NOTE TO THE MEMBERS OF THE ENLARGED BUREAU
OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Subject: Final minutes of the meeting of the Enlarged ACVT Bureau – 4 March 2015

Please find enclosed the final minutes of the meeting of the Enlarged Bureau of the ACVT which took place on 4 March 2015.

This version takes account of the comments received from participants, following the sending of the draft minutes on 27/03/2015.

Joao Santos
Acting Head of Unit
1. Opening

Detlef Eckert, Director for "Europe 2020: Employment Policies", opened the meeting by presenting current plans for implementing employment-related activities in the Commission work programme. These initiatives will address long-term unemployment and skills for employability. He also highlighted the importance of the event "A new start for Social Dialogue", which was taking place the day after. The meeting was chaired by Joao Santos, Acting Head of Unit of EMPL C5 "Vocational training and adult education".

2. 2015 VET Review

Youri Devuyst from DG EAC unit A1 "Europe 2020, ET 2020, contributions to education, investment package" explained the state-of-play of the mid-term reviews of Europe 2020 and the ET 2020 as well as the Joint Report. In terms of the process, ET 2020 is closely connected to the EU's overall jobs and growth strategy (Europe 2020). However, it has now become clear that the review of Europe 2020 will not take place before the end of 2015. It is not opportune to postpone the adoption of the ET 2020 Joint Report until after that moment. The Commission will therefore move forward with the adoption of a draft Joint Report by the end of July and Education Council adoption in November 2015.

On the substance of the ET 2020 mid-term stocktaking, stakeholders supported keeping the four strategic objectives stable. They are therefore likely to remain unchanged. But the ET 2020 priority areas will be adapted in light of the results of the stocktaking and the new political circumstances (e.g. post-Charlie Hebdo attention for the role of education and training in preventing radicalisation and fanaticism). The Commission is likely to propose that those priorities would remain valid until end of the ET 2020 cycle i.e. until 2020.

Joao Santos elaborated on the consequences of the above developments for the 2015 VET Review: the new priorities have been largely agreed on, and we would not gain anything by postponing their endorsement, in particular as the previous set of short-term deliverables covered the period 2011–2014. Furthermore, there is a need to avoid multiple reportings, which is why the cycles for ET2020 and the Copenhagen process should be identical.

The Latvian presidency and the Commission explained that the document to be endorsed in Riga (on 22 June 2015 – for further information please see item 3a below) would have the format of presidency conclusions, but they could be called Riga conclusions, leaving the name "communiqué" for comprehensive reviews. The contents of this document will be adopted formally by the Council as part of the Joint Report. However, we need to make sure that also other stakeholders (social partners, EEA and Candidate Countries)
adhere to the process. This could be done via a joint statement from these stakeholders, reaffirming their involvement in the review and their subscription to the objectives.

The LV presidency will prepare an information point to the Education Committee on matters linked to the VET priorities.

UEAPME found it important that the integrated nature of education and training remains. Social partners also enquired about their role in the process, to which the Commission explained that the views of the social partners are taken into account, e.g. through the dialogue that exists between EAC and the social partners.

In particular BE reflected on the need to formalise the new document, not only through the Council, but also by bringing the document on the agenda of the Education Committee.

Jan Varchola presented the results of the DGVT/ACVT consultation of 17 February 2015. By the time of this meeting, 30 replies were received, out of which 28 agreed and 2 (FI and DK) requested for clarifications on the adoption by the Council and the integration into ET2020. In addition, two drafting suggestions were received (from RO and BE).

A long discussion followed in order to formulate the contents of the documents towards "Presidency Conclusions". Cedefop and UEAPME stressed the need to keep the contents (wording) of both documents (i.e. the presidency conclusions as well as the document adopted by the council) identical. Several participants found it important to explicitly link the new conclusions to the Bruges communiqué and to the Copenhagen process.

As a result of the discussion, it was decided to keep the main document short and political, highlighting the links to the growth agenda, and to minimise references to technical implementation; the concrete policy options as well as the EU level support could be presented in the annex. Jargon should be avoided, and less known terms explained. BE asked to add in the political part of the document the general objective of striving for more coherence and synergy between the EU transparency tools.

The horizontal priorities will be moved up before the five numbered priorities, and a mandate for Cedefop and ETF to monitor will be included.

The chair recapitulated the next steps of the process; the document will be redrafted by the Commission and the Latvian Presidency, and the new version will be discussed at DGVT meeting on 20-21 April.

