



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

VET, Apprenticeships & adult learning
Skills for the Young (Initial VET & Apprenticeships)

6th EAfA Stakeholder Meeting
15 September 2016, Brussels (PLB 3-1/4)

General remarks

- The **6th EAfA stakeholder meeting** took place on **15 September** with around **90 participants**.
- The EAfA has welcomed **over 40 EAfA new pledges** since the last stakeholder meeting in March 2016, counting now over 150 pledges.
- The EAfA meeting focused on **two main items: integration of migrants and refugees** through work-based learning (WBL) and apprenticeships and the first [European Vocational Skills Week](#) (see summaries of workshops).
- The meeting was organised back to back with the **European VET Policy Sharing seminar on 14 September** which was the final seminar of the Erasmus+ Key Action 3 project of five national VET authorities from Austria, Denmark, Germany, Luxembourg and Switzerland creating an [Apprenticeship toolbox](#) and supporting the EAfA (altogether 9 projects are being financed through the 2014 Erasmus+ call for National Authorities on apprenticeships. These projects which end in 2016).

Follow-up

- Expressions of interest for the selection committee of the EAfA Awards (for the Vocational Skills Week)
- Upcoming Erasmus+ call on VET-Business partnerships (17 October 2016)
- Upcoming EAfA newsletter: October – Deadline for contributions: 30th September (to be sent through EMPL-EAFA@ec.europa.eu)
- Next EAfA meeting: **8 December (afternoon)** as part of the European Business Forum on Vocational Training organised during the first European Vocational Skills Week (5-9 December)

Main content of the meeting

- The **Commission** presented the **latest EU policy developments**: key items of the New Skills Agenda for Europe (including Sector Skills Alliances), the European Pact for Youth, the Pilot project on long-term mobility for apprentices and the first European Vocational Skills Week (5-9 December 2016) combining activities in Brussels and across Europe.
- **EAfA Stakeholder contributions** included
 - **Eurochambres** and **CSR Europe** reporting on their new Erasmus+ Key Action 3 projects for supporting SMEs on apprenticeships. In total 16 projects on this theme will start in the autumn;
 - **Nestlé** gave an update on the Alliance 4 Youth and the European Parliament event on 15 November 2016 for which EAfA stakeholders will receive an invitation;
 - the **Adecco Group** outlined progress on their target of creating 5000 WBL opportunities and called for avoiding competition between different European platforms,
 - **Capita** explained its policy on expanding the supply of apprenticeships in the UK and Europe,

- **Vocational schools Johann August Röbling** from Germany explained their activities on strengthening the mobility of apprentices through EU funding and
- The **Confédération Construction Bruxelles-Capitale** showed a pilot project on apprenticeships in the Brussels region in the construction sector (see also their [video on increasing the attractiveness](#)).
- Moreover, the Italian company **ENEL** announced its intention to join the EAfA.
- Additional statements were made by the European Parents' Organisation and Obessu.
- The Commission gave an update for developing a **new set of EAfA support services** (knowledge sharing, networking, cooperation) and requested feedback from participants. The following main comments were received: the need to consider how to identify relevant experts, keep the services up-to-date, define the contribution of stakeholders, how to collect all relevant documents and how to reach people beyond the EAfA.
- **EU social partners** (ETUC and BUSINESSEUROPE) informed about their joint statement "Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships" based on their respective projects on [cost-effectiveness](#) and a [European quality framework for apprenticeships](#). They also endeavoured to explore the possibility of further joint activities, including achieving higher mobility of apprenticeships across Europe, and informed of preparatory work on paving the way for a tripartite opinion of social partners and Member States in the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT). ETUC welcomed the availability of reimbursement for EAfA meetings, which enabled a broader range of participants, such as the trade unions, but also inviting representatives of government.

Summary Workshop 1: Integration of migrants and refugees through WBL and apprenticeships

- The workshop was led by Ann Vanden Bulcke. Heike Sutter from the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) reported back to the plenary.
- The Commission presented the **Action Plan** on the integration of third countries' nationals with a focus on WBL/apprenticeships. References to the available tools under Erasmus+ and the new Skills Agenda were made.
- Three presentations gave examples of approaches and pilot projects from across EU Member States.
 - **Martin Schmid** from the EU-Office of the **Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ)** presented a pilot project on apprenticeships services for migrants, which include a comprehensive approach: competence assessment, including demonstrating practical experience, and professional and personal support through tutors and coaches.
 - **Jakob Krohn-Rasmussen** from **Dansbyggeri**, Denmark, presented a project on Labour Market Integration of refugees and migrants, with a strong focus on quick access to employment (within two weeks newcomers are placed in companies) and with offering companies better incentives for hiring refugees.
 - **Marcus Persson and Johanna Togelid** from **Cuben utbliding**, Sweden presented a "Spotted hidden talents" project, which focuses on supporting students through teachers and individual coaches and on cooperation between schools, employment and social welfare offices and employers. The scheme leads to 90% employment.
- The following success factors and challenges were highlighted:
 - **Success factors:** early integration in the labour market, prioritise language learning, sector specific orientation, ensuring real job opportunities and overall support and motivation.
 - **Challenges:** communication, limited outreach, different qualifications in countries of origin, low skills levels of migrants and refugees, bureaucracy and offering better conditions to companies.

Summary of Workshop 2: Preparation and Mobilisation for the first European Vocational Skills Week

The workshop was led by Pirkko Pyörälä. Ángel Gudiña Canicoba from Don Bosco International reported back from the workshop in the plenary session.

1) The European Vocation Skills Week

- The concept, objectives and plans for the European Vocational Skills Week were presented and participants were invited to provide feedback, ideas, comments and suggestions.
- The draft animation video was also presented. Reactions were positive, while some suggestions for improvements were made.
- Obessu stressed the need to involve young people, also in the events at European level which will be done at the closing ceremony and during the EAfA meeting on 8 December – also in cooperation with the European Youth Forum. Siemens pointed out that the big momentum to reach out to young people has to be created at the national and local level.
- In reply to several questions, the Commission explained that there would be no national coordinators, that it would investigate the feasibility to develop an event calendar on the web page and that after the Week, the Commission would prepare a report summarising the results but also the lessons learnt.
- Stakeholders were strongly encouraged to make contributions to make the Week a success, e.g. by organising open days for apprentices in companies, VET schools etc.

2) EAfA Awards

- The draft concept of an EAfA award to be part of the Closing Ceremony of the European Vocational Skills Week on 9 December was presented by the Commission (categories: large company; small company; apprentice(s)).
- Comments were made in relation to the selection committee which should be established as a first step: The selection committee should then decide on the selection criteria, taking into account gender balance instead of having a separate award for male and female apprentices. The selection should focus on achievements rather than on "great presenters" and any conflict of interest needs to be avoided.
- The Commission is asking expressions of interest from EAfA stakeholders to participate in the selection committee for the awards (under the European Vocational Skills Week). The selection committee will first define the selection criteria, which will be communicated together with the proposals for award nominations. The selection committee will need to meet twice (most likely webinar/teleconference/telephone conference – without a need to travel). The selection committee will be composed of eight members, representing each of the EAfA stakeholder groups (businesses, social partners, chambers of commerce/industry/crafts, education and training providers, regions, professional bodies and networks, NGOs/Youth organisations, think tanks/research institutes). The Commission will not participate in the selection, but will provide the framework for the selection and will chair the meetings.
- Expressions of interest for the selection committee will be welcome until 30 September 2016.