

## NON-PAPER

### ON FUTURE PERSPECTIVES FOR THE EDUCATION-RELATED WORKING GROUPS

in the framework of

EU Strategy for the Danube Region – Priority Area 9 “To Invest in People and Skills”

Vienna, 23 November 2012

## INTRODUCTION

1. The purpose of this paper is to facilitate future perspectives for education-related working groups in the framework of EUSDR – PA 9 “To Invest in People and Skills”. It reflects on the possibilities to create synergies between education related action areas in terms of contents and adequate methods of co-operation in the framework of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) – Priority Area 9 (PA) and also presents the state of discussion about the on-going work of working groups which accompanies the work of the Steering Group (SG) and the Priority Area Coordinators (PAC).
2. The idea to support the implementation of PA9 actions through thematic working groups (TWG) was kick-started in June 2012, when thematic clusters of the projects and project-ideas were processed in the following working groups of the Stakeholder Conference of Priority Area 9 in Vienna:
  - To enhance **performance of education systems** through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies (WG 1)
  - To support **creativity and entrepreneurship** (WG 3)
  - To support **lifelong learning** and expand learning **mobility** (WG 4)
  - To promote **equity, social cohesion and active citizenship** through education and training (WG 5)

Some of the treated topics or activities of the working groups established during the conference are strongly connected to each other in terms of content and should better not be analysed in an isolated manner. On the other hand, many topics are very complex and some also address and involve other actors, so that it does not seem realistic to work on them jointly (qualification frameworks for example). Consequently, it would be necessary to secure information exchange at strategically decisive points of development rather than plan over-complex work arrangements.

The different levels of activities have also to be taken into account. This is due to the fact that there exist, roughly spoken, projects on **institutional- respective**

**provider level - and on strategic or political level.** Following the conference and the 3<sup>rd</sup> SG meeting, it was therefore decided that next steps as regards working groups for the Actions 1, 3, 4 and 5 will concentrate on further analysing possible and feasible mandates, outputs, composition and schedules of the working groups.

3. In order to prepare this paper, a strategic meeting took place on 17 and 18 October 2012 in Vienna. The PAC invited country representatives and from EUSDR networks and projects from all DR countries. During the workshop, the participants worked on thematic scopes and methods for future work. Beside a further clarification and definition of possible working methods, contents and (future) outputs of the planned Working Groups were discussed. Issues pertaining to sustainability and strategic connections with on-going linked activities in the framework of ET 2020 (thematic working groups etc.) and establishment or consolidation of regional co-operation efforts among non-EU member states were also addressed.

## **POSSIBLE FORMS OF SHARED ACTIVITIES**

4. An important fact is the intensity of interaction between the involved countries and projects. Modes of work applied in the projects, networks and initiatives include learning mobility, peer learning, networking, dissemination of results, exchange of good practice and more. The objectives of the working groups should take these various forms into account. This could support:

- **collaboration (working and developing together)**
- **co-operation (combined effort)**
- **observing/mutual learning**

All three forms of shared activities can be of high significance at the provider level, depending on the purpose or type of project. At policy level, primarily observing/learning and sometimes co-operation apply.

5. Essential element of the EUSDR remains the fact that the set of initiatives and projects implemented is **not incited or motivated by an additional specific funding programme**, but existing projects should contribute to the Strategy. When new projects are in the pipeline, the collaboration and co-operation in the DR should be considered and planned as early as possible, as approval periods in the different programmes show significant durations.

## **FOCUSSING WORKING GROUPS ON THE PRIORITIES OF ET 2020 AND THE PA**

6. All working groups should focus on their contribution to the Europe 2020 strategy and to the ET 2020. The planned education related working groups were, concerning topics, already composed in a similar way to the four strategic objectives

for the first cooperation circle of the Council conclusions on a strategic framework for European cooperation in education and training ('ET 2020'):

- objective 1: Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality
- objective 2: Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training
- objective 3: Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship
- objective 4: Enhancing innovation and creativity, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training

The thematic focus of the strategic objectives could be seen as a strong argument that - in terms of content - the previous grouping should be continued. In the strategic meeting in October 2012 the thematic structure of the working areas was not questioned.

