**OUTLINE PROJECT APPLICATION SOCIAL DIALOGUE CALL SEPTEMBER 2018**

**Title:**

Lifelong Learning for All: Social Partners in Education promoting quality and inclusive VET to enhance lifelong learning for all

**Main project partners**: MBO Raad (NL, member of EFEE), EFEE and ETUCE

**Partners involved in project advisory group:**

MBO Raad

- Manfred Polzin, Policy Advisor Internationalisation and Project Manager of this project

- Pia Deveneijns, Lifelong Learning expert

EFEE Secretariat

- Daniel Wisniewski, General Secretary

- Sarah Kik, Assistant General Secretary

ETUCE Secretariat

- Susan Flocken, European Director

- Agnes Roman, Senior Coordinator Education & Training Policy

EFEE members

- Riikka Vataja, Association of Finnish Independent Education Employers (AFIEE), Finland

- Joan Russell, Education and Training Boards Ireland (ETBI), Ireland

- José Luis Diogo, National Association of Professional Schools (ANESPO), Portugal

- Walter Würfel, Bildungsverband (BBB), Germany

- Nives Pockar, Association of Secondary and Vocational School Headmasters (DR), Slovenia

- Silviu Ispas, EDUFORM Education and Training Employers Federation, Romania

ETUCE members

- Joaquim Santos, National Federation of Education (FNE) (teacher union), Portugal

- Inkeri Toikka, Trade Union of Education in Finland (OAJ), Finland

**Duration of the project**: 1/1/2019 – 31/12/2020, 24 months in total

1. **Background information**

Quality vocational education and training (VET) plays a fundamental role in raising the level of education and developing the skills of young people and adults. By doing so, it supports their employability and social inclusion. As also stressed in the Council recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning (2018)[[1]](#footnote-1), education and training are part of the solution to get more people into decent jobs, respond better to the skills the economy needs and strengthen Europe's resilience. The rapid societal, technological, environmental and demographical developments of today’s society and related changes in skills and competences requirements, expose the need for “an inclusive, lifelong-learning-based and innovation-driven approach to education and training”, as stated in the European Council Conclusions of 14 December 2017[[2]](#footnote-2) setting out the steps to further follow-up on the European Pillar of Social Rights and to deliver on the European Skills Agenda.

However in many European countries VET is not considered as first choice, as also underlined in the European Skills Agenda, and research shows (e.g. from the OECD) that lifelong learning strategies often do not reach the group people who are threatened with exclusion and in most need of further learning and developing. If European countries want to remain inclusive and competitive at the same time, we need to find ways to offer more tailor made and flexible programs (including apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities) in order to make participation of VET more attractive, feasible and accessible to all, and by doing so to enhance the lifelong learning opportunities for all European citizens (no matter their socio-economic and educational background). Quality, attractiveness and inclusiveness of VET is a necessity and a shared responsibility of employers, employees, providers and governments and therefore a crucial topic for the European Social Partners in Education: the European Federation of Education Employers (EFEE, of which the MBO Raad is a member) and the European Trade Union Committee for Education (ETUCE).

With this project EFEE and ETUCE build further and deliver on their previous work done in the framework of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue in Education (ESSDE) on improving the attractiveness, quality and image of VET, to which they committed themselves in their joint work programme 2018-19[[3]](#footnote-3) and their joint Statement on improving VET in Europe (2017)[[4]](#footnote-4). In this statement EFEE and ETUCE show their commitment to jointly take appropriate measures aimed at making VET more attractive for both students and adults, by improving the role and status of VET teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education personnel; contributing to high quality learning outcomes for VET and apprenticeships to better prepare students for life, further education, and quality jobs, by ensuring that students are supported both in the pursuit of their studies and during apprenticeships by qualified teaching professionals and trainers with up-to-date and appropriate skills; and promoting the implementation of the Riga Conclusions (2015) and the goals of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

There are no ‘one size fits all’ solutions, but some countries are clearly performing better than others. By exchanging good practices in line with the needs of all partners, whilst learning from their strong points, the project aims to find strategies on how social partners in education (and training) can promote quality and inclusive VET to enhance lifelong learning for all.

1. **Short summary of the action**

The project aims to contribute to addressing the challenges identified in the *White Paper on the Future of Europe* on how equip people with the right skills and create more unity within our society in light of tomorrow's society and world of work. The project partners also wish to promote the delivery within Member States on the *European Pillar of Social Rights*, in particular the principles on “education, training and life-long learning” and “active support to employment”. In order to make these principles a reality the first requirement is to reach these groups that are in vulnerable positions who are at risk of becoming socially excluded and that are in need of further and tailor-made support to find their way in our society by means of quality and inclusive VET (including apprenticeship) to enhance this way lifelong learning for all.

Furthermore, the project aims to actively implement and to promote the current Work Programme of the European Sectoral Social Dialogue Committee in Education (ESSDE). By mapping good practices (GPs) and fostering peer learning, the project will contribute to the identification and development of a joint approach of the ESSDE partners.

The partnership envisages to share GPs from social partners in education from different countries through the organisation of 5 Peer Learning Activities in different countries and 1 final conference in Brussels. There are no 'one size that fits all' solutions, but by exchanging GPs the project aims to find strategies to promote quality, flexible programs (including apprenticeships and work-based learning opportunities) in order to make participation of VET more attractive, feasible and accessible to all (no matter socio-economic and educational background). A strong focus will be on the roles of employers, trade unions, school leaders, teachers, and trainers in making quality and inclusive VET a reality.

