

6th International Stakeholder Conference
The Future of Priority Area 9
‘Investing in People and Skills’ in the Danube Region

29th November 2018

Seminar- und Veranstaltungszentrum Catamaran (Johann-Böhm-Platz 1, 1020 Vienna)

The conference was hosted by the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, Austria and the Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria

Report

by Gabriele Stöger

The 6th International Stakeholder Conference in a series of such events taking place in Vienna and in Chisinau had intended to *provide participants with opportunities to discuss current and future challenges related to education and training as well as employment policies in Europe and the Danube Region.*

Since 2011 the Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region has been in effect. *In May 2018, the European Commission and the Bulgarian EUSDR Presidency have initiated a revision process of this document.* With regard to experiences and achievements in the countries of the Danube Region, conference attendees were invited to examine, if it is time to think about new topics and new structures of working together.

Format

This year, the Stakeholder Conference followed a more familiar design on one hand with plenary sessions, keynote-speakers and a panel discussion, serving as inputs and a World Café session with invited table hosts, preset subjects and questions.

sli.do

On the other hand, as a novelty, the conference worked with an online-instrument (*sli.do*), which gave participants the chance to participate instantly via their smart phones: After the welcome, attendees were invited to pair up with a neighbour and then interview each other in order to assist in compiling conference statistics (poll).

Secondly *sli.do* was used for posting questions during the panel discussion and finally for the feedback, replacing feedback forms with the benefit of providing immediate results.

Graphic Recording

Another innovative tool in this conference was introduced by graphic designer **Eva Rudovsky** who visualized the most essential contents of speeches and discussions as they happened and thus kept record of the conference proceedings.

Objectives

of the presentations, discussions and the World Café session were:

- To discuss current and future challenges related to education and training as well as employment policies in Europe and the Danube Region with regard to the ongoing consultation phase in the revision process of the 2010 Action Plan of the EU Strategy for the Danube Region.
- To examine whether future PA9 actions should be conceived rather as a continuation of the current framework (priorities, working groups/areas) with some adaptations, or if it is time to think about new topics and ways for working together.
- To discuss lessons learnt and possible perspectives of promoting common European values, inclusive education and the European dimension of teaching through cooperation in the Danube region.
- To highlight risks and opportunities along with the digitization of work and, as a consequence, the skills sets essential to be developed.
- To analyze the main developments and current challenges in the areas of 'Education and Training' and 'Labour Market' in the Danube Region to address common challenges for the future.
- To provide networking opportunities.

Participants

105 Stakeholders from thirteen of fourteen Danube Region countries followed the invitation (all except Bosnia and Herzegovina), and registered, 89 were actually present at the event (58% female, 64% over 35 years old):

According to the *sli.do* poll at the beginning of the conference, **the following countries** were represented (percentage of those delegates who participated in the survey):

EU Member States: Austria (31%), Bulgaria (0), Croatia (3%), Czech Republic (5%), Germany (5%), Hungary (3%), Romania (14%), Slovak Republic (3%) and Slovenia (3%),

Accession Countries: Bosnia and Herzegovina (0), Montenegro (7%) and Serbia (8%),

Neighbourhood Countries: Moldova (5%) and Ukraine (7%)

Other: 5%, (Belgium, Italy, Greece).

37% had not **attended** any EUSDR meeting or **Stakeholder Conference before**, whereas 39% had participated in at least one such event and 24% in more than 3.

Participants' working background is in a Ministry or other public body (49%), a Research institution (15%), NGO (10%), with a Social partner (5%) or Intergovernmental /Supranational Body (7%).

(See also Annex poll-results.pdf)

Opening

After the introduction by the conference moderator, **Gabriele Stöger**, the meeting started with greeting words and opening statements by the Priority Area (PA) 9 Coordinators.

Roland Hanak (Priority Area Coordinator, Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Health and Consumer Protection, Austria) welcomed the delegates, emphasizing the number of new attendees and registrations from 13 of 14 countries. Looking back on eight years of the Action Plan coming into effect, showed that cooperation inside the European Union and especially between EU and its neighbours is more important than ever and, rather than getting smaller, we should hope for an enlargement of the Union in further times.

The subject of this Stakeholder Conference being the reform of the Action Plan and future cooperation structures in the perspective of post 2020 discussion of the European Commission, Hanak referred to the thematic policy papers on the 'European Pillar of Social Rights'. The principles in the 'European Pillar of Social Rights' should serve as a compass in this renewal process: equal opportunities and access to the labour market; fair working conditions as well as social protection and inclusion.

