



Brussels, here I come !
Annual Conference CHAIN5, 8-9 March 2018

1 Introduction

Of course you will find further details of the annual conference in this newsletter, on 8 and 9 March. This event takes place in Brussels, on the campus of the Hogeschool Odisee. The day before there is the possibility to visit several educational institutions in Ghent – meaning that in conversation with a number of employees you can learn more from the education at level 5 in Flanders.

Do not wait too long to sign up for the conference, given the aim to create a small-scale activity with interactive sessions. The goal is to learn from each other and - after 5 years working with CHAIN5 – to take the next steps when it comes to the European Level 5 Area.

Go to: <https://www.ucll.be/content/registration-annual-conference-chain-5>
and fill in the necessary details. You will receive automatically a confirmation by e-mail.

Further interesting items in this newsletter:

- Start of a discussion about a better definition of Higher VET
- Call for experts (and being invited for Brussels)
- Reports from DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion - VET, Apprenticeships & Adult Learning (European Commission), on recent developments, projects and initiatives
- Memorandum of Understanding VET4EU2
- Evaluation of the Luton seminar (part of the Tandem project).

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3 How to register for the annual conference

Registration for the conference is still open!

Go to:

<https://www.ucll.be/content/registration-annual-conference-chain-5>

and fill in the necessary details. You will receive automatically a confirmation by e-mail.

The invoice for the conference (and dinner and/or social programme) will be send to you some weeks before the conference, by e-mail.

4 Information about the conference

Here an update for the practical information of the conference, the preliminary programme and the programme for the Wednesday (the 'social activity') – and the 'general meeting' for members on the 8th.

Let the European Level 5 Area Drive Change and Connect Talent

How to make qualifications at level 5 future-proof

and function well with the needs of the world of work and the challenges for all learners

8-9 March 2018, Brussels

***There will be a social programme (visits to institutions in Ghent, Flanders)
on the 7th of March 2018***

1. Dates of the conference: 8 and 9 March 2018
2. Thursday 8 March: lunch / 13:00 – 17:00 / dinner in Brussels
3. Friday 9 March: 09:00 – 13:00 / lunch
4. Date of the visits to institutions in Gent: 7 March, 10:00 – 17:00 / possibility for having dinner in Gent
5. Venue: Hogeschool Odisee (University College), Brussels
6. The conference is a good opportunity to harvest good practices for the use of the 'Level 5 Area', and the qualifications that are used at the international level, being important for the national settings of learning pathways. Short Cycle HE is one of them, to feed the discussion about the use of this qualification and also Higher VET as a challenge for VET providers to offer vocational qualifications parallel to the higher education area.
7. Brussels is easy to reach by plane and train, and the venue is within walking distance of the Central Station: <https://www.odisee.be/en/campus-brussels-en>.
8. We recommend that you find a hotel by yourself, knowing that it is difficult to make a general arrangement for the whole group.

Costs

- Fee for the conference: 175 euro (a reduced fee for participants from selected countries – see the registration page for more information about this)
- Dinner on Thursday evening: 40 euro
- Social programme (visit to Ghent): 40 euro.

Further on in this newsletter, after the programme, you will find a (provisional) list of topics that will be discussed in the workshops and the sessions. Also a short call for experts that we want to have in our community of practice, and who we would like to invite to come to Brussels.

General meeting CHAIN5

On Thursday morning from 10:15 till 11:30 we will have the general meeting for the members of CHAIN5. The meeting room will also in the building of Hogeschool Odisee.

The agenda and documents for this meeting will be send to the members the week before the conference.

Programme

Here the programme we have in mind for the conference.

