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MEETING OF THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING 21-22 May 2015, BRUSSELS

MINUTES

1. OPENING AND WELCOME BY THE CHAIR

The meeting was chaired by Mr Detlef Eckert (Director - Europe 2020: Employment policies, DG EMPL) on the first day and by Mr Joao Santos (Acting Head of Unit, DG EMPL C5, Vocational training and adult education) on the second day.

In response to previous expressed concerns of some members of the ACVT, Mr Eckert underlined the good cooperation with DG EAC since the transfer of the VET and adult education files to DG EMPL. This cooperation includes important aspects of relevance to VET and Adult education such as the ET2020 review, the 2015 Joint Report, cooperation on the ET2020 Working groups and the implementation of the ERASMUS+ programme.

On the European Semester, he underlined the recommendations included in the proposals by the Commission had been reduced considerably in order to ensure a stronger focused message to Governments, while striving to keep the effectiveness of the content. He reminded that the Employment guidelines, where VET was well anchored, are under discussion at the Council and Parliament. He overviewed the agenda and invited participants to actively comment and ask questions during the meeting.

Mr Santos apologized for the late sending of some documents due to reasons beyond the control of the Commission.

2. COMMISSION INITIATIVE 'PROMOTING INTEGRATION AND EMPLOYABILITY IN THE LABOUR MARKET'

The Chair introduced the agenda topic explaining the different elements of the Commission initiative in the framework of its work programme 2015 (the increase of pre-financing for the Youth Guarantee; long term unemployment recommendation and skills agenda).

The Commission (Mr Gelu Calacean, EMPL C3, Mobility and employment services) gave a presentation on the grounds underpinning the long term unemployment initiative. Long term unemployment has grown and affects particularly low skilled adults. There is a need to further coordinate support services to this group and to individualize service.

A public consultation had just closed and work on assessing the impact was ongoing.

The Chair highlighted the relevance of this initiative for VET, as often this phenomenon was linked to skills mismatches and the need of training. He proposed that once the recommendation would be adopted, the ACVT could discuss its implementation.

The Trade unions' representatives asked whether social partners had been consulted.

Mr Calacean explained that the cross sectoral and sectoral Social partners at national and EU level participated in a consultation workshop on the initiative.

Mr Joao Santos outlined broadly the ideas on the forthcoming Commission initiative related to skills. It consisted of three priorities and would concern all sectors of education: understanding better the demand for skills from business; investing in education and training to develop skills for employability; support validation and recognition of skills and qualifications.

The UK Governmental representative asked if this initiative would replace the European Area for skills and qualifications (EASQ).

About links to ESF (BE Q), the Chair explained that it could be possible to revise the ESF priorities at the moment of the midterm review in 2017, but not in the immediate future. The EASQ would be part of a more comprehensive Skills initiative.

The German Employers considered the initiative was still very general. They asked if there will be a special focus on C-VET to address adults' needs, as now a lot was being focused on I-VET, apprenticeships and youth. They underlined the importance of tackling also shortages in STEM and digital skills.

The Chair confirmed these elements (DE Empl Q) would be included in the initiative and reminded that one of the new medium term deliverables concerned C-VET.

The Latvian Governmental member underlined that it was crucial to translate the initiative into concrete results, for example the identification and development of qualifications requested on the market. They agreed also to focus more on adults.

ETUC welcomed the integration of the EASQ into a more comprehensive frame by DG EMPL, in order to tackle the skills issues in a broader perspective. They asked for an update on an expert group foreseen to be created last year following the public consultation about the EASQ and enquired about how Social partners will be involved/consulted before finalization of the initiative.

The Chair explained that a consultation framework on the topic would be set up (while not sure if in the form of an expert group) and a new discussion in the ACVT in December might take place (if the timeframe of the initiative will allow it). He underlined that at present all skills initiatives of the Commission services were being brought under one umbrella and coordination was ongoing.

