

## COOPERATION AGREEMENT

### Between Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutions Acting in the SEECP Region Aiming to Create the SEE Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net)

The Ministers responsible for education, science and research in South East Europe (SEE), by signing the Istanbul Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in May 2007, agreed that education, science and research are areas of key importance for the future of SEE and that the re-launched Lisbon agenda is the main driving force for reforms in these fields in all signatory countries. The MoU represents commitment to the implementation of the EU recommendations in the area of vocational education and training, as laid down in Europe 2020, as well as to the strategic objectives set in Education & Training 2020. Other relevant European and international processes and initiatives, including the Copenhagen process, will be also adhered to.

The Regional Cooperation Council (2008) acting within the South East Europe Cooperation Process (SEECP) identified fostering and building human capital as a priority area for economic and social development of SEE and for increased regional cooperation.

The Education Reform Initiative of South East Europe (ERISEE), as regional platform for dialogue and cooperation is supporting national efforts in reforming education sector through capacity building and harmonization with EU related instruments and developments.

Vocational Education and Training (VET) contributes significantly to the creation of jobs, economic growth and social development, as well as to personal development and social inclusion. It constitutes an important part of lifelong learning and plays a vital role in enabling young people to acquire skills and competences relevant for labour market requirements. Vocational education and training should also promote competences and mobility by improving training opportunities and better recognition of prior learning gained through training and work experience.

In order to fulfil this major role, the VET systems in SEE are undergoing fundamental changes, as a result of numerous regional initiatives. Moreover, SEE countries have identified VET development as a very important factor for economic and social development and considerable actions have been foreseen with the national IPA<sup>1</sup> and ENPI<sup>2</sup> planning documents.

The national efforts in SEE, continuously supported by expertise and projects jointly realised with relevant international institutions (e.g. ETF, World Bank, OECD), as well as those based on agreements for bilateral cooperation (e.g. KulturKontakt Austria, GTZ, USAID) have brought to relevant results in building the national VET systems<sup>3</sup>: adoption and implementation of legislation and policies, support to and establishment of national VET agencies and/or other institutions at national, regional and local level, activities to increase the quality and attractiveness of VET, improving VET curricula and qualifications' responsiveness to labour market needs and the adoption of approach to base curricula and qualifications on learning outcomes, ensuring learning

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<sup>1</sup> Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance

<sup>2</sup> European Neighbourhood and Partnership Instrument

<sup>3</sup> This is just a general overview of initiatives and directions taken. It is important to note that not every SEE country has achieved the same results and they are not all in the same stages of VET reforms. However, further detail exceeds the scope of this document.

pathways to further and higher education. Attention has been also paid to the learning and training needs of teachers and trainers, learning partnerships, social partners' involvement, widening access and improving equity of participation, as well as increased opportunities for participation of disadvantaged groups.

Reforms in VET in SEE are moving from emphasising the development of new legislation and policy strategies to policy implementation. Several countries have recently set up new VET agencies, VET centres or vocational qualification authorities, which have all important roles and often main responsibilities for the implementation of VET reforms in their countries.

The diversity of the VET systems in SEE is an asset which serves as a basis for mutual learning and support for future reforms. It calls for increased transparency and common understanding of national VET systems as a basis for building mutual trust, thus paving the way to mutual recognition of qualifications and skills acquired in different countries of the region. By using the European frameworks, such as the European Qualifications Frameworks, on one hand and available instruments, such as programmes and cooperation schemes dedicated to educational initiatives, on the other, SEE countries will increase their involvement in the common European Area of Education.

WHEREAS:

- i. During 25-26 September 2008 in Tirana, Albania, first conference of VET Institutions of SEE was held, under the patronage of ERISSEE Secretariat, ETF and Twinning Project CARDS of CE. The scope of this conference was to initiate the process of establishing the Regional Network of VET Institutions in SEE.
- ii. During 17-18 December 2008 in Ankara, Turkey, a conference on "Implementation strategies for national qualifications frameworks in South East Europe" was held, under the patronage of ETF, Turkish Vocational Qualifications Authority and ERISSEE Secretariat. One of the objectives of the conference was to strengthen the networking between VET Institutions in SEE.
- iii. During 10-11 December 2009 in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the second meeting of the VET Institutions in SEE was held. The meeting focus was on the aspects relevant for strengthening the work of the VET Institutions and to provide a platform for updates on the recent European and SEE developments relevant for VET institutions in SEE.
- iv. During 28 October 2010, Woerden, the Netherlands, the third meeting of the VET Institutions in the SEECP region was held. The meeting contributed to sustained dialogue of VET Institutions in the SEE region. One of the outcomes was the flagship theme for 2011: Quality Assurance and Enhancement in VET.
- v. The national VET institutions (hereinafter "VET institutions") participating to the above mentioned meetings,

HAVE CONCLUDED THIS COOPERATION AGREEMENT:

## **Article 1**

### **Objective of the Cooperation Agreement**

- (1) The National VET institutions acting in the SEECP region are concluding the current Cooperation Agreement aiming to create the South East Europe Regional Vocational Education and Training Network (hereinafter referred to as the "SEE Regional VET Network").
- (2) The abbreviated version of the English name of the network shall be: SEEVET-Net.
- (3) SEE Regional VET Network has no legal personality.

