

The European Association
of Institutes for
Vocational Training
(EVBB)



TANDEM; Flexible pathways
connecting vocational
education and training (VET)
and higher education (HE),
taking into account the
requirements of the labour
market

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TANDEM; Flexible pathways connecting vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE), taking into account the requirements of the labour market

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For more information
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Editorial and layout

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TANDEM; Flexible pathways connecting vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE), taking into account the requirements of the labour market



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Executive summary

The TANDEM project aims at enhancing the flexibility in learning pathways across education systems (from EQF levels 4 to 5 and 6) connecting Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) by taking into consideration the needs of the labour market.

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The project mainly focused on the need for education and training in the labour market, how to offer workers and apprentices learning pathways where they can take a next step to advanced vocational qualifications. It seems quite clear that companies need training to meet specific needs related to the activity and position of their workers and prefer practical experiences and work-based learning approaches.

TANDEM surveys showed learning pathways based on using the workplace allow workers to grow into a job at a higher level, supported by the employer, and in consultation with the educational institutions. Even though higher-level VET qualifications refer to highly skilled workers, this does not mean necessarily that those skills can be obtained only by higher education institutes/degrees. TANDEM results indicate employers do not necessarily favour graduates with higher-level degree. One of the reasons is the distance between some level 6 training (university training) and the reality at companies. When entering the labour market, recent graduates find themselves in an unknown reality. Many companies prefer therefore VET4 students directly after graduation, giving them the opportunity to start their career, going step by step further, by combining work with study. The forecasts point to a future shortage of people with a VET qualification, however more precisely attuned to job market demands to keep up with technological and economic change.





1. As Tandem shows, employers and employees invest in a substantial bundle of trainings, leading to a group of certificates. Depending of what the labour market (and the job) needs employees fill a “port-folio with VET certificates” based

upon courses, training and work-experience. For employers the certification/recognition is a minor issue; they expect immediate results. Although the EQF/NQF aims to promote flexible learning pathways and focuses on learning outcomes independently of where the qualification has been acquired (i.e. any sector from formal education or through validation of non-formal and informal learning), no common arrangements exist for credit transfer and accumulation for qualifications related to the EQF. This makes it more difficult to move from one learning setting to another; such transitions are, however, fundamental for individuals who experience several transitions throughout their learning and employment careers. The growing internationalization of products and services value chains has triggered an increasing number of international (sectoral) qualifications industry-based training and certifications, based on standards developed by international companies or sectoral organizations. We recommend:

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- Close cooperation with companies and educational institutions: An important aspect that reflects one of the basic deficits is the gap between training and employment with a shortage of skills and qualifications of interest to the labour market. The training system is mostly not providing agile and well-oriented responses to the changes that are occurring in the labour market.

- Education matters are mostly transversal and in charge of several ministries; absolutely necessary to have a platform for LLL in a country, having representatives of all ministries on board for shaping pathways and recognition diplomas and certificates outside the formal system, whit involvement of business organization. A European directive on how to recognize competences acquired from





all types of learning and training is needed as well to issue certificates which could also be used as parts of national/international formal studies and joint degrees incl. recognition and accreditation of skills acquired through

professional experience.

- Involving the business world in the necessary reform processes for the simplification of NQF; EQF should become less an education agenda and more a labour market driven agenda. EQF is still too much considered to be an education policy, falling under the responsibility of the educational sector driven by governments and the decision-making role of labour market side is often weak. The main focus should be placed on evidence of competences acquired rather than on the learning pathway and building bridges between formal, non-formal and informal learning, leading also to the validation of learning outcomes acquired through experience. The implementation should respond quickly to the rapid changes that are occurring at companies. Therefore streamlining the process of updating the map of qualifications, vocational diplomas and certificates of professionalism is necessary so that they constitute a realistic offer regarding the needs of the companies.

2. Besides; the world of work, as well as VET providers are more and more concerned that the numbers of graduates are growing in the HE (higher education) programs as already observed even in countries like Germany “duale Ausbildung” with high reputation. In Bulgaria: 54% percent of the university graduates have jobs, which don't require a university degree, while with 32 % tertiary education attainment in 2015, Bulgaria is “on track to reach its national Europe 2020 target of 36 % “as European Commission indicated (Volume 2 of the Education and Training Monitor 2016). Similar in TR and UK, studies indicate half of all university graduates are doing non-graduate jobs, languishing in jobs they are over-qualified for. On the other side students drop out of higher education without completing





their studies. Though data availability and comparability still pose challenges, available completion rates range from 48 % to 88 %. In Germany 28% of students of any one year (in many technical courses at 50% or higher) currently give up their

studies in bachelor degree programmes at German higher education institutions.

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So it is actually highly recommended, to have a VET degree at level 5, to be seen as Higher VET by linking academic and vocational competences to each other. The traditional notion of white/blue collar with the concept of separate (higher/lower) skill sets is no longer appropriate to current conditions, has serious repercussions on VET students' capacity and must be revised. Students/apprentices need the right tools representing alternatives more precisely attuned to job market demands to keep up with technological and economic change. For many people, VET remains a second option, and only a minority of workers has opportunities to develop new skills.

EQF level 5 offers possibilities to build flexible learning pathways, creates a potential for expansion of VET at higher levels to better reflect the qualifications demanded by the businesses. New impulses can be created by means of incorporating of elements of both VET and HE, a promising platform that can facilitate the step-through to advanced vocational qualifications without workers/students have to "invest" in a higher education degree. "Level 5 area" could be a continuum for all supplementary qualifications and interdisciplinary skills acquired through business education, in-company training and vocational courses with effective procedures for recognizing skills acquired beyond formal education.

It is becoming increasingly important in countries that are critical of their education system and think of modernization, that it is necessary to develop VET programs at their own national level 5. VET provider itself could develop programs that are suitable for those with a VET4 diploma, strongly with the focus on the labour market,





with the help and input from the (regional) field of work. VET can only become more attractive if people rely on its results. The common trade coin is the learning outcomes. The step from VET4 to a higher level is often a difficult one, and it

demands a specific approach in the government legislation and therefor the overall national strategy.

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For level 5, VET and HE providers could work together; tools exist and what is missing is just political will. Companies need a greater role in the definition of both, formal VET degrees and certificates of professionalism. VET and HE (at levels 4, 5 and 6) need a national platform to discuss issues related to Lifelong working together so for the attractiveness for students, workers and business world, by offering a system without dead ends and involving the business world in the necessary reform processes for the simplification of NQF.

Bologna and Copenhagen processes were not synchronized from the start. European as well as national policy-makers should make a greater effort to synchronize the Bologna and Copenhagen process in order to maximize these processes' potential to facilitate institutional and social mobility between VET and HE in Europe. Points of ECVET and hours of ECTS should disappear and be replaced by the competences acquired. It is necessary to stop classifying because it leads to more division.

TANDEM recommends promoting the coordination of the current decentralized VET system, establishing a single administrative unit that will ensure the adoption of common criteria, and will streamline administrative, management and funding actions for all training (both formal and employment training).





Introduction

TANDEM is designed to contribute to the debate on reform by drawing lessons from already existing practices of consortiums' partners and strengthening the connection between policymakers and practitioners, business and educational community. The project builds up upon the demands, analysis and practices of consortium partners and advocates for flexible modular pathways across education systems and more differentiation regarding the level of education with the aim to drive change and support the policy shift from a local, limited response, towards anticipating, and managing systemic changes.

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Project rationale in short

1. Work package 1 (WP1) – The need for education and training in the labor market; Analysis-, “finding the dots”= the background study through desk research and surveys (comprehensive reports of WP1, WP2, WP4 and WP5 are on TANDEM website)
2. The Work package 2 (WP2 – How should education respond to the needs of the labour market; Synthesis-, examining and combining of processed information from WP1 and performing statements
3. Work packages 4, 5, 6 (WP4, WP5, WP6) addressing national, European stakeholders and policy makers sharing and discussion the results, getting feedback and integrating (their) perspectives and solutions and finally compiling and publication of findings and policy recommendations





Project aims in maximum 3 sentences:

- What: Advocating for flexible learning pathways by connecting VET, HE and business world
- Why: to make possible that individuals continuously update and acquire skills required by work-life
- How: by drawing lessons from already existing practices of consortiums' partners



3 main expected achievements in relation with the chosen priority:

- Flexible learning pathways aligned with work life demands
- better communication and collaboration between VET, HE, business world
- Giving impact for improving and driving the EU-policy agenda



3 key elements that make project being a FLCP :

- being composed by key stakeholders with potential and influence in giving input for educational policies
- Towards the future of LLL in EU=fluidity; convergence of what traditionally thought of as separate skill sets
- a change-oriented and proactive approach towards problems and make solutions happen rather than waiting



3 main characteristics of partnership:

- European associations and networks in the fields of VET and HE
- business community (small, medium and large size enterprises, as well local and global level)
- heterogenic, complementary, synchron and efficient





The need for education and training in the labour market

WP1 focused mainly on

- EQF levels 4-5-6 , when speaking about flexible pathways,
- workers of companies as target groups and
- highlighting the companies' need and strategies to quickly anticipate and meet the demands regarding their employees' current skill sets and working practices on qualifications acquired through non-formal and informal learning (not the formal education)

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The full report is to download on TANDEM website.

The separation between professional and academic qualification is dysfunctional for the labor market. Most employers do not care whether their employees obtain their skills within “higher” or “lower” education, they even do not aware about NQF levels the project is referring. In fact, there are few ones who are acquainted with the terminology used in the education field and European frameworks and tools, mainly, the industry's targets and industry stakeholders.

It seems quite clear that companies train their employees to meet those specific needs related to their activity and position. They expect immediate results and the certification/recognition is a minor issue. To obtain other type of qualification does not seem to be a priority, therefore to choose to take higher level training cycles is a personal decision, which does not directly involve the company.

