



European Alliance for Apprenticeships 4th Stakeholder Meeting 5 October 2015, Brussels

Short summary

General remark

- The 4th EAfA stakeholder meeting took place on 5 October in Brussels with **two thematic sessions**: support for **SMEs** engaging in and regional approaches to apprenticeships. For the **first time Member States and EFTA/candidate countries** were asked to join and three countries presented their VET system and reforms. The meeting was also an opportunity to discuss the **way forward for the Alliance** after the re-boosting event on 22 June in Riga. Around 60 participants attended the meeting in Brussels or were connected via video conference. In addition, web streaming was provided to enable remote access.

Main content of the meeting

- In her welcome video message **Commissioner Thyssen** stressed the crucial role of the Alliance for improved skills matching by better linking the world of education and the labour market and underlined her personal commitment to support the work of the Alliance.
- The Commission informed participants about the latest policy developments since Riga, notably on the **Youth Pact** initiated by CSR Europe focusing on education and business partnerships (17 November 2016) and the forthcoming **Skills Agenda** (1st half of 2016).
- Participants** informed about their **recent activities** on the Alliance (Interventions from the Swedish National Agency for Education, Eurochambres, European Construction Industry Federation (FIEC), European Builders' Confederation (EBC), BusinessEurope, Basque Government, European Youth Forum, CSR Europe, ETUC/ETUCE and ETF).
- Three of the EAfA newcomers** presented VET reforms in their countries: In **Italy** the 2014/2015 VET reforms include clearer definition of roles and responsibilities, enhanced flexibility/simplification for companies, changes to training hours proportional to the qualification obtained, and remuneration proportional to effective hours spent on the job. In **Norway**, a social contract between government and social partners to increase apprenticeship supply is now under review, public procurement is used to strengthen apprenticeships and direct funding of enterprises for apprenticeships has been increased for non-traditional sectors, in addition to enhancing apprenticeships in the public sector. In **Turkey** there is a VET Strategy Action Plan for 2014–2018 focusing on improved access to VET, capacity of VET providers and employment. The lack of supply of apprenticeship placements in companies was attributed not to unwillingness of companies to train, but to difficulties related to adapting VET curricula to changing skills needs.
- On SMEs**, Ms Steedman, Senior Research Fellow from the **London School of Economics** presented a new study conducted for the ILO which showed that the in AU, CH, DE and UK proportion of small enterprises training apprentices is smaller than in large enterprises, but that certain strategies and policy options could enhance the participation of SMEs in apprenticeships (e.g. support from a local or national agency, training providers). The **EACEA** outlined a new call for proposals which will be published under Erasmus+ on SMEs in mid-October and **Cedefop** informed about the [SME matching conference](#) on 9 and 10 November aimed at exchanging information between stakeholders and networking. A large number of organisations have registered to the conference so far. **DG GROW** gave an update on their [initiative for](#)

MEMBER STATES, EFTA, CANDIDATE COUNTRIES

Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey

BUSINESS MEMBERS

AIM, Adecco, AXA, Aequor, BASF, Bertelsmann, BMW Group, Capita, Cisco, emh group, CSR Europe, ERT, General Electric, Iberdrola, Microsoft and European Youth Forum, Nestlé, Pera Training, Repsol, Robert Bosch, Safran, Saica, Saint Gobain Vicasa, Scottish Power, Sepur, Siemens, Swiss Post, Tesco, and the Alliance for YOUth

CHAMBERS OF COMMERCE/INDUSTRY/CRAFTS

Assemblée Permanente des Chambres de métiers et de l'Artisanat (APCMA), Austrian Federal Economic Chamber (WKÖ), CCI France, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Terrassa (Barcelona), Chamber of Crafts, Leipzig (HWK zu Leipzig), Cyprus Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Eurochambres, French Chambers of Commerce and Industry, General Council of Chambers of Commerce of Catalonia, German Confederation of Skilled Crafts and Small Businesses (ZDH), High Council of Official Chambers of Commerce Industry and Navigation in Spain, Leipzig Chamber of Crafts

SOCIAL PARTNERS

AOb the Netherlands, CMKOS/ CMOS PS, BusinessEurope, CEEP, EFBWW, Eurocommerce, European Trade Union Committee for Education ETUCE, ETUC, FIEC, IndustriAll ECEG - European Chemical Employers Group, FNE - National Federation of Education, FoodDrinkEurope and EFFAT,

[apprenticeships](#) in the construction sector. Representatives from the construction sector highlighted the engagement of SMEs in the construction industry, but the involvement of employers would need further strengthening. The work by DG GROW was welcomed, which might also be applicable to other sectors/focus groups.