Thursday:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 12:00 - 13:00 | Lunch buffet and Registration |
| 13.00 - 13.30 | Opening session (Steering Group) |
| 13.30 - 14.45 | Key-note speeches <ul style="list-style-type: none">- The role of the labour market in the Flemish Level 5 Area, Fons Leroy, VDAB, Flanders- Looking back at 5 years of CHAIN5, and what the future will bring us Hans Daale, CHAIN5 |
| 14.45 - 15.15 | Coffee break |
| 15.15 - 16.05 | Workshops, round 1 |
| 16.05 - 16.10 | Short break |
| 16.10 - 17.00 | Workshops, round 2 |
| 19.30 | Cocktail + dinner (Restaurant Scheltema, in the center of Brussels) |

Friday:

- | | |
|---------------|---|
| 09:00 - 09.45 | Key-note (t.b.c.)
Short Cycle HE and Higher VET: two pillars in the European Level 5 Area, but what do they have in common and how about quality assurance for linking them within flexible learning pathways? |
| 09.45 - 09.50 | Kick-off for the sessions |
| 09.50 - 10.20 | Sessions, round 1 |
| 10.20 - 10.25 | Short break |
| 10.25 - 10.55 | Sessions, round 2 |
| 10.55 - 11.20 | Coffee break |
| 11.20 - 12.00 | Interactive plenary session, based on the outcomes of the sessions – having a panel with employers, students and policy makers for 'feedback' |
| 12.00 - 12.30 | A summary... by the Steering Group of CHAIN5 |
| 12.30 - 13.00 | Closing session: interactive – for setting the scene for the future of the community |
| 13.00 - 14.00 | Lunch buffet |

Social activity: visit to Ghent

On Wednesday, March 7, there is the opportunity to participate in the 'social activity'. It concerns visits in the morning and afternoon of educational institutes, related to level 5 in Flanders. Lunch is provided by one of the institutions.

In the second half of the afternoon Flemish students will act as a guide for a tour in the center of Ghent. Then there is the possibility to dine in Ghent (where we will recommend a few restaurants, and also reserve one of them for a group).

There will be collected around 9:30 at Brussels Central Station, to take the train to Ghent. Transport is provided in Ghent. The return journey is by train again.

Workshops and sessions

Here a list of topics we have already for the workshops and sessions. In the next newsletter more about them, and information about participation in them (knowing that we need your input also)

1. The 'three parties concept' – the importance of all three stakeholders in flexible learning pathways at level 5 (NHL-Stenden, the Netherlands)

Collaborating with employers for education based on learning outcomes. A concept based on:

1. Personalized learning
2. Co-creation

Getting started with the 'Euroduale framework' in which the role becomes visible of the three stakeholders: student, world of work and educational institution

2. Higher VET, an interesting concept for flexible lifelong learning – but how to link this type of qualification to the higher education framework (CHAIN5)

See chapter 5

3. Journal of Pedagogic Development' (University of Bedfordshire, UK)

See chapter 6

4. Experts in level 5 issues: how to start this year with networking (CHAIN5)

See chapter 7.

5. BEEHIVES: the results so far – and how to use them (AoC, UK)

See for information: <https://beehives.de/>

6. Another brick in the level 5 area: how to deal with ECVET and ECTS (Leido, the Netherlands)

See the 'opinion section' in number 28 of the newsletters.

7. Work-based Learning in general – and how to start with new concepts in the European Level 5 Area (CHAIN5)

See the article about this topic in number 28 of the newsletters.

5 Higher VET

In 2018 a further discussion will be held about what should be understood under Higher VET, a type of qualification at level 5 (and sometimes also higher). It is important to have a clear definition of HVET, to be able to conduct a good and relevant discussion about the permeability between VET and HE, the flexible learning pathways from level 4 to levels 5 and 6, and the use of formal and non-formal qualifications.

Within CHAIN5, attention will certainly be paid to this, given the objectives of our community. A contribution will also be made by formulating a definition, as will also be done during the session in Brussels.

Below is a document written by Cedefop that is involved in the formulation of a new strategy for VET, and therefore looks at the excellence and status of this educational sector. It can also be used for the session.

Cedefop:

What is higher VET?

