



Council of European Employers  
of the Metal, Engineering and  
Technology-based industries

## Minutes

### SSD Education and Training Working Group`

22 June 2017

#### Follow-up actions

- Metindustry website: industriAll Europe and CEEMET to remind member associations to send their best practices on VET and web-based learning outcomes for the website
- industriAll Europe and CEEMET Secretariats + Chairs will meet on 18 July to agree on a final work-programme for 2018
- industriAll Europe and CEEMET to contact the Commission for further details on the participation of social partners in the Vocational Skills Week of November 2017

The meeting was chaired by Ms Rudelli for CEEMET and Ms Barthes for industriAll Europe.

#### Item 1) Welcome and approval of the minutes

The minutes of the last SSD E&T working group of 20 June 2016 were formally approved.

#### Item 2) Follow up to the joint event of 21 June

On 21 June 2017, industriAll Europe and CEEMET organised a joint event on the topic “Meeting the skills challenge for the future of the MET industries”. The joint event was structured into 2 panel discussions that focused on 2 key topics for the sector: VET and digital skills.

Comments of both CEEMET and industriAll Europe representatives were very positive about the event. Both industriAll Europe and CEEMET agreed on the principle of organising another event next year as it is the best way to promote social dialogue, the important role that social partners play in the development and implementation of VET and skills policies, as well as the best way to put forward industry key messages for policy makers to understand the realities (challenges, obstacles) that companies and workers face in a digitalised context.

The following comments were made by the participants to the event:

- Mr. **Jörg Ferrando** (IG Metall, Germany): Maybe in a future event, consider the possibility not to have MEPs as moderators & speakers in order to properly discuss between trade union and employer representatives the real challenges of the sector. MEPs could be more present as audience (listening at what the social partners say) and not so much moderating and or speaking during the events.

Ms. **Delphine Rudelli** (UIMM, CEEMET co-chair of the SSD WG ETE) said that at the occasion of the June event it was very timely to have the MEPs as they are the co-rapporteurs for the New Skills

Agenda and were also hosting the event. She further mentioned that depending on the issues chosen to be discussed on a future event, industriAll Europe and CEEOMET could consider targeting another type of audience. She wrapped-up her intervention by referring to the possibility of organising an event within the framework of the Vocational Skills Week in late November 2017.

Ms. **Delphine Rudelli** and Ms. **Isabelle Barthes** (co-chairs of the SSD WG ETE) also referred to the joint statement on the New Skills Agenda that was adopted prior to the organisation of the event of 21 June. Statement can be downloaded [here](#).

### Item 3) Digital Skills in the MET Sector

*The digital skills and job coalition is one of the key ten initiatives proposed by the Commission under the New Skills Agenda for Europe issued on 16 June 2016. The Coalition brings together companies, non-profit organisations, educational providers, social partners and Member States in order to tackle the lack of digital skills in Europe.*

Ms. **Heidi-Renata Cigan**, Head of Sector (Digital Economy and Skills, DG Connect) delivered a presentation on the initiatives being put in place by the Commission to tackle the issue of digital skills with a focus on 4 target groups: citizens ('digital skills for all'), workers ('digital skills for labour force'), ICT professionals, education providers and (lifelong) learners ('digital skills in education'). She basically referred to the Digital Skills and Job Coalition launched at European and national levels.

Ms. **Heidi-Renata Cigan** referred to the rationale for setting up the digital skills and job coalition, amongst which, to create the opportunity for a broad range of stakeholders to cooperate and share best practices, as well as to give more visibility to the actions they undertake (published online as pledges which can be thematic such as "women in digital"), and give them better access to EU and national policy making. The European-level Digital Skills and Job Coalition gathers 240 members from a wide array of sectors. Currently, up to 17 national digital coalitions have been set up.

Different questions were addressed to the Commission representative:

- about the composition and, more specifically the involvement of social partners in such coalitions, Ms. Cigan explained that membership in both the European and national coalitions is open to any stakeholder. To be accepted, applicants to the European coalition are required to endorse the dedicated 'Members Charter'. To be recognised and supported by the European Commission, national coalitions are required to adopt a clear roadmap and be composed of a diverse set of stakeholders. National coalitions may not be set up under the initiative of Member States which could, however, be part of the coalition. Ms. **Cigan** encouraged social partners to learn if there are coalitions set-up at national/regional level and get involved in them.
- and about how the coalition tackles the specific challenges related to digital skills. Ms. Cigan explained that Member States were invited to develop national digital skills strategies by mid-2017. The Digital Single Market (DSM) Strategic group nominated an expert group which came up with a "shared concept", i.e. a kind of model or menu items to guide the Member States in developing their own digital skills strategy. The model includes a selection of best practice initiatives which are compiled and [available online](#).

