

VETAS Network conference newsletter – Issue III – May 2011

VETAS Network conference, 09/10 May 2011, Autoworld, Brussels (BE), www.vetas.eu, www.project-vetas.eu



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Thank you to the conference speakers and moderators

The 1st VETAS Network Conference has been successfully implemented on 09/10 May 2011 in Brussels and we would



like to thank all the contributors to our conference for their active participation and the enrichment of the discussion within the emerging VETAS network. Our thanks go especially to:

- Mr. Georgy Afanasyev, Expert club of Industry and Energy (RU)
- Mr. Vicente de las Heras Banon, Robert Bosch Espana, S.A. (ES)
- Mr. Pavol Krempasky, EACEA
- Mr. Peter Kuen, Mobility Cluster of the Vienna Business Agency (AT)
- Prof. Hugh Lauder, University of Bath (UK)
- Mrs. Annette Parker, AMTEC (US)
- Mr. Prokhor Tebin, Expert club of Industry and Energy (RU)
- Dr. Markus Tomaschitz, MAGNA International Europe AG (AT)
- Mr. Norbert Willeke, Volkswagen Service Deutschland (DE)

Special thanks to the conference participants who strongly contributed with their questions and remarks to the conferences outcomes but also to the VETAS project consortium partners who supported the conference preparation and implementation.

Notes from the thematic conference sessions

In the framework of the conference two thematic sessions and a panel discussion took place on the topics of: "Keeping up with technological innovation and managing the aging workforce", "Comparability of qualifications in Europe" and on "Challenges and opportunities of VET in the automotive industry":

Comparability of qualifications in Europe

M.A. Peter Kuen, Head of the Department Cluster Vienna in the Vienna Business Agency (AT), talked

about "Cross Border Qualification in Centrope": The wider region CENTROPE – in the border quadrangle between Slovakia, Czech Republic, Hungary and Austria, up to Romania and Poland – is becoming more and more significant for the automobile industry. One of the most important challenges the companies are facing is the lack of qualified people. The Mobility Cluster in Austria, together with partners from Hungary and Slovakia, has developed the first "Pyramid of Automotive Qualification" to face these challenges. The pyramid illustrates certain levels of specific qualification programs, with a unique Automotive MBA program on its top, which was introduced by Peter Kuen.

Prof. Claudio Demartini, Vice-Rector of Politecnico di Torino talked about the challenges of "Setting up publicly recognised occupational profiles and curricula in the automotive sector". Research in the context of the project VETAS has shown that instruments to identify learning requirements related to work processes have been developed in many European countries, but are not used as a standard. As it is the most important issue of adapting training processes to the needs of industry using the abilities of learners for their purposes, procedures of work processes transfer into needs of training and education have been investigated, to identify best practices and to see whether it is possible to develop an optimum model to be used as a benchmark for setting up occupational profiles and curricula derived from that.

It was discussed that one of the main challenges within the automotive sector is to find qualified employees and to tie them to the company, especially in small and medium sized companies. Enterprises are not familiar with the EQF as useful tool to make qualifications more comparable. From the perspective of enterprises there needs to be more information and open communication about the background and sense of EQF. It needs to get more practice-oriented in

its descriptions to be of any use. (Sigrid Nindl, 3srl, AT)

Keeping up with technological innovation and managing the aging workforce

Future Challenge: Topics of this session were the future challenges how we will keep up with technological innovation and how to manage the aging workforce. Norbert Willeke, Regional Director Aftersales of Volkswagen Service Deutschland, started with his presentation where he commented on the technical qualification in the retail and sales organization of Volkswagen in Germany. In order to keep up with permanent developing technologies Volkswagen comes back to various measures: First of all a sufficient number of specialists is needed to cope with the multifaceted tasks in the workshops. To guarantee a competent service a continuous qualification of the employees is vital. For any kind of technical issue a Technical Service Center has been set up as a support for all Volkswagen Partners.

Markus Tomaschitz, Executive Director of Magna Education & Research, continued the session. His approach how to manage an ageing workforce in Europe is based mainly on a more positive attitude towards older workers. He dispelled common prejudices as such that older workers have too high salaries in relation to their productivity. Fact is that we will depend on these workforces since the age profile of the European population is changing significantly. The number of working age is falling constantly and as consequence it is necessary for companies to draw forthcoming on the talents of older workers.