Priority Area Coordinator **Jürgen Schick** (Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research, Austria) thanked the co-PA-Coordinators from Austria and the Republic of Moldova, all other institutions, Ministries and Stakeholders for the good cooperation and work in EUSDR so far. He further thanked the European Commission for the support of the cooperation during the last eight years.

Respectable achievements in terms of innovative projects, sustainable networks and exchange on a policy level have been reached. The high level of transparency, the will to cooperate, the sense of ownership and a cluster of projects and reform measures in PA9 should act as reference points for future activities. Building on existing structures, cooperation with ETF, Western Balkans and regional as well as bilateral cooperation turned out to be success factors today and in the future.

Education and Culture are keys to inclusion and a cohesive society. In the discussion process concerning the renewed Action Plan, one should think of what works and build on success stories. Delegates are invited to contribute which areas to further focus on for future collaboration.

Anna Gherganova (Priority Area Coordinator, Ministry of Labour, Social Protection and Family, Republic of Moldova) valued EUSDR as an important tool for addressing challenges and network building covering broad topics in the field of investing in people and skills. Being aware of the existing labour market disparities inside the macro regional strategy, collaboration above all helps increasing the efficiency of labour market and education systems and to strengthen cohesion and integration. Collaboration has inspired knowledge transfer to Moldova, e.g. social enterprises following the Austrian model and dual learning on the basis of the German VET system. PA9, being the backbone for education and training infrastructure has to be considered one of the most important areas of the whole EUSDR.

Ludmila Pavlov (Priority Area Coordinator, Ministry of Education, Culture and Research, Republic of Moldova) stated that being part of the strategy is important for the countries and gives the opportunity to learn from good practice and share experience. The power of education and new knowledge is the basis for success in the future. Being part of EUSDR means being able to prepare our youth for the international labour market and for future job requirements.

Reform should cover all the education system from Kindergarten to higher education, common elements for all being the curricula reforms, the initial and

continuing teacher training, teaching material, social partnership and the improvement of learning environments.

In all this EUSDR creates added value by being open, confirming and supporting reform and active involvement.

Stefaan Hermans, gave his greetings as representative of the European Commission, DG EAC as well as on behalf of DG Regio and thanked for the cooperation. He mentioned ETF as an important body in this collaboration and congratulates Stakeholders for the brilliant work during the last eight years. He stated that education is a source for prosperity, economic development and individual development, the benefit of transnational cooperation being building bridges and facing challenges in and outside the EU, he wished delegates a successful conference.

Keynotes

Keynote 1: The Future of European Education Cooperation

Stefaan Hermans, European Commission, DG EAC

Education and Training will be core elements of the future agenda within the EUSDR and among the goals of the EU Pillar of Social Rights, one of the principles being equal access to quality education.

Education and training have to be regarded as one comprehensive package from early childhood throughout life. To keep coherence in the training system, it has to be organised along lines (which is not the case now).

The context of education and training systems is different to one decade ago: we faced economic and financial crisis, the issues of migration and refugees putting pressure on EU relationships, terrorist attacks in European capitals and radicalisation of youth.

As a consequence, society has changed due to these past events and the technological changes to social life – how to get society ready for that?

New strategies have to take these changes into account. Unless we agree on priorities, take measures and monitor outcomes, there will be no results.

The main challenges (early school leaving, childhood care, basic skills ...) are still valid, although there was some achievement in the figures for early school leaving, no improvement can be seen in basic skills (reading, writing, maths): Still, 1/5 of the

population in the European Union do not have the basic skills to survive in life – reading and writing, maths, science – not to mention, digital skills.

Digitization will have to be addressed as well as social and ethical issues. Education is still linked with socioeconomic background. Therefore inclusiveness shall remain an issue of priority in future. Education still is a social elevator.

Within the EU education is a matter of national competence. EC fully respects that, its responsibility being to support and to complement action.

Towards which benchmarks in education attainment, early childhood and care basic skills and school leave should we work to in 2030? What are the most valid benchmarks? Should we rather start reflecting on:

- Access to labour market
- Education attainment with perspective to
- Career guidance and individual development
- Adult education (has not moved ahead inside EU)

At present flexibility on labour market is not automatically conducive to continuous learning – this is highly political and a major challenge.

