

## 7<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE WESTERN BALKANS ALLIANCE FOR WORK-BASED LEARNING

17<sup>th</sup> December 2018

Rogner Hotel, Tirana, Albania

The 7<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning (the Meeting) was organized by Education Reform Initiative of South Eastern Europe (ERI SEE) and the KulturKontakt Austria (KKA). It gathered 23 participants (full list of participants attached as Annex 1), composed of representatives of agencies for vocational education and training from the region under the umbrella of the South Eastern Europe Vocational Education and Training Network (SEE VET Net), and regional chambers of economy under the umbrella of CIF from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

The purpose of the meeting was to reach the final agreement on the sectors and occupations to be dealt with at regional level, agreement on the methodology to be used for the development of regionally-based standards of occupations, to up-date the participants and members of the Western Balkans Alliance for Work-based Learning (WBA for WBL) on the status of the submitted ADA project proposal *Towards regionally-based standards of qualifications*, and on the status of the WBA4WBL on-line platform.

Ad 1)

In the opening and welcoming part, the participants were addressed Ms Tina Šarić, director of ERI SEE, Ms Ejvis Gishti, the director of the Albanian National Agency for VET and Qualifications of Albania and Ms Ines Muçostepa, president of the Union of Chambers of Commerce and Industry of Albania, and Ms Monika Mott, Head of Education at KulturKontakt. All the participants expressed their support for the work of the WBA for WBL, commitment of their institutions to the plans of the WBA for WBL in identifying joint sectors, occupations and methodology, and satisfaction for planned more intense further activities in this direction. They all agreed that these activities present an important step for the regional.

Ad 2)

The second session was organized in the form of the working groups, nationally-based, where the participants expressed their interest for priority sectors. After presenting the results of each group, the conclusion was made that the sectors further activities (planned within the ADA project) will be focusing in are the sectors of:

- Tourism and catering industry
- Construction industry.

The participants agreed that in the further expansion of activities the focus will also be to include the sectors of food production and processing. The issue of re-naming this sector as the agriculture was also raised.

Ad 3.)

In the third session the focus of discussion, again organized in the form of the working group nationally-composed, was on identifying the relevant occupations within the agreed sectors of tourism and catering industry, and construction industry.

After the presentation of results, negotiations and consultations, the following conclusions were made:

In the construction sector, priority occupations are:

- operator of finishing construction works (which combines the occupations of dry construction worker, floor-layer, tile-setter and painter). In some countries, for example Montenegro and Serbia, the operator of finishing construction works will be developed as a standard of qualification that includes the 4 mentioned occupations; whereas in other countries/economies it will be developed as 4 standards of occupations and then, depending on national regulations, into 4 standards of qualifications or merged into 1 standard of qualifications. For the purposes of the ADA project, it is relevant to note that within the scope of the project 4 standards of occupations – for dry construction worker, floor-layer, tile-setter and painter – will be developed, which will then be taken onwards according to national regulations.
- operator of construction machines
- construction technician.

After voting and negotiating, the focus of further activities is decided to be put on the operator of finishing construction works.

In the tourism sector, the identified priority occupations are:

- hotel and restaurant technician (occupation of coordinating hotel and restaurant activities dealing with catering, reception, kitchen, administration, tourist information, at the level 4 of EQF)
- tour operator (planning and designing tourist offers)
- bartender
- receptionist
- tourist technician (tour agency worker selling the tour packages and making administrative arrangements for them).

After negotiations, most of the countries/economies agreed for the occupation of the hotel and restaurant technician – Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia, and Kosovo\*.

Ad 4).

The draft methodology for the development of regionally-based standards of occupations, developed by the external expert Mr Despotović (Faculty of Philosophy) was briefly discussed. It was concluded

that the draft methodology presents the solid basis for general concept, but that for the regional purposes further agreements need to be made regarding more concrete steps.

First of all, the participants agreed that, since each economy has its own methodology that is prescribed by national regulations, in order to avoid any confusion, the regional work on regionally-based standards of occupations should be governed by the Common Framework (and not methodology) for the development of regionally-based standards of occupations.

After the presentation of each national methodology, the following Common Framework for development of regionally-based standards of occupations, containing guiding principles, was defined:

a. The process of selection of the representative sample of business representatives

The process of selection of the representative sample of business representatives includes consultations and involvement of:

- Chambers of commerce
- Business clusters
- Union of employers
- VET centres

The composition of the representative sample:

- it includes micro, small, medium and large enterprises and
- the number varies from minimum 5 to maximum 12 business representatives
- it is also important to include the education sector in the representative sample
- it includes workers who actually perform this occupation, but also the supervisors having the bigger picture

b. Methodology for receiving feedback from the business sector

The combination of several methods is combined, depending on the sector and interest of the business community:

- polls or surveys,
- structured interviews,
- dacum and
- functional analysis.

c. Format of the regionally-based standard of occupation

The format should contain:

- General information: Occupation, Sector, Level, Description
- Group assignments or Group Functions
- Key functions or Key Assignments
- Activities or Performance Criteria

Ad 5).

Ms Šarić informed the participants that the feedback from ADA is positive, that ADA is interested in our plans and activities and preliminarily supports the project proposal. However, it requests the clarifications within the project proposal, concerning the national processes for the adoption of standards of occupations, are needed, as well as clear roles and responsibilities of each actor included. The clarifications are also needed in the part dealing with concrete sectors and occupations, and relevance of gender balance, sustainable development and social inclusion in the occupational standards to be developed.

The clarifications are expected by 15<sup>th</sup> January, after which ADA will finalize the assessment of the project, and make the final decision. If finally approved, the project is expected to start in March 2019.

Ms Šarić also informed the participants that, regarding the WBA4WBL on-line platform, some modifications are still needed with regard to input from certain countries, which will be contacted on an individual basis.

Ms Šarić thanked the participants for their cooperation, willingness to go further with the activities, as well as their commitment to the project.

The meeting was concluded at 16:30.

