previous Panels the delegates tended to see engagement with the teaching profession as a challenge to the development of Entrepreneurship Education. However, this challenge was seen in terms of achieving effective development, co-ordination and delivery of teacher training to support Entrepreneurship Education rather than actually securing the enthusiasm of the teaching profession in support of Entrepreneurship Education. It is important that future development in Entrepreneurship Education is aligned with developments in the teaching profession and educational establishments. The Commission could therefore usefully take account of research and studies undertaken in this field.

- **Stakeholder Co-ordination and Co-operation**

It was noted that the Entrepreneurship Education policy area involves a significant number of stakeholders. Whilst this was also a feature of working in other regional clusters, the complexities of national administrative processes in countries such as Spain were identified as further complicating the process of collaboration. Participants highlighted that in developing a national strategy it is important to include all relevant stakeholders, as well as the responsible ministries, whilst establishing clear roles for each in order to streamline the process. Furthermore, it was seen that there are benefits for one Ministry either taking ownership or leadership of the process. This has been seen in Sweden, where the Ministry of Education coordinated the development of the new national strategy. In the cluster of countries meeting at the Rome HLRP, there was a general sense that cooperation between Ministries and also stakeholders was a work in progress and needed to be improved.

Portugal offered an encouraging example of how positive progress can be supported through embedding Ministry cooperation. There was not unanimous support in favour of the formation of a national level stakeholder group with the remit of drawing stakeholders together to guide national level entrepreneurship development. The main objection to this was related to administrative processes and it was generally perceived that the process of development would be complicated rather than streamlined by the introduction of such a group.

- **Involvement of Businesses**

It was widely recognised amongst stakeholders and delegates that consideration needed to be given to leveraging business involvement in the delivery of entrepreneurship education at the local level. In the Rome HLRP, perhaps to a greater degree than previous panels, there was limited discussion as to the practicalities of actually involving or incentivising business involvement in the delivery of entrepreneurship education. This is reflected in the positive support for the Commission to follow up the HLRP series with a practical workshop addressing such matters.

The HLRP identified that incentives and a strategy for securing practical involvement from businesses in Entrepreneurship Education is required. There was little recognition in discussions as to how this could practically be achieved. However, the two main barriers to involvement cited in the Panel related to the lack of incentives for businesses to get involved with schools and an unclear understanding amongst businesses as to how they could most usefully contribute. This highlighted that perhaps there was scope to promote the corporate social responsibility benefits, and resultant profile and publicity opportunities of working with local schools to promote entrepreneurship learning. This aside, there transpired to be a demand for some sort of guide, to provide recommendations and guidance to businesses in terms of how to go about engaging with schools. Equally, it was identified that a guide or European level compendium as to how to lever involvement from local businesses would be useful to support education stakeholders in delivering Entrepreneurship Education. There was some agreement that this may be a task appropriately performed by the European Commission.

- **Network Development and creation of an Observatory or Platform**

The group discussions exposed a need for the development of networks between practitioners/ teachers, businesses and government Ministries through which resources and experiences could be shared. There was demand for such networks to exist which went beyond a particular level in order to support cross-party communication. Whilst there was not consensus about the requirement for a national level stakeholder group to be established within Member States, there was demand for the creation of an observatory style structure to collect relevant research and good practice in the area of Entrepreneurship Education at an international level. There was keen support for the European Commission to develop a

central research base and to collate findings, studies and good practice case studies. This approach may lead to the creation of an institutional platform for the dissemination of knowledge at European level (see also section 3.4)

- **Resources and Funding**

There was perhaps less awareness in this Panel, compared to previous ones, as to the European level funds available to support progress in Entrepreneurship Education. Therefore, the closing words from the DG Education and Culture representative were appropriate in encouraging Member States to make effective use of available ESF and Structural funding to cement and further develop the area.

- **Development of Cross-Curricular Approaches**

It was noted that in Slovenia between 1996 and 1998 all teachers were trained on the basis of a cross-curricular model. However, national exams had emerged as a requirement and this had shifted the priorities for teachers and the model had been discontinued. Apparent from the Panel discussions was that a paradigm shift is necessary to support the cross-curricular implementation of Entrepreneurship Education and in this respect a period of 10-15 years was seen as a necessary time frame for change. The approach of the European Commission should therefore be to plan to support Member States for the duration of this process through the continuous provision of encouragement and advice. This on-going approach will support the gradual emergence of policy frameworks and institutional cultures to underpin the delivery of entrepreneurship education on a cross-curricula basis in every Member State.

