

#### 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence

## VET EXCELLENCE FOR AN INCLUSIVE, GREEN, AND DIGITAL DANUBE REGION

**Date:** Tuesday, 30 September 2025 | 9.00-12.00 CET

**Venue:** Online

### FORMAT

International online meeting bringing together national and EU policy makers, experts and VET stakeholders. The meeting will be held in English. It is hosted within Priority Area 9 “People & Skills” (PA9) of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) by OeAD – Austria’s Agency for Education and Internationalisation in cooperation with the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education and the European Training Foundation (ETF).

### BACKGROUND

The Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) serves as a forum for cooperation on CoVEs. The platform was launched in 2021 by PA9 in cooperation with the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE)<sup>1</sup>. ENE supports vocational excellence development together with currently more than 330 CoVEs and skills providers from over 50 countries.

As part of the initiative, a Policy Platform was established, promoting exchange among core stakeholders from responsible national institutions in Danube Region countries and experts from the European Commission, PA9 and ETF. The Danube Region Platform also facilitates the development of transnational CoVEs projects in the Danube Region. The platform’s efforts were recognised in 2022 and 2024, when it was designated a “Danube Strategy Flagship” for its contribution to the implementation of the EUSDR.

Concrete needs for VET excellence in the Danube Region identified in the 3<sup>rd</sup> meeting of the platform in 2024 include reaching a common understanding of CoVEs, developing cooperation at a national and transnational level (including public-private partnerships), supportive legal frameworks and autonomy, as well as information and knowledge sharing. Relevant areas of expertise identified include the development of green and digital skills, as well as social inclusion to make sure that no one is left behind.

### CONCEPT

The aim of the 4<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Danube Region Platform on CoVEs is to provide an update on new developments regarding VET excellence and CoVEs. The meeting will also inform about funding opportunities in the context of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Call of the Danube Region Programme (DRP), which will be launched in September 2025, and *inter alia* support the cooperation and development of CoVEs.

Inputs from the European Commission will highlight the role of vocational excellence in promoting required skills and contributing to European competitiveness. Presentations from policymakers and practitioners will address regional challenges and showcase good practice examples. After a presentation of the 3<sup>rd</sup> call of the DRP, opportunities for project development and potential applications will be explored in an interactive session.

As a follow-up to the meeting, documentation on the meeting and further resources will be shared.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.etf.europa.eu/en/what-we-do/vocational-excellence>

## DRAFT AGENDA

Time (CET)	Sessions
8.45 – 9.00	<b>Log-in</b>
9.00 – 9.10	<b>Introduction by the Moderator and Ice-Breaker</b> <i>OeAD - Austria's Agency for Education and Internationalisation (tbc)</i> <b>Welcome Remarks</b> <i>-Jürgen Schick, Coordinator, EUSDR Priority Area 9 'People &amp; Skills'</i> <i>-Gordon Purvis, Human Capital Development Expert, European Training Foundation (ETF)</i>
9.10 – 9.25	<b>Union of Skills</b> <i>-Anna Barbieri, Team Leader for Apprenticeships and Erasmus+, DG Employment, European Commission</i> <i>-Q&amp;A / interactive discussion</i>
9:25 – 10.35	<b>Good Practice Examples on Policy and Project Level</b> <i>-Presentations by 2-3 countries</i> <i>-Presentations by 2-3 projects</i> <i>-Updates from ETF in the Area of Vocational Excellence: Jolien van Uden, Senior Human Capital Development Expert, and Susanne M. Nielsen, Human Capital Development Expert</i> <i>-Q&amp;A / interactive discussion</i>
10.35 – 10.45	<b>Break</b>
10.45 – 11.15	<b>Funding Opportunities under the Danube Region Programme</b> <i>-Presentation by Stephen Halligan, Project Officer, Managing Authority/Joint Secretariat of the Danube Transnational Programme</i> <i>-Q&amp;A</i>
11.15 – 11.45	<b>Interactive Session to Explore Project Ideas and Potential Partnerships</b>
11.45 – 12.00	<b>Closing Session</b> <i>-ETF &amp; PA9</i>