The term “higher VET” was only introduced a short time ago in the educational policy discourse at European level and at the level of the Member States. Before that, the main distinction made was between initial and continuing vocational education and training (IVET, CVET) as well as higher (academic) education. In the course of the development and implementation of the national qualifications frameworks (NQF) in the EU Member States, higher VET qualifications – above all those acquired outside the higher education (HE) sector – increasingly moved into the centre of interest. The reasons are, on the one hand, increased interest in company- or work-based qualification programmes and, on the other, the lack of information on these programmes and qualifications that has been prevalent to date. But to appropriately assess these qualifications for the purpose of an NQF allocation, it is necessary for them to be presented in a transparent manner.

To date there is no common understanding in Europe on which qualifications belong to higher VET and what, quite generally, is understood by this term.

The European Guidelines define higher VET as follows:

- Higher VET qualifications are allocated to those NQF levels which are referenced to the EQF levels 5 to 8.
- These qualifications are usually acquired outside the higher education sector and therefore also outside the Bologna system.
- Higher VET is consistently demand-driven. Critical are the specific qualification needs of the companies providing the impetus for developing new or adapting existing qualifications.
- The higher VET sector is characterized by a governance structure with close ties to the economy. Professional and business associations as well as chambers and social partners are the driving and controlling forces behind the development and implementation of qualifications and therefore the guarantee for proximity to the labour market and demand orientation.
- Higher VET is characterized by the direct involvement of professional practitioners from the companies, who contribute their expertise throughout the entire “lifecycle” – from the development and implementation of a qualification up to its evaluation.
- Higher VET makes it possible to provide tailor-made further and higher qualification for people who, as a rule, already have a relevant IVET qualification and/or several years of experience in company-based practice, with different regulations applying in the national systems.
- At the foreground of the qualifications provided in higher VET are practical work and experience-based learning, supported or complemented by the theoretical knowledge required for action competence.
- One major focus when providing qualifications in higher VET is to deepen and/or expand specialist competence, thus enabling graduates to perform complex tasks, including in combination with unforeseeable situations at work which prompt certain actions, at their own responsibility, or to coordinate the performance of these tasks.
- Graduates in higher VET additionally acquire managerial skills which enable them to lead project teams, fields of work or organisational units as well as to set up companies. In addition, they are able to assume responsibility for staff and often to carry out the company-based training of junior employees as well.
- The provision of specialist and managerial competences is complemented practically by the strengthening of key soft skills (such as communicative skills, the ability to deal with conflict, enthusiasm, problem-solving ability, creativity, innovation capacity) to further expand the professional competence.
- Qualifications provided in higher VET are not geared specifically towards companies but open up to graduates a wide activity field in the economy.

6 Workshop on the call for articles (Journal of Pedagogic Development - issue Nov. 2018)

We will have the possibility to edit an issue of the 'Journal of Pedagogic Development' (UK), to be published in November 2018. The articles can be based on workshops and sessions to be held during the Annual Conference in Brussels. But we also welcome other articles about level 5 topics and developments.

During the annual conference we will have a workshop about this initiative, led by the editors. It will be about more background information and the instructions for the writing of an article in this magazine.

We got the offer by the editors of the Journal for Pedagogic Development to use their November issue for CHAIN5 and its community, looking at Work-based Learning at level 5. We appreciate this opportunity very much, so we have accepted this offer.

It means that we need articles, not only written by members of the Steering Group. One of the ideas is to ask the contributors to the conference in March whether it will be possible to write an article about their topic for the workshop or session. After the conference the outcomes of the workshop can be used also, to show how 'level 5' is getting attention in a regional and/or national context. But... of course we welcome also other articles about level 5 developments, without having an own workshop in Brussels.

For more information, you can already take a look at <https://www.beds.ac.uk/jpd> and also at <http://wblearning-ejournal.com/contributors.php>.

7 Call for experts

Here the text we have published in the last newsletter. We invite you, if you want to join the community as an expert, to come to Brussels. You can take part in one of the sessions on Friday morning, to discuss the best way of starting-up the thematic group and how to act in the coming years. It is an open discussion, to get a clear picture of the possibilities and to get the best results by investing as experts in time and energy.