1. **Importance of training:** The company surveys of TANDEM indicate that -observing the dynamics of workforces and skills gaps as the rate of skills change accelerates- proactive skill-building and workforce planning is an urgent issue. The employees (encouraged/demanded and provided by their companies) are constantly and continuously participating on trainings and courses, to ensure that their skills are updated for the company to stay ahead in the race and keep up with changes in the market. 75% of





respondents of the Tandem survey declared giving training to workers. Short term training courses/programmes are preferred and awarded by companies, sectors and/or international bodies. Rate of employees took training courses during the last 3 years: 84% within the survey of

Spanish partner, as well as Turkish partner Prysmian. Within EWF (European Welding Federation) survey 88% indicates that employees having training courses, while short term training courses (87%), workshops (73%) and lectures/conferences and/or seminars (53%) were the most representative options.

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EWF survey shows 43% of companies prefer modulated tailored courses and each 36% want mentoring/coaching, delivering classes in the workplace and more flexible schedule. Also significant= most companies themselves are organising the courses and/or have own training centres and defines training needs on their own accord; learning (non-formal and informal) takes place in enterprises. The question whether courses outside the company are useful, Spanish companies responded: interesting courses, but they must be adapted to specific company needs. The most selected average duration of these courses is between 21 and 100 hours. 60% of education providers indicated giving company/sector courses to workers, 64% financed by companies (multiple answers).

2. **Training to obtain what:** The surveys of TANDEM indicate that the employers and workers want efficient continuing competence development, to deepen “knowledge and skills in the current job position and career development”; but the huge majority selected “a specialized VET” against the option of a Higher Education. Even though higher-level VET qualifications refer to highly skilled workers, employers do not necessarily favour graduates with higher-level degree. Enterprises prefer practical experiences and work-based learning approaches, more tied to VET institutions. It seems quite clear that companies train their employees to meet specific needs related to their activity and position. To obtain other type of qualification does not seem to be a priority, therefore to choose to take higher level training cycles is a personal decision, which does not directly involve the company (Chamber Oviedo Spain).





EFW survey results indicating in similar direction: The great majority of employees expressed that they would attend/have attending in order to deepen “knowledge and skills in the current job position” (88%), followed by the willing to “improve

job prospects” (47%), while the aim to “pursue further academic pathway” represented by only ¼. Whether employers and employees consider “having a qualification that allowed their workers/or themselves to carry out their training/education in a HE or VET organization would be an added value”. Both answers were quite aligned, agreeing that it would be an added value, representing 92%. But the huge majority of “Managers/employers” selected “a specialized VET ” (92%), against the option of a specialized Short Cycle Higher Education (23%) and a generalist Short Cycle Higher Education (8%). The employees also opted mainly for the “specialized VET ” (66%), while the second option was “Short Cycle Higher Education (specialized)” (40%) and “Short Cycle Higher Education (generalist)” (11%) far behind.

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The Prysmian Academy in Mudanya offers Post Graduate Program, International Leadership Program and Advanced Leadership Program to its workers from all Prysmian subsidiaries in order to acquire advanced technical and/or management competences; improving their job prospects and helping them progress in their careers. Their concept of grey collar (between blue collar and white collar) as a bridge is allowing workers to enrich their educational and professional profiles. Target group is mid-level production personnel who have 1-3 years of cable experience in Process, Maintenance and Production. Grey collar worker combines hands-on practical skills with selective white collar technical capabilities.

3. **The validation:** As Tandem shows, employers and employees invest in a substantial bundle of trainings, leading to a group of certificates. Depending of what the labor market (and the job) needs employees fill a “port-folio with VET certificates” based upon courses, training and work-experience. Although the EQF/NQF aims to promote flexible learning pathways and focuses on learning outcomes independently of where the qualification has been





acquired (i.e. any sector from formal education or through validation of non-formal and informal learning), no common arrangements exist for credit transfer and accumulation for qualifications related to the EQF. This makes it more difficult to move from one learning setting to

another; such transitions are, however, fundamental for individuals who experience several transitions throughout their learning and employment careers.

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The growing internationalization of products and services value chains has triggered an increasing number of international (sectoral) qualifications industry-based training and certifications, based on standards developed by international companies or sectoral organizations, like the welding sector. In Turkey too in several technical branches the training is linked to certificates requested by law and by specific international quality standards and norms. The surveyed companies indicate the importance of the training, but the certification awarded is mostly not important.

The EQF is still too much considered to be an education policy, falling under the responsibility of the educational sector. Hence, the labor market side is (still) not sufficiently engaged to ensure that the objectives will be reached and the dialogue between education and labor market side stakeholders is ensured. It appears to be difficult to have employers truly involved in the process because they regard the EQF/NQF as not relevant for them. There is also a lack of established validation procedures for non-formal and informal learning.

Which tools does the company use to assess employee training needs: Companies mostly check the knowledge acquisition and also personal satisfaction.

3. **Companies supporting employees:** Spanish survey shows financial assistance is available which is provided through credits against Social Security contributions. EWF survey indicates the majority of the companies support the employees providing them time to attend the training programs (83%). A considerable number





of managers pointed out that employees receive grant/funding of the company to attend training (58%).

4. **Skill needs:** The topic of project is very dynamic and, as being a forward looking project, it is aimed at promoting

innovation emerging from consortiums` stakeholders by giving authentic insights into partners` own acting regarding flexible learning pathways ("bottom-up approach"). The surveys show the companies prefer and provide non-formal training by highly valuing the fact that training is tailored to the specific needs of their (existing) workforce and departments with immediate impact to identified deficits.

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Beyond subject related knowledge the training should complement the specific on-the-job skills with broader, transversal and transferable skills, since work is getting more complex and in flux and requires flexibility, initiative, creativity, the ability to take on many different tasks - and to learn from own doing and experience. Employers emphasize skills as being important in turning technical skills into economically productive ones that allow workers and apprentices to excel at effectively learning on the job.

From a skills perspective, the companies need to quickly anticipate the new production/consumer values, to translate them into product offerings and to become ever more knowledgeable about the processes involved in meeting these demands and the impact this may have on their employees` current skill sets and working practices. As outlined already the growing internationalization of products and services value chains requests several international (sectoral) qualifications.

Current technological trends and skills demand are evolving rapidly at an aggregate industry level, the degree of changing skills requirements within individual job families and occupations is even more pronounced. Transversal and cross sectoral competencies and skills, —such as persuasion, emotional intelligence and teaching others— are in higher demand across industries than narrow technical skills. Content skills (which include ICT literacy and active





learning), cognitive abilities (such as creativity and mathematical reasoning) and process skills (such as active listening, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork) are growing part of the core skills requirements for many industries.

So TANDEM surveys show employers are often equally concerned about the work-related practical skills or competences beyond hard skills and formal qualifications, that current employees (or prospective new hires) are able to use in order to perform various job tasks successfully.

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% Of responses	Most nominated work place skills (TANDEM surveys)
84%	communication, instructing, team working, decision making
62%	self-direction and learning to learn skills: planning, task discretion, learning, adapting
68%	connecting skills and knowledge from multiple sources and experiences; applying and understanding issues and positions contextually
95%	Solving complex problems (problem-solving)
57%	Skills regarding information and communication technologies , (Spanish survey 83%)





How education should respond to the needs of the labour market

The topic of project is very dynamic and as being a forward looking project, it is aimed at promoting innovation emerging on one side from consortiums` stakeholders, on the other side from various stakeholders also active in the field of project topic.

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The full report of WP2 is to download on TANDEM website.

Consortium's point of view

The partners in the project used WP2 for the analysis of the outcomes of WP1, from their own point for view. Subthemes are selected and statements formulated in order to elaborate

- How to adapt/react to companies` skill and training needs and strategies?

Companies developing and maintaining the training, individual/company/sector based; validation of "port-folios with VET certificates" based upon courses, training and work-experience

- The impact of these practices and strategies on national systems of skill formation; the state, trade unions, and employers' associations as brokers shaping and regulating training systems, VET and HE (two systems) providing education and training: which changes, partners, structural, legal, financial framework conditions could effectively permit a more flexible use necessary for the individuals and companies/sectors; governance and decision making
- Which practices, as well inhibiting factors are identified within consortium partners?
- Recommendation

1) Employers` perspective

1.1. **Decision making in companies about skills provision for employees:** who is responsible for up-skilling employees and how do they take care for the provision of courses and training programs – and: what are the possibilities in working together with public-financed institutions?





Main conclusions for formulating statements by Prysmian Group

Education is just a part of what has to be done to keep a company 'alive' and 'competitive'. Is there still a huge and immediate need for up-skilling employees, looking at the current economic situation? This can be used as basis, but it is not the only source, on a general forecast for the new skills and competences that the workers need to have in two or more years.

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But besides this more general information, a company will use the market for its products for having a strategy for schooling its workers. This means that a company has to gather information about the (regional, national and international) labour market in general and about its own sector, to have an idea about what education (training) can be worth, looking at this as an investment (and the profit of the company and the employability of the workers can be seen as issues, contributing to a 'return of investment').

And what are the partners in this? Do formal institutions (for VET, and HE, for youngsters) have an idea about how to actualize programs for students? Do you have as company a seat in the so-called 'advisory committee for the labor market', for a study programed? In general: how is a company communicating with Colleges, Universities and other providers of formal education? Does it help to advise them about new programs?

The statements formulated by Prysmian

- If certificates acquired through non-formal learning are obligatory for jobs (competences needed for the workplace, the work that has to be done), e.g. based on national regulations, those modules have to be integrated also in formal study programmes at the corresponding level(s). Some study programmes in VET and HE are aligned with the certificates so that people can work directly in companies without taking any "non-formal" certificates.





- In case of international jobs having similar activities on the work-floor including international requirements for them, we need also international certificates – to be recognised at the international level – and to be used for international formal studies and joint degrees (offered by institutions for VET, HE and similar levels).

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- Programmes at VET level 4 must give the opportunity to (young) students in their final year to get specific labour market oriented certificates, in combination with their internship. This means that the content of the modules for those certificates is developed and maintained under control of the companies in the sector. In such a situation the government finances part of the costs for students: material, salary, insurance, travel... In this period students can work, for instance, 3 days in a company and go to school for the remaining 2 days.

