10th Meeting of the South Eastern European Education and Training (SEE TET) Network

06 and 07 December, Vienna, Austria

CONCLUSIONS

The 10th Meeting of the South Eastern European Education and Training (SEE TET) Network and Study visit to Vienna, funded by the ERI SEE Secretariat and OeAD and organized in cooperation with the Technical College of Vienna and Teacher Training Faculty on the subject of digitalization in teaching and learning and systems of teacher education and training (best practices and potential improvements) took place on 06 and 07 December 2022 in Vienna, Austria.

This event was organized with the goal of sharing expertise on methodology of e-education, different types of CPDs (organized on-line and organized on the subject of digitalization), methodology of e-teaching and learning material, blended learning and digital school culture, as well as exploring the possibilities of transferring the lessons learned to the region of South Eastern Europe and Moldova.

Participants of the meeting were more than 20 nominated experts dealing with teacher education and training in VET and general education and experts in digital teaching from the SEE region (Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Kosovo*, North Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia) and Moldova, along the ERI SEE representatives.

On this occasion, the participants visited Technical College Spengergasse in Vienna, where the valuable insights on implementing innovative teaching/learning approaches for promoting digital competences and creating a digital school culture were gained. Another visit was paid to the University College of Teacher Education Vienna and Future Learning Lab where the participants were introduced to the approach of the Future Learning Lab and innovative learning setting for promoting digital competences and blended learning.

During the two-day meeting the participants also discussed the pedagogy and didactical approaches of promoting digital competences and new digital skills needed in the labour market they had the opportunity to learn about. Special attention was given to the lessons learned from the visits and exchange of national experiences. Additionally, ways ahead of the SEE Teacher Education and Training (SEE TET) Network and its next activities were discussed.

Lessons learned in Austria

Participants reflected on the aspects of digitalisation they believe would be the most beneficial in their economies. The observed examples of good practice were as follows:

- High level of digital infrastructure in place, including usage of numerous licenced software and internet connection
- Psychological reward system of badges according to digital maturity categorisation in place
- Technology in application serves to facilitate learning, communication and critical thinking, and development of other students' competences
- Teachers are intrinsically motivated for self-improvement and professional development
- Teachers have a strong say in elaboration and adaptation of curriculum, not only its delivery

- In addition to curricula flexibility, there is also school flexibility which can in cooperation with ministry quickly respond to the demands of labour market for new programmes
- There is strong cooperation with business sector and labour market needs
- Other: English as mandatory language of instruction for 20 lessons annually, readiness to respond in emergency situations

Challenges the region face in implementation of digital strategies (excluding infrastructural ones) the participants noted were:

- Lack of motivation among teachers for self-improvement
- Lack of IT experts working in public service
- Slow pace in decision making and legislation process
- Lack of appropriate strategic documents and legislation, as well as standards of competences in some economies
- Technical unreadiness of teachers to apply blended teaching
- Lack of analysis of enabling factors/ obstacles for digital culture to flourish
- Teacher competences gained in pre-service training
- Lack of adequate assessment of In-service teacher training

Good practices economies could offer one another identified were:

- Albania established Sectoral committee on digitalisation, governmental body
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: In West Herzegovina canton there is excellent cooperation with companies which train students and teachers in VET sector, favourable climate for investment, strong incentive to participate in different projects with external organisations and stakeholders, excellent cooperation with all principals from 24 schools in canton
- Croatia has plenty of relevant content available for sharing
- Kosovo* has a Strategy of Education 2022-2026, the strategic objective 5 cover Digitalization of Education, under the shkollat.org they are using Microsoft 365 for education and Learning Passport.
- Montenegro has digital school portal for teachers and students, as well as Microsoft licences for all
- Digital school award programme in Serbia piloted, aligned with SELFIE, like the one at Technical College
- Serbia and Croatia have digital competence framework developed /adjusted to national needs
- Across many economies variety of platforms are used: Moodle, INNOVET and EDUINO platforms (websites, repositories), LMS for teachers; economies also have their E-registers, E-gradebooks (and E-diaries), integrated with EMIS

Regional possibilities for cooperation recognized in the meeting encompass:

- Sharing of the relevant content from each of the economies (selected and translated to national languages) at the regional level
- Continuation of best practices sharing/ experience exchange/ study visits, e.g. to Croatia
- Research on digital competences (trainings and implementation)
- Development of legislation supporting digitalization

- Trainings for digital competences for blended learning, flipped classroom
- Digitalisation of practical subjects – implementation and digital competences needed
- Support from experts in the field of Digital well-being: for introducing the concept, joint work on guidelines and practical steps on how to implement this topic and make whole school aware of its importance

The good practices from Austria and the region, challenges and potential areas of collaboration identified during the meeting will be used for further work of the SEE TET Network.

It was agreed that the SEE TET Network should continue in the mode with one nominated representative from each economy, who remains its permanent member, while other participants of the events change from event to event, depending on its topic and logistical conditions. This requires agreement on which institution would take the lead and appoint core representative in each economy, which will be the subject of consultations of the meeting participants and their hierarchies upon return, supported by an official letter from ERI SEE. The nomination of members of the SEE TET network, coordinated by the ERI SEE Secretariat, can be expected in 2023.

Following up to the meeting, attendees of the 10th Meeting of the SEE TET Network from Montenegro and North Macedonia expressed the need to have two core representatives to Network from their economies – one from institution competent for general education and the other one for VET. Their proposal will be considered and adequate solution proposed.

* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and is in line with UNCSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence.