

### Workshop

#### **Investing in inclusive and innovative education and training for better socio-economic outcomes**

Friday 27 June 2014, 9.30-12.00h (City Hall, Room 02)

The workshop "Investing in inclusive and innovative education and training for better socio-economic outcomes" focussed on EUSDR Priority Area 9 actions to raise the performance of education and training systems, to support creativity and entrepreneurship, to promote lifelong learning and mobility, as well as to foster equity, social cohesion and active citizenship. The session was chaired by PAC Jürgen Schick (Federal Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs, Austria).

The workshop was kicked-off with a statement by Mr. Torsten Hubertus Arndt from the European Commission (DG EAC) and structured around three panels on "Cooperation platforms and networking", on "Improving the quality and attractiveness of VET" and on "Transversal key competences, active citizenship and innovative learning environments" (for speakers see Agenda).

#### **Main outcomes:**

- From a European perspective the investment in human capital remains one of the most important assets for the future. Education and training do not only generate growth, innovation and employability but are also a key to promoting equitable and inclusive societies.
- Action is needed to improve education and training systems' performance, as empirical evidence shows that too many people are not equipped with good and relevant skills. Existing challenges relate i.a. to combating early school drop-outs and improving basic skills. It is essential to invest in the modernisation of education and training systems, including life-long learning, and to facilitate the transition from school to work. To achieve good educational results requires securing the necessary investments, and, at the EU-level, the ESF offers financial support to Member States in the field of investments in education and training. In times of tight public budgets it is also important to strive for improved efficiency and effectiveness so that the investments in education and training yield the best possible outcomes.
- Regional cooperation platforms such as ERI SEE (Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe) are important instruments for the implementation of EUSDR actions as they support national reforms in education and training through regional capacity building, transfer of know-how and linking these efforts to European frameworks for education development.
- Partnerships at the interface of education (formal and non-formal), training and youth should be fostered through the establishment of a Danube Region Youth Platform. Coordinated by Interkulturelles Zentrum and PA9, the platform should act as a meeting point between formal and non-formal learning institutions, map existing projects, enable exchange and project development and explore possible funding opportunities for projects.
- High attention should be given to the promotion of creativity and entrepreneurial skills as they contribute not only to new business creation but also to the employability of young people. With the aim to strengthen the cooperation in this area PA9 has

established a thematic working group coordinated by BSC Ruse, working i.a. on gathering existing directly transferable practices as a basis for the development of further projects.

- In the DR, many countries are considerably affected from sectorial changes in employment. This implies – in many countries – high youth unemployment rates. The field of vocational and educational training (VET) is therefore undergoing fundamental reform processes.
- Close cooperation between the political level, administrative level(s), vocational schools and companies are a necessary prerequisite for successful VET reforms as demonstrated by the project "Capacity-building for Teachers of VET in the Danube Region".
- With a view to improving the links between the labour market and the educational system, DR countries have increased their cooperation in VET. E.g. Romania has signed a Joint Declaration with Baden-Württemberg and a Memorandum of Understanding with Austria in this regard.
- Regional cooperation in VET supports countries with opportunities for mutual learning, regional exchange of experience and good practice and for encompassing the specific phases of national reforms in VET. The main result of the "Cluster on Modernising VET Systems" is a compendium of good practices to share the quality culture and to allow an increasing of the attractiveness of VET as a training pathway.
- Work-based learning (WBL) in VET is seen as an important concept for enhancing competitiveness and employability in the DR. A transnational ETC-project should be jointly developed aiming i.a. at the issues of raising awareness of the potential of WBL, especially among the business community, improving quality assurance in WBL and supporting the development of WBL policies and support measures in the regions of the project partners.
- Transnational collaboration between schools are important contributions to the process of European integration, active citizenship and a shared vision of Europe as they enhance dialogue and cooperation of young people and teachers. In particular the project ACES – Academy of Central European Schools, one of the largest school networks in the region coordinated by Interkulturelles Zentrum and Včelí Dom, offers concrete opportunities for international school projects, mobility, intercultural exchange and creative learning environments.
- Skills and competences for green jobs are becoming more and more important. Addressing the issue of sustainable growth and development needs to embed the skills and training dimension within a wider approach. The project CoDeS has developed a platform with resources and materials that support the collaboration of schools and communities for sustainable development.
- Managing the transformation towards “green” jobs requires bringing together labour market actors and education and training providers. With a focus on VET, Romania has initiated an ad-hoc group on green competences to act as a facilitator for knowledge sharing and policy recommendations.



## EUSDR Annual Forum 2014 - Workshop

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#### AGENDA

##### Session 1: 9.30 – 10:30h

- **Welcome and Introduction: Cooperation in education and training in the Danube Region**, *Mr Jürgen Schick, Federal Ministry for Education and Women's Affairs, EUSDR PAC 9, Austria (Chair)*
- **Investing in education & training for better socio-economic outcomes – a European Perspective**, *Mr Torsten Hubertus Arndt, European Commission, DG EAC*
- **Presentation of projects, panel discussion and debate**

Theme 1: Cooperation platforms and networking

- **Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe**, *Ms Milica Grahovac, ERI SEE Interim Secretariat/Centre for Education Policy, Serbia*
- **Danube Youth Platform**, *Mr Marco Frimberger, Interkulturelles Zentrum, Austria*
- **Creativity and Entrepreneurship - Fostering the Creative Potential of the Danube Region**, *Ms Christiana Kasparyan, Business Support Centre for SMEs, Bulgaria*

Coffee Break: 10:30-11:00h

##### Session 2: 11:00 – 12:00h

- **Presentation of projects, panel discussion and debate**

Theme 2: Improving the quality and attractiveness of VET

- **Capacity-building for Teachers of VET in the Danube Region**, *Mr Hartmut Mattes, Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports, Baden-Württemberg, Germany*
- **Cluster on Modernising VET Systems and Optimizing the links between labour market and the educational system**, *Dana Stroie, National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development, Romania*
- **Enhanced Competitiveness and Employability through Innovative work-based learning in VET**, *Ms Monika Mott, KulturKontakt Austria*

Theme 3: Transversal key competences, active citizenship and innovative learning environments

- **aces – Academy of Central European Schools**, *Ms Christine Gamper, Interkulturelles Zentrum, Austria*
- **Collaboration of schools and communities for sustainable development (CoDeS)**, *Mr Günther Pfaffenwimmer, Federal Ministry for Education and Women's Affairs, Austria*
- **Cooperating on Green competences**, *Gabriela Ciobanu, National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development, Romania*

- **Wrap-Up and Closing**