## 4.2 Delegate Feedback

Feedback and input from the delegates was elicited through the use of a question and answer sheet which was distributed within the delegate pack on the first day of the HLRP. The questions related to the development of national level strategies, and the sharing of good practice in Entrepreneurship Education, with the responses gathered in at the end of the event. The questions posed are recounted here along with a synopsis of the responses:

**Which are, in your opinion, the main elements of an ideal national strategy to promote Entrepreneurship Education?**

The main features of a national strategy were identified by respondents as requiring input and/or coverage across the following areas:

- **Content**

- ▶ Clear definition of what is meant by 'Entrepreneurship Education'.
- ▶ Clear objectives for the strategy.
- ▶ Monitoring and Evaluation Strategy.

- ▶ The Strategy should include Entrepreneurship through all levels of education – with a continuum demonstrated both vertically from primary to tertiary as well as horizontally across curricula.
- ▶ Clear learning outcomes expressed.
- **Co-operation**
  - ▶ Well established roadmap for the future strategy – where does the strategy want to take us?
  - ▶ Strong co-operation required between education and economy ministries.
  - ▶ Key involvement of business stakeholders and constituted representative bodies e.g. Chambers.
  - ▶ Teaching staff of course play a key role in delivery but at secondary and post secondary levels real-life business experiences need to come to the fore – involving the business community first-hand.
  - ▶ Establish a form of institutional co-operative framework.
  - ▶ Training and development for teaching staff – and commitment from them.
- **Implementation and Practical Considerations**
  - ▶ Production or adoption of learning/teaching materials.
  - ▶ Training of teachers.
  - ▶ Establishing and maintaining networks.
  - ▶ Evaluation procedures.
  - ▶ Clear financing for achieving goals.
  - ▶ Fostering of a lifelong learning process.
  - ▶ Institutional and administrative capacity to deliver the strategy.

**What is the most interesting example of good practice that you have heard of in these two days – one that could be usefully applied in your own country perhaps?**

The following examples of good practice shared within the HLRP were referred to in the delegate feedback:

- The innovative use of technology in an Italian secondary school scenario was highlighted as both inspirational and transferable.
- The IFS Network – in particular, the hands-on demonstration presented by teacher and student.
- The best practice presented from Valencia on higher education.

# **Annex One: Rome High Level Reflection Panel AGENDA**

## EU HIGH LEVEL REFLECTION PANEL ON ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION

Rome, 15<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> October 2009

Schedule	Agenda
12.00-12.30	<p>Welcome by the Italian Authorities and the European Commission - Introduction to the Event: Aim and purpose of the meeting</p> <p>Piero Antonio Cinti, Director General for SMEs and cooperatives, Italian Authorities</p> <p>Maria Grazia Nardiello, Director General for education and technical vocational training and for relations with training systems of the Regions, Italian Authorities</p> <p>Marko Curavić, Head of Unit Entrepreneurship, Directorate General for Enterprise and Industry of the European Commission</p> <p>Elisabeth Bittner, Expert, Directorate General for Education and Culture of the European Commission</p> <p>Entrepreneurship education in Europe: a review by the European Commission Roundtable: introduction of participants</p>
13.00-14.00	Lunch at the Radisson BLU hotel Via Filippo Turati 171
14.00- 14.30	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION 1:</b> Entrepreneurship Education in Italy - progress in the host country</p> <p>Introduction and presentation of the project: The Network of Training Firms</p>
14.30-15.30	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION 2:</b> Round the table – Entrepreneurship Education in south/east Europe: <i>Moderated by Andrew McCoshan and David Gluck, ECOTEC</i></p> <p>Where does Entrepreneurship Education sit in your country?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is the current institutional framework for Entrepreneurship Education;</li> <li>• Key challenges in your country.</li> </ul>
15.30-15.45	Refreshment Break
15.45-17.30	<p><b>GROUP SESSION 1:</b> Practical Examples of Collaboration in Action by Country:</p> <p>Examples of cooperation on Entrepreneurship Education;</p> <p>Is there an ideal way to incorporate EE into teaching? Best practices?</p> <p>Are there specifics for EE when teaching different age groups?</p> <p>EE - Subject oriented or cross curricula topic? Lessons learnt so far</p>