Benchmarks alone are not sufficient. Indicators help countries to compare and to learn from each other. Monitoring does help in taking decisions.

One strength of EU and in EUSDR is the learning dialogue. Mutual learning and active exchange are beneficial. Peer counselling is a fascinating matter that has to be further developed. We bring together experts from member states to help one another, to bring in new ideas, for testing pilots, to help scaling it up and for looking on specific needs of countries.

Through dialogue taking place in working groups in different areas, approaches can be taken forward, also on the political front. For example, EU values: It does matter to pass values to our children – dignity, non-discrimination, respect for the rule of law, human rights ... These basic things bind us together. As a result from one working group, meanwhile a recommendation has been agreed by the council of Ministers and has become a legal document that calls for the promotion of our common values.

Further, questions of substance and orientation of development emerge from our discussions. Thinking about the future, there will be new professions: mechanics, medicine doctors and others will further exist, although with different tasks, there will be different ways of working, more personalised information will become available etc.

Although one cannot be certain about the future, but we can be certain about different things: Equity and inclusion, equal access to higher level education will stay a big priority for cohesiveness and prosperity.

Being competent in a digital world will play a more important role, which are the digital skills to be acquired, are schools sufficiently equipped? There will have to be another benchmark.

It will be necessary to broaden key competences, we need more basic skills but also specialised skills, to be adaptable and flexible and we will need creativity and entrepreneurial behaviour.

Besides inclusiveness, equity and digital competences another area clearly emerges: Teacher education. We demand a lot of our teachers; they have to be socially competent, responsible, to get along with developments in society. This is a matter of Initial and in-service-training, of attractiveness and respect for the profession.

As a last issue funding has to be mentioned. Education will have a financial priority in the next program. We see a doubling of the Erasmus+ funding and the EU spends about twice as much on education through structural funds, ESF and ERDF than on Erasmus. Money is spent on infrastructure and learning outcomes.

Although the future is uncertain, for the next framework in 2020 there will be a binding matter for the future: education.

Keynote II: Digitization of Work: Risks and Opportunities

Marcel Fink, Senior Researcher in IHS - Institute for Advanced Studies, in the unit of Labour Market and Social Policy, Austria,

During the last years, digitization has become a mega-trend and, like many other institutions, IHS has been doing quantitative and qualitative research, not from a technological point of view but with the perspective of social science, examining the impact on society, on working conditions, on qualification and the labour market.

Digitization is forming our everyday life. The definition of digit(al)ization by the business dictionary: *Integration of digital technologies into everyday life by the digitization of everything that can be digitized* (<http://www.businessdictionary.com/definition/digitalization.html>), does not explain very much and sounds rather redundant. Taking the smart-phone as an example: it replaces an alarm clock or the wake-up call, a map, a camera, you can easily use it for booking your hotel or as a library etc. So, everything gets digitized that can be digitized and then the market finds out whether there is demand for it.

Looking at the important elements of digitization, which will have the largest impact in future and already have in the production sector, we talk about “Cyber physical systems” or better, “Industry 4.0”. We have to deal with highly connected mechatronic systems, inter alia based on the “internet of things”, which is about the Interaction of physical goods. “Internet of things” is the network of devices, vehicles or everyday objects with an IP-address and equipped with sensors, which allows these things to communicate and exchange data over the Internet. This can result in a revolution of the production sector by a digitization and partly automation of ordering, planning, production and delivery of a product, the maintenance and product development via sensors. The idea is to have a lot size one production, the consumers order online at the company (e.g. a car), the supply chain starts automatically and within this smart factory, machines control themselves and the quality of what they produce via sensors. And in future the product may even be delivered next to your house by a self driving lorry. When you use the car within IOT it always informs the producer online about the health of the car and so, by algorithms, the maintenance of the car can already be planned. Industry 4.0 is based on technologies which are already developed, like gathering big data, cloud computing, IOT platforms, smart sensors etc.

It is likely that this will have a huge impact on the production, the precondition for it being big investments by companies on the one hand and the provision of appropriate skills on the other.

There is another development which will have a huge impact on the labour market, the so called “Platform Economy”, “Crowdwork” or “Sharing economy”. On a (meanwhile large number of) platforms freelancers, or single person businesses compete individually for a short term job. In Germany e.g. there are 700.000 – 1 Mio clickworkers, who use these jobs for their second source of income. There are 2300 Crowdwork platforms at present worldwide, but it is sure that they will be concentrated in the hands of a few important players in future. We do not know yet how far this will spread, but when it comes to labour law and social protection systems there are a lot of open questions.