Themes that we have in mind, just to give the discussion a start:

- *Quality Assurance and accreditation*
- *Cooperation with the world of work and 'dual education (apprenticeships)*
- *Projects and level 5*
- *Mobility at level 5*
- *Managing of institutions, offering level 5 qualifications*
- *Combining VET and HE, for flexible pathways*
- *Designing level 5 qualifications*
- *The role of teachers and practitioners.*

CHAIN5 is a community of practice, meaning that we want to be as practically oriented as possible with the issues that has to do with the EL5A. It is also necessary to be able to lean on the use of experts through the networks we have within CHAIN5 - and that we are building at the moment. These experts are the ones who, within their own job, with their specific work, make use of the competences for this.

As already mentioned earlier, we want to create a 'platform of experts'. That platform will be based on several themes. For each theme we then look for experts who can be used for CHAIN5 and its members. In the January issue we will include a form with which you can register yourself as an expert. Here an example of what we have in mind for the use of the 'platform of experts':

- A member of CHAIN5 can organize a regional seminar about level 5 in general or one of the themes that we have defined as relevant for the EL5A.
- The organization appoints a number of topics for the seminar and sends a list of these to the secretariat at an early stage.
- We will look at which experts can best be engaged and also be available for this seminar.
- Further agreements are made between the relevant organization and the experts. In any case, we assume payment of the costs for the flights, the hotel and the seminar itself.

Of course, such a meeting can also be held by another organization in the CHAIN5 network. We can be asked for contributions from our experts, for presentations, workshops and other activities. That we as CHAIN5 will also use all experts for our own activities, per theme or in general (think of the annual conference), is only logical.

In the next newsletter we will mention the themes we have in mind for the 'Platform of Experts' and the concrete call, with a registration form.

8 Luton Conference – results and good practice

In the evaluation report for the Tandem project, the CHAIN5 conference in Luton is mentioned. In the previous newsletter we have published some of the outcomes of this event, combined with recommendations. Here this paragraph, for your information.

Luton conference as final conference of the project was organized by Leido, the Dutch partner in the TANDEM-project. The conference took place at November 9th and 10th 2017 in the premises of University of Bedfordshire, Luton / UK. All project partners participated in this conference and gave their contributions.

Preparation was excellently done by informing participants starting from summer 2017 by sending them different Newsletters, preparing for conference topics as well as for transport and accommodation possibilities and organizing also a cultural supporting programme.

The composition of the programme was very stringent and touched all the important topics concerning bridging Level 4- to Level 5-education and training based on workplace experience and high standard theoretical learning.

Highly qualified and experienced speakers gave input on the conference topic and raised attention to the core points of high professional qualification and workplace requirements.

In his opening speech, *Bill Rammell*, Vice-Chancellor of University of Bedfordshire gave "Reflection on policy and practice for higher level work-based learning". *Professor Jonathan Garnett* pointed in his keynote speech to the terms and definition of "work-based learning and learning-construction in the work-place". *Simon Broek MA*, Researcher at Ockham Institute for Policy-Support focused on "Teachers and Trainers in work based learning and apprenticeships".

Besides this very important theoretical input, from side of enterprises different partners reported on good practice, how companies assure high qualification, in general higher than "normal" standard by cooperating with institutes, like Stanton University or by founding an own Academy like Prysmian group.

All project partners took the opportunity to present their practice for assuring highly qualified employees by organizing training and further education, mostly leading to formal degrees or diploma. Depending from the special target groups they organize focused courses, for SMEs as shown by Chamber of Commerce Oviedo or for specialised skills as shown by EWF, safeguarded by quality assurance methods and measures.

In a panel discussion, they debated on experience and educational activities for the sake of the common goal to open flexible pathways to generally recognized qualifications in a higher VET level and open the way to further steps in Higher Education.

In the concluding feedback on the seminar, *Helen Hoffmann*, European Commission, Directorate General Employment, Social affairs and Inclusion, expressed her respect to the TANDEM project consortium on the results and achievements they had shown during this conference and promised her support for to continue this important path of more flexibility and permeability in Vocational Education and Training and work based steps to Higher VET , Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE) and Higher Education.