17.30-18.00	<b>PLENARY SESSION 3:</b> Sum-up of Group sessions Conclusions from each group: <i>Andrew McCoshan and Christian Weinberger</i>
19.30 – 20.00	Pre Dinner Drinks
20.00 – 20.30	Italian Ministry of Economic Development- UNIONCAMERE Carlo Spagnoli; Presentation of the activities of Chambers of Commerce for the transmission of enterprise Italian Ministry of Education, ANSAS (The Italian Agency for Innovation in education), Antonella Zuccaro; Activities of support and promotion of an entrepreneurial culture at school
20.30	Dinner

## DAY TWO

Schedule	Agenda
09.00 – 09.15	<b>INTRODUCING THE DAY AHEAD</b>
09.15 – 9:45	<b>PLENARY SESSION 4:</b> Developments in Entrepreneurship: Best practice from Valencia, Spain (Institute for Small and Medium-sized Enterprise of Valencia - IMPIVA and Valencia Foundation for University and Enterprise - ADEIT).
09:45– 10:30	<b>PLENARY SESSION 5:</b> Incentivising Young Entrepreneurs – pathways from education to entrepreneurship.  UNIONCAMERE, Sandro Pettinato; Transforming Business Transfer into an opportunity for innovation.  IISS “De Pace”- Lecce, Giuseppa Antonaci; Project “Agenzia delle entrate” (Revenue Agency)
10:30– 10:45	Refreshment break
10:45– 12.15	<b>GROUP SESSION 2:</b> Future developments in Education Entrepreneurship:  What is the ideal strategy to promote entrepreneurship education? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How to establish good communication channels with employers and business?</li> <li>• How to align entrepreneurship in the educational system to the Lisbon agenda and Small Business Act, and how to implement the “Oslo Agenda for Entrepreneurship Education in Europe”?</li> <li>• How do you plan to strengthen entrepreneurship education in your country in the next two years?</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How to create a European framework for exchanging good practices and ideas for improving policy? How to follow up to these Reflection Panels?</li> </ul>
12.15– 12.45	<b>PLENARY SESSION 6:</b> Sum-up of Group session 2
12.45 – 13.00	<p><b>PLENARY SESSION 7: SUMMING UP and CONCLUSIONS</b></p> <p>Closing conclusions from the discussions:  Review of the Event – <i>Italian Authorities</i>  Next Steps - <i>European Commission</i></p>
13.00	<b>Lunch and Close</b>

## **Annex Two: Ministry and Stakeholder representation**

The Rome HLRP meeting was hosted by the Italian Ministries of Economic Development and Education. Invitations to the HLRP were extended from the Italian authorities and European Commission to representatives from nine other Member States in the south/east of Europe: Bulgaria, Cyprus, Greece, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia and Spain<sup>9</sup>. The following table lays out the attendance of the Panel in terms of ministerial and stakeholder representation. A full delegate list is attached to this report at Annex 3.

Role	Organisation	Country of Representation
Hosts	Ministry of Economic Development	Italy
	Ministry of Education, University and Research	Italy
Delegates	Ministry of Economy and Innovation	Portugal
	Ministry of Education	Portugal
	Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment	Malta
	Ministry of Education	Malta
	Ministry of Education	Spain
	Ministry of Industry, Tourism and Trade	Spain
	Ministry of Education, Research and Innovation	Romania
	Ministry of Economy and Energy	Bulgaria
	Ministry of Education, Youth and Science	Bulgaria
	Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports	Czech Republic
	Czech Business Representation in Brussels (Ministry of Education)	Czech Republic
Stakeholders	European Trade Union Committee for Education	Based in Brussels
	European Training Foundation	Based in Brussels

<sup>9</sup> The Czech Republic, Sweden and UK authorities were also invited to send a delegate as hosts of previous HLRPs.