A lot of meta-analysis and research on digital qualification has been carried out but still there is a lack of original research. The results of quantitative research on risk of automation in different jobs and on the impact on labour market and working conditions are disputed. The automatability of jobs measures the percentage of jobs risking automation. Some studies talk about 47%. The question is, which tasks cannot be automatized, where are the bottlenecks of automation?

A recent study by IHS applying a refined methodology states that in Austria only 9% of jobs are at „high risk“ of automation, jobs in the production sector (industry 4.0) and in primary production facing a higher risk than those in the service sector and jobs requiring creativity and social intelligence (knowledge intensive business service KIBS). It is remarkable that higher educational attainment leads to a significantly lower risk of automation. In most countries, the graphic relationship between age and automation is U-shaped: teen jobs and jobs of older employees have higher risks to be automatized.

Challenges: increased digitization goes with „creative destruction“, which implies new positive growth and employment opportunities as well as new training requirements. On the other hand it includes social risks, dualization of chances in society. The need to address issues which have not changed during the last 15 years on the way to social inclusion and equity.

The following options, for macro regional strategies and national policies are most relevant:

- Social investment into education of children
- Public investment into training and lifelong learning (people with highest risk jobs have the least likeliness for further education!)
- A new generational contract (a poverty proof universal first pillar of old age pensions)
- Clear definition of what is an ‘employer‘, self employment at minimum income as a disguise new dependent employment on platforms.

Panel Discussion: Ideas and Lessons Learnt for a Forward Look on Investing in Human Capital in the Danube Region.

After the break the meeting continued with a panel discussion, assembling main actors and representatives from EU and national level (in alphabetical order):

Jader Cané, Directorate General Employment/ European Commission

Carmen Clapan, Ministry of National Education, Romania

Anastasia Fetsi, European Training Foundation (ETF)

Roland Löffler, Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (oeibf)

Attendees are invited to make use of Sli.do as an opportunity to post questions and remarks, moderated by **Barbara Willsberger** (L&R Social Research).

Jader Cané, Directorate General Employment/ European Commission started with his statement on ESF+ as the main instrument for funding in people and skills in future.

The current European Social Fund 2014-2020 has been one of the EU's main financial instruments to invest in people, helping them to get better jobs and ensuring fairer job opportunities for all EU citizens (7.5 Mio participants). Within ESF youth employment is a major issue.

Macro regional strategies like EUSDR hold a strong potential for cooperation with neighbour countries. In the perspective of a new Europe and its social challenges the importance of cooperation and building an integrated framework cannot be stressed enough. As an independent study (assigned by the EC) shows clearly that the potential of macro regional strategies is yet unexploited and should be further exploited. Macro regional strategies even could become a laboratory for a new Europe. They do already interact with the ESF and they convey ESF priorities to a large audience and contribute to a more cost effective use of the EU funds where resources are put together.

In the period 2021-2027 we shall be investing in people with an overall budget about 101 Billion. ESF+ will be an instrument with a closer linkage between the EU Pillar of Social Rights and the structural funds in general. So it should be fostering equal opportunities and access to the labour market, inclusive education and training system and quality in education and training, fair working conditions and social protection and inclusion.

What are the novelties of ESF+: it will be more politically oriented and will have a strong linkage to political goals. It will be a more integrated framework and will encompass what are now 5 different instruments: ESF, Youth Employment Initiative, FAIR - the Fund for the poorest, EaSI - the EU Programme for Employment and Social Innovation and the EU Health Program. There will be a better focus and closer linkage between ESF+, the European semester and the country specific recommendations to achieve political goals.

25% should be spent on fighting poverty and promoting social inclusion and also 25% for young people. ESF+ should be more politically oriented than as it is now. Now, macro regional strategies could step in now even more strongly, as we are in the process of negotiating, proposing themselves as a framework which would be conducive for the EC to a better achievement of political goals. Macro regional strategies could escalate their importance in a political way: Having better access to

funding for actions that can have political added value which is assured by the principles of the pillar social rights.

Anastasia Fetsi, European Training Foundation (ETF)

The European Training Foundation supports transition and developing countries bordering the EU to harness the potential of their human capital through the reform of education, training, and labour market systems.

