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MEETING OF THE PLATFORM OF EUROPEAN ASSOCIATIONS OF VET PROVIDERS

BRUSSELS, 27 MAY 2016

DRAFT MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Participants: 6 Associations members of the expert group, active in the field of initial VET, post-secondary VET, continuous VET, professional higher education, lifelong learning and HE (EfVET, EVBB, EUproVET, EVTA, Eucen, Eurashe), Cedefop. For the second part of the meeting, ETUC, UEAPME and BusinessEurope joined the meeting.

1. Welcome

The Chair (JS, Deputy Head of Unit Vocational training, apprenticeships, adult education), welcomed the participants and provided an update on the latest news about VET and AL.

European Skills agenda

The Chair explained the initiative and its 3 strands of action based on the current societal challenges on lack of skills. More detailed information was given on the "Skills pathways" initiative aimed at providing a response to the needs of the low skilled, as well as on other initiatives to strengthen vocational education and training (work-based learning, partnerships, mobility, European Vocational Skills week, etc.). A strategic approach to sectors (blueprints) would be enforced linked to Sector Skills Alliances under Erasmus+.

The participants asked several questions and clarifications and underlined the need to involve public authorities and to communicate well the actions of the Skills Agenda at national and regional level.

A site which will be soon available was presented showing the location of the Erasmus+ VET Charter holders in Europe. This will be very useful to establish links among organizations. Link will be sent when publicly available.

The group was also informed of the follow up undertaken by the Commission concerning the pending actions from previous meetings. They were also informed that a new package concerning expert groups' rules would be adopted by the Commission soon. This will require inter alia the mandatory registration in the Transparency Registry <http://ec.europa.eu/transparencyregister/public/homePage.do> for civil society organizations members of expert groups.

The Chair also communicated that the Call on the pilot project on mobility had received 9 applications and that following to the eligibility check approximately 50% of the projects would be retained.

Feasibility study for the creation of a EU network of national Associations of VET providers

The Commission will start contacts with the organizations identified in the study. The list will be kept updated and integrated with suggestions by the expert group. The Commission wishes to invite some of these organizations to the VET-Business Forum of 8 December (part of the European Vocational Skills Week).

The study also highlighted that more links should be sought from the expert group with ACVT and with other stakeholders: discussions started with the PES network as well as with ACVT Bureau for more synergies.

2. European Vocational Skills Week

The Chair gave an update on the initiative of the European Vocational Skills Week that will focus on VET excellence as a means to increase its attractiveness. He highlighted the communication tools being developed and the light governance approach for the first edition of the event. Upon adoption of the Skills Agenda, Commissioner Thyssen will officially announce the organisation of the Week from 5 to 9 December 2016.

The Week will feature several EU level events: 1) Skills for a lifetime - Conference on Adult learning and Skills guarantee; 2) EQAVET Annual Forum 3) The European Business Forum on Vocational Training with a morning plenary session for all VET stakeholders, and afternoon with **5 parallel sessions**: EAfA stakeholders meeting, Sector Skills Alliances, Researchers, Mobility event (with Erasmus+ NAs) and a meeting for VET and PHE Associations.

The expert group will work on the organization of a specific event bringing together VET (and professional higher education) providers associations. The expert group takes care of the organisation of the content in terms of the overall theme, programme, workshops, speakers and written record of the event (under supervision by Commission which will also take charge of the logistics, according to a specific limited budget).

The overarching theme should be appealing to participants, focusing on excellence in VET (for instance 'VET as a path to excellence'). 3 subthemes would be tackled in sub-groups meetings (availability of break-out rooms in principle possible).

By allowing participants to provide different priorities for their registration to one of the 5 parallel events, it should be sought to have a representation also from other stakeholders and not keeping the event restricted to VET providers associations only. Nevertheless, the Chair underlined the importance of defining an agenda that would be pertinent for VET providers.

During the closing event, and to emphasise the focus on "excellence", a series of awards could be delivered by the EU leaders. These could include awards to the young winners of Euroskills, the best VET research paper, the most innovative VET provider (upon suggestion by the EU Associations themselves), the most engaging and inspiring teacher and trainer (probably by ETUCE), the best VET learner video, etc.

The morning of 9 December will be used to wrap up and report back from the discussions from the previous day, possibly in a creative, lively way (video, interview etc.). Web-conference connections may be established to liaise with stakeholders reporting from their national events.

Participants underlined the importance of a swift communication and distribution of information as the summer holidays would be starting soon.

Participants hoped that the logo and slogan could be used by interested organizations, in particular for their October Annual Conference, in conjunction with their logo of the event.

The group should work on the distribution of tasks (workshops, background documents, speakers, etc.), persons responsible and deadlines (as found appropriate) in the draft roadmap sent by the Commission on 7 June.

Suggestions about events organized at national, regional or local level (short description, dates, location, organizer, link to site, if available) could be sent by 20 June.