9 Memorandum of Understanding VET4EU2

During the Vocational Skills Week (Brussels, November 2017), the partners in VET4EU2 signed a Memorandum of Understanding, if it is for the VET sector. Interesting development, to have a group of 6 associations for formulating joint initiatives, to work together in stimulating the discussions about the role of VET in a range of issues and developments.

Here this MoU, plus one of the annexes, mentioning Higher VET.

Memorandum of Understanding VET4EU2

Stronger Cooperation and Integration of European Associations of Providers of Vocational Education and Training

Since 2009 European Associations of Providers (EVBB, EfVET, EUproVET and EVTA) have been working together to enhance and promote the expertise of providers of Vocational Education and Training at the European policy level. The first activity was a joint statement on the EU Bruges declaration on Vocational Education and Training. This was based on the realisation that EU policy has a large impact on national policies and on providers and learners in VET. It led to the awareness that policy development needs the active engagement of those at the grass root level. Schools, Colleges and training institutions and training in companies is where policy must become not only an intention but a reality. Without providers involvement in policy development the impact, outcomes and results that are necessary for a stronger and higher quality VET will not be realized. This is the case at EU level, at national level and even at regional or institutional level.

On the part of the EU commission this was recognised and since then the involvement in policy development and listening to the people at the level of schools and colleges has been growing.

The four associations issued policy statements like the Bruges statement (2010), the Frankfurt declaration (2012), the Barcelona declaration (2014) and the statement on the EU Riga declaration on VET (2015).

Since 2009 the associations are actively involved in working groups and conferences, and participate in advisory groups. The strengthened cooperation with the EU commission has led to an enhanced involvement by higher vocational education. EURASHE was involved in EUproVET at an earlier stage in order to strengthen the link between VET and Higher Education. For this same reason eucen and EURASHE both joined the expert group of providers of Vocational Education and Training at the initiative of the EU commission. This groups meets quite often with the EU commission. This is based on a mandate of activities that are being carried out in the framework of EU policy development and implementation.

This closer cooperation over the years led to a larger mutual involvement of the respective associations. All this was realized in the spirit of the EU that cooperative action and collaboration has more effect than individual activities. Also in the realization that we have more in common than at first hand seemed to be the case. It finally resulted in 2014 in an agreement to work together under the abbreviation VET4EU2. The abbreviation refers to the 4 networks that are mainly working in secondary VET (EVBB, EfVET, EUproVET and EVTA) and the two networks that work primarily in Higher Professional and Academic Education (EURASHE, eucen). The abbreviation is pronounced 'VET for you too', thus indicating that VET is an honourable and first class educational route for all. It also refers to the route from VET to Higher Education which should be considered as an equal route next to the more academic pathway of general secondary education.

The cooperation between the associations has been increasingly constructive. This can be seen in joint projects, cooperation in conferences, joint policy statements, and an agreed distribution of tasks for the work in policy working groups. Therefore, it was agreed to follow and strengthen this path of cooperation that has been started already many years ago. So, we are now building on the building blocks that we have laid in the years before.

With the present memorandum, we aim to further strengthen our cooperation in policy involvement at the European level. Each of the associations will work in close collaboration with their member institutions. It is recognised that each association has an individual mission, members, background and history. This seems self-evident in the case of the difference between higher and secondary professional/vocational education. EURASHE and eucen on the one hand and EfVET, EVBB, EUproVET and EVTA on the other hand. But we meet on issues like continuing education, lifelong learning, permeability from VET to higher education and the link through level 5 programs and qualifications.

Also for the four associations in secondary VET it is true that there are differences in origin and priorities but we meet in the need to recognise the importance of VET for learners constructive

talent development and in the importance of VET for both the labour market and personal development. This requires an equitable position of VET in the educational system providing initial, dual and continuing education that benefits both the learner and the companies they (will) work for. VET is increasingly important for both social and economic development, for the young the adults and those that aim for vocational excellence

It is not our aim to merge as associations, but to strengthen our cooperation where we have common insights for positive policy development that will be effective for learners, teachers and trainers, and companies and society. These insights originate at the level where Vocational Educational and Training takes place, meaning in schools, colleges training institutions and companies that provide for Vocational Education and Training.