A recent conference in Turin, **Skills for the Future: Managing Transition** explored how developing and transition countries can respond to the challenges of current global trends from a skills perspective. Although the future is not predictable, monitoring can help to identify and shape the main developments. How can we profit from technical analysis – will we as human beings be redundant in future? The future is for all people. We rather should profit from artificial intelligence. Emphasize is on lifelong learning, not new, but now new things like online and digital learning make access easier. Other issues were that we should use the potential of macro-regional strategies, identify partnerships and link with companies, more focus on teachers and trainers, on innovation in teaching methods.

ETF moves towards more agile partnerships on a local level, where actors get together, because they see an interest. This is already happening, but now they are a little bit isolated cases of good practice. Now, the question is how to lead these practices into more policy approaches that reinforce this agile partnership approach. It is not only implementation of policies it is also the motivation and mobilisation of actors to interact with each other.

Roland Löffler, Austrian Institute for Research on Vocational Training (oeibf)

The Danube Region Monitor, which is developed in present, shall act as tool for the evidence-base for Danube Region policy-making and the discussion of priorities within PA9. It will serve the development of policy recommendations for the implementation of successful measures in the field of education and labour market. At the outset, it was most important that the monitoring system was based on indicators that are meaningful, compatible, comparable, reliable and useable. It is most relevant that the monitoring instrument does not stress the differences between countries, since ranking is not intended at all.

Looking at the current developments in the areas of Education and Training and Labour Market in the Danube Region a number of indicators were selected, which cover five major challenges:

- Demographic change (increasing life expectation concurrent with decreasing fertility rates)
- Migration (meaning not refugees, but migration inside Europe, brain drain)
- Skills mismatch (shortage of skills in certain trades)
- Digitization
- Modernisation of VET

As a consequence of ageing societies and the brain drain caused by migration and the qualifications needed by companies following a growing digitization, the modernisation of education systems, individual development, provision of VET including practical training and further education become more and more important. It is highly important to provide solid basic qualification and the possibility to learn and also work based training which is very near to the needs of the labour market. This is provided by the dual system like in Austria, Germany and Switzerland, but we also have to think also about WBL for people already in employment. Since the working population grows older, you have to invest in further education. Funding, political decisions and transnational strategies should reflect this. Successful education and training systems enable learners to achieve high level outcomes. At the same time they need to contribute to the reduction of inequalities and provide the best education for all pupils, regardless of their gender, socioeconomic background and educational attainment of their parents, their language, culture, religion or special needs.

Carmen Clapan, Ministry of National Education, Romania

Romania has overtaken the presidency of the European Union Strategy for the Danube Region (EUSDR) in November 2018, and in the first half of 2019 Romania will also preside over the Council of the European Union. One of the topics of interest of this presidency will lie on Europe of Common Values.

The main task during the Romanian presidency in the EUSDR will be our contribution the revision of the Action Plan. We will organise a number of activities and conferences as well as cooperation projects concerning education (e.g. our project 'Learning by doing'). The most important event will be the Annual Forum of EUSDR, which will take place in Bucharest, 27-28th June 2019.

One motto for the presidency is 'Cohesion as Common European Value'. This is based on four main pillars:

- Insuring of sustainable growth in all EU member states
- Increase the level of convergence (innovation, GDP, connectivity)

- Maintaining a safe Europe, strengthening the global role of EU and
- Promoting solidarity as a common value for Europe.

The EU has to face a different context now. Romania's presidency takes place in a difficult and complex international context. Our mandate will have to take into account the integration process shaping the EU and the reflections on the future of EU.

Regarding education and training, the motto of our presidency of the Council is "Connecting Education". On the occasion of the European summit in Sibiu in May 2019, we would like to promote together with the EU members a set of messages on the role of education in building the future of Europe.

Education and all related priorities, of course will be essential for both presidencies, the EU council and EUSR. We will focus mainly on three main issues being inclusion, mobility and excellence. We will discuss the Council recommendation on early childhood education and care systems, on the comprehensive approach to the teaching and learning of languages and also will continue discussion in the Erasmus+ program.

More concretely related to VET, in this time of globalisation and migration additional pressure is put to the challenging socio-economic context in Europe, focusing on common EU values, such as equity, social cohesion, active citizenship, is crucial. European values should be found in our behaviour and attitudes, governing our way of relating one to another. There is no better way to learn and transfer values than by being involved in a concrete learning context and we have to exchange good practices.