Role	Organisation	Country of Representation
	Confindustria Delegation at the European Union	Italy
	ADEIT, Valencian Foundation of University Enterprise (partner of IMPIVA)	Spain
	Institute for Small and Medium Sized Industry of Valencia (IMPIVA)	Spain
	Unioncamera 'Union Rooms' (represents the Italian Chamber of Commerce)	Italy
	IISS 'De Pace' (Institute of Higher Education 'De Pace') - Lecce	Italy
	Eurochambres	Belgium
	ANSAS (The Italian Agency for Innovation in education)	Italy
European Commission	DG Enterprise and Industry	European Commission
	DG Education and Culture	European Commission
Consultants	ECOTEC Research and Consulting	United Kingdom

## **Annex Three: Delegate List**

Name	Country	Position and Organisation	Contact
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## **Annex Four: Post HLRP perspectives from Delegates (as submitted after the Event)**

Feedback forms were included in the delegate packs for the Reflection Panel and a high response rate was achieved. The feedback can be summarized as follows:

**Event Organisation** – delegates were generally very satisfied with the arrangements for the event and its organization across the two days. Specific areas in which suggestions or comments were made were as follows:

- The scheme 'Alternanza Scuola/lavoro', (the School/ form rotation model undertaken by **ANSAS** (The Italian Agency for Innovation in education) was not directly related to entrepreneurship education – more about exposure to work in general.
- Further comments noted that a number of subject areas covered seemed to have more relevance to SME growth and development as opposed to purely the relationship between education and entrepreneurship.
- More time would have been useful for Member States to share specific best practices.
- It was a most positive element of the Panel to provide all Member States with the opportunity to share their ideas and visions for the future of this policy area with the Commission directly and face-to-face.

**Event Structure** – positive feedback was received regarding the structuring of the event. Key points to note were as follows:

- **Day 1**
  - ▶ Session 1: Welcome and Introduction – a good overview of the sessions ahead. However, the main focus was upon the transference of enterprises and not on the entrepreneurship education agenda directly.
  - ▶ Session 2: Entrepreneurship Education in Italy – an informative overview.
  - ▶ Session 3: The positioning of Entrepreneurship Education in national policy and governance in south/east Europe – provided good examples and progress made in different countries. Highlighted the difference in development between some very advance countries (with regard to the agenda) and those just beginning to grapple with the issues strategically.
  - ▶ Session 4: Practical examples of collaboration in action by country – "a great opportunity for discussion and debate".
- **Day 2**
  - ▶ Session 1: Best practice from Valencia – the focus was very much university sector based and therefore of limited direct relevance to other sectors.
  - ▶ Session 2: Incentivising young entrepreneurs – the involvement of students themselves was appreciated, as they are a target audience.
  - ▶ Session 3: Future developments in Entrepreneurship Education – very good levels of participation and innovative thought apparent in providing direction to the future.
  - ▶ Session 4: Summary and conclusions – satisfactory.

Delegates were asked to cite a collaborative action and learning point that they intended to take forward from the HLRP. The following were included in responses:

- **Collaborative actions**

- ▶ Enabling the involvement of the business community with teachers in training; via chambers of commerce and other enthusiastic business representatives (Romania).
- ▶ To explore the collaboration with other participating, more advanced countries (Portugal).
- ▶ To learn more about the methodology expressed by the Czech Republic in developing their Lifelong Learning Strategy (Portugal).
- ▶ Greater involvement of the official government sector with other external stakeholders in developing the entrepreneurship agenda within the revised national curriculum (Malta – revised curriculum due in December 2009).
- ▶ The HLRP has facilitated contact and strengthening of relations between ministries of Education and Ministry of Finance, Economy and Investment (Malta).
- ▶ Teacher training best practice from Valencia adopted to a secondary level – in collaboration with business owners, consultants and ministry of Economics (Bulgaria).

- **Key Learning Point**

- ▶ The experience of Portugal in involving all their stakeholders in entrepreneurship education systems and policy development.
- ▶ The need for cooperation between regional agencies and educational institutions for effective entrepreneurship education development.
- ▶ The need to place more emphasis on the young entrepreneur as a solution for business transfers and to include this perspective in on-going entrepreneurship measures.
- ▶ Crucial need to use technology to develop interactive approaches.
- ▶ The Ministry of Economy should develop links between primary/secondary sector and higher education, to ensure continuity and development towards business formation.
- ▶ The unanimity of delegates from the cluster that Europe needs to think and act more entrepreneurially.