3. ET2020 JOINT REPORT – STATE OF PLAY

Ms Benedicte Robert (DG EAC, Europe 2020, Investment plan, ET2020) updated the Committee on the timing of the Joint Report (to be adopted in November 2015) and the latest

policy debate in the Education Council few days earlier (importance of employability, but with a similar emphasis on inclusion and citizenship). The Ministers broadly emphasized basic skills, in particular in VET (ES, PT, AT)

The Trade unions' representative asked if the Joint Report would be discussed also in the EPSCO Council and welcomed the conclusions of the policy debate which were in line with their suggestions sent to DG EAC earlier on. They requested clarifications about possible future benchmarks (AL, ICT, apprenticeships etc.) and the adoption of more focused priority areas. This latter will be included in the COM proposal to be adopted early September.

The Chair replied that so far it was not planned that EPSCO would discuss the Joint Report, but this would be up to the Luxemburgish Presidency.

4. THE 2015 VET REVIEW

The Commission (Mr Jan Varchola, DG EMPL, Unit C5 Vocational training and adult education) gave an overview of the changes to the medium term deliverables, since the December ACVT, following the DGVT meeting in April and 2 meetings of the ACVT Bureau.

The LV Presidency had tabled the day before a proposal for a "preamble" and "way forward" to the new VET deliverables and explained no substantial changes had been made in the document but the structure had been revised. They informed the meeting that comments would be welcome by 29 May.

The Chair reminded that to add a political frame for Ministers had been suggested at the DGVT meeting (21-22 April 2015, Riga).

The UK Governmental expressed concerns about the Minister presence at the event and asked to clarify what were the expected outcomes of the meeting.

The Latvian Presidency gave an overview of the agenda of the event, which foresaw breakout sessions with questions for discussion between the Ministers. The intention was to have a Ministerial discussion to place VET high in the political agenda and think about the future of the Copenhagen process.

The Chair welcomed the possibility of real discussion between Ministers in the breakout sessions.

Trade Unions' representatives regretted the late submission of the new version of the Riga conclusions and expressed reservations about the preamble, wishing this would reflect better the quality and inclusiveness of VET. They were concerned about the way forward introduced in the document and mentioning VET providers' associations in the beginning of the draft Conclusions.

The LV Presidency (on behalf of Governmental group) explained that general support had been expressed in the interest group meeting; nevertheless, requests for modifications had been raised, in particular some terminology and definitions would need to be looked at (status vs attractiveness, guidance, rationalize, transversal competences).

The Employers' representatives indicated a general agreement with the document, while the preamble and the way forward should be revised, in particular when referring to Social partners. They were willing to provide additional written comments.

The MT Trade Union proposed not to have a preamble (which was also echoed by ETUC) but keep the main text which had been agreed already by several bodies. The Turkish Trade unions welcomed the content and the fact their previous suggestions were taken on board. They suggested keeping consistency of terminology throughout the document.

The VET providers' representative wished to make stronger the reference (also mentioned in the ET2020 presentation earlier) to social inclusion and citizenship (based on the references already there in the medium term deliverables MTDs and preamble).

The Belgian representative recommended not changing the core of the text which had been agreed earlier; comments should concern only the new parts (preamble, way forward).

The NL, DK and DE Governmental members welcomed the idea of the preamble to base the Ministers' discussion, most likely as a short document without making any changes to the substance of the rest of the Conclusions. The BE NL and DE Governmental representatives expressed concerns about the introduction of new terms like international qualifications and 'beyond 2020'.

The Chair proposed a compromise solution to have a political introductory text (as requested at the DGVT meeting) including the way forward, to frame the political discussion of Ministers (possibly renaming it to a declaration). Changes to other parts of the document should be strictly limited. On 10 June a final version should be sent out to participants to the Riga event of 21-22 June.

Participants mostly supported the proposal.

Ms. Lore Schmid from Cedefop presented a possible approach for monitoring the future MTDs, taking into account the demand for impact assessment and different situation and traditions of countries. Issues to be considered are that the deliverables are very broad and slightly overlap while policy options might need to be further defined/broken down. The challenges of a fully-fledged impact assessment were discussed. The approach, which would combine qualitative and quantitative elements where possible, would entail that each country establishes national objectives/targets (Cedefop would be ready to support this process). In addition to collecting factual information through its reference network (ReferNet), findings of other Cedefop activities will also be used (e.g. country support on apprenticeships, Cedefop's support to the work on European tools). Discussion of findings with ACVT and DGVT at/in the context of their meetings would ensure their involvement throughout the reporting period. Cedefop intends to design approach and time schedule so that the data can also serve other information purposes, e.g. background information for the Commission's work on the European Semester. An interim report would be provided in 2017 before a final report in 2020.

