Project Meeting in Dresden, Germany

KES College had been prepared to participate in the Dresden meeting 11 - 13 March 2020 with the local coordinator and all teachers involved in the project. Unfortunately, the meeting was cancelled due to Covid-19 pandemic, which has changed both the College’s and everybody’s plans.

Beginning March 11th, all courses had to be suspended after clear instructions from the Ministry of Education, Culture Youth and Sports, in order to limit the Covid-19 spreading.

Kes College was able to install a modern distance learning electronic platform and during a very short period of time teachers were trained using online training and detailed instructions were sent to students through the Electronic Platform of the College.

So, since the 23rd of March 2020 all theoretical courses are implemented by distance learning. Distance learning lessons at KES College will continue based on the timetable of each
Programme of Study until 10/04/2020, subject to Government decisions. Academic and administrative personnel work for the time being from home.

KES College is doing its best to ensure the uninterrupted supply of courses and the quality of its education provided and aims the completion of the academic year 2019-2020. All practical courses will be replenished at a later stage.

Regarding PECVET, we have participated in the two tele meetings of the coordinating team organised by the coordinator in March and have internally shared information. We are working on issues deriving from last coordinating team tele meeting.

We hope that the Covid-19 pandemic will be soon over and that people in the whole world will be able to continue with their everyday lives.

PECVET FLYER:
This year is the Fifth Anniversary of the European Vocational Skills Week, which will take place from the 9 to the 13 November in Berlin. Two issues high on the agenda of the new European Commission will receive particular attention – green and digital.

European Vocational Skills Week 2020 - Register your event!

Many of you know that you can register your event/activity to associate with the annual European Vocational Skills Week. After the opening of the registrations, it is possible that any event/activity you are/were planning in the near future may be cancelled or postponed. If at this stage you are fairly confident it can be held do please take the opportunity to register.

- Go here and register your event or activity.

- If you register your event before 30 June, you may win an invitation to attend sessions during the European events of the Week in Berlin. More info.

- Visit the Partners section for everything you need to plan a brilliant VET event or activity. The European Vocational Skills Week Ambassadors are back in 2020!

If you convert your planned physical event/activity into a virtual one due to the COVID-19 crisis, then you can register it on the European Vocational Skills Week webpage so that it can be associated with the Week. Once you have done this, you can share the link to your meeting and it can be promoted on the Week webpage. If you are interested in this option please send an e-mail to: EMPL- VOCATIONAL-SKILLS-WEEK@ec.europa.eu.

The European Vocational Skills Week Ambassadors are back in 2020!

It has become a tradition: a network of Ambassadors are supporting the promotion of the European Vocational Skills Week every year. It started with eight Ambassadors in 2016, and gradually increased to as many as 27 Ambassadors last year. All of them helped in promoting the Week and disseminating messages around VET.

They are all role models with a VET "story to tell". As highly credible resources, they can efficiently promote the attractiveness and excellence of vocational education and training, including to an audience that would be difficult to reach for the European Commission or national authorities.

This year event is also counting on the Ambassadors in 2020, trying on one hand to
keep the many who helped the campaign in previous years, and on the other to bring in new Ambassadors.

**Skills Agenda on the Agendas... and other initiatives**

Conversations at the Week this year will focus on the Commission's 2020 policy initiatives in VET. With a new Commission and financial framework, this will be a busy year!

On 14 January 2020, the Commission presented its Communication on “A Strong Social Europe for Just Transitions”, which announces an updated Skills Agenda and a proposal for a Council Recommendation on VET.

The updated Skills Agenda will build on the current one. New actions will be announced, as well as others that take existing actions further.

The VET Recommendation will emphasise the need for skills to manage the green and digital transitions. It will lay down a strategic vision, the principles of quality and excellence in VET, mobility and internationalisation. Tools and instruments to support these elements will be included. The EU role with be clarified, including that of Cedefop and the ETF.

**Erasmus+ funding opportunities for Vocational Education and Training**

Watch out for the Erasmus+ funding opportunities in Key Action 2 - Cooperation for Innovation and the Exchange of Good Practices - for Vocational Education and Training.

Deadline: 24th of April; 12:00 (noon) CET.

These Strategic Partnerships aim to support the development, transfer and implementation of innovative practices as well as the carrying out of joint activities promoting cooperation, peer learning and exchange of practice at organisational, local, regional, national or European levels. Under the Erasmus+ programme, the institutions active in vocational education and training (VET) field can work with others to help improve VET provision across Europe. VET institutions can work with different organisations, such as, enterprises, social partners and local or regional bodies to deliver high quality provision.