#### Round table of members update of national initiatives:

Ms. **Anja Trier** (DI, Denmark), explained the following in relation to Denmark:

- Many actions are being put in place and activities organised around digitalisation, most of them with the participation of social partners
- A digitalisation strategy has also been set up by the government, with the participation of Ministers. A report on how to deal with the issue of skills together with some recommendations has been issued
- Education area: the use of digital tools in schools is becoming more and more extended

Mr. **Jörg Ferrando**, mentioned the following 3 important initiatives led by or with the involvement of social partners in Germany.

- 1) The Social Partner agreement of IG Metall, Gesamtmetall, VDMA and ZVEI signed in April 2016 in which the signing parties committed to analyse all industry 4.0 relevant vocational education and training occupations and advanced vocational training. On the basis of this social partner agreement, a joint team has been set up to analyse the professional profiles and qualification requirements in the metal and electric industries.
- 2) The Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB) has been putting a great emphasis on 'education 4.0 for industry 4.0', including via the work of committees in which social partners are fully involved
- 3) IG Metall has also been working on 'industry 4.0' and published a set of recommendations directed towards companies and policy-makers, including policy recommendation focused on VET.

Mr. **Gintaras Vilda** (LINPRA, Lithuania), said that at national level there are different kind of initiatives being put in place. In 2017 the setting-up and running of the platform 4.0 has taken place. Digital skills is also part of a working group within this platform

Mr. **Alexander Chenger** (BBCM, Bulgaria) said that for the Bulgarian employers' organisation, making VET a first choice is a key point. He also made reference to the fact that young people in Bulgaria are leaving the country to find a job elsewhere (brain – drainage).

Mr. **Frédéric Touboul** (FTM-CGT, France) said that in France initiatives are being put in place in the area of digitalisation but not in a coordinated way. For example, existence of a national digital skills and job coalition in France was unknown until today meeting.

Mr. **Juan Blanco** (CCOO de industria, Spain) explained that in Spain, there is a big disconnection between the "rhetoric speech" on digitalisation and the initiatives/actions being put in place in practice. Most of the companies (across all sectors) and workers are not enough aware of the challenges of digitalisation nor of the initiatives being put in place. He also referred to a regional digital skills and job coalition which has been set-up in the Basque Country. This coalition deals with issues in the area of the education system, and specifically on VET. A national digital skills and job coalition has also been set up in Spain, without any social partners' involvement. Beyond the exchange of best practices, genuine public policies relying on a long term strategic view of VET is crucially needed.

Ms. **Bhavina Bharkhada** (EEF, UK) said that, recently, a digital inclusion paper that gives an overview of what the government does to tackle the issue of digital skills has been issued. This paper also focuses on the employers needs as employers are well aware of what kind of skills are needed. In the long term, the government would focus on adapting the education system to include the issue of digital skills.

#### Item 4) Making VET a first choice

Mr. **João Santos**, Deputy Head of Unit, VET, apprenticeships & adult learning (DG Employment) delivered a presentation structured into 3 issues. You can download the presentation [here](#).

##### **VET mobility and ErasmusPRO - long duration mobility**

On VET mobility, he made reference to the following points:

- There is around 12 million VET learners in Europe
- ERASMUS + currently supports the mobility of around 3% of the annual inflow of VET learners. A Council target estimates to have around 6% of VET learners in mobility by 2020
- Demand for VET mobility is much higher than the current ERASMUS + budget can support
- Mobility in VET is of very short duration, 90% of mobility is 3 months or less (71.5% is less than 1 month)
- The average age in VET mobility is 18 years

VET mobility has lots of advantages as it facilitates, for example, the exchange of knowledge between participants to the programme.

Ms. **Delphine Rudelli** made reference to a French- German programme of exchange of VET learners, which aims at mobilising VET learners across both countries. She said that companies encounter many legal and financial problems when putting in place this programme. In addition, for small companies, it is a real challenge to “lose an apprentice” that moves within the programme to another country for some months. The Commission should be aware of these difficulties when putting in place these programmes, which in principle are positive.

Ms. **Anja Trier** said that a VET exchange programme was put in place in Denmark in 1991. Since then they are struggling to motivate companies and learners to use it, despite the fact that they have done it as unbureaucratic as possible. She stressed the fact that it is not easy to promote the exchange of VET learners throughout these programmes.