ETUC welcomed Cedefop's presentation of the monitoring challenges. Social partners should be better involved (via collection of information via questionnaires) in view of improving cooperation with stakeholders at national level.

The BE Governmental member proposed to have more time to consult on the complex issue of monitoring, ideally through setting up a working group.

The Employers' representative asked what the proposed methodology was for setting objectives and National targets and said that this needed further thought.

The Latvian Presidency explained that monitoring would be also an item of the DGVT on 21 June.

The UK Governmental expressed concerns about adding new reporting (in addition to ET2020 and the European Semester) and the link to future initiatives, like the Skills agenda.

The FI Governmental representative was concerned about the potential variety of national targets, which would be set by Governments, and the link with the Copenhagen process, which has been in place since 2002. They were worried about the increasing number of tasks for Cedefop.

The Chair explained that further comments would be welcome by 3 June and a new document for the DGVT meeting of 21 June would be circulated.

Ms Madlen Serban, Director of the ETF explained that candidate countries would be willing to participate to the exercise once the criteria are defined. She explained they used already ex-ante conditionalities for assessment of different policy options. She called for streamlined reporting also for candidate countries to avoid excessive burden, as they had obligations also towards DG NEAR.

Ms Mara Brugia, Deputy Director of Cedefop underlined that monitoring is only possible if targets and indicators are predefined, to allow assessment in cooperation with countries and in full agreement with them, otherwise this process will fail. A balance should be found between effective assessment and constraints for reporting.

5. EUROPEAN ALLIANCE FOR APPRENTICESHIPS (EAfA)

The Commission, Mr Norbert Schöbel and Ms Helen Hoffmann (DG EMPL, Unit C5, Vocational training and adult education) presented the latest news on the EAfA and provided an overview of the recently conducted on line survey among the stakeholders of the Alliance. A summary report on the survey results was to be available soon on the new EAfA website.

The French Governmental representative presented the recently submitted commitment by France on the EAfA following the reforms undertaken in 2014 and renewed efforts to promote apprenticeships, their attractiveness for youngsters and companies and simplifying requirements for companies while putting into place a quadripartite body for concertation.

Mr Robert Plummer, on behalf of Employers, presented their project "The cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes – making the business case for apprenticeships" which involves also EU VET providers. The project concerns 3 specific sectors and its expected outcomes would include ways to encourage greater involvement of employers in (designing) apprenticeships schemes and looking at possible ways to strengthen social dialogue in this area. Final outcomes should be available in the spring of 2016.

Ms Agnes Roman from ETUC introduced their project on a quality framework for apprenticeships, bringing together 5 economic sectoral social partners aiming at setting up a

list of quality indicators for apprenticeships, based on EU transparency tools. Results should be available in the first semester of 2016.

Upon request by Turkey, the Commission explained the definition of apprenticeships falling under the Alliance. No specific determination of time is made, but in principle it should be above six months.

The CZ Trade union welcomed the increased visibility for the EAfA. They regretted that in their country the Ministry did not involve the trade unions in preparing the commitment. They expressed willingness to promote the EAfA in the country.

UEAPME underlined that one political focus of the EAfA is to involve especially SMEs and that in the framework of the cost effectiveness project they are exploring the role of intermediary bodies to assist SMEs in offering apprenticeships.

The German Governmental representative highlighted the long term nature of the Alliance, to implement apprenticeships in countries which are less experienced in the field and make their efforts sustainable.

The Chair highlighted that the European Commission intends to mobilize new stakeholders to join the EAfA before the Riga event on 22 June to mark its two years of existence. He added that the EAfA has not yet reached enough companies. He indicated some concrete steps for 2015, possibly a new call for proposals under Erasmus+ to support SMEs to engage in apprenticeships followed by a matching conference with Cedefop.