## **Article 2**

### **SEE Regional VET Network objective**

- (1) To support implementation of policies in the VET contributing to human capital development in a lifelong learning perspective, through policy learning in the context of the objectives related to the EU accession and the "Education and Training 2020" and follow-ups.

## **Article 3**

### **Key areas for mutual learning:**

- (1) Key areas for mutual learning have be defined as follows:
  - a) Collection and dissemination of comparable information on the VET in South East Europe region;
  - b) National Qualifications Frameworks, with particular focus in VET;
  - c) Quality assurance and improvement in the VET;
  - d) VET as part of Lifelong Learning and (including formal, non-formal and in-formal education);
  - e) Social partnership enhancement in the VET sector.

#### **Article 4**

##### **Cooperation instruments**

- (1) Instruments for policy learning and sharing of knowledge and experience between the members of the SEE Regional VET Network activities, could be:
  - a) Peer learning;
  - b) Exchange of information and experience and good practice sharing;
  - c) Capacity building for effective roles and responsibilities of VET institutions.

#### **Article 5**

##### **Working method**

- (1) The working method of the SEE Regional VET Network is foreseen in the following fashion:
  - a) Face to face and virtual communication will support SEE Regional VET Network activities.
  - b) Thematic web forum;
  - c) E-newsletters.

#### **Article 6**

##### **Membership**

- (1) Eligible VET institutions for becoming members in the SEE Regional VET Network are:
  - a) National VET agencies, centres and institutions;
  - b) National agencies for adult learning;
  - c) National qualifications authorities.
- (2) Membership is open to all eligible institutions acting in the SEECP region addressing a written request to the SEE Regional VET Network chair-in-office. The request for membership will enclose a copy of the constitutive act of the institution in original language and the English translation certified by the applicant.
- (3) Membership in SEE Regional VET Network may be terminated by each member at any time in a form of a written request to the chair-in-office. The membership also terminates due to the loss of the member institutions legal status.

## **Article 7**

### **Rights and obligation of the partners**

- (1) Members have equal rights and obligations in carrying out the SEE Regional VET Network activities.

## **Article 8**

### **Organisational elements**

- (1) The SEE Regional VET Network is coordinated by an elected chair for one year duration.
- (2) Chairmanship will be assured on rotation basis. The chair-in-office remains in function after expiration of the term until a successor is elected.
- (3) Should a person acting as chair resign while in function the member institution represented by the respective person will nominate a successor. The lack of nomination after the period of one month or the withdrawal of a member institution whose representative was acting as chair shall be solved by new elections. Provisional chair could be elected by online voting to act till next regular meeting when elections will be organised.
- (4) The chair-in-office represents the SEE Regional VET Network to outside parties, within the limits of his/her mandate. The mandate of the chair-in-office is decided by the absolute majority of the partners.
- (5) The chair-in-office is in charge of drafting the Rules of Procedure of the SEE Regional VET Network and the meeting agenda; calling the meetings via E-mail one month prior to the meeting; taking the minutes and distributes them to all members not later than two weeks after the meeting. The Rules of Procedure of the SEE Regional VET Network is adopted by the simple majority voting by all SEE Regional VET Network members.
- (6) SEE Regional VET Network will meet, at least, once a year and will work in compliance with the Rules of the Procedure of the SEE Regional VET Network. Additional meetings will be held as necessary and appropriate, as initiative of the chair-in-office or of the majority of the partners.
- (7) SEE Regional VET Network members are informing the chair-in-office on the events organised within the areas of common interests open to the SEE Regional VET Network member's participation, under conditions determined by the organiser.
- (8) The chair-in-office is informing all SEE Regional VET Network members on all events organised by the members or other institutions in the common areas of interest, in view of designation of interested participants.

- (9) In case of the necessity to convene the members for voting on a particular, under the circumstances that members cannot meet otherwise, SEE Regional VET Network could also work by using the written procedure via E-mail, in the manner described below:
- a) Online voting (applicable for the election of the provisional chair) and consultations initiated by the chair-in-office.
  - b) All partners in the SEE Regional VET Network have the right to cast a vote. The prerequisite for taking part in online votes is a valid E-mail address. Each partner is solely responsible for setting and updating the E-mail address and communicating to the chair-in-office.
  - c) Only the information which is directly included in and/or attached to the E-mail sent as voting proposal is subject of the voting. The voting proposal E-mail has to explicitly be marked as voting proposal by starting the E-mail subject line with the string "Voting Proposal:".
  - d) Unless specified otherwise in the voting proposal the voting period lasts for two weeks. Only votes cast within the voting period are considered for the results of the voting. Within the voting period, a proposal can still be retracted.
  - e) All decisions in written procedure will be taken with a simple majority. Should the number of pro and contra votes be equal, the application is considered as dismissed. A dismissed voting can be repeated, but not before a period of four weeks has passed between publishing the results of the initial vote and the proposal for the repeated voting.
  - f) Additionally, online consultations can be initiated by the chair-in-office to form opinions about options which are available and to discuss a potential voting. Unless specified otherwise, the consultation period lasts for two weeks.
  - g) E-mail communication could be initiated by any partner if not engaging the SEE Regional VET Network in joint actions.
- (10) The responsibility for the administrative support to the SEE Regional VET Network lies with ERISSE.
- (11) The working language of the SEE Regional VET Network is English.

