



ET 2020 Working Group on Adult Learning 2016-2018

Report of third meeting, 19 – 20 June 2017

1. PARTICIPANTS

26 people took part in the meeting, representing 16 EU Member States, one EFTA country, three social partners, Cedefop, ETF and the European Commission, and the external consultant. The full list of participants is attached as Annex 1.

All the presentations and reports referred to in these minutes are available to members of the WG on Yammer.

2. OBJECTIVES

The objective of the meeting was to make progress towards the Working Group (WG) outputs identified in its mandate by:

- adopting the report from the second peer learning activity in Reims;
- defining the theme of the next peer learning activity in Poland in September;
- identifying remaining issues and information required in order for the WG to achieve its expected outputs.

3. WELCOME

Paul Holdsworth welcomed members of the WG. Then participants, in small groups, exchanged on new developments in adult learning in their countries. In plenary, participants shared the most interesting developments.

4. POLICY UPDATE

Dana Bachmann, Head of Unit E3 in DG Employment presented the latest policy developments regarding education and training, which included:

- the update on the New Skills Agenda for Europe with the focus on Skills Profile Tool for Third Country Nationals and Blueprint for Sectoral Cooperation on Skills;
- the progress regarding the preparations for the implementation of Upskilling Pathways;
- the introduction to the European Pillar of Social Rights.

Then Anna Nikowska presented an update on plans for the Second European Vocational Skills Week, which will take place from 20 to 24 November 2017, and encouraged WG members to disseminate the information to their stakeholders and actively participate in the Week. She also informed the members about a proposed ‘public hearing’ on the current state of career-long professional learning in Europe. It will be a part of the Vocational Skills Week in Brussels and will

take place on the 23 November. The aim of the hearing is to allow adult learning stakeholders (including WG members) to gather evidence on the current state of career-long professional learning in Europe by questioning, and hearing the testimony of, representatives from education, training and business sectors. She also encouraged members to send contact details of possible witnesses to be questioned. She noted that an official invitation will be sent in due time.

In her presentation Ms. Nikowska also mentioned the *Learning at work* award whose main aim is to reward organisations that promote career-long professional learning in micro and small companies and to inspire new practices and policies. The award will be also a part of the Vocational Skills Week.

The presentation of the policy update is available via Yammer.

5. PLA, REIMS, MAY/JUNE 2017:

POLICIES PROMOTING THE ACQUISITION OF MEDIUM LEVEL SKILLS IN THE WORKPLACE: PRESENTATION OF CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

Simon Broek presented the main conclusions of the peer learning activity which took place in Reims on 31 May - 2 June 2017 (the report is attached to these minutes).

He introduced the key elements (figure 1) which were identified based on amalgamating the factors for success identified in relation to the three policy examples discussed during the PLA.

- The first set concerns broad preconditions that need to be in place at governance level to enable policies to be sustainable.
- The second set concerns elements that deal more with how the policies are quality assured, monitored and evaluated.
- The third set deals with what can be considered characteristics of successfully designed and implemented policies for medium skills learning. These three sets of elements are clearly identified in the schematic overview presented below.

Mr. Broek underlined that these elements do not provide an exact 'blueprint' for what needs to happen in every country: the country context plays an important role in situating the elements identified; for example countries with a more top-down tradition in policy making and implementation in the (adult) education area might emphasise different aspects compared to countries that have a more liberal and cooperative tradition in policy development and implementation. However he indicated that several of the key factors for success identified during the PLA match those identified by other research and by previous working groups. The evidence of the PLA strengthens the idea that adult medium level skills training at the workplace is a multi-faceted policy area for which a variety of different approaches need to be combined in order to be successful.

Mr. Broek emphasised that what came out strongly in the concluding sessions was the need for political will by all stakeholder groups (government, employers, trade unions, and providers) to work on medium skills development and that, especially for the government, mostly represented by Ministries of Education, a more holistic view needs to be taken that transcends existing formal education structures and that aligns better to other branches of government (such as Ministries of Employment, Social Affairs, Economy, PES, regional and local governments).

He also noted that, in a short PLA, not all of the expectations that participants brought with them could be addressed in detail. Perhaps the most important issues that remained to be addressed included: how to assure the quality of medium skills provision; how to gather

feedback and establish effective monitoring systems; and, how to reach out to those who need encouragement for learning.

Figure 1.