- In addition to all these technical trainings, the other competencies that the industry expects from the people it needs are the managerial skills of the people. Many companies are trying to develop these skills outside of their technical training. It would also be beneficial to include this type of personal development training (team work, communication, time management, team management etc.) in training programs

1.2. Employers and the need for training: how to serve them?

Main conclusions for formulating statements by Camara de Comercio de Oviedo:

- Companies are aware of the importance of training within their organizations
- Training enables them to respond to shortages of certain professional skills
- They stress the importance of financial assistance for training their employees
- The necessary involvement of social and economic agents in planning vocational training, since “employees and companies understand training requirements better than anyone”.





The mission of a 'Training for Employment System' is to train and qualify people for work and update their skills and knowledge throughout their professional careers.

'Training for Employment' is each type of professional, vocational training aimed at responding immediately to the different needs of the individual and the productive system.

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There are two initiatives related to this training:

- Training offered by the competent administrations for employed and unemployed workers. This will be funded through grants.
- Programmed training for companies and their employees.

Awareness-raising with business on these issues is essential:

- the new vocational training;
- its connection with labour rights and the economy;
- the possibilities of access to training;
- the interconnection between work and vocational training provided by the educational system;
- the form of certification;
- the process of implementation in companies of training strategies

When it comes to training and skills development, SMEs face several very practical and organizational problems:

- How to identify a training program suited to the company's specific needs?
- How to organize training, for example further training for workers in micro companies where each worker is needed every day?
- How to find financing for training courses?

These are typical problems that SMEs are currently facing when it comes to training and skills development. SMEs are facing external and internal barriers and obstacles with regard to improving their skills base. There are also financial and organizational barriers. It is more difficult for micro- businesses and small companies to find the financial resources needed to offer training to their employees. Nor





do they have the means to send their experienced staff and workers on longer training courses. Training programmes and methods available on the market are too often unsuited to the size and needs of this type of company.

Currently, the Spanish Chambers of Commerce are proposing a more active participation and collaboration in the framework of the Training System for Employment (one of the systems that integrate vocational training in Spain, linked to the Ministry of Employment and Social Security, and the Autonomous Communities). For example:

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- A permanent function of prospecting and detection of training needs whose results will be collected in an annual report and will be reflected in the multi-year strategic scenario that will be the reference of the programming of all the training that is imparted in the system. The whole procedure has to be carried out, what will be the importance of these reports in order to schedule the calls and how will the evaluation be evaluated if the training meets the expectations of the companies in the different sectors. These reports must be done with all rigor so that the courses offered really provide the training that companies need to increase their productivity. Here the Chambers could offer their independence, being one of their functions to look after the general interest.
- It is envisaged that questionnaires and interviews will be carried out with the participants in the training actions, annual monitoring plans by the Administrations and specific instruments to detect, avoid and sanction cases of non-compliance or infraction This would require the involvement of independent agencies in order for the evaluation of the process to be efficient. Once again, the Chambers of Commerce could contribute their independence to help the Public Administrations to carry out the necessary follow-up.
- A commitment of permanent evaluation is introduced in all the phases of the training process and the performance of quality audits of the entities that impart the training.





The Chambers of Commerce could make such assessments with full guarantees.

The statements formulated by Camara de Commerce Oviedo

- If in a country formal education is under control of Ministry X and non-formal education is organised by Ministry Y, the providers of VET and HE (at levels 4, 5 and 6) need to have a national platform to discuss issues related to Lifelong Learning.

- Business Academies, owned by big companies and responsible for internal professional training programmes, have to be integrated in the national education system, in case they offer non-formal certificates that are (partially) funded by the (regional) government. If they are part of the system, it will allow adult learner to get exemptions in case of studying in formal degree programmes, offered by Colleges and Universities.

- We need more research on the situation in which students will follow courses, training programmes and even full degree programmes at level 5 (of the National Qualifications Framework), after completing a full degree programme at level 6 or after dropping out from a formal programme in higher education. In cases like that level 5 programmes have to be offered in an apprenticeship format

- We need more attention for the role of Chambers of Commerce (and similar organisations) in being a 'linking pin' between companies looking for tailor-made training and education and providers of VET and HE. Examples from countries like Germany (is doing well as economy) and Spain (facing still a lot of problems, looking at the economic situation) can be used as inspiration for similar countries.





1.3. International Qualifications: role in the labour market

Main conclusions for formulating statements by EWF

The importance of having European

Qualifications

The European/International qualifications of European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting (EWF) are of great importance, as they are based on quality standards issued by ISO, they set standards to perform tasks in welding and allied areas based on stakeholders' needs, ensuring the new technologies are embraced, as well as the health and safety assurance. Finally, they enable mobility and recognition of workers within the membership network. The process and mutual influence between EWF qualifications and ISO standards were in both ways. Our qualifications (welding coordination qualifications) were matching the industry's requirements, so we gave inputs to ISO and, on the other hand, we have been constantly updating them according to new evolving requirements. So, at an ultimate level, we can state that our proposal for EQF descriptors fully cover the ISO requirements and welding tasks, but organised according to competence units and written into much more detail.

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Quality Assurance process

The combined training, qualification and certification system of the European Federation for Welding, Joining and Cutting (EWF) and the International Institute of Welding (IIW) is based on a network of Authorised Nominated Bodies (ANBs), with a wide range of mechanisms to ensure quality of its qualifications and certifications along the lifecycle of qualifications. EWF meets some of the findings mentioned on the "Study on International Qualifications Framework and Systems (2016)", in the following scopes: the development of qualifications, delivery of training, assessment/-certification process and maintaining the quality of training.

Role of the European Qualification Framework and linkage to National Qualifications Frameworks

The European Qualifications Framework (EQF) is a relevant tool to translate a given level of a qualification comprised in a given National





Qualification Framework (NQF) of a country in mobility cases, for example. In the scope of the International Qualifications, the EQF is intended to prevent the qualifications are multiple-referenced to different levels according to the NQF of the country where is delivered.

That would weaken the quality assurance mechanisms. NQFs can have more than 8 levels, or even less. The mechanism is that a qualification in country A can be linked to the national level X and in country B to national level Y, but that both X and Y are linked to the same level of the EQF (if that qualification has comparable learning outcomes in both countries).

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According to the study on International Sectoral Qualifications Frameworks and Systems (European Commission, 2016) the sectoral organisations are willing to reference their qualifications directly to the EQF, EWF is now starting to do it as well, mostly through Erasmus+ funded projects, using learning outcomes.

Main statements elaborated by EWF

- Social partners, involved in the development of the EQF and in its Advisory Board for this instrument, need to have a formal link with an international platform with representatives of international networks (associations) for international certificates (based on international qualifications).
- There is a need for a link between the European Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education and standards for the quality assurance in the world of work, controlled by other non-state organizations (national and international).
- There is a need for a European Qualifications Framework for non-formal learning, with descriptors based on standards that are used by 'the world of work', like ISO and NEN – and with a 'conversion table' of this EQF-NF with the EQF for LLL.





2) Level 5 in general and the 'European Level 5 Area'

Main conclusions for formulating statements by Leido/Chain5

Level 5 is often seen as insufficient, having a lower status – less than the Bachelor. That is also the case in countries, in the eyes of policy makers. We need to make them aware of the fact that it is something different – having its own quality. So, it will in most cases compared with level 6 (by students, parents, influencers, politicians...). Often it is unknown what the competences are of someone having a diploma at level 5. Level 5 is still not well known in the labour market (thinking of HVET, SCHE and more like this kind of formal programmes). Competences and responsibilities are often the same on level 4 and level 5 for jobs and positions in sectors. And the payment is often the same. The implementation process of a developing a level 5 programme (HVET and SCHE) takes rather a long time and that makes it different to react on changes in the labour market.

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But level 5 is, next to the fact that is a level in its own, has to be seen as a positive 'road' to come further, to have more possibilities. There is a lack of permeability from level 5 to level 6. Level 5 is often unknown by HEIs – or those programmes will be ignored. Maybe those institutions are having the wrong 'images. There is a need to share examples of good L5 qualifications/characteristics across countries. Permeability is important, meaning that the diploma has to be recognized in other countries. Profiles are important, for instance thinking of the different profiles in nursery in different countries for level 5 and 6. Most employers use tailor-made programmes, offered by private institutions.

New developments in the UK – related to apprenticeships

In the UK the focus is on apprenticeships for youngster and workers. Here some information from the Sheffield Hallam University about one of the programmes. The government now proposes that:

- levy paying employers with wage bills above £3,000,000 per annum will use their levy pay-ments and a 10% government top-up





to pay for apprenticeship course fees and any end-point assessment up to the funding-cap

- non-levy paying employers (below the wage-bill threshold) may access government funding of 90% of the course fees (or 100% for learners below the age

of 19 at the start of the course for small employers with less than 50 staff) up to the funding cap

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Main statements elaborated by LEIDO/Chain5

- Experiences and good practices of adult learners in formal and non-formal programmes on level 5 (offered by institutions that are selected by companies) must be used for developing in the next years new and creative arrangements, to have more flexible work-based learning pathways starting from level 4. This can help to raise the status of Higher VET at level 5, if adult learners want to get a qualification at a higher level. It can also represents a choice for youngsters for a more attractive HVET programme, next to a study in Higher Education.
- Within or after this project we have to pay attention to formulate essential issues if it is about giving Higher VET a better status for all stakeholders – next to Short Cycle HE. This is necessary knowing that a lot of adult learners want to get a well recognized qualification at a higher level and it will make the choice for HVET more attractive for youngsters, being a qualification similar to SCHE.
- Every country needs a national system, having big companies paying a specific levy (taxes) for the funding of apprenticeships in their own organisations but also for having a budget for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accepting apprentices. The government should be 'the broker' in this system, paying for some other 'out-of-pocket' costs for those SMEs.





3) European strategy on University Lifelong Learning

Eucen has an important role in the policy making process in university lifelong learning (ULLL). Through conferences, projects and networking activities, Eucen

provides a wide range of opportunities for its members and stakeholders to share innovation and best practices, and to establish platforms for knowledge transfer and interaction in ULLL

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Specific aspects of a LLL University versus traditional Universities

New lifelong learning -based approaches at universities offer a possibility for advancement in case the culture of traditional forms of education can be transformed. There are various activities that link higher education with VET and whose situation clearly indicates the need of enhanced cooperation. The definition of ULLL varies between countries and universities.