The Commission representative concluded that if we manage through ERASMUS + to increase mobility and its duration it will be a success. Within this context he mentioned that the Commission is considering launching an “ErasmusPro” programme dedicated to support long-duration work placements (3 to 12 months) for VET students abroad. The target participants would be VET learners, apprentices and recent VET graduates.

The programmed publication of the General Call for ERASMUS + (including ErasmusPro) is expected to be October 2017.

##### **Apprenticeships and WBL – drivers for reform**

Mr. Santos recalled what the ‘European Alliance for apprenticeships’ is about. There is no legal basis for the creation of this network. It is a voluntary and unique platform which brings together governments with other key stakeholders, like businesses, social partners, chambers, vocational education and training (VET) providers, regions, youth representatives or think tanks. Mr. Santos encouraged the social partners to take action and submit a pledge on the EAFA. More information, follow [link](#).

As part of the EU cross-sectoral social dialogue programme of integrated projects 2014-2016 the European social partners have undertaken separate projects on the cost-effectiveness of apprenticeship schemes (employers) and a European quality framework for apprenticeships (trade unions). At the conclusion of these projects, the European social partners (ETUC, Business Europe, CEEP and UEAPME) agreed on a landmark joint statement *'Towards a shared vision of apprenticeships'* in May 2016.

Few months later, the tripartite Advisory Committee on vocational training (ACVT) built upon the social partners' joint statement and delivered an opinion in December 2016 calling the European Commission to take action for *'Quality and effective apprenticeships and work-based learning'*

Mr. **Santos** said that the upcoming Council recommendation on a "European framework for quality and effective apprenticeships" does not intend to harmonise apprenticeships but to identify key elements, building upon social partners' and ACVT statements. Most probably this proposal for a Council Recommendation would be published in September/October 2017.

Ms. **Aline Conchon** (industriAll Europe), stressed the need for the Commission to follow the elements agreed on the ACVT opinion, which should not only influence but be the basis for the future Council Recommendation.

Mr. **John Harkin** (CEEMET) said that the element of "effective" should be included in the future recommendation.

### **Vocational Skills Week**

Ms. **Sue Bird** (Policy Officer, European Commission) stressed that 'Making VET a first choice' is one of the ten key actions foreseen in the European Commission's New Skills Agenda launched in June 2016. To support this action, the European Commission organised the first *European Vocational Skills Week* in December 2016.

Following the success of the first edition, the European Commission is organising a second European Vocational Skills Week to take place on 20 to 24 November 2017 and call on all stakeholders, including social partners to get involved.

Ms. **Bird** recommended the MET social partners to actively participate in the Vocational Skills Week, and possibly organise an event as it will get "European publicity".

### **Item 5) Joint industriAll Europe – CEEMET MET industry website**

The joint industriAll Europe-CEEMET website [www.metindustry.eu](http://www.metindustry.eu) is up and running. It is important to continue feeding the website with social partners' initiatives in the area of VET and work-based learning as well as on learning outcomes in the MET industries.

At present and, despite several calls, the website still needs to be much further updated and developed.

As agreed in the SSD plenary meeting of 8 December 2016, both joint and one-sided initiatives (e.g. from industriAll Europe affiliates only) are welcome as long as they highlight the importance that trade unions and/or employers at national level give to education and training-VET in the MET sector.

An example could either be a joint agreement, a (cross-border) project, an innovative practice, etc. industriAll and CEEMET reminded members to send their best practices.

Proposal for work-programme:

Preliminary discussions on the work-programme on SSD E&T for 2018:

- Organising another event in 2018
- Participating in the Vocational Skills Week of week November 2017 (20-24 November 2017)
- Submitting a joint pledge on apprenticeships (to promote attractiveness, quality, effectiveness of apprenticeships schemes) - 2018
- Developing a joint statement on digital skills (to be annexed to the general statement on digitalisation and its effects on the world of work) – for 2018
- Continuing the development of the metindustry website – ongoing
- Continuous education and training (CET): To be included in the agenda of the SSD E&T meeting of 2018, possibility of preparing a joint position to be developed in the second half of 2018 for approval.

CEEMET and industriAll Europe Secretariats will hold a meeting on 18 July to agree on a final draft work programme for 2018.

**Item 6) Miscellaneous**

The European Commission presented the new system (AGM) to be put in place for the reimbursement of travel and accommodation expenses of the members.

This system will be introduced gradually.

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