In the Erasmus+ Project Results Platform you can find inspiration from the pool of good practices and success stories as well as information, results and contacts for all projects funded under the Erasmus+ programme. More information about the application process can be found here and Erasmus+ National Agencies implementing this action can help as well.

**COVID-19 - Commission and DG EMPL response**

The European Commission has launched a Coronavirus Response Investment
Initiative (CRII) to mobilise €37 billion of cohesion policy funds. This will flexibly respond to the rapidly emerging needs in the most exposed sectors, such as healthcare, SMEs, and labour markets, including education and training. It will help the most affected territories in Member States and their citizens: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/coronavirus-response/.

We also launched a Coronavirus Response Investment Initiative+ to mobilise flexibly all unused Structural and Investment funds. Also, the Fund for European Aid to the Most Deprived (FEAD) will deliver food aid and basic material assistance through electronic vouchers, and provide protective equipment, thus lowering risk of contamination. The European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) will cover temporary stopping of fishing activities, and the suspension of production and additional costs for aquaculture farmers, as well as producer organisations for the storage of fishery and aquaculture products: https://ec.europa.eu/regional_policy/en/newsroom/news/2020/04/04-02-2020-coronavirus-response-investment-initiative-plus-new-actions-to-mobilise-essential-investments-and-resources.

You may have seen information on our initiative Support to mitigate Unemployment Risks in an Emergency (SURE)? Its aim is to help protect jobs and workers affected by the coronavirus pandemic. It will provide up to €100 billion of financial assistance to Member States, and will help the whole of Europe.

These loans will assist Member States to cope with sudden increases in public expenditure to preserve employment. Specifically, they will help Member States to cover two types of costs: those directly related to the creation or extension of national short-time work schemes, as well as costs for other similar measures they have put in place for the self-employed. Here are some Q&A: https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/QANDA_20_572.

Education and Training News

🎀 ERASMUS+ Practical Advice

The COVID-19 outbreak affects the carrying out of the many activities which are ongoing or were planned, under the Erasmus+ programme and European Solidarity Corps.


🔹 New Relevance of On-line Resources

The coronavirus pandemic has affected education and training systems worldwide. The European Commission’s website features a page with links to the many platforms that support educators: https://ec.europa.eu/education/resources-and-tools/coronavirus-online-learning-
Online tools and digital tools are now enabling access to information and environments not usually available in every home or institution.

◆ Online survey: Together again despite COVID-19!

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and the closing of education and training institutions all over the world, several initiatives have been mounted to ensure continuity of the learning and teaching through this period. To capture the variety of initiatives that have been undertaken within our VET community on distance learning, the European Commission launched an online survey. Here you can see the overview of the survey and list of links, modules, tools and other initiatives useful for our VET providers: https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/fight-against-covid-19_en.

You can also share your VET activities on distance learning as a response to COVID-19 here: https://ec.europa.eu/eusurvey/runner/VETproviders-COVID19. They will be included in the overview available on the EC website.

All over Europe, practitioners and policy-makers have been moving as fast as they can to implement distance learning. Andrew McCoshan (expert member of the Education and Training 2020 Working Group on VET) reflects on some of the key challenges and opportunities emerging: https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/covid-19-how-can-vet-respond_en.

◆ Coronavirus: Online learning resources

The outbreak of COVID-19 in Europe and necessary national measures taken to tackle the spread of the virus may cause significant disruption to the provision of education, training and mobility opportunities for learners, teachers and educators across the European Union (EU).

Online tools – like many digital tools (online and offline) – can serve different educational purposes:

- connecting educators and learners with each other when in separate locations
- accessing information and environments not usually available in every home or institution

To help ensure continuity in education and training activities, there is a wide range of online learning materials made available online:

- online platforms
- EU-funded projects

An upcoming review of the Digital Education Action Plan in mid-2020 will further support the development of online learning at different levels of education across Europe.
Cedefop’s community of apprenticeship experts launched an internal consultation on how European countries are managing apprenticeships in the current health emergency due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Twenty five experts contributed to this exercise from: Austria, Belgium (fr, fl, de), Bulgaria, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Lithuania, Malta, the Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, UK-England and UK-Wales.

A synthesis of the information shared was produced. The experts expressed their individual professional opinion, not that of their institution or Cedefop’s.