These events will be put in a geo map internet site of the Week, following the filling in of a form to allow for a light quality check by a consultant.

3. VET graduates tracking

Following a presentation by the Commission (KBdE), the expert group underlined that graduate tracking is also very important for the VET sector and the DG EAC initiative for a coordinated EU approach to (tertiary) graduate tracking should also cover the VET sector. Currently, the practices of VET graduate tracking are very limited in many countries. It was also highlighted by participants that the data wished to be collected should be simple and precise. They regretted the variety of the data at national level which made it difficult to extract useful data at EU level.

They asked clarifications about the scope of the tracking (also for higher VET falling outside higher education?) and if a different tracking for Vet and higher VET would exist.

The picture sketched by participants at national level is that EQAVET indicators 5 and 6 are not fully applied.

Cedefop highlighted the need to counter any reverse effects of tracking systems.

4. ET2020 Working groups

DG EAC (BR) gave an overview of the work just started by the ET2020 WGs 2015-2018. She gave an overview of a newsletter to be sent out and informed participants that the letters to applicants will be sent soon (letters were sent on June 9).

She ensured participants that also for organizations not included officially in the groups, their contribution to the groups would be possible.

5. Information by the EU Associations on their initiatives and events

From this agenda item, representatives of EU Social partners (UEAPME, ETUC and BusinessEurope) joined the meeting.

In a tour de table the organizations presented their activities.

EfVET informed that their Annual Conference will take place in Valencia on 25-29/10, featuring also the European Vocational Skills Week. They planned an ECVET event and were involved in 20 Erasmus+ projects.

The focus of the work of EVTA/EVBB will be on refugees this year (in particular by a group created between Enaip (IT), IB (DE) and AFPA (FR) with a conference launching project in Turkey in Sept 2016; one aim was the training of Syrian refugees for their return to the country for reconstruction; a joint Annual Conference will be organized in Brussels in October on Industry 4.0. EVTA was undertaking their project on social utility of VET and foresaw training the trainers seminar in September.

EUProVET announced the new membership of a Slovenian VET association, the preparation of a EuProVET conference in conjunction with the European Vocational Skills Week in December and the preparation of an Erasmus+ application. They are also contributing to the EQAVET steering group.

EURASHE announced its Annual Conference in Belgrade on 21-22/4 'Cooperation for excellence; Professional Higher Education and the world of work'; they wished to invite the Commission for a conference in Slovenia on 25/10. Chain 5 was following up their conference in DK with the aim of developing level 5 qualifications in Eastern Europe as well as a network of experts to help others.

EUCEN was celebrating 25 years. Their work on refugees HE4EU2 focused on ethnic groups and migrants in higher Education; they were developing a course for training the trainers in apprenticeships.

The EU social partners shortly presented their projects on apprenticeships whose reports were subsequently shared with the expert group. ETUC suggested the quality framework for apprenticeships could be useful for VET providers.

Strong interest was shown by VET providers about the projects of Cost-effectiveness and Quality framework for apprenticeships.

6. Business Forum on vocational training (morning of 8 December)

BusinessEurope, UEAPME and ETUC joined the meeting in the afternoon to discuss the 8/12 morning event 'EU Business Forum' which will be devoted to Business-Education partnerships.

The expert group should cooperate with EU social partners on the general part of the EU VET Business Forum. On partnerships, it was suggested to cover work-based learning, apprenticeships (governance, including SP and VET providers) and teachers and trainers.

ETUC suggested a panel discussion on apprenticeships, where they would like to contribute.

Showing examples of how VET providers contribute to innovation and skills development for companies would be very relevant. VET providers highlighted that employers should better communicate their future needs, taking account of the time for responsiveness of VET providers.

The importance of reaching out to SMEs was underlined, in addition to involving big companies. A proactive approach should be sought in activating SMEs representatives, members of UEAPME, as they represent SMEs.

7. Any other business and closing of the meeting

The Chair informed the next meeting would take place in September, and a doodle has been sent out for participants to provide their available dates during the week of 19 September.

FOLLOW UP

- Prepare ASAP a short summary on the discussions about VET week, for participants to elaborate by mid-June (DONE)
- Roadmap **tasks** for VET skills week to be shared among expert group participants by 30/06
- Organizations to send **lists of events** they would organize, or their members before or during the VET week (by 20 June – possible interesting info for ACVT)
- COM sends template for information requested on events (title, organizer, link to site. etc.) when agreed with external consultant
- Comments on VET tracking by participants (also by their members) to be sent in writing by 13/6
- Com sends Pact for Youth documents (DONE)
- Com sends link to transparency registry (DONE)

- Com sends link to Entrepreneurship competence framework when available (DONE)
- Com sends link to newsletter on ET2020 WGs
- Com sends links to projects of EU social partners (DONE)
- Com sends link to VET mobility Charter map (when available)
- Send date proposals for next meeting of expert group to take place during the week of 19 September (chosen date 23 Sept).