## PLANNING OF ROLES, OUTPUTS AND COMPOSITION

7. All working groups should fulfil the following prerequisites:

- Each working group has at least one **formal representative** or coordinator
- The role and **resources** for participation are clarified
- **Goals** are discussed and agreed upon. All WGs should have a **work-programme** including **planned outputs** and a related **time schedule**.
- The coordinator and the members of the working groups should have the possibility to **communicate between the meetings**
- The work programme and outputs should be presented for information at SG meetings.
- To increase visibility and impact, **dissemination** activities should be considered, where appropriate.

8. Regarding the thematic diversity, many areas and target groups are addressed. The thematic grouping brings together organisations that work on related issues but otherwise do not co-operate often. Derived therefrom other methods of group work come to the fore. **Issues that relate more to the policy level should be processed in thematic working groups. Meetings that will serve to prepare possible cooperation and support acquaintance of potential partner institutions would need an appropriate event.** A thematic focus should not be excluded.

If the focus is on **thematic working groups** (on-going group-work, Learning):

- Relative **stability** of the group composition to improve
- Group size **fits for work**
- Involvement of additional **specific expertise**
- **Platform** for research, projects, activities, publications and debate

- **Temporary**, counted number of meetings, **small time intervals**

Is the emphasis is on **networking**, which will support future collaboration and co-operation:

- **New members** enrich the network
- Range up to **large groups** (but design of meetings has to fit)
- Meetings with appropriate time and space for dialogue and **in-depth exchange**
- **Larger intervals**

9. Against the background of some content related objectives the working groups should consider whether **additional experts** could be invited to attend, permanently or ad hoc. Relevant expertise exists on national level, among staff of European agencies or members of European networks or ET 2020-thematic working groups, for example the expertise of CEDEFOP (European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training) and ETF (European Training Foundation), from steering groups of co-operation processes in the EU (Copenhagen process, European Agenda for adult learning, Bologna Follow up Group), high level expert groups (literacy, higher education) or partnership fora (University-Business Forum or Business-VET forum).

In recent years thematic networks have also been established (in addition to the activities of the Member States) that could provide valuable resources for co-operation in the DR. These are for instance EQAVET (European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training) a community of practice bringing together Member States, Social Partners and the European Commission to promote European collaboration in developing and improving quality assurance in VET by using the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework<sup>1</sup> also in co-operation with national reference points, ELGPN (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network) that aims to assist the European Union (EU) Member States (and the candidate countries which are partially eligible for the EU Lifelong Learning Programme); or the European Commission in developing European co-operation on lifelong guidance in both the education and the employment sectors<sup>2</sup>.

## CURRENT PRIORITIES AND POSSIBLE MUTUAL ACTIVITIES

10. The state of planning for future work in framework of the working areas (WA) as discussed at the strategic meeting 17-18 October 2012 is described in the charts below. It shows a current thematic focus for each working area and also provides proposals for working plans and planning of the outputs of the working groups.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.eqavet.eu>

<sup>2</sup> <http://ktl.jyu.fi/ktl/elgpn>

The broad thematic scope of the working areas had to be narrowed down to make the topics processable. Broad participation from all DR countries is desirable in all the working groups, but it is not necessary that every country is represented in each of the study groups. Participation should be based on the needs and interests of the countries. They will select, in accordance with national/regional priorities, the areas of work and co-operation in which they wish to participate in joint follow-up work.

The promoters respectively WG-co-ordinators should work in close co-operation with the PAC and the Steering Group.

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| <b>WA1: To enhance performance of education systems through closer cooperation of education institutions, systems and policies</b>   |  |
| <b>WGs and ad-hoc events: TBD</b>  |  |
| <b>Current thematic focus</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cross-thematic meetings could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attractiveness of VET</li> <li>○ Evidence based policy making in education</li> <li>○ Educational pathways (inter-connection of educational subsystems)</li> <li>○ Financing of education</li> </ul> </li> </ul> |  |
| <b>Level of activities</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider level (mainly)</li> <li>• Policy level</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Forms of shared activities</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support and foster collaboration</li> <li>• Support co-operation</li> <li>• Mutual Learning</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Methods (of joint activities)</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc meetings</li> <li>• Project development-meetings</li> <li>• Project fair events</li> <li>• Peer Learning activities</li> </ul>   |  |
| <b>Objective/emphasis</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for finding (future) partners</li> <li>• Supporting next practise</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Promoter/Co-ordinator</b>   |  |
| <p>Interested Coordinators: still open</p> <p>Interested partners, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministry of Baden Württemberg (DE) (for in service teachers training)</li> <li>• University of Ruse (for Co-operation on master and PhD-programmes in the Danube Region)</li> </ul>                            |  |
| <b>Intended working plan/next steps</b>  |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Peer Learning event on VET; Vienna, 5-6 December 2012, organised by AT</li> <li>• Other areas tbd</li> </ul>  |  |
| <b>Intended/possible outputs</b>   |  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Joint applications</li> <li>• tbd</li> </ul>  |  |