- On the **regional dimension**, **EARLALL** (European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning) explained how it worked together with its members from different regions focusing on quality and innovation, mobility and teachers/trainers. The government of **Wales** underlined the tendering process for selecting an effective providers' network as an important measure to ensure high quality apprenticeships. The representative also highlighted future challenges of responding to changing needs of the economy in priority sectors, apprenticeships at level 4 or above, and measuring impact.
- Regarding **communication tools** the **EaFA website**, **LinkedIn group**, **EaFA Newsletter** and other developments were presented. The latest state of play of [Drop'pin@EURES](#) was presented. An automatic input function is currently being developed so that trusted companies and other organisations could publish opportunities directly onto the platform. The newly launched [NetWBL](#) toolkit was developed by 29 National Agencies and has the objective to promote work-based learning and in particular apprenticeships supporting the Alliance. Both these **instruments are evolving** and participants were invited to actively use the tools and make suggestions on how to further improve them.

EaFA reflections beyond 2015

- The debate focused on how to improve the functioning and monitoring of the Alliance, including in the context of an upcoming external study to be launched by the Commission end of this year, which will include interviews with stakeholders. It was requested to follow a more **targeted approach in future surveys** taking into account the diversity of stakeholders' ambitions (such as the role of teachers' trade unions not being able to provide figures on the supply, but focusing on quality provision).
- **Two key topics** emerged: **quality outcomes and VET mobility**, besides the ongoing work on the better involvement of enterprises/SMEs. Other new topics included the issue of **migrants**, the **evaluation of prior learning/skills** of refugees or drop-outs from higher education in key subjects like engineering to integrate them in apprenticeships.
- Other subjects which were proposed to tackle included **entrepreneurship** (including cooperation with JA Europe/European Education Entrepreneurship Network), **digital skills**, the key role of **intermediary organisations (SMEs, local and regional approaches etc)** and **widening access** including for women and vulnerable people.
- On **system level** it was suggested to build on the European Semester **policy recommendations** including effective social partner involvement for strong VET systems and enhance cooperation with the **European Parliament** for stronger **political backing** and **better targeted funding** opportunities.
- On **functioning** of stakeholder meetings, it was noted that in future due to size considerations meetings could benefit from splitting the participants into **workshops** to encourage more **interactive debates** and **peer learning**. Further reflections were needed on how to optimise the meetings in terms of content, output, networking and better respond to the needs of stakeholders.

Follow-up

- Participants will receive a request to take part in short online feedback evaluation
- Members of the EaFA are invited to register for the Cedefop conference as soon as possible
- By end of October: circulate draft EaFA 2016 roadmap (asking participants to add any relevant events).

Force Ouvrière of Energy (FNEM FO), GEW — Gewerkschaft Erziehung und Wissenschaft, Lithuanian Trade Union Confederation (LPSK) and Federation of Lithuanian Education and Science Trade Unions (FLESTU), Malta Union of Teachers, NSZZ Solidarnosc, Poland, NASUWT The Teachers' Union UK, UNI Europa, OAJ Trade Union of Education in Finland, Union of Education Norway, UNIO Norway, UEAPME, UEAPME SIN-DEP, UNSA-Education France

EDUCATION & TRAINING PROVIDERS

CIAPE – Centro Italiano per l'Apprendimento Permanente, EfVET, EUProVET, European Youth Forum and Microsoft, EURASHE, EVBB, EVTA, Food & Drink Training & Education Council, Fondazione Casa di Carità Arti e Mestieri Onlus, Horeca Vorming Vlaanderen, GEW, Lycée ORT Daniel Mayer

ORGANISATIONS AND THINK-TANKS

Agefa PME, Apprenticeships 4 England, Apprenticeships in Scotland, Bertelsmann Foundation, Bertelsmann Foundation Spain, EUCEN, Europatriates, Fundación Laboral de la Construcción, f-bb, ICAEW, NETIN-VET, Norwegian National Council for VET (SRY), OBESSU, UNIEP, YouNet, European Youth Forum

REGIONAL AUTHORITIES

Basque Region, Scotland, Wales, Earlall