Preconditions at governance level	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) There is a legal foundation, or government commitment through links to national strategies to work on medium skills development in the workplace. 2) There is a cooperation framework in which all the key organisations and stakeholders are involved and in which their role is clear. 3) The policies include elements of decentralisation, whereby responsibilities are assigned to organisations at the most appropriate level. 4) There is a financial system and there are accompanying measures that support and incentivise the medium skills training (training costs, hours, training development etc.) targeting the responsible stakeholder: companies (e.g. co-funding), learners (e.g. free of charge, low interest loans) and other governing bodies (e.g. additional grants for local authorities).
Quality assurance, monitoring and evaluation	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5) There is a quality assurance system or mechanism in place to ensure that the training taking place is of high quality. 6) There is a system in place to monitor the implementation of the policy and that provides the steering mechanism for the stakeholders involved and the government for improving the policy. 7) The policy is regularly evaluated, making visible whether the policy is leading to impact at learners', employers' and national level, what are challenges of the policy, and how it can be improved.
Characteristics of the design and implementation of successful policies	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 8) The policy on medium skills training is responsive to employers', sectoral- and regional needs and contributes to company and national competitiveness and innovation. 9) The policy contributes to a change of mind-set, in the organisations involved, towards work-based learning, lifelong learning and establishing a learning culture in companies (where it does not already exist). 10) There are mechanisms in place to ensure that the training is responsive to the learners' needs and leads to enhanced employability. 11) The policy on medium skills training puts the learner on a lifelong learning pathway by providing encouragement and opportunities (for instance concerning recognition of experience and further learning). 12) The policy ensures that medium skills training is delivered in a flexible and adult-learner friendly manner (balancing studies adult life, working time, duration of the programme). 13) The policy on medium skills training includes a high proportion of work-based learning and takes into account both work-related/ technical skills and transversal/ soft skills as well and even basic skills (such as language skills for migrants). 14) The provision for medium skills training is accessible to all who need it, including vulnerable groups. 15) There is a system in place for provision of information, advice and (career) guidance related to medium skills development.

After the presentation some of the members asked questions for clarification regarding the policy examples, which were answered by Mr. Broek, Swedish and French colleagues. Ms. Nikowska suggested to the participants that if they are interested in specific details, the best approach would be to contact directly colleagues who presented the examples.

Then, Mr. Holdsworth asked members of the group to think about and answer following questions:

1. What elements identified during the PLA do you find interesting and why?
2. Is there in your country a policy that could support the conclusions reach by the PLA?
3. Under which conditions could these elements work in your country?

The members listed elements from the PLA report that they found interesting. Three countries also mentioned policies that could support the conclusions reach by the PLA.

Colleagues who participated in the PLA shared their impression of the event with other; they also thanked Ms. Claire Ariston (France) for hosting and organising this very successful PLA.

6. PROGRESSING TOWARDS THE FINAL OUTPUTS PART 1 AND 2

Before starting the activity Ms. Nikowska reminded the members what the main output of their work is - guidance for Member States on how policy can promote career-long learning in the workplace, and thereby help to:

- address skills shortages,
- ensure that workforce skills levels are maintained or improved and facilitate occupational transition.

The activity started with the group analysing a table summarising:

- issues originally identified by the group as important and necessary to look at in regard to adult workplace learning;
- policy pointers identified during the first two PLAs referring to the issues identified; and
- possible sources of information on the issues identified.

Members looked at the table and identified those issues that in their opinion still need to be answered by the group and without which the final policy guidelines will be incomplete.

The group came up with following elements:

- quality (quality assurance; teachers and trainers, mentors);
- learning needs/relevance (skills needs identification/ monitoring SMEs / attune curricula, future);
- governance (incl. collaboration providers and companies, quality);
- specific learning content (ICT, transversal skills, soft skills/ relate basic skills with continuing VET);
- outreach (learners/SMEs)(inclusion);
- sustainability (political will sustainability of funding);
- guidance (counselling/guidance skills);
- system (pathways, permeability);
- learning culture (more than financial incentives).

During the second part of the activity, the members identified possible ways in which they will deal with gather necessary evidence on these issues – whether by analysing a policy example in a PLA, by discussing it in a webinar or meeting, or by making use of already existing research. The main conclusions from their discussion are set out below.