## **Annex Five: Useful Links**

Through the two days of the Rome Panel, useful activities, research and links were referred to by delegates which may provide valuable source material for future reference. These are noted (in no particular order) below:

- [Mini-companies in secondary education \(Enterprise and Industry Directorate General; Final Report of the Expert Group\), 2005.](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/doc/mini_companies_en.pdf)  
[http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support\\_measures/training\\_education/doc/mini\\_companies\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/entrepreneurship/support_measures/training_education/doc/mini_companies_en.pdf)
- [Young Enterprise: http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk](http://www.young-enterprise.org.uk)
- [European Forum for Entrepreneurship Research: http://www.efer.eu/web/index.htm](http://www.efer.eu/web/index.htm)
- [Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs: www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu](http://www.erasmus-entrepreneurs.eu)
- [Enterprise Europe www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu](http://www.enterprise-europe-network.ec.europa.eu)
- [Kiva \(Social-enterprise microfinancing facilitation\): http://www.kiva.org/](http://www.kiva.org/)
- ADEIT – Fundació Universitat Empresa. (E) Comunidad Valenciana <http://www.adeit.uv.es/>
- <http://www.ruisnet.net/web/en/the-project/who-adeit-0.htm>
- Agenzia per lo Sviluppo dell' Antonia Scholastic (The Italian Agency for Innovation in education): <http://www.indire.it/>
- OECD Attracting, developing and retaining effective teachers (2005)
- <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/39/47/34990905.pdf>
- The Economist 'Teaching Entrepreneurship; Nature of Nurture' (October 6th 2009).
- The New York Times 'You're the Boss' blog: <http://boss.blogs.nytimes.com/2009/10/26/an-easy-way-to-encourage-entrepreneurship/>

## **Annex Six: Executive summaries of the three previous HLRPs**

## **ENTREPRENEURSHIP EDUCATION HIGH LEVEL REFLECTION PANELS SUMMARY PAPER**

This paper brings together short summary reports of each HLRP in turn. This initiative is jointly developed by the European Commission and national authorities as part of the implementation of the Small Business Act. The project is intended to help in the exchange of good practices, in view of introducing more systematic strategies for the development of entrepreneurship education at all levels.

The London, Stockholm and Prague HLRPs summarised below represent the first three in a series of four such Panels on Entrepreneurship Education taking place between March and October 2009. Each of these will bring together national level policy makers (from both education and enterprise departments) and stakeholder representatives from a regional cluster of seven or eight EU (and EEA countries).

### **1° Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel – London 16-17 March 2009**

This paper summarises the proceedings of the EU High Level Reflection Panel (HLRP) on Entrepreneurship Education which took place on 16-17th March 2009 at the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform (BERR), London.

Participants in this HLRP included representatives from Belgium, France, Iceland, Ireland, Luxembourg the Netherlands and the UK, as well as some relevant stakeholders (including business associations, teachers and students).

In developing the notion of entrepreneurship, it is important to maintain a clear message that it is not only about enterprise and business, but allowing our children to develop skills for life. A critical aspect of the debate is to ensure the thread of Entrepreneurship Education runs throughout the education system, from primary through tertiary and encompassing vocational and adult education.

Participants agreed that there is no shortage of ideas; the problem is how to use them. A common obstacle to developing policy at national level has been recognised in the lack of coordination between different entities. A national strategy or framework should be set up, supported by all departments, with clear outcomes identified for each level of education. Also, there is in general a lack of financial resources for these activities. It is important to create a stable framework, so that available funding is not short-term based.

External bodies can be associated to the implementation of policy. In Belgium, Luxembourg and the UK, some NGOs (supported by the private sector) have been given a public role in promoting and delivering entrepreneurship education. In France, junior enterprises run by university students are supported by the government: this is seen by students as a good example that could be applied by other countries as well.

The following debate touched on issues such as whether entrepreneurship education is currently part of the established curriculum or is rather offered by schools on a voluntary basis, and whether it is preferable to deliver it with a cross-curricular approach or as a specific subject.

In the UK, a reform has been introduced in England, for students of the age 14-19. This was firstly started by making funds available to schools for pilot projects; subsequently general guidelines have been drafted by the government. The approach was to embed enterprise across the curriculum, instead of introducing a separate subject. Entrepreneurship is seen as the ability of young people to handle uncertainty, respond to change and be creative. Currently 90% of secondary schools in England offer this type of education.

In Luxembourg, a cartoon on starting a company is used in all primary schools, while in secondary education the main tool is student companies, either implemented as part of the established curriculum or on a voluntary basis.