Statements

The undersigned associations agree to the following statements for strengthening their cooperation:

- 1.1. The associations will strengthen their cooperation to achieve their respective missions, the development of EU policies that strengthen the quality and equitable position of VET in educational systems and EU policy proposal, to achieve the goals and outcomes that have been set out in notably the Barcelona declaration by VET4EU2 and the RIGA declaration and the mandate of the expert group of VET providers. This stronger cooperation should not result in extra financial obligations and administrative burdens in accounting.
- 1.2. The associations will aim not to merge but to establish a formal legal umbrella for cooperation that will facilitate their intended cooperation and, increase access to calls and increase the eligibility to delegate experts in policy development activities by the EU.
- 1.3. The associations commit themselves to strengthen mutual information exchange on developments, events and activities of each association and to facilitate cooperation and networking between their members including granting access to each other's events at membership conditions of the organizing association.
- 1.4. The associations will actively try and enter into joint projects (e+) or platforms that will contribute to strengthened cooperation and will actively involve or invite each other and each other's members to contribute where relevant
- 1.5. The associations will form a joint pool of experts that can be of assistance in policy development and formulating joint policy statements and the representation of VET4EU2. The associations ensure that their experts in this network are experienced experts in the field that have knowledge of the aims and policy statements of the VET4EU2 associations.
- 1.6. The associations will develop a joint website to facilitate their cooperation and communicate with each other members. A link to this website will be on the homepage of the website of each individual association.
- 1.7. The associations aim to increase VET providers representation from all the EU countries and will stimulate capacity building for VET grass root representation in all EU countries. The growth of representation will be through membership of the most appropriate organisation. There will be no competition for memberships.
- 1.8. The associations will actively try and engage sectoral European VET associations within the efforts of VET4EU2.
- 1.9. The associations will realize an adequate and representational delegation in policy development working groups at EU level. Delegation will consider an equitable representation of all associations and the available expertise in time and quality of any association.
- 1.10. The responsibility for this cooperation will be with the appointed representatives of boards of the six associations.
- 1.11. The cooperation within VET4EU2 does not lay constraints on individual actions of the individual associations in the field of attention. This memorandum does indicate a preferred channel for policy representation. This means that it is also possible to agree on joint positions on issues that are particularly interest for one or a minority of associations.
- 1.12. This memorandum has been agreed to by the boards of each association.
- 1.13. Any conflicts resulting from this memorandum will be resolved within a joint meeting of the representatives of the associations as mentioned in 1.10, and it can be part of an annual meeting of the associations.

One of the annexes:

Permeability, continued and higher VET (deliverable 3)

Permeability towards higher VET and university is increasingly identified as a key factor to develop career perspectives and increase employability. There is a growing need for more cooperation and alignment between initial VET, continuous VET and higher education, to raise qualification levels and design effective and sustainable lifelong learning schemes.

New effective policies can only be developed when VET and higher education networks and policymakers join forces at EU, national and regional level. VET4EU2 provides a platform for dialogue with stakeholders such as EURASHE and eucen to address this issue and strengthen cooperation.

VET4EU2 regards EQF as a key instrument to support transparency and recognition and enhance permeability. To optimise further development, some issues need to be addressed. Among these are the systematic low appreciation of VET in many NQF systems, the international recognition of the EQF system beyond Europe and aligning the NQF values of VET in participating countries.

Recommendations:

- Intensify the integrated dialogue with all stakeholders in order to improve smooth transitions from VET to Higher Education, both in initial education programmes and lifelong learning.
- Continue to stimulate cooperation between VET and Higher Education networks on topics of common interest.
- Facilitate a study into the positioning of VET in NQF systems in comparison to general education and use results to improve NQF systems.
- Speed up national actions to align NQF – and subsequent regional and Sectoral qualification schemes - with EQF through country specific recommendations.