Issues	PLA - policy examples	Meetings	Webinars	Research
Quality (quality assurance and Teachers and trainers, mentors)	SI, PT	Invite EQAVET experts	Present FR example	Outputs of previous AL and VET ET2020 working groups Annex 2 – p. 3
Learning needs/relevance (skills needs identification/ monitoring SMEs / attune curricula, future)	SK(?), PT, PL, SE(?), SI Countries/ organisations interested in participating: BE(fr), AT, HU, SK, SE, PT, LU, UK, EAEA, DK, Business Europe, FR, LT LV, IS	Invite: •colleagues from EMPL E2 responsible for skills forecasting and skills intelligence •representatives of Skills Councils		Annex 2 – p. 2 OECD
Governance (incl. collaboration providers and companies, quality)	LV, SI			Latvia model Report from the DGVT conference in Slovakia (focus: apprenticeships)

				for adults) Skills Governance in the EU Member States - Synthesis Report for the EEPO
Specific learning content (ICT, transversal skills, soft skills/ relate basic skills with continuing VET)				Outputs of previous AL ET2020 working groups RecTec – French project Report on the key competences (summary of the consultation) Annex 2 - p. 5 and 6
Outreach (learners/SMEs)(inclusion)	LU		EAEA offer to organize the webinar	
Sustainability (political will sustainability of funding)				
Guidance (counselling/guidance skills)	SI, SK(?), PT		Present result of the GOAL project	Results of the GOAL project TRIAS Annex 2 – p. 1
System (pathways, permeability)				
Learning culture (more than financial incentives)				work of Senger and Brandi Annex 2 – p. 4

Ms. Nikowska informed the group that regarding the final PLA, Poland had agreed to host the event and offered access to stakeholders – representatives of employers (including small and medium companies), trade unions and training providers. The PLA will take place in Warsaw from 13 to 15 September 2017.

The group agreed that the PLA in Warsaw should ideally focus on “learning needs/relevance (skills needs identification/ monitoring SMEs)”. Colleagues from Slovakia, Poland, Portugal, Sweden and Slovenia shortly presented possible examples that could be compared:

SK: Sectoral skills councils build in national project, which main aim is to attune curriculum for further learning.

PT: National qualifications catalogue; based on demand; involving sectors to identify skills needs.

PL: Identification of skills needs and collaboration within sectors.

SE: Fast-track for migrants, offered by PES including close cooperation with sectors, identification of skills needs, validation and recognition of skills - for people that already have some experience in job (unemployed and migrants) focus on individual skills needs.

SI: Adult education centres supporting in identifying their skills needs and providing learning.

The Commission agreed to send detailed information regarding the PLA as soon as possible. In this way the members will be able to talk with their colleagues and stakeholders and take a final decision regarding their country's participation in the PLA.

Regarding other activities like webinars and meetings, Ms. Nikowska informed the group that she will announce them as soon as possible on Yammer.

7. THE DIMA ONLINE MODULES ON ADULT EDUCATION POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Ms. Gina Ebner from the European Association for the Education of Adults presented the results of the Erasmus+ KA2 project DIMA - A Toolkit for Developing, Implementing and Monitoring Adult Education Strategies (presentation available on Yammer).

The main objective of the project was to create a practical and innovative toolkit for developing, implementing and monitoring coherent and participative adult education strategies. The project should enable adult education providers and local authorities to actively contribute to national and EU adult education policies, increasing adult participation in education and training in a lifelong learning perspective.

The main outputs of the project are:

- state of the art report on existing adult education strategies, policies and tools;
- comparative study of needs assessment at national and EU level;
- toolkit to facilitate the development, monitoring and assessment of AE;
- training curriculum to be used by policy makers and adult education providers;
- e-learning portal with an innovative training package: online instructional materials on adult education strategy development and monitoring;
- national seminars and a European conference in Cyprus (October 2017).

Ms. Ebner also presented the e-learning portal and one of its modules regarding stakeholders and consultations.

After the presentation participants asked questions for clarification. Mr. Holdsworth summed up the discussion asking the members to disseminate the information about the project outputs among their stakeholders and encouraged the members to undertake the e-learning.

8. WORKING TOGETHER – SUPPORTING CROATIA IN DEVELOPING ITS ADULT LEARNING POLICY

Mr. Ante Franić, representing Croatia, informed the group about new developments regarding adult learning in his country. He explained that Croatia is working on reforming its adult learning sector. He presented the current situation, outlined the main challenges and explained the main objectives of the proposed reform. He also noted that the starting point for the reform is to have comprehensive detailed information and data regarding the adult learning sector both on the supply and demand side. He also presented the basic elements of the system they would like to have.

Mr. Franić asked members of the group for suggestions, good examples and advice about making reforms in the field of adult learning. The main suggestions were as follow:

- there can be advantages in drafting educational laws in as simple a way as possible – for example, the main law could be expressed in general terms, so that detailed matters could be regulated by regulations that are much easier to be changed than the law;

- legislation on adult learning should take into account the whole sector, and not only the formal part of it; include non-formal learning, and learning happening in the workplace.