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| WA3: To support creativity and entrepreneurship   |
| <b>WG 3.1. To support creativity and entrepreneurship</b>   |
| <b>Current thematic focus</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entrepreneurial learning in schools, bringing education closer to businesses</li> <li>• New forms of creative learning for entrepreneurs, managers and leaders (e.g. for creative industries and green industries, SMEs)</li> </ul> <p>Bringing creativity closer to entrepreneurial education &amp; training</p>  |
| <b>Level of activities</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider level</li> <li>• Strategic level</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Forms of shared activities</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and mutual learning (mainly)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Methods (of joint activities)</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ad hoc meetings (to start)</li> <li>• Exchange of good practice to support next practice</li> <li>• Online communication</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Objective/emphasis</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platform for exchange of ideas and experience/knowledge</li> <li>• Space for finding (future) partners</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Promoter/Co-ordinator</b>  |
| <p>Interested Coordinator: Business Support Centre (BSC) for SME (BG)</p> <p>Interested partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vienna Board of Education (AT)</li> <li>• Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT)</li> </ul> <p>Existing Networks and expertise should be involved, e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enterprise Europe Network</li> <li>• SMART Network</li> <li>• SEECEL</li> </ul> |
| <b>Intended working plan/next steps</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• BSC initiates a meeting in spring 2013 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To discuss possible outputs</li> <li>- To develop a road map for the next three years</li> </ul> </li> </ul>   |
| <b>Intended/possible output</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Handbook or manual with recommendations for training via new learning methods</li> <li>• Database with projects and initiatives to support next practice</li> </ul>  |

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| WA4: To support lifelong learning and expand learning mobility   |
| <b>WG 4.1 Co-operation of VET- schools</b>   |
| <b>Current thematic focus</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Enhance co-operation of VET-schools on specific domains</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Level of activities</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provider level (mainly)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Forms of shared activities</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Co-operation</li> <li>• Observing and mutual learning</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Methods (of joint activities)</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• (Open) network</li> <li>• Exchange of good practice</li> <li>• Peer learning, Study visits</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Objective/emphasis</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Platform for exchange of ideas and experience/knowledge</li> <li>• Space for finding (future) partners</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Promoter/Co-ordinator</b>   |
| Interested Coordinator: National Centre for TVET (RO)  |
| <b>Intended working plan</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20/11/2012 Summary in EN</li> <li>• 12/2012 – Dissemination on national Level</li> <li>• 05/2013 – Setup of Partnership agreements</li> <li>• 10/2013 – Development of networks output</li> </ul> |
| <b>Intended/possible output</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guides of good practice</li> <li>• Brief papers on specific topics</li> <li>• (At least) 8 networks of VET schools set up (at least) 8 products</li> </ul>  |



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| WA5: To promote equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through education and training   |
| <b>WG 5.1 Youth Platform</b>  |
| <b>Current thematic focus</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Work towards the establishment of a Youth Platform for education/training/citizenship education/social inclusion/mobility</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Level of activities</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic level (longterm)</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Forms of shared activities</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Observing and mutual learning</li> <li>• Co-operation</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Methods (of joint activities)</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation meetings</li> <li>• Conferences (possible)</li> <li>• Grassroots projects</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Objective/emphasis</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Space for finding (future) partners</li> </ul>   |
| <b>Promoter/Co-ordinator</b>  |
| Interested Coordinator: Interkulturelles Zentrum (AT), depending on the resources available   |
| <b>Intended working plan/next steps</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Draft of idea circulated to the DR Network PA 9</li> <li>• Working meeting to prepare a follow-up plan</li> </ul>  |
| <b>Intended/possible output</b>   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Working meeting (short term) of stakeholders to clarify needs, structure etc.</li> <li>• Establishing a supported platform (mid term)</li> <li>• Supporting grassroots projects and also the policy level (long term)</li> </ul> |