VET can play an important role by facilitating access to education and training for vulnerable groups and by investing in developing flexible pathways to stable jobs. Cooperation within the EU Danube Region among regions and countries on these key issues of common interest will remain a priority on the long run for all of us. Many events during the presidency will be organised in Bucharest and in other towns in Romania and will deal with solidarity, cohesion, equal opportunities and social justice. Most important, the meetings of the DGs for schools, VET and higher education, will discuss, among others, the subjects of key competencies and excellence in VET and digi schools, common values and competencies for inclusive education. Another conference by the Ministry of Labour will address the issue of adults' up-skilling and re-skilling, balancing the labour market.

Discussion

For questions attendees were invited to use again the Sli.do app and to post questions to the speakers. (See AnalyticsReport.pdf)

World Café: People and Skills and its Future Focus

After the lunch break, space and time was dedicated to the discussion by participants.

World Café Setting

The moderator explained briefly the aim and procedure of a World Café setting:

- Collect as many ideas and thoughts from participants as possible and
- Have the key words written on the paper „tablecloth“
- Benefit from 3 rounds of discussions (40 minutes each) with changing participants
- Each table should not have more than 8 participants including one host.
- While participants are invited to move to another table after each round, the table host is required to stay to keep record of the proceedings and
- to present the results to the plenary.
- Questions and topics were displayed on the tables for attendees to choose the ones, where they could contribute most efficiently

Questions

- *Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?*
- *On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them? (Topics on Education and Training and Labour Market und Social Inclusion, see below)*

Results

After 3 rounds of discussions with changing participation (55 persons still present) around the tables, hosts were invited to sum up the discussions and present key findings to the plenary: (See also images of the flip chart notes)

1. Quality and Efficiency of Education and Training Systems

Table host: Tina Saric

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Quality is not a national issue.
- Non-convergence of curricula
- Skills for labour market – redefinition of key competences

- Teachers: image, salaries, training

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

Systems

- Development of **EU framework** for standards
- Re-thinking of systems
- New **curricula**: cooperation of agencies for curricula and skills strategies. Curricula with more convergence will allow greater **mobility for learners**
- **Quality assurance**, external evaluation of QA

Learning and training

- Assessment of learning outcomes, comparable national practices, establish cooperation of experts
- Skills: output of adequate skills for labour market and life (**key competences**), invest in skills = invest in teachers and trainers
- Validation of prior learning to enable flexible learning pathways

Teachers

- Key issue = **teachers**, recruitment and training, (status, income, benefits, prospects for teachers)
- Intellectual property in education

Cooperation

- **Connection of education and business sectors**; involve business for future skills needs,
- Implementation of WBL and
- Training for trainers.

2. Relevant and High-Quality Knowledge, Skills and Competences

Table host: Petra Reiner

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Encourage cooperation with employers
- Traineeships
- Keep education systems update and flexible (transnational approach)
- Find basic common issues to build bridges

- Motivate teachers for changes, train for IT-skills
- Redefine key competences

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- Policies, actions, projects – promote **networking of stakeholders** in the countries
- Active labour market **policies**
- Investing in **infrastructure**
- **Cooperation with employers**, ministries and other policy makers
- Awareness of employers to employ **people with disabilities**
- Emphasize **WBL**, encourage employers
- **Flexible learning paths** (online learning)
- **Performance based funding** for successful schools
- Shift focus from knowledge to **skills and competences**
- Increasing **IT competences**

3. Lifelong Learning and Learning Mobility

Table host: Andreas Stockhammer

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

Learning mobility

- U-shape in risk of automation for younger and older people alike
- Brain drain – nostrification of studies, recognition of prior learning (EU perspective). Issues to be addressed on EU level
- Future of education: LLL to start at early age, adaptability, motivation of learners

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- **Career guidance**, LL perspective: teachers, employers and authorities need to know how to develop career guidance on **regional level**
- Use **technology** for work and learning
- NQF connected to **EQF**, for better employability
- **Motivation for teachers**, learners/employees and employers

- **Train the trainers**, teachers, structures
- We need: **more critical thinking**, problem solving capabilities
- Education has to be adaptable, flexible, **inclusive** (virtual) **mobility**, online learning to acquire IT-skills

