

Newsletter

December 2011

EUNEC statements on 'New Skills for New Jobs. Challenges for VET in the 21st century'

"Students need to find positive role models in their family, in the group of professionals they are in touch with and in their peer group"

These statements are an important output of the conference held in Lisbon on 24-26 October 2011, with the participation of members and partners from 15 European countries.

They will be sent pro-actively to the European Commission and the European Parliament. EUNEC hopes that these statements will promote actions by its members at national and regional level and contribute to the advisory opinions of education councils.

Today, VET faces encompassing and deep rooted structural changes in the economic and political environment. These changes have not yet been taken into account in the discussion at EU-level on the renewal of VET. In these statements, EUNEC wants to highlight developments over recent years that need to be better integrated into European initiatives.

EUNEC insists on the importance of 'life skills', prerequisites for the further development of each individual; they offer a broad basis to deal with the unpredictability of the labour market, with future lifelong learning and with wider changes in society.

There is a long existing tension between the vocational and the more general strand in education. Often, students and their parents make choices in favour of the academic strand, and this has to do with the poor image of VET in a lot of member states. It is important to realize a shift towards VET as a positive choice, raising the sense of purpose. Motivation and passion are essential for a successful VET learning path. VET should no longer be presented as a deficit model, but should provide a competence-building learning environment and a positive career option, offering good opportunities for personal development and integration into the labour market. EUNEC wants to consider the construction of a more mixed educational pathway integrating qualification oriented education with a learning competences based pathway and strengthening VET for a lifelong learning and inclusive perspective.

If we want VET learners to be self confident, VET will have to offer pathways to ensure that students are enabled to step up from one qualification level to the next.

A critical factor in the success of VET are the teachers; good teachers in VET need a balanced set of purely technical competences and pedagogic competences.

EUNEC is not pleading for more benchmarking in the context of new skills for new jobs. We are asserting that existing benchmarks should reflect more appreciation for VET as a valuable education strand.



EUNEC wishes you all an inspiring 2012!

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The full text of the statements is available at www.eunec.eu

Workshop on increasing the impact of policy advice

In the margins of the meeting of the Executive committee on 5 December, EUNEC organized a workshop on increasing the impact of policy advice. The workshop was facilitated by Prof. Dr. Marleen Brans and Drs. Jan Van Damme from the Public Management Institute, and is a follow-up of the recommendations of the study on 'Education councils in the EU. Balancing expertise, societal input and political control in the production of policy advice', published in December last year.

Participants were asked to list a set of recommendations from the research for which action is most required, on a scale from five to one. Those recommendations were then discussed in small working groups: participants of different Education councils discussed challenges related to the recommendations and proposed an action plan in order to tackle the identified challenges.

The work does not end here. EUNEC member councils intend to select recommendations for which another member council has good practice, and to work together on that recommendation.



The main conclusion of the research is that a sufficiently funded, embedded, autonomous, broad and representative education council will have better possibilities of high advisory impact.

Professor Marleen Brans

The recommendations that require most action are:

- Adopt dissemination strategies
- Legally settle the councils' access points
- Engender different understandings of advisory success

It appeared that EUNEC has a great potential of learning; during this workshop, councils combined their expertise and learned from each other.

A report is published on www.eunec.eu

EUNEC invested in a new and more accessible website. We hope to have the new website operational by the end of January 2011.

Overview of main policy lines in education and training

At the Executive committee meeting of 5 December 2011, EUNEC presented an overview of relevant policy lines in the field of Education and training.

The role of education and training was highlighted in the context of the Europe 2020 strategy and of the new governance under the European semester.

Attention also for the results of the council for Education, Youth, Culture and Sports of 28-29 November 2011, under the Polish Presidency of the EU; summaries of the council conclusions on

language competences to enhance mobility, council conclusions on the modernisation of higher education, council conclusions on a new benchmark for mobility and the council resolution on the renewed European agenda for adult learning.

The European Commission proposed the new EU programme for Education, training, youth and sport. 'Erasmus for All' would start in 2014 and replace seven existing programmes. It is based on the premise that investing in education and training is the key to



unlocking people's potential, regardless of their age or background.

The proposal will be discussed by the Council and the Parliament. EUNEC will closely follow these developments.



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