Main messages
According to the information received, all the above countries make efforts to keep up with the learning at school via distance learning and maintain the contracts with the companies. The aim is not to lose the year, although most countries are still working out how to deal with the final assessment (postponement being the worst-case scenario).

Distance learning however is piecemeal, and its use very much depends on the schools’ and teachers’ e-skills and availability, and on sectors. Its use ranges from mere communication/keeping in touch with students, to access to resources (videos etc.), to actual teaching. Some countries are considering virtual final assessment.

The role of teachers and of cooperation at school-company level is critical to ensuring training continuity (especially via distance learning). Apprentices who still go to companies, are occasionally allowed – in cooperation with schools – to make up for
parts of learning meant to be delivered in schools.

Concerning schools, the response was linear across countries (schools are closed), but when it comes to companies the situation is more nuanced, largely depending on economic sector. Not going to school does not necessarily mean discontinuation of company attendance. Apprentices continue their training and work, particularly in companies providing essential services such as healthcare and food, as long as health and safety measures are observed. Apprentices discontinued their company attendance in sectors whose activities have been shut down by regulation, such as, in most countries, hospitality, wellbeing, tourism.

Impact on school-based component
All schools and VET providers offering training to apprentices are closed. Countries differ in the deadline for this measure (April or mid-May 2020). Most countries have not specified the implications of the training activity interruption and its impact on the duration of the apprenticeship period.

Most countries have set up arrangements for distance learning, including organised online classes. Familiarity with, and success of, distance learning varies across countries. In Bulgaria, for example, students study theory online for two or three days, just as they did in school. In Germany, apprentices who still go to companies may access school training resources at the workplace. In Iceland, teaching was transferred online overnight. This has been challenging for many teachers, especially those teaching more hands-on classes. But some are using or creating demonstration videos and finding creative solutions with online resources. In Spain, students continue their programmes, where possible, through online classes.

Impact on company-based component
In most countries, apprentices do not go to companies, but the situation varies by sector, scheme or education level. Where it is considered safe, in-company training continues. In French-speaking Belgium, for example, students in higher education with work-based learning, can continue going to the workplace if the employer and the school agree. In Portugal, work-based learning can continue at the workplace provided the enterprises where it takes place are operating and there is an agreement between learner, tutor and VET provider.

In general, apprentices whose contracts are not suspended are paid as usual. When companies close there are two main options: apprentices whose contracts are covered by the labour code, receive a wage if they continue working or, if they don’t, they are covered by labour market measures; apprentices whose contracts are not covered by the labour code and usually receive an allowance, receive a State grant/subsidy.

In Austria, for example, where apprentices’ contracts are covered by the labour code, if companies are closed, they can apply for Kurzarbeit (reduced working regulation). This is a scheme whereby the training company pays 100% of apprenticeship wages but gets reimbursed from the public employment service for most of them.

In Malta, on the other hand, where State allowances apply, apprentices will not be paid by the employer, but they will continue to get the stipend issued by the government.

Check out the synthesis report for more information on the response of single countries.
**Project Status:**

The PECVET partnership is finalising ECVET system and ULOs documents

**Next Project Steps:**

The guide ‘How to prepare ULOs?’ will be finalised by the end of April 2020

Partners will review and give comments by mid-May 2020

The final version will be made available by mid-May 2020

Partners will translate it in their languages by the end of May 2020

EfVET will make good-looking layout by beginning of June 2020

**Next Meeting:**

To be confirmed

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**Partnership:**

Stredni prumyslova skola chemicka Pardubice (Pardubice, Czech Republic) - Coordinator

Byåsen videregående skole (Trondheim, Norway)
School web page: [http://byasen.vgs.no](http://byasen.vgs.no)

EfVET - European Forum of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Brussels, Belgium)
Web page: [https://www.efvet.org/](https://www.efvet.org/)

ITT Michelangelo Buonarroti (Trento, Italy)
School web page: [http://www.buonarroti.tn.it/](http://www.buonarroti.tn.it/)

Kes College (Nicosia, Cyprus)
School web page: [https://www.kes.ac.cy/](https://www.kes.ac.cy/)

Sächsische Bildungsgesellschaft für Umweltschutz und Chemieberufe Dresden mbH - SBG (Dresden, Germany)
School web page: [https://www.sbg-dresden.de/](https://www.sbg-dresden.de/)

Stredná odborná škola chemická (Bratislava, Slovakia)
School web page: [http://www.sosch.sk/](http://www.sosch.sk/)

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