10 Italian and Canadian EQF5 Colleges Agreement

The Italian situation for the level 5 qualifications is challenging. There are institutions offering Higher VET. They have started the discussion about the role and the status of this qualification, parallel to what is happening in the Italian Higher Education Area.

Last year one of those institutions, in Como, has taken the initiative to sign an agreement with the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics. Here the press release.

Cometa Formazione and International Academy of Tourism and Hospitality had a meeting with Italian and Canadian in order to coordinate mutual activities of students exchange, internships and opportunities for a recognition of credits (EQF level 5) for Italian students to integrate studies in Canadian universities to get a bachelor degree.

On September 26th, in the Italian Senate in Rome, Alessandro Mele, CEO of **Cometa Formazione** and Secretary-General of the International Academy of Tourism and Hospitality led an international meeting with Denise Amyot (President of the Colleges and Institutes Canada and of the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics), Paola Bucalossi, (Public Affairs Officer, Education Promotion and Communications, Embassy of Canada), the national steering committee of the EQF5 organizations (“ITS”) and members of the Italian Parliament.

The meeting, promoted by Alessandro Mele as coordinator of the national steering committee, launched a preliminary agreement between Italian and Canadian EQF5 colleges, in order to coordinate mutual activities of students exchange, internships and opportunities for a recognition of credits for Italian students to integrate studies in Canadian universities to get a bachelor degree.

At the same time, the visit of Mrs Amyot has consolidated the relationship between Italian ITS system and the World Federation of Colleges and Polytechnics: the quality of Italian ITS has been recognized by Mrs Amyot who pointed out the value of their research in technology, their international attitude, their strong connection with the industry sector, with an impressive placement rate (more than 80%) since their creation five years ago.

11 News from the European Commission – DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion

We regularly receive e-mail messages from Brussels, on behalf of the European Commission - DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion, about projects, plans, documents and all kinds of other developments. We take the liberty to include a selection of them in our newsletter. In most pieces you will find links to websites and papers. Of course, we are open for reactions and suggestions.

A The Public Employability Services Network

In 2017, the PES Network reflected on the active role PES can take in building efficient bridges between education and employment by partnering with relevant stakeholders, and in preventing young people becoming NEETs.

A PES Network Position Paper <<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18867&langId=en>> sets out concrete proposals for facilitating cooperation between PES and the education systems throughout the EU.

For all questions, please don't hesitate to contact EMPL-PES-SECRETARIAT@ec.europa.eu. There is also a toolkit: <<http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=18611&langId=en>> for PES on LLL, for information.

Both documents are accessible on the PES Network page; <http://ec.europa.eu/social/PESNetwork>

B European Year on Cultural Heritage in 2018

2018 will be the European Year of Cultural Heritage, officially launched at the European Culture Forum on 7 December 2017 in Milan, Italy.

The aim of the European Year of Cultural Heritage 2018 is to help rekindle a sense of belonging to a common European family, by involving citizens and particularly young people in events and projects which will bring the common European heritage and values to the fore. The Year will also highlight that cultural heritage is a resource for Europe, bringing many social and economic benefits and promoting European excellence in the sector. The Year should also lead to a "quality leap" in how we take care of heritage when it comes to quality of conservation and restoration, use of new technologies, sustainability, access to heritage and participation in its management.

A strong education and skills component is embedded in the 10 themes put forward to contribute to the objectives of the Year, among which heritage-related skills.

Skills for heritage is one of the key topics for the Year

Indeed, the European Year is an invitation to "support the development of specialised skills and improve knowledge management and knowledge transfer in the cultural heritage sector, taking into account the implications of the digital shift" - Decision (EU) 2017/864, Art. 2, specific objective 2(h)¹.

