



“LEARNING BY DOING” PROJECT
“Targeted capacity building of VET partnerships
in the Danube Region for the effective modernisation of VET systems”

WP6-POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Deliverable D: 6.2.1 Memos on High-level Policy Roundtable

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Croatia

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1. Introduction

According to the description of WP6, Act.6.2 Policy recommendations (p.94 AF) the main purpose of the activities under this work package is to transfer the lessons learnt and conclusions drawn through the process to the policy level via regional and national strategies, elaborated jointly by each local VET partnership as stakeholders. In addition, policy recommendations will make proposals on concrete legal changes, regulatory modifications regarding the way of integration of WBL schemes into national VET system within the existing regulatory frameworks (i.e. new framework in the countries where legislation does not exist and revision in countries where it does).

Strategies are discussed at the high-level policy roundtables ending with ceremonial pledges, which state the way forward in the regional/national VET modernization (e.g. launching a smaller or bigger modification in the legislation, incorporating any new elements of WBL in vocational education).

This document will describe the results of the each partner country that will be integrated directly into the daily practices and organisational structure of the PP institutions either in forms of concrete legal text or by creating the necessary regulatory frameworks regarding the integration of WBL schemes into VET system.

2. Basic information on high-level roundtables

Country, venue, agenda and date of High-level roundtable:

Country: Croatia
Venue: Hotel Varaždin, Kolodvorska 19, 42000 Varaždin – Croatia
Date: 13th June 2019;
Time: 10,00 – 14,00 hrs

Agenda:

1. Welcome / Opening of the round table
2. Presentation of the project results and conclusions made at regional level
(derived from 1st and 2nd stakeholders meetings)
3. Presentation of the proposed model for modernization of WBL in Croatian VET developed and proposed by CCE Varaždin stakeholders group
4. Work / discussion with representatives of the target groups about the final policy recommendations and main areas of intervention (free discussion)
5. Proposals included in the pledge / Signing of the pledge
6. Closing of the Round table

Partner organizations and stakeholders institutions, participants in the RT:

CCE Varaždin
Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts
Croatian Employment Office – Regional Office Varaždin
VET Schools (principals, teachers, ...)
Companies` representatives
Greenomed project (interreg MED)

Strategic documents, discussed within the stakeholders meetings:

On 13th June 2019 the project partner PP2 – Croatian Chamber of Economy Varaždin County Chamber, organised the round table event where the Ministry of Economy with all the other respective target groups representatives discussed the project results and the final proposal of recommendations prepared by the Croatian project partner regarding the transition toward modernization of WBL in VET in Croatia.

At the end of April 2019, after the two previously held stakeholder meetings, the CCE Varaždin sent to all stakeholder institutions, organisations and decision makers, according to the existing list of stakeholders group, the new document to be evaluated and to be given opinion on.

At the very beginning of the round table, the project manager of CCE Varaždin presented the main challenges that the established stakeholders group has been discussing during implementation phases of the project and based upon which the proposition were made and strategic steps toward modernization of WBL in VET was drafted.

For the Croatian partners these meetings were the key events that gathered Varaždin County stakeholders involved in vocational education supported by the regional government, national Ministry of Economy and national Agency for vocational education and education of adults. Although the Croatian Chamber of Economy is not in any way officially involved in coordination of the VET system in Croatia, they managed to gather a unique stakeholders` platform for creating a model of cooperation and planning the steps toward the modernisation of WBL in VET. All of them were selected and invited with the same goal – to discuss common institutional, mind-set and cultural challenges that Varaždin County VET and economy faces and to identify possible solution by providing a platform for capacity building, cooperation, exchange of experience and good practice. This platform is also to consider the VET system and possible solutions in a context of Danube region and views from other, much more experienced countries in WBL like Germany or Austria.