Also France and Slovenia gave examples of their tools and policies that could serve as inspiration for reforms in other countries, including Croatia.

Mr. Franić thanked the members and invited them to share any further comments through Yammer.

9. NEXT STEPS

The group agreed to hold its next and final PLA in Warsaw. The Commission would send Member States a request for expression of interest in attending the PLA as soon as possible.

Ms. Nikowska thanked the members for their recent exchanges of information on Yammer in response to a request for advice from the UK colleague on the value of personal learning accounts or similar initiatives for adults and invited them to continue this good practice of sharing.

The Commission asked the members to think who of them would be interested in participating in the editorial group that will steer the preparation of the WG's final outputs.

Ms. Nikowska also informed the members that the next working group meeting will take place in Brussels on 17-18 October 2017. She also reminded them that only after receiving the official invitation may participants book their tickets. The invitation will be sent five weeks before the meeting.

The Commission invited the WG to give feedback (through Yammer) on the process of the WG meeting.

Annex 1

Participants

Surname	Name	Delegation	organisation
ARISTON	Claire	France	Ministère de l'éducation nationale de l'enseignement supérieur et de la recherche
ASCHEMANN	Birgit	Austria	Association for Research and Media in Education (CONEDU)
BABRAUSKIENE	Tatjana	European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)	European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE)
BLACK	Joyce	United Kingdom	Learning and Work Institute
DENEŠ	Michal	Slovak Republic	Ministry of Education, Science, Research and Sport
DRZAZDZEWSKI	Stanislaw	Poland	Ministry of National Education
EBNER	Regina	European Association for the Education of Adults	European Association for the Education of Adults
FANDEL	Chantal	Luxembourg	Ministry of Education
FRANIC	Ante	Croatia	Ministry of Science, Education and Sports
HAABER	Matthias	Denmark	National Agency for Education and Quality
JONSDOTTIR	Adalheidur	Iceland	Mission to the EU
KARLINA	Silvija	Latvia	Ministry of Education and Science
LURZ	Norbert	Germany	Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport of Baden-Württemberg
MOMBEEK	Michèle	Belgium	Ministère de la Fédération Wallonie-Bruxelles
OTEANU	Cristina Liana	Romania	Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research
PERME	Ema	Slovenia	Ministry of Education, Science and Sport
PUTYS	Tomas	Lithuania	Ministry of Education and Science
REHNSTAM	Jan	Sweden	Ministry of Education and Research
SAIDI	SIHAM	BusinessEurope	Mouvement des Entreprises de France (MEDEF)
SALVATORE	Lidia	Cedefop	CEDEFOP
VUJKOV TOMORNE	Krisztina	Hungary	Ministry for National Economy
WATTERS	Elizabeth	European Training Foundation (ETF)	European Training Foundation (ETF)
CONRAD	Ulrike	Germany	Representation of the State of Baden-Württemberg

Cedefop research in those areas which still need to be further explored in the adult learning working group:

1. **Lifelong guidance** <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/lifelong-guidance>
Including a recently published study on the role of labour market information in career and education guidance, available here <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/5555> and a study to be launched in 2017 on Validation of non-formal and informal learning and career guidance.
2. **Skills forecast and skills anticipation** (full list of relevant publications available here <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/eu-skills-panorama/publications>)
Here of particular interest to the group may be:
 - Using labour market information to anticipate and match skills and jobs (publication here <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/big-data-analysis-online-vacancies/publications>)
 - Assisting EU countries in skills matching (recently launched project information available here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/assisting-eu-countries-skills-matching>)
 - Skills panorama, which is a central access point for data, information and intelligence on skill needs in occupations and sectors that provides a European perspective on trends in skill supply and demand and possible skill mismatches, while also giving access to national data and sources. <http://skillspanorama.cedefop.europa.eu/en>
 - Cedefop skills demand and supply forecasts <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/forecasting-skill-demand-and-supply> relevant publications here: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/forecasting-skill-demand-and-supply/publications>
3. **Teachers and trainers' professional development** <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/teachers-and-trainers-professional-development> and list of relevant publications <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/teachers-and-trainers-professional-development/publications>
4. **Learning cultures in organisations** (ongoing). This is an ethnographic study: 8 case studies across 5 countries <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/events-and-projects/projects/learning-cultures-organisations>
5. Research on **Adult apprenticeships** (just started) <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/about-cedefop/public-procurement/apprenticeships-adults>
6. **The potential of work-based learning in developing upskilling pathways for adults** (to be launched in 2017).