Mr Schöbel explained that reflections on a long term strategy have started in order to address the objectives of the Alliance. This year, the focus would be on how to increase the supply, notably SMEs offering apprenticeships. He also invited stakeholders to come with proposals for thematic workshops in 2016.

6. EUROPEAN MULTILINGUAL CLASSIFICATION OF SKILLS, COMPETENCES, QUALIFICATIONS AND OCCUPATIONS (ESCO)

The Commission (Mr Pedro Chaves, DG EMPL, Skills and qualifications) introduced the latest news about ESCO following a presentation in December 2013. He corrected some information in the background note sent, about the involvement of one Belgian stakeholder, the VDAB.

He informed that the first full version of ESCO should be ready earlier than foreseen, in principle at the end 2016, with 27 fully mapped economic sectors for skills competences and knowledge. He confirmed that the current ESCO portal is only a pilot version.

A new Member States working group on ESCO would be created, with governmental and European social partners experts, starting to meet from October. Mr Chaves explained that the mission of this group would be to act as consultation and information forum on ESCO between Commission, Member States' authorities and European social partners, as well to prepare the grounds for the implementation of the future EURES Regulation.

Information on qualifications would be integrated in ESCO later on, as technical requirements are being finalized for the uploading of national and international qualifications.

The main questions concerned the role of the expert group and the governance of ESCO (IT, DE, DK Gov), how to ensure the quality of the information about sectors going to be mapped via on line consultation, inclusion of regulated professions and links with Europass (HU, DK).

Mr Chaves explained the ESCO Board was composed mainly by stakeholders and social partners and has a strategic role for advice and dissemination of ESCO while the Maintenance Committee approves and assesses the quality of occupational profiles. The new Member States working group on ESCO will be officially composed of MS and social partners' representatives to liaise with the Commission on ESCO. He explained that the legislative proposal on EURES being currently discussed at the European Parliament will foresee the obligation of MS to make their national classifications for employment systems compatible with a "European classification" (in principle ESCO) by 2017. The Member States working group on ESCO would also cope with the implementation of this future EURES Regulation

The results of the online consultation will be assessed by the ESCO Terminology Experts Group. Information about regulated professions will be available in the system as well. The learning outcomes format is being discussed with the EQF Advisory group in partnerships with Cedefop and will be taken on board also by ESCO.

Business Europe enquired about whether an impact assessment of this ambitious project, whose goal could be to increase mobility and matching opportunities, would be carried out.

BE Trade union as ESCO Board member underlined that ESCO will help to understand better qualifications and asked some details about the Member States working group on ESCO (that would include European social partners) while German trade union suggested ESCO could be the tool for linking skills and the labour market, but with a broad approach, not narrowed only to the needs of the labour market.

Governmental representatives (FI and UK) expressed concerns about the link of national qualifications databases with ESCO and the appropriate assessment of the tool, to ensure stakeholders, employers and users are not lost within the full system of tools.

The Commission (Mr Chaves) clarified that an assessment would be possible once the system is fully developed but criteria were already being established for that purpose. The MS representatives to the Member States working group on ESCO will be decided by MS. He reminded that the on line consultation was approved by the ESCO Board, and their remarks had been taken into account. He explained that one of the main aims of ESCO (once qualifications will be included) is to bridge the world of work with education. The national databases will be linked to ESCO and it would be important to create technical support at MS level allowing for any update in national qualifications databases to come automatically into ESCO. Development and updating of national qualifications databases, including new technical requirements, can benefit from EU funding. He replied to a Turkish question that candidate countries are not included in ESCO and ESCO will be used in 24 languages.

The German governmental representative proposed to continue discussions on ESCO in the next meeting.

7. GRAND COALITION FOR DIGITAL JOBS

Ms Lucilla Sioli, Head of Unit, DG CNECT, presented the challenges and needs in the EU about digital skills and highlighted some examples of pledges made by companies under the

Grand Coalition (GC) which aims at improving digital skills for teachers and trainers, including in the VET sector.

The UK Governmental representative underlined that it was important to provide digital skills to teachers for young children in addition to VET. DG CNECT acknowledged this and explained that their activities stretch to both (and even beyond) as they are complementary (to instil the skills as soon as possible) and mentioned some good examples existed also for primary school education.