In Ireland entrepreneurship is part of the established curriculum as a specific subject, which was an advantage in terms of take-up by the schools. However, Ireland is also trying to further develop a horizontal approach. In Iceland, education for innovation is embedded in the curriculum. In Belgium, France and the Netherlands activities are of a voluntary nature.

In reality, the skills to be an entrepreneur transcend all subject areas. The challenge is to transform schools and universities into places where environments enable the nurturing of entrepreneurial skills. According to the representative of teachers, teachers themselves will not create any obstacles if entrepreneurship is correctly understood as a tool to help young people.

There was a debate over the role of business in Entrepreneurship Education in terms of shaping the curriculum and the way that business is engaged. Business must recognise that the development of enterprising people serves the whole of society – business included.

Participants highlighted that it is necessary to keep this dialogue at European level going. Many expressed an interest in studying more in detail other countries' good practices and plans, among those presented during this Reflection Panel. For instance, the DREAM programme in Belgium, where a student works one full day with a real entrepreneur, was seen as an easily transferrable model.

## **2° Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel - Stockholm 23-24 April 2009**

The second Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel took place on 23-24 April 2009 at the Ministry of Enterprise, Energy and Communications in Stockholm. Participants included representatives from Denmark, Finland, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden.

The Panel brought together senior managers from national departments of education and enterprise, as well as some relevant stakeholders. In particular, all ministries of education of the

above cluster of countries were represented. Stakeholders included representatives from business associations and teachers.

In these countries there is a good level of development of policies for entrepreneurship education, and good cooperation among different players. A national strategy exists already in Finland, Lithuania, Norway and Sweden. A similar strategy is in preparation also in Denmark and Estonia. Therefore the focus is now especially on implementation. Finland and Norway are launching a new action plan for the coming years.

As regards the split of tasks within national administrations, the Ministry of Education is normally in the lead and responsible for curriculum development, while the Ministry of Economy provides specific funding, for instance by supporting NGOs active in this field.

Main challenges highlighted by participants concern especially the need for more research on the effects and impact of entrepreneurship education, and the preparation of teachers. Also it was stressed that it is particularly difficult for national authorities to influence developments in higher education, due to the autonomy of universities.

Participants agreed that it is essential to create a steering group where all national departments interested in this issue can meet regularly, in order to facilitate communication and the development of coherent measures. Norway provides a good example of that. Also, it was stressed that stakeholders need to be involved since the beginning of this process. The experience from participants is that it takes 15 to 18 months to agree on a national strategy (e.g. in Sweden) and that it will take of course more time to implement the objectives set on paper.

Having a clear strategy as a starting point, next steps will be to provide stable sources of funding, and to find the best way to integrate entrepreneurship into the national curriculum (as it is the case in Finland).

Participants stressed the importance of this initiative set up by the Commission, as it creates a framework where EU Member States can exchange experiences and information on how to improve and coordinate their policies. The format of these Reflection Panels is considered as very helpful, but it should not remain the only opportunity for Member States to work together. The Commission needs to play a key role in facilitating the continuation of this process.

### **3° Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel – Prague 25-26 June 2009**

The third Entrepreneurship Education High Level Reflection Panel took place on 25-26 June 2009 at the Ministry of Education in Prague. Participants included representatives from the following countries: Czech Republic, Austria, Germany, Hungary and Poland (with a representative from Sweden participating as an observer).

This initiative is jointly developed by the European Commission and national authorities as part of the implementation of the Small Business Act. This project is intended to help in increasing cooperation at all levels and in introducing more coherent and systematic strategies for the development of entrepreneurship education. The panel brought together national departments of education and enterprise, and some stakeholders proposed by relevant European organisations.

The current split of responsibilities between ministries differs from country to country, but there are some common trends. Ministries of education are responsible for the national curriculum and for education standards; organize training for teachers; sometimes they produce teaching material and organise support for specific programmes. Ministries of economy give input to lifelong learning strategies, in particular as concerns vocational education; they focus on start-ups, incubators and existing entrepreneurs; they may financially support external organisations that provide entrepreneurship education, and sometimes also the production of teaching material.

Cooperation between different departments and with stakeholders still needs to be improved in most countries, while in Austria this is already well established. In general where a “dual system” is in place such cooperation is well organised at least in the field of vocational education. In particular the importance of bringing entrepreneurs to the school as role models was highlighted. A good model of connecting education and enterprise is found for instance in Baden-Württemberg but also outside this regional cluster, i.e. the education-business links in the UK and in Ireland.