European excellence in heritage preservation and conservation is jeopardized by the combined effect of the age pyramid and cuts in public budgets; this affects the transmission of heritage knowledge and skills to the younger generations. A lack of high-level professionals in "traditional" heritage occupations is already predictable. It is therefore important to explore possible responses in the short, medium and long term, since the cycle of professional preparation in these areas is often very long. In addition, new skills and competences are needed to make better use of new technologies for heritage preservation, and enhance the visitor's experience in sites and museums. During the Year, by means of a dedicated initiative, the Commission will aim at attracting young people to heritage related jobs and ensure the transmission of European expertise in the field, while accompanying the adaptation of heritage related professions to the digital world.

What will happen in 2018?

2018 will see several hundreds of activities and initiatives at European, national, regional and local levels all around Europe to get people interested and involved in cultural heritage. Events will be organised in all EU Member States as well as in numerous other European countries.

¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32017D0864&from=EN>

Projects and initiatives implemented in EU Member States, municipalities and regions are complemented by transnational projects funded by the EU. In 2018, cultural heritage projects are being funded with the support of Erasmus+, Europe for Citizens, Horizon 2020 and other EU programmes. The Erasmus+ National Agencies have been informed of the Year and will include the heritage field in their communication activities to encourage Erasmus+ projects in the field, in particular through VET.

The objective is to help trigger real change in the way we enjoy, protect and promote heritage, making sure that the European Year benefits citizens in the longer term.

For more information: <https://europa.eu/cultural-heritage/>

C Reports of the Vocational Skills Week (through the eye of youngsters / reports workshops)

Here the link to a report of the 2017 Vocational Skills week from the eyes of the learners. One of the contributors is a youngster suggested by the expert group.

Direct link for ease:

https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/sites/vocational-skills-week/files/evsw_learners_report_final_06.pdf

The report is now online https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/european-vocational-skills-week-2017-inspires-learners-1_en.

The reports from the 3 workshops of 22 Nov on S.M.A.R.T VET are also online:

https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/sites/vocational-skills-week/files/session_2.1_smart_permeability.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/sites/vocational-skills-week/files/session_2.2_vet_for_industry_4.0.pdf

https://ec.europa.eu/social/vocational-skills-week/sites/vocational-skills-week/files/smart_communities_of_practice.pdf

D Call for proposals – integration of third-country nationals

DG HOME opened the AMIF 2017 Call for proposals on the integration of third-country nationals, comprising 5 topics.

In particular, Priority 4 "Promote swift integration of TCNs into the labour market through strengthened cooperation and mobilisation of employers and social and economic partners" can be quite interesting for the work of some of our stakeholders (PES, VET providers, etc.).

The deadline for applying is 1 March 2018.

For more information please visit:

<https://ec.europa.eu/research/participants/portal/desktop/en/opportunities/amif/calls/amif-2017-ag-inte.html>.

E Three initiatives – education and training

A set of three initiatives in the field of education and training was adopted by the Commission last week:

- The proposal for a Council Recommendation on key competences for lifelong learning, revises the 2006 Key Competence Recommendation and is one of the deliverables under the New Skills Agenda for Europe.

<https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-key-competences-lifelong-learning.pdf>

- A Communication on the Digital Education Action Plan outlining how the EU can help people, educational institutions and education systems to better adapt to life and work in an age of rapid digital change by making better use of digital technology for teaching and learning; developing the digital skills needed for living and working in an age of digital transformation; and improving education through better data analysis and foresight.

<https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/digital-education-action-plan.pdf>

- The proposal for a Council Recommendation on promoting common values, inclusive education, and the European dimension of teaching which aims to promote citizenship and ethics education, critical thinking and media literacy. The proposal also strengthens inclusive education to promote quality education for all pupils as well as the European dimension of teaching, about Europe's common heritage and diversity and get a good understanding of the functioning of the EU.
<https://ec.europa.eu/education/sites/education/files/recommendation-common-values-inclusive-education-european-dimension-of-teaching.pdf>

Links to the full pack and all supporting documents here:

http://ec.europa.eu/education/news/european-commission-adopts-key-education-initiatives-for-inclusive-cohesive-societies_en.