ETUC welcomed the interesting examples and asked to inform better teachers unions' organizations and education employers. Their members were now focusing on pledges for the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, but ETUC would be willing to inform them also about this initiative. She underlined the example of the UK Trade unions which was presented in the previous ACVT.¹ DG CNECT welcomed the proposal and underlined that DG CNECT works closely with DG EMPL & EAfA - a commitment there, if tailored to digital, can be linked with the GC. Also in DG CNECT apprenticeships are considered very important and the Grand Coalition intends to promote them not just in the ICT sector but also in ICT-using companies. DG CNECT also recently started engaging with Trade Unions, confirming the need for more structured dialogue with more social partners.

The BE Trade Union pointed to the potential risk of linking schools commercially to specific companies under the GC. It also emphasised the alleged loss of jobs due to digitalization. DG CNECT pointed out that currently there are few alternatives. As to job losses due to digitisation, some statistics refer to the creation of 3 non-ICT but related jobs for each ICT job created. The net result is however not known yet.

The FI Government underlined that the coding initiative is very fashionable but further reflections should be undertaken about what is really necessary and useful for the VET sector. DG CNECT highlighted that coding is also used to refer to a more general computing science program and to smart use of technologies. It also teaches computational, analytical, logical thinking, and creativity. Coding can be taught on a project based/cross-curricular basis, not necessarily as a subject per se. Exchange of best practices would be very useful.

The German governmental representative underlined the different elements and interests at stake by the initiative and considered they should be further deepened in future meetings (users' skills, ICT specialists, the impact on new technologies on all profile occupations, on line learning, digital content, etc.).

8. EUROPEAN SEMESTER : OUTLINE OF THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL FOR CSRs

The Commission (Mr Jeroen Jutte, Head of Unit, DG EMP C1, European employment strategy and governance) provided clarifications and next steps related to the country specific recommendations (CSRs).

The Chair underlined there had been a reduction in CSRs to concentrate on those priority ones possible to implement within 12-18 months. Recommendations are based on the country reports produced by the Commission in February, as mentioned in the document sent to the Committee.

¹ subsequently sent by DG EMPL to DG CNECT

Trade Unions' representatives welcomed the document received and considered there should be more involvement of Social partners, in particular at National level, in the preparation of CSRs.

The Employers' representative reported positive comments made by some of their members about the approach followed during the Semester by the Commission.

Ms Madlen Serban from the ETF highlighted that this year also candidate countries were involved in the economic governance process and were engaged in reforms, as for example, Turkey is undertaking major efforts in the field of human capital.

The Commission agreed that CSRs were of a general nature, but should be seen in connection with the country reports prepared by the Commission (LT Q, BE TU Q). The Commission gave a detailed overview of the Social partners' involvement at European and National level and reminded that stakeholders will be consulted about how to improve further the consultations (ETUC Q). Replying to Italian Trade unions, the Commission declared that it was aware of the claims about consultation on school policy by national social partners, but welcomed the wave of reform taking place in the country, while still implementation would need to be thoroughly monitored.

9. ECVET DEVELOPMENTS

The Commission (Mr Carlo Scatoli, DG EMPL C5, Vocational training and adult education) informed on action taken to follow up on the 2014 external evaluation of the European credit transfer system for VET (ECVET). In particular, consistently with the evaluation conclusions, two objectives were being pursued in 2015: the governance structure was being revised to include a policy group (the current ECVET users' group) and a network of bodies responsible for ECVET at national level; a working group had been set up to learn from national approaches to using units of learning outcomes. Two such national experiences were presented by guest speakers from FI and BE FR, who informed on how ECVET played a role in comprehensive reforms at system level.

Ms Sirkka-Liisa Kärki from the Finnish National Board of Education explained how the implementation of ECVET has contributed to the reform of the VET qualification system based on the learning outcome approach. ECVET units of learning outcomes would be introduced in all VET qualifications as per August 2015, with the aim of making individual learning and qualification pathways more flexible.

Mr Alain Bultot from Europe Formation presented the role of ECVET in the design of the recent reform of the VET system of the French Community of Belgium. Units of learning outcomes, which can be certified separately, have been introduced in particular to fight early school leaving.