Comparison of LLL Universities with Institutions for Professional HE

ULLL can reach a level that the expertise of its faculty can offer. The essence of research-based learning underlines the significance of both the general level of research, but also the pedagogic excellence of the academic staff and their ability to work in the external context. Often the universities organize courses and programs in only part of the fields represented in the institution. In general, some educational fields have closer links to professional networks and practices than others. On the other hand, the institutions for professional HE mostly focus on the professional developments in specific areas regarding the demand and financial resources from the sectors. Additionally, they are more flexible in comparison with the universities.

Interesting aspects of the programs at level 5 for companies

In the process of knowledge economy and transformation of Industry 4.0, the requirement for more skilled employees is increasing day-by-day. The ULLL mission statements mostly emphasize the advancement of the economic, social and cultural well-being of their region. In this context, bridging the internal networks of the university and the external connections to work life are of utmost





importance. Both the universities and companies may benefit by crossing the borders of degree programs through lifelong learning.

Connections with VET / formal in countries

As a part of widening access to universities, they could actively promote the pathways, tools and procedures opening doors to new publics from VET. The pathways from VET to universities are partially open, but the numbers of applicants are limited and there are various hindrances to be tackled and procedures and practices to be developed. The collaboration in Level 5 would be a good start to pave those ways.

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Main statements elaborated by EUCEN

- LLL Universities can take the lead in the (international) discussion about the role of level 5 qualifications (the European Level 5 Area) in up-skilling workers with a VET background and even possibilities to get a formal degree at level 6.
- If LLL Universities are working together with Business Academies, we have to have a research on the criteria for the cooperation and the success factors. The outcomes of the research can be discussed with organisations for the social partners, national and international.

4) **Developments in European networks looking at VET and HVET**

VET organizations' perspective; main conclusions for formulating statements by EVBB

In the education and training policy discourse, permeability is mostly understood and fostered as new access pathways into higher education. The academic sector defends barriers for access as a necessary measure to maintain the level of performance of HE.

Higher education attainment levels are generally on the rise in the European Higher Education Area. The development of skills at higher levels and the enhancement of qualification levels of European





citizens have been high on Europe's political agenda since several years. In 2010, EU Member States and the Commission have agreed upon that by 2020 at least 40% of 30-34 years old should have completed tertiary education or equivalent education. Bulgarian EVBB

member indicates: 54% percent of the university graduates have jobs, which don't require a university degree, while with 32 % tertiary education attainment in 2015, Bulgaria is "on track to reach its national Europe 2020 target of 36 % "as European Commission indicated (Volume 2 of the Education and Training Monitor 2016).

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The Bruges Communiqué explicitly called on Member States to 'develop or maintain post-secondary or higher VET at EQF level 5 or higher, as appropriate'. HE institutions responded by developing and expanding vocationally oriented HE programmes to meet the demands of the labour market. Yet many students still drop out of higher education without completing their studies. In recent years the dropout rate from Bachelors' degree courses has been a relatively constant 28 per cent in member states (in Germany in many technical courses 50% currently give up their studies in bachelor degree programmes) . "Such high drop-out rates are in no other sector of the education system imaginable and is also due to the fact that the clientele of the universities has changed" (Hessen Metall/German Trade union).

Main statements elaborated by EVBB

- Academisation can currently be observed insofar as the statistical numbers of graduates are clearly growing in the higher education programmes. If the development continues in this direction, vocational training and the dual system of education will disappear in insignificance. Vocational education must be a fully-fledged system, recognized as an educational phase of equal status. If the "final qualifications" could be only provided by HE institutions, vocational education would be degraded.
- VET providers have to develop programs (VET5) and give VET students/apprentices the right tools more precisely attuned to job





market demands. Higher-level VET qualifications refer to highly skilled workers, but this does not mean necessarily that those skills can be obtained only by higher education institutes/degrees.

- To avoid the competition between the two systems, duplication and wasted resources, redefining of roles, identities and areas are necessary. VET and Higher Education: Two systems, ECTS and ECVET are not compatible and cannot be cumulated

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Discoveries including comments and suggestions for discussions

Group 1; Employers and companies are always willing to offer 'education and training' to their employees knowing that 'learning' is vital for both of them

- But the schooling has to be:
 - relevant
 - given now, here and being practical
 - and it must fit in the work-conditions
 and:
 - the level is not relevant for the modules and competences
 - and the quality criteria are = usefulness, satisfaction, and having results in practice

Employers will not always be able to let an employee having some education. One has a number of criteria, as indicated in this row.

- Companies are willing to cooperate with providers of VET and HE in case of more standard modules, but still based on 'the needs' of the company. There must be clear reasons for companies to work with formal providers. This can also mainly be done using modules and other parts of formal qualifications. These modules are suitable for working people and the companies know that young students have also followed them and will have those skills when they come to work.





- Question: Do we need an intermediary organisation for this, bridging the cultures of both 'worlds'? Chamber of Commerce and Industry? Employers' network? Or?

It is difficult to build all kinds of 'bridges' when it comes to involving various organizations in such an important issue as education. In many countries, Chambers of Commerce and Industry can play a role, or will interfere with employers' organizations. But that is not always an optimal plugin. It will have to be seen from an investigation whether a sufficient approach is possible at regional and national level. Based on that, recommendations can be made.

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- Using international networks for this?
The experience gained by international qualifications networks with bringing together all sorts of worlds, with providers and clients of training, can certainly be used.
- The role of the government can be crucial – having a strong policy, to convince all stakeholders
A party that has a lot of importance in the schooling of employees and thus also lifelong learning is the government, through the ministries involved in that. A strong, clear and powerful strategy can help. On this basis, stakeholders can be brought together. Experience has shown that it is advisable to have a national office, independent working and being based on expertise (think of the development of the Foundation Degree in the UK), which can be involved in a good structure in all of this.
- The intermediary organisation can be financed by the government
Of course, that will cost money. The government can make a budget available, as is the case for public funding of institutions.
- And that includes a (national) Platform for LLL
Because there are many substantive issues to be discussed, with the involvement of experts, a national platform for organizations around LLL is definitely recommended.





- It looks bureaucratic, but who and what else?

It can be seen by an outsider as setting up a bureaucratic structure. However, in the education system, VET and HE providers are often autonomous, and are used to self- controlled arrangements. However,

in this kind of business, there must be cooperation across the boundaries of sectors. It is also necessary to negotiate with employers, with a view to flexibility, money, organization and other matters that maybe less important in a public funded institution. Private providers may then have a head start. But it would also be good if the public financed providers view how they can operate on the 'adult learners market', alone or with those private institutions in a network.

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- Knowing that employers are paying taxes and they are not willing to pay twice: once for the formal education and a second time for similar modules in private settings (tailor-made courses are always expensive). Employers, through their company taxes, also contribute to the funding system. Training programs, modules, certificates and other parts of formal education can certainly be relevant to companies and certain professions. The costs to be charged for this may then be marginal, as certain costs will no longer be paid; a win-win situation.

Group 2; The role of Universities in making a choice by students, parents, counsellors, politicians: higher status = status of the provider – is this a healthy situation?

- But there is huge need for people at higher levels – qualifications with a mix of academic and really professional competences and learning outcomes. Lots of attention from young people, their parents and supervisors goes to providing training at the highest possible level. It is thought that a University study is the best. But in many countries it appears that this choice is not always the best, to get a job. A national government strategy should therefore be aimed at informing these target groups that a qualification at levels 5 and above in a vocational or professional setting may be better for youngsters. The form from which work and





learning from level 4 are combined, with the use of the workplace, can in the long run be better in order to initiate a career. If it is about the status of both types of learning pathways, it will take some time before they are the same, by linking them to the national framework - but it is worth

to get started with the process.

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- In some countries dual education is part of the 'economic structure', needed for the companies to be (international) competitive

The forms of dual education, work-based learning, are already seen in some countries as necessary in order to help young people to work in a sector where there is a need for them. That is of great importance for an economy. And the companies can also continue to compete with other companies in other countries.

- Polytechnics are showing a 'vocational drift'
A development that may possibly be used is that Polytechnics are engaged in offering highly vocational studies, actually Higher VET.

- We need a new formal system, but that will take a lot of efforts, discussions, and a strong leadership of the government (national) If all thoughts about those developments are taken seriously, it seems time to look into the possibilities for structural adjustment of the formal system. Institutions in VET and HE, formal and non-formal education - and take all other ways of being busy as separate institutions - must create opportunities for cooperation. It will be difficult to start the discussion, considering all the interests that play there. It will have to be the government that takes the lead, with a firm direction – as mentioned also earlier.

- An idea for a new system – having two pillars in HE:
 - Universities:
 - Academic / Research
 - Academic / Professional / Research
 - Polytechnics
 - Professional / Vocational (VPET)
 - Offering level 5, 6 and 7





- involved in LLL
- Cooperating with VET providers

Classification in higher education; a binary system, with Universities and Polytechnics.

- Polytechnics are cooperating with Business Academies (private, tailor-made and non-formal). The public-funded colleges are therefore having a task in collaborating with training institutes owned by large companies. The private providers move on to their own market and provide clear tailor-made programs and trainings that can't be designed and offered by those public-funded institutions. In short, the public-funded and private markets need to cooperate more effectively.

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Group 3; We need an area for bridging

- VET and HE
 - Qualifications acquired through formal and non-formal education
- And for bringing providers together – for the labour market's profit

- This can be a 'European Level 5 Area' for all kind of qualifications – having a broad spectrum. We can start with having new developments by using the qualifications at level 5 of the EQF. There has to be a natural way of bringing stakeholders like the providers together. The start is to have a clear view on the 'area' for all types of qualifications at this level, including HVET and SCHE.

- With respect for all providers – giving space for agreements about transfer of certificates (Learning Outcomes), in a vertical and horizontal way. The Level 5 Area is a kind of 'meeting place'. Someone can complete a qualification and use it for a transfer to another qualification, at level 5 or level 6. Providers can make agreements about this, using their own programmes and aims.

- The EQF can be the reference for this all – and having a National Coordinating Point for agreements linking the qualifications to the NQF – also a 'broker', funded by the government (The EQF for LLL, using it for formal and non-formal learning). The recent proposals for the EQF, to take more care for the quality assurance





procedures and having more attention for qualifications through non-formal education, are in favor of this all.