## **Article 9**

### **SEE Regional VET Network cooperation**

- (1) SEE Regional VET Network seeks cooperation with ETF, ERISSE, other regional networks, international organisations and with the business sector.

## **Article 10**

### **Financial aspects**

- (1) If not agreed otherwise, SEE Regional VET Network members will take advantage of their existing facilities and resources in view of implementation of this agreement.

## **Article 11**

### **Final provisions**

- (1) The Cooperation Agreement is concluded over an unlimited period.
- (2) The termination of the agreement is decided by the simple majority of signatories' partners.
- (3) Each change of this agreement is valid only if agreed in written by all signatories' partners.
- (4) An individual member can cease its status as a member of the SEE Regional VET Network by informing in writing the chair-in-office and/or the other partners.



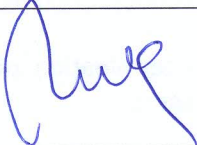

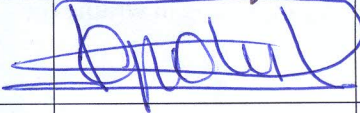
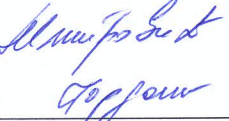
## **Article 12**

### **Entry into force**

- (1) This Cooperation Agreement will enter into force on the day of its signing by SEE Regional VET Network signatory countries.
- (2) For member countries joining the SEE Regional VET Network after this date, the provision of the Cooperation Agreement shall enter into force on the signatory date.

Settled in 6 (six) originals, in the English language, one for each of the signatories' partners.

Signatures:

Partner in VET Net	Name and the position of the person authorized to sign	Signature	Place and date
ALBANIA: National Vocational Education and Training Agency	Ilija Paluka Director		Chisinau, 12 July 2011
BULGARIA: National Agency for Vocational Education and Training	Nadezhda Kamburova Chief expert		Chisinau, 12 July 2011
MACEDONIA: Vocational Education and Training Center	Zeqir Zeqiri Director		Chisinau, 12 July 2011
MOLDOVA: Institute for Education Sciences	Lilia Pogolsa Director		Chisinau, 12 July 2011
MONTENEGRO: Vocational Education and Training Centre	Duško Rajković Director		Chisinau, 12 July 2011
SERBIA: Institute for Improvement of Education – Center for Vocational and Adult Education	Gordana Mitrović Head of the Center for Vocational and Adult Education		Chisinau, 12 July 2011



## PROTOCOL

**National Centre for TVET Development from Romania** declares to join the South East Europe Regional Vocational Education and Training Network established by signing the *Cooperation Agreement Between Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutions Acting in the SEECP Region Aiming to Create the SEE Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net)*, on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 in Chisinau, Moldova by officials from VET institutions from Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia.

This protocol is to be seen as an integral part of the *Cooperation Agreement* and becomes effective between all parties immediately after signing.

For the National Centre for TVET Development

For the South East Europe Regional  
Vocational Education and Training Network

Ms. Gabriela Ciobanu, Director



Mr. Duško Rajković, Chair of the SEEVET-Net

Location and date:

BUCHAREST, ROMANIA, 24/02/2012

Location and date:

PODGORICA, MONTENEGRO, 15/02/2012

## PROTOCOL

Agency for Pre-School, Elementary and Secondary Education from Bosnia and Herzegovina declares to join the South East Europe Regional Vocational Education and Training Network established by signing the *Cooperation Agreement Between Vocational Education and Training (VET) Institutions Acting in the SEECP Region Aiming to Create the SEE Regional VET Network (SEEVET-Net)*, on 12<sup>th</sup> of July 2011 in Chisinau, Moldova by officials from VET institutions from Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Moldova, Montenegro and Serbia.

This protocol is to be seen as an integral part of the *Cooperation Agreement* and becomes effective between all parties immediately after signing.

For the Agency for Pre-School, Elementary  
and Secondary Education

For the South East Europe Regional  
Vocational Education and Training Network

Ms. Maja Stojkić, Director

Mr. Duško Rajković, Chair of the SEEVET-Net

Location and date:

  
01-33-1-199/12

Location and date:

