



Memorandum of Understanding

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Statements

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

- 1.1. The associations will strengthen their cooperation to achieve their respective missions, the development of EU policies that strengthen the quality and equitable position of VET in educational systems and EU policy proposal, to achieve the goals and outcomes that have been set out in notably the Barcelona declaration by VET4EU2 and the RIGA declaration and the mandate of the expert group of VET providers (annex 1, 2 and 3). This stronger cooperation should not result in extra financial obligations and administrative burdens in accounting.
- 1.2. The associations will aim not to merge but to establish a formal legal umbrella for cooperation that will facilitate their intended cooperation and, increase access to calls and increase the eligibility to delegate experts in policy development activities by the EU.
- 1.3. The associations commit themselves to strengthen mutual information exchange on developments, events and activities of each association and to facilitate cooperation and networking between their members including granting access to each other's events at membership conditions of the organizing association.
- 1.4. The associations will actively try and enter into joint projects (e+) or platforms that will contribute to strengthened cooperation and will actively involve or invite each other and each other's members to contribute where relevant
- 1.5. The associations will form a joint pool of experts that can be of assistance in policy development and formulating joint policy statements and the representation of VET4EU2. The associations ensure that their experts in this network are experienced experts in the field that have knowledge of the aims and policy statements of the VET4EU2 associations.
- 1.6. The associations will develop a joint website to facilitate their cooperation and communicate with each other members. A link to this website will be on the homepage of the website of each individual association.
- 1.7. The associations aim to increase VET providers representation from all the EU countries and will stimulate capacity building for VET grass root representation in all EU countries. The growth of representation will be through membership of the most appropriate organisation. There will be no competition for memberships.
- 1.8. The associations will actively try and engage sectoral European VET associations within the efforts of VET4EU2.
- 1.9. The associations will realize an adequate and representational delegation in policy development working groups at EU level. Delegation will consider an equitable representation of all associations and the available expertise in time and quality of any association.
- 1.10. The responsibility for this cooperation will be with the appointed representatives of boards of the six associations.
- 1.11. The cooperation within VET4EU2 does not lay constraints on individual actions of the individual associations in the field of attention. This memorandum does indicate a preferred channel for policy representation. This means that it is also possible to agree on joint positions on issues that are particularly interest for one or a minority of associations.
- 1.12. This memorandum has been agreed to by the boards of each association.
- 1.13. Any conflicts resulting from this memorandum will be resolved within a joint meeting of the representatives of the associations as mentioned in 1.10, and it can be part of an annual meeting of the associations.

Signed the 22nd of November 2017 in Brussels

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President of EUpVET - European Providers of Vocational Education and Trainers