The German Governmental representative welcomed the examples provided and called for a clear strategy concerning the future of this tool in line with the recommendations by the external evaluation and regretted the delay in the preparation of the Commission report on ECVET.

ETUC considered the practices presented were very good, also as far as involvement of social partners was concerned, and stressed the need for social partners' involvement in the governance bodies of ECVET.

The FI Governmental representative asked clarifications about the composition of the governance groups and the future plans for synergies among the European tools, which should not be taken in isolation. Also other governmental representatives stressed the efforts of Member States to apply all the European instruments, including ESCO, EQAVET and asked to consider them all together, while implementation should be flexible.

The Commission (Mr Scatoli) explained that the composition of the users' group would not change, with one governmental and one non-governmental member designated by each country, plus European social partners and stakeholders. The delay of the ECVET report, which should be released in summer 2015, was due to the move of the VET portfolio to DG EMPL and the need to adapt to a different policy calendar. As explained however this had caused no delay in relevant developments. Longer term developments will need coordination with other instruments, with particular reference to the revision of the Europass decision and the EQF Recommendation.

10. EURES STATE OF PLAY

The Commission (Mr Doede Ackers, Deputy Head of Unit, DG EMPL, Mobility and employment services) presented the state of play on the Regulation on EURES (COM (2014) 6 final). The aim of the proposal is to provide easy access to job vacancies and CV's at EU level through the EURES portal, to provide clear information to job seekers and employers where and how to find jobs in other EU countries, to establish minimum support services on intra-EU labour mobility and to enable the portal to do online matching. EPSCO reached a general approach in December last year. The Employment Committee aims to take position at its session in June this year. On the inclusion of traineeships and apprenticeships considered as work (in accordance with the legal basis of Article 46 TFEU), the Council modified the proposal of the Commission and introduced two exceptions (those publicly funded and being part of curricula). He also informed the Committee about the pilot project for the inclusion of apprenticeships and traineeships. First, in the autumn this year country fiches will be put on the portal, with clear information on where to find information on offers and further support as well as whether other EU nationals are eligible. Second, on the feasibility of EU-wide matching of offers and applications in this area, a study will be conducted until spring next year. The study will look at the experiences of the German programme 'The Job of my Life' which has enrolled EU nationals (notably from ES) into German apprenticeship programmes over the last years. The assignment is to draw lessons from this experience for a possible EU wide matching, including, where appropriate, for traineeships.

In reply to questions from BE Trade unions, the Commission agreed to make available an information note on the Regulation and the relationship with ESCO that was sent to the Education Committee.

The CY Trade unions' representative drew attention to the need for appropriate support to young people (mentor system) and it was agreed that this aspect should also be examined in the study.

The Dutch governmental representative commented on the fact that jobs may be substituted with apprenticeships.

Mr Ackers explained that the intention is to offer a range of opportunities to people under EURES; both job vacancies and offers for apprenticeships and traineeships would be on the portal and clearly distinguished, so that people can make an informed individual choice. In reply to Business Europe, it was explained that the aim of the pilot and the future provisions under the Regulation would be to facilitate mobility of EU nationals into apprenticeship programmes in full in other EU countries (and not just for short periods as part of the completion of a national programme, which can be supported by Erasmus +).

11. INFORMATION NOTE ON EDUCATION AND TRAINING TOPICS

The Chair invited the meeting to ask questions or make comments on the topics presented in the information note, which also includes recent publications by Cedefop and ETF, which could be presented in a future meeting, if participants would find it useful.

ETUC thanked for the information about the Calls of DG EMPL and regretted that for Erasmus+ there were problems for EU level organizations to apply as applicant.

The Maltese Trade unions requested clarifications about the expert group members and the registry of the expert groups.

The Latvian Governmental representatives asked about the other 4 ET2020 working groups which were the responsibility of DG EAC, in addition to the reports on the VET and AL working groups.

