



REPORT

KICK-OFF: DANUBE REGION PLATFORM ON CENTRES OF VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE – A REGIONAL APPROACH TO COOPERATING ON VOCATIONAL EXCELLENCE

29 NOVEMBER 2021, 13:00-16:00 CET (ONLINE)

Organized by Priority Area 9 “People & Skills” of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) and the European Training Foundation (ETF) Network for Excellence, the online event launched the Danube Region Platform on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs). The thematic focus of the platform lies on the topics of going green and social inclusion. As part of the initiative, the meeting established a Policy Platform on CoVEs, bringing together representatives of responsible national administrations/institutions from Danube Region countries and experts from the European Commission, PA9 and ETF.

The Austrian Priority Area 9 Coordinators Jürgen Schick and Roland Hanak outlined areas of cooperation on vocational education and training policies in the Danube Region. Jürgen Schick introduced the idea behind the Danube Region Platform on CoVEs and drew attention to the role of CoVEs as drivers of quality VET and catalysts for innovation and smart specialization. Georgios Zisimos and J. Manuel Galvin Arribas presented the ETF Network for Excellence (ENE), an international hub that was built up in 2020 to connect CoVEs within and outside the EU, create mutual learning and promote VET development.

João Santos from the Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion of the European Commission gave an overview of the European initiative on CoVEs. He highlighted the contribution of CoVEs to skills ecosystems, key success factors for CoVEs, the importance of transnational networks, and funding opportunities under Erasmus+.

A tour de table then provided an opportunity for a first exchange between members of the Policy Platform on the role of CoVEs and policy priorities regarding the future development

of CoVEs in their countries. Representatives from the following countries participated in the tour the table: Austria, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Republic of Moldova, Montenegro, Romania, Slovakia and Ukraine.

First insights into the thematic topics of going green and social inclusion were given by representatives from Centres of Vocational Excellence. Bojan Jovanovski from the FH JOANNEUM University of Applied Sciences introduced the project GREENOVET. The project aims to build a skills ecosystem for green innovation by developing teaching methods and tools, facilitating access to available infrastructures, and disseminating knowledge.

Silvia Proțiu, Director of the MD4 Centre of Excellence in Food Processing and Service, highlighted how social inclusion in VET can be promoted through partnerships, innovation in teaching and learning, and the sharing of institutional experience with other institutions.

Both topics were then further discussed in breakout sessions, looking at the potential of CoVEs to promote going green and social inclusion in VET as well as tools, formats and instruments that could help support exchange and cooperation between CoVEs.

In a concluding poll, participants identified further areas for cooperation, including networking within the framework of the Danube Region Platform on CoVEs and participating in specific peer review/learning actions within ENE.

Further documentation on the event, including the agenda and presentations, is available here:

<https://peopleandskills.danube-region.eu/events/kick-off-danube-region-platform-on-centres-of-vocational-excellence/>