Group 4; The future is for apprenticeships (but only if it is applied in the right way!)

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- Better to have a job and to combine with a study (instead of having a diploma, at a certain level, finding no job or by far not having a job at the right level). It is necessary to build the bridge between formal and non-formal education. An excellent opportunity for this is to set up learning pathways by using work-based learning, in which certificates can be obtained in conjunction with a formal, recognized study. In addition, an allocation for all the tasks can be made between the private providers and the public funded institutions. The great importance of this approach is that young people and employees, who go to another company, start with working, having a job. The study helps to put the next step in the career. It is increasingly common for formal education that people will complete a study (sometimes after a fairly long time) and that there is too few jobs for them or that the requirements for certain activities have been adjusted.

- Education is a 'Merit Good' but it will be more and more an 'Economic Good'

It is clear that education is important for the personal development of people and that it is necessary to function in society. The government takes this assignment seriously, for young people. But in the harsh world of a global economy there must also be opportunities for young people and the adult learners to be able to meet their needs. The economic return of an investment in a study becomes more important.

- Higher Apprenticeships and Apprenticeship Degrees

An essential point is that the learning pathways for apprentices also yield a recognized diploma, at the same level as degrees and other diplomas. National organizations involved in accreditation, quality assurance and system control, should play a role, even though this means that one must rely on what companies are used to do and what other quality assurance systems are.





- UK: Levy for big companies to be spending for their own apprentices and this kind of learners in SMEs (with some funding by the government). A remarkable and interesting approach has been introduced in the UK. Large companies

pay a specific tax. The budget thus built is mainly used to enable SMEs to employ students. For example, this means a kind of cross-financing. It has a compulsory character, partly because the government often can't make agreements with companies on a voluntary basis. Such a system is worth examining, looking for good examples, with an eye for the role of the world of work. It must also be ensured that the funds are effectively spent.

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Group 5; the 'publishers world', an important player in offering qualifications at levels 4 and 5

- They can be involved in material for the programmes (books, guides, exams, and so on)

Not so known in the world of formal education, but there are big publishing companies involved in private education, at all levels.

- Pearson (publisher) involved in (owner of):
 - BTEC (diploma / secondary): BTECs are career-based qualifications designed to give students the skills they need to move on to higher education or go straight into employment
 - They are also Higher National Diplomas and Certificates
 - Edexcel (education and examination body)

An interesting example is Pearson, having the right for qualifications under the name of BTEC, and it is the owner of Edexcel, a private accreditation body. They are offering programmes like Higher National Diplomas in some member states. It means that there is a private 'circuit' for programmes, material, exams, projects and so on. They can have in certain sectors of the labour market a good reputation and a well-deserved status. The question will be in what way formal providers can use such a company.





- They can cooperate with ‘quality assurance bodies and agencies’ for private education.

Such a company can use the same formats for accreditation and quality assurance as there are for formal education and other

systems for non-formal education. It is interesting to learn more at the role of this kind of stakeholders in the overall system, also in Europe.

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- and also for ‘work-based learning’ like apprenticeships
- And of course such a company is working for profit. They know the ‘language’ of the companies, what the needs are for education – having the possibilities to become a big player in LLL.

Some highlights

Here a short list of ideas as input for further discussion

- There are many professions that must comply with legal requirements, often under government control. But it is interesting that many of the requirements are set under the management of an international organization for professions, found in many countries.

- So, the government is expected to work with others to ensure the entire system's flexibility, with respect for the public financed and private institutions.

- Is it possible that the signals from the labor market through the private market in education can be used to update the formal education programs? If so, then giving exemptions will also be a lot easier.

- A specific focus is on schooling within small businesses and self-employed persons. Can one follow the developments in the sales market and translate them into the need to follow certain education? Is that to be combined with the work? Is it financially feasible if someone works for himself? Is education thus part of the entire entrepreneurial package?





- So, it is often not possible to qualify the exact level of the NQF. This will not really matter to the employer if such a formal leveling can't take place. Only if the modules can be used by the employee for exemptions for a formal training, the provider would like to take a look very carefully at the content and the level.

- One of the conditions for getting a complete new creative LLL-system is to have for workers the opportunity to get certificates and then to use them for a formal degree in a certain way. This could be a formal type of diploma for young people, but it may also be a qualification at the same level, with comparable competencies and in a similar way accredited.

- These qualifications through non-formal education also have their own frameworks and standards, such as ISO and NEN. The proposal is to review how the European Standards and Guidelines for the SCHE can be linked to those systems, thus gaining the confidence of employers, and ensuring the status of formal qualifications in use.

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Recent developments regarding the project topic

Higher Vocational and Professional Higher Education Qualifications in the European Level 5 Area: a basis for more international cooperation

Introduction

This chapter is about the possibilities for having more cooperation at an international level by using the qualifications at level 5. The cooperation is between providers in some countries, involving also companies for flexible learning pathways by using work-based learning.

In the so-called level 5 area Higher VET and Short Cycle HE are important types of qualifications, involving VET providers and HE institutions. In the project the focus is on bringing them together, where possible, to help companies in organising training, courses and





other programmes for their employees. In that context it has to be clear for companies what the roles of the providers are, and what the 'value' of a qualification will be for all stakeholders.

That's why here background-information about HVET and SCHE – and the progression routes between them – looking at some countries and Europe in general.

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The 'European Level 5 Area (EL5A)' is a relatively new concept for Europe, giving an excellent opportunity to link the sectors for Vocational Education and Training (VET) and Higher Education (HE) to each other. Then it is about looking at qualifications at level 5 of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF) and using them for cooperation between the involved institutions, as their providers.

This can lead to more flexible learning paths for students and employees ('adult learners'), making them possible at all times in their lives. Particularly by using also at level 5 programmes and qualifications beyond the formal public-financed system - such as business education, in-company training and vocational courses - effective procedures for recognizing skills acquired earlier and elsewhere as 'recognition of prior learning', can be put in place. It is also advisable to see whether there are similar developments in level 5 qualifications in other parts of the world. If so, then it may be useful to have further discussions and to share experiences and good practices in the years to come.

A community for level 5: CHAIN5

CHAIN5 is 'the community of practice for Level 5' in Europe. It was established in 2013 to take care of opportunities, in cooperation with stakeholders, for using qualifications at this level, having better shaped learning pathways between levels 4 and 5, and also level 6. An important limit that many people need to cross, is that is there between VET at level 4 at HE at level 6. A flexible route can help to make sure that more people succeed, do not drop-out or are not able to complete their study. In that way, young people studying at level 5 can get started in the labour market, having the right qualifications. It





is also important for the world of work to be able to train workers appropriately, as a function at level 5 is demanding for new and relevant competences.

Higher VET

An important pillar under such a system with qualifications at level 5 and being a particularly interesting qualification within the EL5A, is formed by study programmes that are known under the name 'Higher Vocational Education and Training' (also mentioned: Higher Technical Education and Training). In the eyes of CHAIN5, this concerns only level 5 - and possibly higher – study courses that in a formal way are offered under the flag and responsibility of a formal recognized VET provider.

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They lead to a recognized diploma, not to a formal degree as in higher education will be the case. Such a clear definition is absolutely important in order not to cause confusion with the providers and all other parties involved. So, no formal HVET programmes in the portfolio of Higher Education Institutions or providers for private training programs, just to be mend for companies. Of course, these qualifications can be linked to level 5 of the EQF, using the National Qualifications Frameworks (NQFs), but 'that is all for them'.

VE and T

But it is in that way interesting to notice that VET means to have a combination of VE and Training, provided in secondary vocational education. Thus, in programs up to level 4 already many training components and professional competences can be found, i.e. attempting to teach a student as many skills as possible, which are very practical, partly by having an eye for what is happening in the world of work. In higher education, a focus on pure training for a job is often not the case, given the nature of this type of education. Therefore, it is good to know that more and more countries see Higher VET as an opportunity for learners to complete a combination of education with practical training at higher levels. Dual programmes for HVET can be extra interesting in that way.

For young people, this means that they do not have to enroll directly after graduating for a VET4 study into a higher education institution –





of course in countries where such a direct transfer to HE is possible, like the Netherlands. They can experience whether the job is interesting enough to stay at work, in combination with strong related training and education, or that getting back to school and a continuation

in higher education is more rewarding (because they want to have a return on investment, like their parents and others 'investors' in the study do - just as the government may have in mind as one of the most important contributors, in countries where public-financing still exists...).

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A need for level 5

In addition to this, the world of work is more and more concerned with the possibilities for those who finish VET4 - to prevent that a big majority of them will continue 'automatically' in higher education. This progression happens under social pressure, from parents, supervisors and others who are faced with study choices. But having too many people at level 6 or above can't be good for developing a national economy, and especially a regional one. Many companies prefer VET4 students directly after graduation, giving them the opportunity to start their career, going step by step further, by combining work with study.

The result of this is, among other things, that there will be more types of qualifications within the Level 5 Area (L5A) – national and also international. Many of them have to do with forms for dualization, work-based learning, and thus linking a study to a job - using a formal contract that allows this. In some countries, this endeavors to find alternatives for higher education, but it has to be very clear to the students and all other stakeholders that the status of this learning path is the same as starting in higher education. They need to know that there are more opportunities for having a job (and earning an income) and that there is always a formal degree that can be achieved. It maybe takes a longer time, but it is with more certainty: there are no dead ends in the system. Therefore, within such a L5A, we need to look carefully at what is possible and what is already there. It is also important to see who can and will pay for the





study: the person himself, the company and/or the government, but possibly there are also other sources.

Progression routes

If we think of the need for education and training in the labour market, it is important to offer people a learning pathway where they can take a next step - although it may also be good to make it possible within a national system to achieve multiple degrees at the same level, to be widely applicable for jobs and professional activities. The step from VET4 to a higher level is often a difficult one, and it demands a specific approach in the government legislation and therefor the overall national strategy.