The Commission, Mr Santos, took good note on the remark about Erasmus+ and explained that this was linked to the way calls under KA1 and KA2 were designed originally. He informed the meeting that a future call on apprenticeships which was being prepared would try to include also EU organizations to take advantage of their experiences. He proposed to send information about the other working groups (LV Q) which were relevant for VET. He underlined VET providers were important VET stakeholders for implementation of policies at the grass root levels and they had a less structured representation compared to Social partners.

The Commission, Ms Anna Barbieri (DG EMPL C5, Vocational training and adult education, explained the purpose of the registry for expert groups (mainly transparency towards the public) and that for the time being the newly created group was composed of 6 EU Associations, but in the future membership could be revisited.

12. LABOUR MARKET OUTCOMES OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING: EVIDENCE FROM LATEST RESEARCH

The Commission (Mr Mantas Sekmokas, DG EMPL C5, Vocational training and adult education) explained that the two studies being presented were complementary despite the one from CRELL was more narrow in scope. The studies explore the links between education, skills and labour market outcomes, on the basis of the new data from the Labour force survey and PIAAC (Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies). He also informed the meeting that the countries who had not yet taken part in the PIAAC survey would be able to receive support under Erasmus+ to join the survey.

Ms Valentina GOGLIO from JRC-CRELL highlighted the technical report 'Education and youth labour market outcomes: the added value of VET', based on recent LFS data, showing that VET graduates had better labour market outcomes compared to graduates from general education. The data could be analysed more in-depth for the Education and training monitor in 2015.

Ms Glenda QUINTINI from OECD presented a new study² 'The effects of VET on adult skills and wages: what can we learn from PIAAC', providing in-depth analysis of what PIAAC can tell about the skills and labour market outcomes from VET. VET graduates had on average lower literacy and numeracy skills than those with general education qualifications (as VET is foreseen to focus more on occupational skills). However VET promotes employability, particularly at ISCED level 3 and 4. There is a negative probability of employment for ISCED 5 (nevertheless data is still too limited), but the latter has positive effect on hourly wages. She explained that positive effect of VET weakens with age and that effects of VET on ESL were not easy to measure.

Social partners' representatives remarked the limited nature of data for certain countries, asked for a cautious approach in its interpretation and to consider other levels of comparison, while taking into account also the Cedefop study of 2013.

Ms Lore Schmid, from Cedefop, stated that the findings of JRC-CRELL confirmed those of Cedefop's analysis of the 2009 LFS ad-hoc module, the first exercise of this kind. She also commented on findings/interpretation that relate to progression from upper secondary VET to higher education (need to consider types and purpose of VET, direct progression opportunities and others), the challenge of data at higher ISCED levels and difference in salary systems which influence VET benefits.

The remarks were taken on board by CRELL and OECD and the Chair underlined that the debate was very important for the future development of VET policies. The finding about VET being less effective on foundation skills makes all the more the case for a new MTD on key competences.

13. UPDATE BY THE UPCOMING LUXEMBOURGISH PRESIDENCY

Mr Antonio De Carolis from the Luxembourgish future Presidency overviewed the priorities of their Presidency and the main events. In the field of VET and Adult education, the DGVT meeting would take place on 16-17 November (main topics : quality assurance, adult education and work based learning) followed by a Conference on 17-18 November, on the Youth Guarantee (YG), to which also National YG coordinators would be invited.

The LV Governmental representative wished good luck to the upcoming Presidency and took the occasion as rotating Presidency chairing the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) to ask the Commission if in the future the network could be financed by DG EMPL as guidance is very strongly linked to employability.

Good note was taken by the Commission.

² http://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/social-issues-migration-health/the-effects-of-vocational-education-on-adult-skills-and-wages_5jrxfmjvw9bt-en

14. AOB AND CLOSING OF THE MEETING

The Chair clarified that several documents would be sent soon to the participants and overviewed the next steps to be undertaken before the Riga event of 21-22 June. He also informed the meeting of the upcoming events relevant for VET.

The next meeting of the Advisory Committee would take place on 17-18 December (17 December group meetings and 18 December plenary meeting). He underlined that following the discussions in the ACVT Bureau, the minutes of the meetings of ACVT and DGVT will be exchanged among the two bodies.

He thanked the interpreters, the Latvian presidency for the work still ongoing and the participants for their active involvement in the discussions.