3. Events under the current and the future presidencies (DGVT meetings and conferences)

a) Latvia

The LV Presidency explained the contents of the DGVT meeting (20-21 April). In addition to the plenary sessions, there will be 4 workshops reflecting issues from the mid-term deliverables, country-specific recommendations and LV presidency priorities. Background documents will be drafted by the Commission/Cedefop, and LV Pres will provide 1-3 questions for discussion.

The Latvian presidency shed light on the contents of the event in Riga on 22 June: The morning of the Meeting of Ministers in charge of Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission will be devoted to endorsing the presidency conclusions containing the new deliverables under the Copenhagen process.
For both these events (DGVT meeting and the meeting of ministers) bureau members were asked to propose visionary speakers to bring inspiring ideas to the meetings.

In the afternoon of 22 June, the Meeting of Ministers will continue with a larger stakeholder group, to mark the two years of existence of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships (EAfA). The intention is to give it new boost, with a focus on the involvement of companies, in particular SMEs, willing to support the EAfA and committing themselves to offer new quality apprenticeships. It is hoped that as many ministers as possible will be present. Commissioner Thyssen has confirmed her presence.

Questions were mainly related to the Commission proposal to set up a new Business Advisory Group contributing with orientations for necessary reforms and with further enhancement of company commitments, notably SMEs. Social partners suggested to reinforce the role of the ACVT in monitoring the EAfA and to invite businesses to advise and give examples, or to use the ET2020 working group on VET. BusinessEurope informed of their advisory and support group which consist of national employers' organisations and businesses. UEAPME recalled that small companies need the support of intermediary companies in administration and partner search.

b) Luxembourg

The LU Presidency will organise the DGVT meeting on 16-17 November, followed by a conference on Youth Guarantees on 17-18 November 2015. The conference will be organised in cooperation by the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Labour, and will be looking at first conclusions of implementation of the Youth Guarantee.

c) The Netherlands and Slovakia

The programme of the NL Presidency is still open, but they will organise the DGVT meeting and a conference focussing on economic value of VET, mobility and transparency, or international mobility and internationalisation in VET. The dates that NL proposed for these two events fell on the Easter week, and the NL Presidency continues trying to find other possible dates. Slovakia was not able to participate in the meeting, and their presidency plans were not discussed.

4. ACVT meeting on 21-22 May 2015

The Chair presented the draft agenda. ETUC proposed that at the May meeting, ESSDE (European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education) presents their work on apprenticeships, and possibly in a future ACVT meeting there could be a presentation by the Construction sector, similar to what was done by the Food and Drink sector at the previous ACVT meeting.

ETUC requested that the dates of all meetings would be set 3 months in advance and to ensure that the Bureau has enough time to discuss the agendas of DGVT and ACVT meetings.

BusinessEurope agreed to present the Employers' project 'Cost effectiveness of

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1 After the ACVT bureau, the NL has proposed to organise these events on 15-17 February 2016.
Apprenticeships' under the agenda item dealing with the European Alliance for Apprenticeships. They also proposed to include the Joint Report in the information note, but since this question has raised much discussion at this Bureau meeting, it deserves to be presented orally also at the ACVT plenary.

Cedefop proposed to include an input on the C-VET stocktaking.

5. **Reflection on how to organise future meetings/events**

We wish to develop and improve the DGVT and ACVT meetings as well as presidency conferences. Therefore, the meeting brought forwards some ideas how to do this in practise.

Cedefop suggested giving more time for discussions and proposed involving meeting participants more actively. This could be done by complementing presentations with practical examples from Member States, or by increasing the number of workshops and organising more peer reviews.

Participants proposed to communicate more clearly what is expected from ACVT members; e.g. BE proposed to indicate on the agenda more clearly the items for information and those for discussion. On the DGVT agenda, it would be good to indicate which countries will take the floor after the presentation.

ETUC suggested adding the discussion questions in the final agenda. The Commission, however, considers that the questions are an integral part of the background document, which is why they should not be separate.

Interpretation at ACVT meetings was considered crucial for certain participants. The Commission invited the participants to make full use of the interpretation services provided, as SCIC recently pointed out that certain languages were not used at the previous meeting.

6. **Establishing a new thematic roadmap for Presidency events related to the Copenhagen process – preparatory discussions**

The Commission intends to propose that the countries, which will hold presidency in the years 2015 until 2020, would focus on selected themes (mid-term deliverables) under their semester. These themes can then be dealt with more in-depth, for example in conferences or as focussed peer reviews.

7. **Any other business**

As the proposed date of 28 April overlaps with the Cedefop bureau, the next meeting of the enlarged ACVT bureau will take place on 6 May.