In all countries represented, entrepreneurship education tends either to be an objective within a broader strategy for lifelong learning (like in Czech Republic and Hungary) or to be part of a reform of the national curriculum. Such reform is ongoing in the Czech Republic and planned in Poland, where entrepreneurship is however already included in the national curriculum for all secondary schools. In Austria a national action plan is in preparation, with the objective of expanding entrepreneurship education and – in addition to vocational and commercial schools where it is already part of the curriculum - to include all types of secondary education. In Germany education policy is a responsibility of the different Länder. Most of them have a strategic approach to entrepreneurship in vocational education, and this is in some cases extended to general education as well (such as in Baden-Württemberg). However in all these countries there is a considerable autonomy at a local level, leading to much variation in the contents of education.

In general a common trend can be observed in the current shift of national curricula from contents to competences (like in Austria, Czech Republic and Hungary). This provides a new opportunity for entrepreneurship to be introduced in schools as a key competence.

It was however stressed that a formal presence in the national curriculum or in a national strategy is not sufficient in itself, and it will be very important to focus on concrete implementation. Common challenges in all these countries are: providing training to teachers;

ensuring a broad participation of students; the involvement of business representatives in courses and activities.

Many new young teachers on entrepreneurship will be needed in the coming years. Moreover, where entrepreneurship is a cross-curricular principle, those teachers who teach other subjects (such as geography, etc.) often have not enough entrepreneurial knowledge and attitudes. Therefore in-service training must be available. In Austria a specific institute was created for teachers who do not come from economic studies, and also a Summer University for teachers has been launched.

Concerning the limited possibility for students to participate in entrepreneurship programmes, some delegates commented that only if entrepreneurship is introduced as a compulsory subject in the curriculum it will become possible to reach all students. The number of students involved is currently too small in most countries (for instance, 1.4% of secondary level students in the Czech Republic).

A broad definition of entrepreneurship (as in the 2006 EU Recommendation on Key Competences) was shared by all delegates. This also enables support from teachers, who generally agree with the importance of soft and social skills. In the implementation, it is therefore important to make a distinction between soft entrepreneurial skills (e.g. social skills and entrepreneurial attitudes) and hard entrepreneurial skills (e.g. drafting a business plan). However entrepreneurship education requires firstly a change in teaching methods (how to teach), and not simply a change in the contents of education. The main focus will shift during the educational path, from working mainly on the attitudes of pupils (e.g. creativity, team work, initiative) in kindergarten and in primary school, to providing practical experience of entrepreneurship in secondary and in tertiary education.

Among the most widely used and most effective tools to teach entrepreneurship, two practice-based programmes were mentioned in particular: practice firms and student mini-companies. Both types of programmes are mainly delivered and promoted by non-governmental organisations and associations, whose important role was highlighted in bringing informal education into the system. Also it was noted that sometimes the activities of such organisations had a more tangible impact than public strategies and curricular reforms had so far.

The topic was discussed whether entrepreneurship should be better introduced into curricula as a cross-curricular principle or as an independent subject. Both approaches are needed. In fact, where some broad elements of entrepreneurship are present in the national curriculum in a cross-curricular fashion (such as in Hungary), there is a perception that efficacy and impact would be improved by also adding a specialised subject in entrepreneurship. The trend observed is to teach basic and social skills through a cross curricular approach, and more specialised skills through an individual subject. In any case it was observed that the curriculum shouldn't be exceedingly rigid, so as to leave enough room for teachers to organise practical activities out of the established programmes.

Concerning the problem of funding, the specific availability of the European Structural Funds (especially the ESF) for promoting entrepreneurship education projects in all countries has been highlighted, and documented with the case presented by Baden-Württemberg.

Participants expressed their interest in other countries' good practices and plans. For instance, in preparing the new action plan for entrepreneurship education Austria is in contact with the administrations of Denmark, Norway and Sweden participating to the previous Panel. Many delegates, such as Poland, expressed a special interest in the strategic approach presented by Baden-Württemberg. This shows that there is a high potential for sharing experiences and ideas, and for working together at European level. Many participants indicated that they will use the results and findings from these High Level Reflection Panels, and are looking forward to the final report (which will be prepared by the Commission's consultant ECOTEC).