4. Inclusive Education, Equity, Common Values and Sustainable Development

Table host: Gerhard Mosshammer

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Brain drain/brain gain/brain work
- Integration of Roma
- Working environment, working conditions change (not full time jobs, changing jobs, flexibility), work life balance
- Lack of skilled labourers (which competences will be needed in future?)
- Need of critical thinking, team work abilities
- Youth empowerment, Active citizenship
- Growing gap between rich and poor

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- All are important – how to prioritize? A **broad approach** is needed (inhomogeneous countries)
- **Roma**: implement human rights (not so popular): Social investment, network for social cohesion in society
- Support systems towards societies with **equal chances**: Integration of children with **special needs**, integration of **migrants**
- Inclusive education 50+ – extra efforts to attract **older learners**
- Policies should support more **social enterprises**
- Combine **school + out of school** learning (formal, non-informal L.)
- New approaches in VET, **peer learning**, **peer counselling** (learn from each other) networking for innovative projects
- Customized, **individualized education**: what to prepare for, better quickly adapt for future (unknown) needs, more **flexibility**. General approach rather than specific education (requires open and flexible education systems)
- Remove barriers in **nostrification** of degrees

- New skills: Integrated thinking, back to **key competences**, soft skills more relevant than specialists.

5. Know-How-Exchange / Cooperation in Labour Market Policies

Table host: Anna Gherganova

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Skills mismatch
- Lack of skilled workforce
- Missing coordination between education and labour market systems
- Functioning labour market information systems
- Attractiveness of public employment services
- VET
- youth unemployment, NEETS (“Not in Education, Employment or Training“)

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- Address **skills mismatch by lifelong learning** and improvement of education results as well as a
- better **connection between education and labour market**
- develop intersectional cooperation
- Improve job market **information** system to gain information for evidence based development of measures for active labour market policies
- develop VET in less developed countries, increase attractiveness of **dual training**
- focus on capacity building on **active labour market policies**
- Capacity building for the staff of public employment services
- implementation of **social enterprises** for inclusion of vulnerable groups
- better targeting of **employment policies**, international cooperation
- Common **peer learning program**, knowledge exchange, peer counselling
- Youth: **improve transition from school to work**, explore reasons for young people not to be in education – plan the right intervention, **skills development, internships** for young people
- **Recognition of non-formal learning**

6. Digitalization and Innovation in the World of Work

Table host: Marie Hejnys

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- A lot has been said about education of skills in IT to avoid digital divide (by age, gender, region, high and low skilled work)
- Lack of knowledge and skills in IT
- Precarious work, platforms, crowd work without social security
- How to adapt old systems to new circumstances without excluding/exploiting people
- Monopoles block innovation that might benefit societies
- how to prevent tax evasion

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- Break monopolies, **bottom-up-approach**
- **Institutional cooperation** to avoid misuse of concept of digitalization
- Digitization as a horizontal topic “**digitization mainstreaming**”
- **Information campaigns** to raise awareness
- Necessary **regulation** versus over-regulation
- **Special programs** for women, **rural areas** in ICT learning
- Programs for digital literacy (for all)
- Organization of work could be more **flexible** (works can benefit), **reduction of working time**, Fair negotiation of new modalities of work
- Enhance social dialogue
- IT in public services
- Policies for social protection/against unemployment

7. Integration of Vulnerable Groups into the Labour Market

Table host: Lydia Anstiss

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Unknown inactive people – active program subsidies for vulnerable groups linked to salary

- Challenge: who are inactive people? People on the fringes of society
Definition of vulnerable groups: marginalised poor, difficult to employ, unskilled, older rural population, migrants, asylum seekers, women, young people from state-care homes, homeless....
- Traditional family culture and structure which deprive members of equal opportunities
- Infrastructure for disabled
- People in vulnerable groups become inactive, when they feel they are not part of the active society

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- Positive: eastern EU countries have started **social enterprises** and outreach programs
- Attention should be given to vulnerable groups: **no limitation of subsidies**, companies should be **forced to employ certain %** from vulnerable groups
- **Financial support** for them
- Specialised targeted **action plan+ funding**
- Policy: **sharing of responsibility** between vulnerable groups, policy makers, action groups and business
- **More tailor made programs for specific groups** (ask Roma and others, what they need)
- Countries should think about (possibly prioritize) business incubation, **promote and support small local businesses**. New models of entrepreneurships (what can they offer?)
- EU cannot compete with Asian labour market, so which values can we look at? Good education for persons, **different view on work is needed**; salary work is not the only type of work. Society would be different without the unpaid work, not highly respected now.