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In most cases, a progression route from secondary education into higher education is chosen by young VET students, to enroll in institutions such as Universities and Polytechnics. But it may be good and actually highly recommended, to also have the way to have a VET degree at level 5, to be seen as Higher VET. This allows a VET provider itself to develop a program that is suitable for those with a VET4 diploma, strongly with the focus on the labor market, with the help and input from the (regional) field of work.

VET and HE working together

As mentioned here, it is also the case that there is a lot of pressure on youngsters and people in their area to achieve a diploma and degree at a high level. That is to say, they often only think of a study at a higher education institution. But there are many students who drop out of a full programme for level 6, the Bachelor. That is why it is certainly a good development that European countries are increasingly thinking of embedding Short Cycle Higher Education (SCHE) as a level 5 degree in their Higher Education system, as a two-year program that links academic and vocational competences to each other. This also allows many target groups to be served – and we know that the number of potential students for such a SCHE programme is growing very fast.

In addition to this, it is good if both the VET providers and the HE institutions know – and experience - what it means to offer a





programme at level 5, to be used as reference points for each other. This does not mean that in all labor market sectors both HVET and SCHE are offered, because that depends on the professions available and the profiles that are needed for the competences. But one knows from the

other what the world of work demands at level 5 and how dynamics can be taken into account in the supply of training and education.

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SCHE = Associate

Such a situation does not arise itself if it is completely left to the education field, i.e. the institutions involved. Their interests are always very big, and not always the same. So, the government or another independent organization will have to take the lead in giving both level 5 qualifications an opportunity, where relevant, using the national framework for qualifications (NQF). At the European level, the ministries involved in the European Higher Education Area decided in 2015 to give level 5, the SCHE, a chance by having all countries committing themselves to this. That is, countries will in any case investigate whether SCHE is needed - and in any way to give those graduates from other countries the opportunity to enter a Bachelor degree programme. And now we need just one big decision for the final step: having a common name for the SCHE, and we think of 'Associate' – world-wide recognized.

Accreditation

If this has happened, the status of both routes must also be guaranteed. For higher education, Europe is used to have for this an accreditation procedure, so for assessing quality, the European Standards and Guidelines (ESG). That is not yet everywhere the case but a lot of countries are discovering that internationalization and studying abroad demands the acceptance of such an approach. Higher VET will often have such mechanisms in mind for the VET sector. But by putting the criteria next to the ESG for higher education, using the similarities, the implementation of such a link to level 5 can be given a real boost





HE systems and SCHE

A further element to be considered is the clear positioning of SCHE in the higher education area, fully recognized and adopted. In one country, two systems for this sector can be used for this:

- A 'binary' system that includes

Universities for academic education and Polytechnics (also known as Universities of Applied Science, UAS) for a more professional orientation - but both will have research components.

- An 'unitary' system with Universities only, offering programs with academic, professional orientation or a mix of them, based on the possibilities they have.

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In the first situation, SCHE will certainly be able to have a place in the Polytechnics, given the nature of this education and the professional approach within such an institution. In the second situation, it is often more complicated, given the focus on offering the Bachelor as 'the most important degree'. But the government can also talk about SCHE, certainly where the world of work demands it, loud and clear.

Learning pathways

Why is this of such importance, having this design and such a construction? It is not just for having a comparable status for both qualifications, so for the attractiveness for students, workers and their environment. It mainly offers the option to have a system after VET in which there are no dead ends. HVET and SCHE institutions could make arrangements for progression, transfer and connecting ('bridging') programmes, supported by legislation and other frameworks that the government knows and enables.





This includes the following flexible learning pathways:

		BACHELOR
VET5	SCHE	
VET 4		

VET4 → VET5 → SCHE → Bachelor (mostly professional oriented within a HEI)

		BACHELOR
VET5	SCHE	
VET 4		

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VET4 → VET5 → Bachelor

		BACHELOR
VET5	SCHE	
VET 4		

VET4 → SCHE → Bachelor

In this way the capacity of young people, the choices they want to make, and the time and money that can be put into play by all those involved, can be addressed. Also, someone can go through shorter trajectories, with a less chance of failure, and with the opportunity to change his or her education route. Also, for each step it can be considered what form fits best: study full-time, combine study with work, and even work for a few years and then continue with a next study.

HVET and the world of work

It is clear, and it is becoming increasingly important in countries that are critical of their education system and think of modernization, that it is necessary to develop VET programmes at their own national level 5. The knowledge, experiences and contacts with the world of work can thus be used optimally to put down 'smooth', flexible learning paths with a real solid status (money, job, no debts, career opportunities). In doing so, the government can take care of all kinds





of measures, and set out frameworks and requirements for progression routes, for some of the learning pathways outlined above. This can be done based on agreements between institutions, possibly with bridging programs or by having a part of the HVET training available for the preparation on the next study programme.

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Role of the government

A particular aspect that the government (and the national organizations for VET and HE) should not lose sight of - even if all goes well – is to create for this all a kind of developments of ‘consultation table’ with multiple parties. In other words, they have something to discuss about, structurally and in substance. Institutions for VET and HE can talk about their experiences with employers and their (regional) organizations. They can also organize meetings, conferences, workshops and other events. It is possible to invite experts to work together for reviewing the programs, without interfering with each other in the wrong way. That alumni can also be used in this way is actually obvious. They are also the ambassadors of these learning routes.

The government, national and regional, is thus a facilitation organization. However, there is also a chance to have a ‘soft’ way to get more insight into what's going on. Of course, plans at a national level can be developed based on regional experiences. Thus, shared responsibility does not mean that everyone can do anything to cross each other, but it is to know each other better, to learn what the strengths of all involved partners are, and what the maximum out of a learning pathway is up to get.

Using the workplace

A step that has already been set in motion and will lead to the deployment of a beautiful ‘educational pedestrian path, followed by a highway’, has to do with the development of learning pathways based on using the workplace as much as possible. Such an apprenticeship, the most commonly used name, is based on the possibilities that a work environment offers. Someone can grow into a job at a higher level, supported by the employer, and in





consultation with the educational institution if it is about what kind of new competences are needed to reach that level.

This leads to a program that is offered in a flexible form. The quality and the level are guaranteed by the institutions, in possession of a degree awarding power to make this offer.

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In the case of Higher VET, this leads to a diploma. With SCHE it can provide a degree, depending on the national education system and the possibilities offered by the national accreditation body. But these are developments that will certainly require a lot of attention in the coming years, not to let young people first doing a study and not finding a job, but first to provide that security of work and income, and then to focus on the study programme.

Some conclusions and recommendations

Here some conclusions, including a few recommendations if it is about cooperation between countries outside Europe, and CHAIN5, as the community of practice for level 5 qualifications in Europe.

- In both parts of the world there is a strong need for young people who can contribute to economic developments at the national and regional level, within a clear profession.
- Therefore, it is necessary to set up routes via HVET and SCHE which have the same status as the programs within Universities, to allow young people and parents to choose these routes.
- Employers can contribute to this by providing high-quality workplaces where the work can be combined with a study.
- The national and regional authorities can provide an education system in which these learning pathways and the dual approach will have a structural place. The quality assurance system should be tailored accordingly.





- It is necessary to bring together teachers, trainers, practice counselors and others involved in these learning pathways, from the institutions and companies, to have them in a network and giving space for training each other. The network can also be used to

dynamism in the study programmes.

All together it can be said that it will be fruitful to investigate what opportunities an 'EQF level 5 cooperation' offers across different parts of the world, to achieve these goals.





Feedbacks and recommendations by national and European stakeholders

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After formulated statements in WP2 we asked national and European stakeholders for similarities or differences as well good practices in different countries with regard of relevance of the statements for them, whether the outlined issue is practiced or if not how they deal with it and their recommendations.

Stakeholders' engagement is critical to the policy changes. Their diverse experiences, requirements, knowledge and opinions about the theme of the project deliver strong outcomes, ideas for mutual benefits and can ensure mainstreaming and sustainability of reforms. The project aims in that way at strengthening the connection between policymakers and practitioners, and businesses and members of an educational community.

In these work packages we dealt with a better awareness of issues that can be properly addressed for a more shared responsibility and the national and European stakeholders can contribute to a better decision-making. That is important for establishing long-term and trusting relationships between stakeholders of a range of processes. Policies and procedures that are part of them reflect the essence of partnerships and the collaboration between stakeholders for shared decision making.

The full reports WP4 and WP5 are to download on TANDEM website.





Template WP4/WP5

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Organization:			
Country:			
Date:			
Statement Nr relevant/important from your point of view	the issue outlined is practiced in your country/activity field/network	In case not practiced , how do you deal with the problem issued by the statement	Recommendations

The view of national stakeholders

WP4; Main findings/recommendations

- ✓ Close cooperation between companies and educational institutions

An important aspect that reflects one of the basic deficits is the gap between the training programmes, offered in formal education and what is needed for employment - meaning a clear shortage of skills and qualifications of interest for the labour market at a certain moment and on the short term. Besides this the training system is mostly not providing agile and well-oriented responses to the changes that are occurring in the labour market, to make individuals employable for the near future. Also promoting procedures for the recognition and accreditation of skills acquired through professional





experience are necessary, to be combined with training, courses and other programmes in formal (diplomas) and non-formal (certificates) education.

✓ Educational issues are mostly transversal and in charge and under control of several Ministries.

It will be absolutely necessary to have a national platform for LLL in each country, Besides LLL experts and members of organisations that are involved in LLL developments such a platform must have representatives of all ministries on board. That is necessary for discussing topics like making flexible learning pathways possible and the use of recognition of diplomas and certificates outside the formal system, and for a clear involvement of the national business organizations. A general European directive on how to recognize competences acquired from all types of learning and training is needed, using a format with some standards and guidelines, being helpful for businesses and institutions.

✓ Involving the business world in the necessary reform processes for the further implementation of a NQF, based on the use of it by companies:

NQFs are mostly driven by governments and the decision-making role of employers and, in particular, trade unions in making the role of such a NQF more relevant for strategies related to work-based learning, is often weak. At this moment, in a lot of countries, the sectors for formal vocational and professional training are strongly linked to the National Qualifications Framework and underlying systems, but its implementation has produced also such a bureaucratic complexity that it has become highly complex, heavy and slow to use it also for more non-formal qualifications within a too dispersed system. This generates inability to respond quickly to the rapid changes that are occurring at companies, to provide more tailor-made work-based learning.