1. **Specific objective(s)**

Main objectives of the action are:

* To respond and contribute to the current demands for an inclusive, lifelong-learning-based and innovation-driven approach to VET (including apprenticeships). We refer to the flagship initiative ‘An Agenda for New Skills and Jobs’ of 2020 and the more recent vision of the European Commission for a European Education Area by 2025, Bruges Communiqué and Riga Conclusions.
* To promote social dialogue in education and training by mapping good practices and fostering peer learning among European, national, and regional/local social partners in education (and training) and contributing to the development of a possible joint approach of the ESSDE partners promoting quality and inclusive VET to enhance lifelong learning for all. A particular focus will be on: What are best examples of successful quality and inclusive VET provisions providing for flexible learning pathways that respond to the different needs, abilities and capacities of the diverse group of learners? How are learning and working combined, e.g. what kind of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities are available? And what are the roles of employers, trade unions, education management, school leaders, teachers, trainers, providers and authorities to improve VET and apprenticeship systems to be of high quality, inclusive and herewith attractive?
* To link the work programme of the social partners in education and the priorities of the MBO Raad and other associated partners with EU objectives, as described in the European Pillar of Social Rights and the Annual Review 2018 on Employment and Social Developments in Europe.
* To contribute to the implementation of the elements of the ESSDE work programme on “quality vocational education and training and apprenticeships” and “promoting inclusion in education and training to combat all forms of intolerance and social exclusion and to promote flexible learning pathways that respond to the different needs, abilities and capacities of the diverse group of learners”. And to deliver on the commitment of the joint EFEE and ETUCE Statement on improving VET in Europe (2017) aimed at making VET more attractive for both students and adult.
* To contribute to improve supportive VET and apprenticeship systems that provide for flexible learning pathways that respond to the different needs, abilities and capacities of the diverse group of learners in order to make sure that learners reach their full potential and unlock their talents and herewith enhancing lifelong learning.
* To contribute to high quality learning outcomes for VET (including apprenticeships) to better prepare students for life, further education, and quality jobs, by ensuring that students are supported both in the pursuit of their studies and during apprenticeships by qualified teaching professionals and trainers with up-to-date and appropriate skills.

1. **Focus of the project**

By exchanging good practices through Peer Learning Activities (PLAs) in line with the needs and strong points of all partners, the project aims to find answers to the following key question: “How can social partners in education (and training) promote quality and inclusive VET to enhance lifelong learning for all?” by focussing on the following specific issues:

* What are best examples of successful quality and inclusive VET provisions providing for flexible learning pathways that respond to the different needs, abilities and capacities of the diverse group of learners and contribute this way to lifelong learning? How are learning and working combined, e.g. what kind of work-based learning and apprenticeship opportunities are available?
* What are the roles of employers, trade unions, education management, school leaders, teachers, trainers, providers and authorities to improve VET and apprenticeship systems to be of high quality, inclusive and herewith attractive?
* How do the changing needs for more flexible learning pathways and the growing diversity of learners impact on the role of teachers, trainers, school leaders of VET institutions?
* What support mechanisms are available to teachers, trainers, school leaders to improve quality of and equality in VET and apprenticeship (continuous professional development, flexible curricula, cooperation with other schools, NGOs, companies, guidance services, social services, etc)? How to improve the role and status of VET teachers, trainers, school leaders and other education personnel?
* What are the problems, challenges, bottlenecks experienced by offering tailor-made pathways to vulnerable groups and how to attract them; such as pupils at risk of becoming NEETs, (low-skilled) adults, (newly arrived) migrants, pupils with physical or mental challenges?
* What support mechanisms and new strategies can assist learning/training centres, including companies offering apprenticeship places to successfully improve the VET and apprenticeship provision to be of high quality and inclusive?
* What kind of national/regional and local support systems can contribute to improve VET and apprenticeship, concerning funding, governance, social dialogue, etc.?

1. **Expected results**

We will develop a reflection form that will be used by all partners after every transnational meeting. Partners will reflect on what they have seen in the other countries, whether and how the strategies or instruments are useful in their own situation and why not if that is the case. Finally, all these reflection forms from all partners after every meeting will be put together as the main source for the final report with recommendations for all countries.

Concrete results are:

* 5 (2-days) meetings (transnational PLAs to the Netherlands, Slovenia, Finland, Germany, and Portugal organised in the period of April 2019 – June 2020)
* 5 documents (one from each country): before every PLA each country provides a document with the featured good practices and existing policies together with the programme of the meeting in its country. The document will be drafted together with EFEE and ETUCE members.
* 5 reflection reports (after each meeting 1 report with the reflections of every partner-country regarding the programme and instruments that were demonstrated during the meeting). The reports are based on the reflections form filled in by all PLA participants (EFEE and ETUCE members).
* 1 final report; which contains the above mentioned documents and general conclusions and recommendations on how to promote quality and inclusive VET (including apprenticeships) to enhance lifelong learning for all
* Publication of the final report on the website of the participants.
* A film visually summarising the main outcomes of the PLAs
* 1 day final conference organised in Brussels to discuss and disseminate the project outcomes (November 2020)
* A possible joint ESSDE outcome on social partners in education promoting quality and inclusive VET to enhance lifelong learning for all

1. http://data.consilium.europa.eu/doc/document/ST-8299-2018-INIT/en/pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. http://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/32204/14-final-conclusions-rev1-en.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. http://educationemployers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Final-ESSDE\_WP2018-2019.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. http://educationemployers.eu/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/FINAL\_ETUCE-and-EFEE-on-VET\_20171123.pdf [↑](#footnote-ref-4)