The stakeholders meeting were a springboard for the pre-final discussion for examine, once again, the need for a strong and effective VET in Croatia and Varaždin County in order to start overcoming the barriers and boosting the human capital. All the stakeholders at the meeting unanimously supported and agreed that the regional/national development of the VET system has also take into account the recent impacts of technological transformation and needs of the companies / regional labour market. The education in VET and WBL has to be considered together with investing in expert human, educational institution and companies` capacity in order to start building and implementing an effective regional/national strategy for modern VET in WBL and all that with having a firm base in a structured and transparent way of cooperation and in the clear and consistent legal framework.

3. Summary of policy recommendations on the strategic document:

Please, describe the conclusions of the High-level round table discussion in your country

Steps toward modernisation of WBL in VET in Croatia have to enable flexibility and adaptability of the education system to the fast and hardly predictable changes on the labour market along with the proactive cooperation of all stakeholders in VET. Most of the findings obtained within the stakeholders meetings refer to 3-yrs vocational education in Croatia for which the institutional framework still has to provide room for students` access to a high-quality education in order to attract new quality candidates. The coordination of roles in relation to VET between respective ministries and agencies has to be intensified. In addition, employers and schools have a common interest and have to develop systematic cooperation and embrace the close bottom-up approach in development of curriculum and firm-based training and such cooperation has to be stimulated on both sides and such partnerships reinforced and supported adequately from the top.

If we want all these actions to be efficient and future challenges to be identified correctly and on time, a basic policy paradigm shift with a strong culture of monitoring and evaluating the whole process of VET is required. The steps toward transition must be based on following: decision-making has to allowed bottom-up approach and has to be subject to constant reviews and periodic audits, funding system has to be improved (regional + national + EU funds), gradual and logical sequence of introduction of changes in line with capacity of those who implement these changes; quality assurance, systematic monitoring and evaluation of results of the measures taken along with the autonomy of the all education institutions involved; clearly defined roles and outcomes of the each and every segment of education has to be assured; joint measures and awareness-raising activities that support and make VET more attractive have to be feasible and implemented by all stakeholders; carrier guidance to be introduced in elementary schools (if possible mandatory); effective support to companies that provide apprenticeships and motivate them to nominate qualified trainers and training facilities.

4. Sustainability of results and further developments

Please, describe your national pledge and launching ceremony. How do you plan to share the knowledge acquired in your organizations and on local/regional/national and international level?

The final regional conference in Varaždin, Croatia with representatives of all stakeholders was held on 13th June 2019 according to the agenda. After the previously announced, consulted and agreed on strategy for modernisation of VET and policy recommendations, all the participants unanimously emphasized the importance of bottom up approach, urgent dialogue and further capacity building and active involvement of all stakeholders especially the educational policy level, educational institutions and companies. The suggested recommendations for transition of VET toward more practical oriented training are found necessary to avoid losing a stream of skilled and qualified workers in the near future with policy responses linked primarily with regional labour market and companies` needs. Activities of the stakeholders are to be continued starting with their own individual initiatives regarding the addressing the barriers and creating more feasible pathway for students, teachers and company mentors but already defined model of inter- and intra-regional cooperation of all stakeholders is envisaged in the form of an Observatory – a platform to acquire and exchange new knowledge and information of WBL, promote VET and collaborate with other partner countries in this area.

The Croatian Chamber of Economy - Varaždin County Chamber will continuously work to respond to the needs of stakeholders by hosting, managing and supporting a well-functioning transnational network of knowledge, experts, good practices and other services to all involved in implementing VET with aim to serve the continuous improvement of VET in producing as successful and competent work force as possible in Croatia and consequently in the Danube region.

In parallel, we will continue with our efforts, in line with other responsible stakeholders and decision-makers, to define the role of the Chamber within the national VET system and to include as more active participation of the companies in the process of development of practical training programs in WBL in VET as possible.

The decision makers supported our tasks by signing the policy recommendations endorsing in this way the approach and efforts made by the regional stakeholders group established within the Learning by doing project.