A recommendation is to streamline the process of updating the 'port-folio' of qualifications, vocational diplomas and certificates of professionalism so that they constitute a realistic offer regarding the needs of the companies; establishing a

single administrative unit that will ensure the adoption of common criteria, and will streamline administrative, management and funding actions for all training (both formal and employment training).

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- ✓ It is seen as one of the important issues, for some VET qualifications that required competences are integrated in the programme.

It will be useful to increase the provision of general and effective certification programs, also to be seen as 'good examples' for formal qualifications, as a check for the relevance of competences. However, it would be inefficient to include in all situations formal training for very specific processes. It is important to know that strong business-related certificates that are important for jobs, looking at the workplace, are in general offered by private institutions. This means that the government is not controlling them, but there can be other systems for the guarantee of the level and the relevance of the content. Those systems can be linked to the way the NQF is used.

- ✓ Diplomas / certificates and professional qualification documents in the formal education system are generally valid in other European countries, but there is no general information about which standards and which certifications will be used in informal trainings. Also, we recommend a coordinated research in Europe (maybe it has already done so, for some of the aspects, but we are not aware of this) about this statement.
- ✓ When it comes to the competences needed for the labour market, now and in the near future, education and vocational training are of key importance for individuals and businesses.





✓ In formal VET there are not always non-formal learning certificates embedded. Some countries have electives (modules, minors, and short training sessions) in their level 4 programmes. In that cases the world of work (companies) are very strong involved in developing such parts of a programme. We can say that this electives can also be based on or lead to such certificates. The advantage of those exams is taken by the VET providers, not an external organization – having of course a good cooperation between the formal institutions and the private market.

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- ✓ It will be good to consider the needs and expectations of the world of work in the creation of training programs. It would be beneficial to include managerial skills and personal development training to make them more effectively.
- ✓ In many countries, different ministries are involved. Common issues of ministries can be used for establishing an "educational pact", to combine their work and efforts. The people participating in this pact should be amongst other experts the decision makers and administrators at high levels who are experienced, highly informed and knowledgeable on the issues to be discussed.

It would be useful to establish a separate ministry for LLL, which is associated with these issues. If this is not possible it can be interesting to have a LLL directorate in one of the ministry, responsible for working together with similar departments of the other ministries.

- ✓ The main issue is lacking the skills and competences of interest to the labour market. This mismatch concerns both, the educational system and the productive system. But the training system is not always in the right way providing agile and well-oriented responses to the





changes that are occurring in the labour market. This, in turn, widens the gap between training and employment.

For that reason, Business Academies can cooperate with providers of VET and HE, making a contribution to the formal programme. Next to that Business Academies can offer non-formal qualifications, to be linked to the national framework. Those study programmes may need to be supervised by an authority that is also working together with the organisations that are responsible for the quality in VET and HE on behalf of the government.

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On the other hand, vocational training is more difficult and costly than other training programmes. It is often not possible for vocational education institutions to capture a market like there is for technology. But in order to survive in a competitive environment, businesses have to adapt the innovations required for the production environments, to keep them up-to-date. It would be more efficient for vocational training programmes to be given in the business academies that the firms set up in their organizations, where possible and relevant. Research for having the best balance in the provision of programmes, on the short and longer term relevant for companies, is needed.

- ✓ Although human resources management and the skills base for many micro, small and medium-sized companies are the most important factors for competitiveness and success, HRM and skills development are in many SMEs not organized in a systematic way - also not with a medium or long-term approach.

Chambers of Commerce and Industry are constantly communicating with these micro, small and medium-sized companies, forming a huge part of the world of work. For this reason, they may have an effect in determining the important requirements of the companies. However, acting as a bridging organisation between educational





institutions and companies will help the system work more efficiently. In this way, the Chambers of Commerce and Industry, other Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Vocational Education Institutions will help to educate eligible

students.

- ✓ People must be able to switch in the formal sector from level 4 to level 5 with other courses they have taken, also if they are acquired through non-formal learning and in a strong way business-orientated. This authorization should be given not only by the higher education institution but also supported by other authorized institutions to make this possible. An appropriate system can be arranged.
- ✓ Adding SMEs and large firms with additional tax, the improvement part of the system does not seem very viable. Even in the present case, SMEs are facing financial and organizational barriers. It is more difficult for micro businesses and small companies to find the financial resources needed to offer training to their employees. At the same time, trainees are provided with additional facilities (salary, training facilities, trainer etc.) for the internship. These applications bring additional costs to the firm. The government has to look at solutions for this, having the economic situation and personal welfare of companies resp. individuals in mind.
- ✓ LLL is considered a very important tool for the adaptation of workers to changing circumstances in the labour market. Promoting more and even better and effective procedures for the recognition and accreditation of skills acquired through professional experience, is necessary. It offers also the possibility to detect the need for a professionally qualified workforce.

On the other hand, those certificates for the outcomes of such procedures are mostly based on programmes that are filled in by





companies. For that reason it can be so that - unfortunately - the sector for Professional Higher Education is not always willing to collaborate with employers' organisation - taking those 'professional certificates' serious.

There will be a task for the national accreditation body to look for criteria to make this collaboration more obligatory.

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One of the ideas is to use institutions for level 5 like Regional Associate Colleges (Community Colleges, European style) and similar providers for having a now start for discussions. If it can be done for qualifications at level 5, a transfer to level 6 will be possible.

- ✓ When analysing the most effective models of VET in providing employers with adequately skilled labour, increasing employability and reducing unemployment rates, it is revealed that the most effective response comes from school-business models (in contrast to the models that are preferentially school-centred).

The relationship between VET and the world of work needs to be increased. Thus, according to the needs of the labor market, they will be able to make improvements in their own structures. Although not so much, modular topics can be added into the education system, sometimes according to the requirements of the labor market. Thus, the efficiency of VET increases further. It would be beneficial to make the relationship between HE and VET more effective. According to the present situation, this relationship has a real potential for improvement.

The education systems for VET and HE are very different organized, having a different status. This makes it difficult for VET courses to be validated in the HE sector, but looking for the most optimal use of them can be helpful to understand their responsibilities for helping the world of work (employers, employees, organisations for them) if it is about education and lifelong learning.





The view of European stakeholders

Introduction

Here we collected and summarized the feedback and recommendations provided by the European stakeholders consulted on the statements formulated by the project consortium as a result of the work and analysis done by the project consortium within Work package 1 and Work package 2. To give a better account of the contributions collected, the report is structured as follows: the recommendations are provided following the order in which the 19 statements were originally proposed to the respondents.

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Statement 1

If non-formal certificates are obligatory for jobs (they refer to practical competences needed for the workplace), e.g. based on national regulations, those modules have to be integrated also in formal study programmes at the corresponding level(s) in VET and HE. This means that the concerned people can work directly in companies without obtaining again those non-formal certificates.

Recommendations to statement 1:

- There should be close collaboration between:
 - a) the national bodies responsible for defining the non-formal qualifications necessary for the labour market and
 - b) the VET and HE institutions delivering formal qualifications
- This collaboration should include systems to make available and keep updated information on the skills competences and non-formal qualifications that are required for employment
- The systems for the management, control and updating of the regulated professions should be made more transparent and subject to regular review.





Statement 2

In case of international jobs foreseeing similar activities on the workplace, that include international requirements, we also need international certificates for the training programmes involved – to be recognised at international level. Those certificates can also be used as parts of international formal studies and joint degrees (offered by institutions for VET, HE and similar sectors).

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Recommendations to statement 2:

- Models of good practice already exist of:
 - a) Collaboration between multi-national companies and HEIs and higher professional schools/institutes to provide training and qualifications which can be international and
 - b) Collaboration between HEIs in Europe and beyond (e.g. European masters, ERASMUS Mundus masters) to deliver skills, competences and qualifications which are international

These models should be analysed for their transferability to other domains and other professional/vocational areas.

- Such analyses should lead to the encouragement (e.g. through start-up funding) of new initiatives and experimentation for further development





Statement 3

Programmes at VET level 4 must give the opportunity to (young) students in their final year to get specific labour market-oriented certificates, in combination with their internship. This means that the content of the modules for those certificates is developed and maintained under control of the companies in the sector. In such a situation, the government finances part of the costs for students: material, salary, insurance, travel. In this period students can work, for instance, 3 days in a company and go to school for the remaining 2 days.

Recommendations to statement 3:

- VET programmes at Level 4 should give young people the opportunity to obtain specific labour market oriented certificates based on their internships as part of the VET qualification
- Enterprises should be given a greater role in the design and assessment of this element
- Financing of these arrangements should be shared

Statement 4

In addition to vocational and technical trainings, needed for the workplace, the industry also expects employees to possess other competencies, such as managerial skills. Most of the companies are trying to develop these skills outside of their technical trainings. It would also be beneficial to include this type of personal development training (team work, communication, time management, team management etc.) in regular training programs.

Recommendations to statement 4:

- In addition to vocational and technical skills, industry needs a wide range of generic skills: team working, communications, time management, team management etc. The development of these skills should be included in regular VET and HE programmes





- Collaboration in regional/local networks would facilitate the inclusion of such skills differently, in ways most relevant to the intended career path of the individuals

Statement 5

If in a country formal education is under control of Ministry X and non-formal education is organised by Ministry Y, the providers of VET and HE (at levels 4, 5 and 6) need to have a national platform to discuss issues related to Lifelong Learning.

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Recommendations to statement 5:

- Often VET, HE and LLL are organised by different ministries at national level but they should all be involved in the development and implementation of an LLL strategy
- Platforms should be developed and supported by all the ministries involved and should be made operational at different levels – national, regional, local – so that issues relevant to all can be discussed and so that actors with different interests – policy, practice, management, research - and different levels of authority can participate appropriately and effectively.

Statement 6

Business Academies, owned by big companies and responsible for internal professional training programmes, have to be integrated in the national education system, in case they offer non-formal certificates that are (partially) funded by the (regional) government. If they are part of the system, this will allow adult learners to get exemptions in case of studying in formal degree programmes, offered by Colleges and Universities.