8. Fighting Poverty and Promoting Social Inclusion for All

Table host: Stephan Barth

Which are the main developments and most pressing challenges within this field?

- Rural/urban divide
- Vicious circle of poverty, High risk, invisibility of marginalised groups
- How to guarantee access to education from child to adult?
- Is there political will to really fight poverty

On which of these issues EUSDR/PA9 should put emphasis on? Which policies, action and projects are needed to address them?

- Long term policy: **start form early childhood** (to run 10 years and more)
- **State benefit approach**, versus services with incentives
- Real **consultations beginning with people's concerns**, case work, testing (instead of centralized policy execution)
- Decision making and **participation on a local level** – providing local budgets
- How to **involve migrants?**
- Respect **culture and identity**
- **Diversification** of provision
- Fight **fear of failure; failure as a learning opportunity**

The Way Forward – Joint Reflection and Exchange

Wrap up and presentation of results

Summary of presentations, most relevant items shared by the discussion groups, recommendations of topics to be addressed by EUSDR/PA9 with regard to future policies, action and projects:

- **EU framework and policies to support national policies** on innovation in education and training systems
- **Teachers and trainers** (training, status, motivation, skills development)
- Redefinition of key competences (including critical thinking, not just employability in focus)
- Cooperation between **education and business sector**
- **Mobility** of learners
- **Recognition** of prior learning and nostrification
- **Network** of stakeholders
- **Quality assurance** as transnational approach
- **Career guidance**: LLL to start at early age
- **Inclusiveness**

- Flexibility of education systems, **individualization of learning**, tailor made programs, diversification of provision
- Consultations with **people concerned** (Roma, migrants, women ...)
- Support children with **special needs**, integration of **migrants**; extra effort to attract older learners, programs for women, rural areas etc.
- Policies for **social protection/against unemployment**
- Peer learning, peer counselling
- Active labour market policies based on improved job market **information** systems
- Emphasize **WBL**, encourage employers
- increase attractiveness of **dual training**
- Promote **IT competences**
- **Address skills mismatch** by lifelong learning
- Organization of work could be more **flexible**), reduction of working time, Fair negotiation of new modalities of work
- Enhance social dialogue
- **A different view on work** is needed (salary work/unpaid work)
- Fight fear of failure, **failure as a learning opportunity**
- Policies should support more **social enterprises**
- Easier **transition from school to work**, skills development, internships for young people
- Promote and support **small local businesses**
- **Funding, investment in education** as priority in policy

Closing Remarks and Outlook

The poster with the results of the **graphic recording** was presented and it's designer, **Eva Rudovsky** was invited to make a few comments to it. (See images)

Priority Area Coordinators **Jürgen Schick** and **Roland Hanak** thanked the audience for the constructive discussion and suggestions for future politics, which on the one hand confirm the main working areas in PA9 and contain a lot of new ideas on the other. The Steering Group of PA9 will further discuss the findings of the 6th Stakeholder conference and will try to make a synthesis of the various inputs given by the attendees.

After the closing sessions, hosts had invited all remaining participants to the common dinner.

End of the conference 17.00

Feedback

Participants were invited to make use of sli.do app one more time and to answer the feedback questions online before they left:

(Highly satisfied = 1 2 3 4 5 6 = not at all satisfied)

How satisfied have you been with the conference in total?

1 (=highly satisfied): 50%; 2: 30%; 3: 13%; 4: 7%; 5: 0%; 6: 0% (= not at all satisfied)

To what extent have your expectations been fulfilled regarding the content?

1 (=highly fulfilled): 40%; 2: 37%; 3: 20%; 4: 3%; 5: 0%; 6: 0% (= not at all fulfilled)

How satisfied have you been with the organizational structure of the conference?

1 (=highly satisfied): 53%; 2: 40%; 3: 3%; 4: 3%; 5: 0%; 6: 0% (= not at all satisfied)

How satisfied are you with your contribution to the debate?

1 (=highly satisfied): 50%; 2: 33%; 3: 17%; 4: 0%; 5: 0%; 6: 0% (= not at all satisfied)

To what extent do you take back new ideas regarding the field of EUSDR to our everyday work?

1 (=very high extent): 27%; 2: 57%; 3: 13%; 4: 3%; 5: 0%; 6: 0% (= not at all)

(See also Annex poll-results.pdf)