Recommendations to statement 6:

- If Business Academies offer internal, professional certified training that is funded partly by regional government, then they should ensure that the training provides genuine links, bridges and recognition arrangements with the formal professional and HE programmes offered by colleges and universities





- Close collaboration between all the stakeholders must be put in place to achieve this.

Statement 7

We need more research on cases where students follow courses, training programmes and even full degree programmes at level 5 (of the National Qualifications Framework), after completing a full degree programme at level 6 or after dropping out from a formal programme in higher education. In cases like this, level 5 programmes have to be offered in an apprenticeship format.

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Statement 8

Experiences and good practices of adult learners in formal and non-formal programmes on level 5 (offered by institutions that are selected by companies) must be used for developing in the next years new and creative arrangements, to have more flexible work-based learning pathways starting from level 4. This can help to raise the status of Higher VET at level 5, if adult learners want to get a qualification at a higher level. It can also represent a choice for youngsters for a more attractive HVET programme, next to a study in Higher Education.

Statement 9

Within or after this project we have to pay attention to formulate essential issues if it is about giving Higher VET a better status for all stakeholders – next to Short Cycle HE. This is necessary knowing that a lot of adult learners want to get a well-recognized qualification at a higher level and it will make the choice for HVET more attractive for youngsters, being a qualification similar to SCHE.

Recommendations to statements 7, 8 and 9:

- At present there are major difficulties for students to move between levels 5 and 6. More research should be done on the needs, opportunities and barriers to such movement and the reasons for it





- The development of level 5 and 6 professional routes has been very patchy and in general slow. There is resistance to vocational drift in universities and academic drift in the universities of applied sciences and the higher professional schools. More collaboration

between the two types of institutions and with enterprises should be systematically developed to promote innovation and creativity in the provision of flexible pathways between the programmes of different providers.

- The flexibility should be focused on the needs of the students and of the labour market rather than fixed to the institutional structures and budget streams
- These flexible individual pathways will require new forms of accreditation and financing that can function across existing structures
- The European commission should provide frameworks of support for the creation of such experimental arrangements and for the sharing of experience between the various actors and stakeholders
- There should be much more promotion of the idea of level 5 qualifications to providers, employers as well as parents, young people and adults looking to upgrade their skills or convert/transfer to different career paths.
- The existing Platform for LLL should make a contribution here since it involves all the key actors and stakeholders

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Statement 10

We need more attention for the role of Chambers of Commerce and Industry (and similar organisations) in being a 'linking pin' between companies looking for tailor-made training and the education providers of VET and HE. Examples from countries like Germany (which is doing well as economy, using a dual system in VET) and Spain (which is facing still a lot of problems, having the economic situation in mind) can be used as inspiration for similar countries.

Recommendations to statement 10:

- The European Commission should undertake an inventory of the roles, strengths, weaknesses, functions and activities





of the Chambers of Commerce and similar/equivalent organisations where there are no Chambers of Commerce

- This inventory should be the basis for sharing experience at all levels and in the development of the role of these organisations in supporting and promoting

greater collaboration for innovation (e.g. of the kind recommended under statement 7 above)

Statement 11

Social partners, involved in the development of the European Qualifications Framework for Lifelong Learning (EQF for LLL) and in its European Advisory Board with representatives of all member states, need to have a formal link with an international platform for representatives of international networks (associations) responsible for international certificates (based on international qualifications).

Recommendations to statement 11:

- An international platform should be created to promote dialogue between the national and international actors and stakeholders on the subject of possible linkages between the EQF and international certificates and qualifications
- This should lead to a structural Working Group at European level to discuss the implementation of European and national procedures that could be put in place for international certificates and certification
- The Working Group should also discuss the strengthening of links between the EQF and the EHEA, and the quality assurance procedures that underpin them in order to facilitate the inclusion of international certificates.





Statement 12

There is a need for a link between the European Standards and Guidelines for Higher Education and widely accepted standards for the quality assurance in the world of work, controlled by other non-state organizations (national and international).

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Recommendations to statement 12:

- Discussions should take place especially with ENQA on the possible linkages between the ESG for the EHEA, which focusses on learning outcomes for diplomas, and the quality standards in enterprises (e.g. ISO system) which focus on the processes and procedures
- University departments for LLL and Continuing Education frequently work with both systems since they bridge the academic and professional domains. They should therefore be involved, especially through their national and European networks and associations for LLL and adult, continuing education

Statement 13

There is a need for a European Qualifications Framework for Non-Formal Qualifications (EQF-NF), with descriptors taking into account standards that are used by 'the world of work' and with a 'conversion table' to be used for this EQF-NF and the EQF for LLL.

Recommendations to statement 13:

- More non-formal qualifications should be referenced to the EQF.
- The descriptors in place for HE (the Dublin descriptors) should be used as a basis for developing descriptors for lower levels and for non-formal provision



**Statement 14**

Every country needs a national system, having big companies paying a specific levy (taxes) for the funding of apprenticeships in their own organisations but also for having a budget for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) accepting apprentices. The government should be 'the broker' in this system, paying for some other 'out-of-pocket' costs for those SMEs.

Recommendations to statement 14:

- Governments should broker a system of shared training and shared financing of training between large enterprises, SMEs and micro businesses
- A conference should be organised to kick-start this process with all the stakeholders, including social partners and the networks and associations of the enterprises to facilitate and promote this debate

Statement 15

LLL Universities can take the lead in the (international) discussion about the role of level 5 qualifications (the European Level 5 Area) in up-skilling workers with a VET background and in opening possibilities to get a formal degree at level 6.

Recommendations to statement 15:

- **eucen** and its member universities and national networks for LLL have considerable experience in this debate. **eucen** and Chain5 should present a policy paper to BFUG for the EHEA conference in May 2018 in Paris
- Similarly, a debate should be (re)launched by CEDEFOP and the VET stakeholders and professional associations to explore links and support for the promotion of level 5 qualifications.





Statement 16

If LLL Universities are working together with Business Academies, we need to carry out research on the criteria for this cooperation and the success factors. The outcomes of the research can be discussed with social national and international partners.

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Recommendations to statement 16:

- Various organisations – UNIIN, European Business, the Business Forum – have done considerable work on the relationship between HE and the business community and there is a body of research on this topic. This should be brought into the debate and discussions about level 5 qualifications
- Similarly, these organisations should be invited to take up the challenge of the level 5 and 6 professional qualifications.

Statement 17

‘Academisation’ can currently be observed insofar as the statistical numbers of graduates are clearly growing in the higher education programmes. If the development continues in this direction, vocational training and the dual system of education will disappear or become insignificant. Vocational education must be a fully-fledged system, recognized as an educational phase of equal status. If the ‘final qualifications’ could be only provided by HE institutions, vocational education would be degraded.

Recommendations to statement 17:

- With the massive increase in recent years in the participation rates in HE there is a fear that VET is being downgraded. In addition, there are skills shortages that could be addressed through VET and particularly through level 5 qualifications. The Vocational Skills Week should be given higher profile and using a range of data, promotional tools and social media





much more effectively promote the value of VET to young people

Statement 18

VET providers have to develop programs (VET5) and must give VET students/apprentices the right tools more precisely attuned to job market demands. Higher-level VET qualifications refer to highly skilled workers, but this does not mean necessarily that those skills can be obtained only by higher education institutes/degrees.

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Recommendations to statement 18:

- VET and professional training providers should develop more programmes at level 5 and more career pathways through level 5 and level 6 training.
- They should develop work-related as well as job-specific programmes so that they offer great balance between the two and open up wider horizons for career development in a rapidly changing labour market

Statement 19

To avoid the competition between the two sectors VET and HE, as well as duplication and wasted resources, it is necessary to redefine roles, identities and areas. For instance, it will be necessary to look at similar credit systems like ECTS and ECVET, knowing that at the moment in most countries these systems are not fully compatible, meaning that credits cannot be cumulated from VET to HE.

Recommendations to statement 19:

- The specific roles of HE and VET institutions and providers should be clarified so that areas for collaboration and cooperation can be seen more clearly.
- Local/regional partnerships and networks (see also recommendations under statement 7) should carry out mapping exercises to see where there are actual and links and pathways that may be under-exploited and potential future ones that could be created.





qualification.

- The validation of prior learning and of informal and non-formal learning should also be promoted to the full range of providers as a tool for bridging specific VET and HE programmes not just for individuals but from groups who have a similar type of experience and





TANDEM

SHAPING FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



Avrupa Birliği Erasmus+ Projesi
projeimizin amacı, ülkelerin ve kurumların (EQF = Mesleki Yeterlilik Seviyeleri) arttırmak için belirlemek ve VET (Mesleki Eğitim) arasındaki

"TANDEM"; İş dünyası kurumlarını bir araya uygun kışkırtıcı geliştiren

TANDEM

SHAPING FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



The TANDEM project aims to create learning pathways between Vocational Education and Higher Education

The word "TANDEM" shows the cooperation between VET and HE providers with regional and global partners

The project has been funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project has been funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union. The project has been funded by the Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union.

TANDEM

SHAPING FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



TANDEM setzt sich zwischen den Bildungsbereichen weiter an

Der Titel „Tandem“ zwischen Wirtschaft und Bildung reagieren: eine Heterogenität

Das Projekt hat eine Förderung von der Europäischen Union erhalten. Das Projekt hat eine Förderung von der Europäischen Union erhalten. Das Projekt hat eine Förderung von der Europäischen Union erhalten.

TANDEM

SHAPING FLEXIBLE LEARNING PATHWAYS



El proyecto TANDEM pretende mejorar la flexibilidad de los itinerarios de aprendizaje a través de los sistemas educativos (desde los niveles MEC 4 a 5 y 6) poniendo en contacto a la FP, la Educación Superior (ES) y el mundo empresarial.

La palabra "TANDEM" debería subrayar la eficiencia empresarial, de la FP y de los proveedores de la ES en su labor conjunta en favor de una FP de alta calidad de acuerdo a las demandas del mercado laboral.

El proyecto ha sido financiado por el programa de Erasmus+ de la Unión Europea. El proyecto ha sido financiado por el programa de Erasmus+ de la Unión Europea. El proyecto ha sido financiado por el programa de Erasmus+ de la Unión Europea.



Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union



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