With regard to the general skills shortage it is not enough just to consider ageing workforce. In future we will also have to rely on foreign employees to level this shortage. This development might be convenient for the implementation of the EQF and also the best chance for such an agreement in the EU. At this stage it is necessary that companies participate in the discussion in order to make their interest and needs heard. Our business is to direct the implementation of the EQF into a way that really serves their needs. (Silke Haubenreisser, LUX, DE)



Challenges and opportunities of VET in the automotive industry

The first question was addressed to the panel moving from Annette Parker in order to highlight the role of the standardization effort. Annette confirmed it was at the base of the final positive result got in USA, obtained as a consequence of a common aim shared by all the automotive enterprises gathered around the table. On this subject both Dr. Littig and Mr. Kuen converged, Dr. Littig outlined the role played by EQF in terms of meta-framework for supporting the standardization process based on Learning Outcomes definition, while Mr. Kuen depicted a different scenario for University, usually more oriented towards topic descriptions rather than towards learning outcomes definition. Mr. Tebin supported the standard perspective which he said to be also in progress in his country (RU).

The second question posed to the panel dealing with the role of assessment was sustained by everyone as the third view point to be added to learning outcomes-based description of qualifications and to job profile representation. The three axes together give in fact a comprehensive representation of the human resource features according to three different reading keys: Labour market, Society reputation and VET system. The last statement can be assumed as a further enhancement of the VET scenario even overcoming constraints forced by any sectorial representation. (Claudio Demartini, Politecnico di Torino, IT)

THE VETAS INNOVATION AWARD

Two innovative/leading vocational education and training approaches from Europe have been awarded by the VETAS network for their demonstrated excellence, impact and innovation in addressing the challenges of the automotive sector. The VETAS innovation award has been given to the FORTECO project coordinated by Robert Bosch Espana, S.A. in Spain, and to the Automotive Academy Styria (AAS) in Austria.

Automotive Academy Styria (AAS), Austria

The Automotive Academy Styria (AAS) (AT) is implemented by the Automobile Cluster Styria (ACStyria) as a platform for industry-specific training, independent of car manufacturers. At the forefront of its activities lie areas such as automotive



technology, automotive business as well as all relevant peripheral areas of knowledge. In addition, AAS ensures optimum networking and co-ordination of existing automotive learning opportunities for all qualification levels.

The offered courses are broken down into three sector-specific areas (automotive technology, business and periphery) as well as into three "training levels" (basic, medium and premium), all AAS courses are completed with a certification that is based on international quality criteria. The assessment of Learning Outcomes takes place via a consortium of staff of different HE and VET providers. Continuous feedback of learners is evaluated and discussed in cooperation with HR-management of partner companies.

AAS provides a broad range of training target groups, offers innovative integrated training models, and customised qualification for the entire workforce of companies based on EQF. The development of new training and education programs/courses is based on the analysis of requirements and trend monitoring in the automotive sector. AAS also coordinates training providers in the automotive sector and was the first institution in Austria, to offer a comprehensive automotive training system that is specifically geared towards the requirements of partner companies.

The VETAS Innovation Award has been given to the AAS for its wide scope of offers for different target groups and qualification levels that are strongly related to labour market needs and show a clear European dimension by applying the approach of the European Qualifications Framework and therefore support comparability of qualifications across borders in Europe. (Sigrid Nindl, 3srl, AT)

FORTECO, Spain

Forteco provides a simple and collaborative work among Government, Industry and Vet centers providing a sustainable, feasible and long term solution to tackle the lack of skilled and updated workforce in Spain. Annually different automotive industry makers provide technical seminars to update teachers of VET schools with the latest technological innovations



in the sector. The seminars are financed by the different car makers. Government and Vet centres allow teachers free time to attend the seminars and finance their travel expenses. Teachers attending seminars when returning to their centres provide internal training for other teachers generating a wide multiplying effect.

In this way Teachers and VET students are updated according to latest automotive labour market technical demands and in pace with the technological changes. Curricula technological gaps are eliminated by this system and industry guarantees provision of updated workforce for immediate start.

The system contributes highly to reduce the constant gap between technological changes observed at the working process and schools curricula. School curricula and national qualification frameworks always run behind the technological changes taken place at the industries. This effect on productivity and employment levels seeing students leave the school with out of date information and Industry has to undertake internal training and qualification schemes to have this "new worker" operative. (R+D, FLM, ES)

Participants reviewing the conference

"Being myself part of the automotive sector as a private entrepreneur, as well as a SME's metal association manager, to attend the VETAS meeting which took place in Brussels this month was a must.



All of us have had to cope with the lack of qualification and the difficulties to attend an ever-changing market, such as the automotive one, and VETAS is one of the first experiences to exchange the points of view of the various key players in this sector.

VETAS meeting has been a unique chance to hear the expert voices of enterprises, research departments, trainers, etc., making it clear that a European standard in qualification requirements is needed, particularly in these globalization times, since a properly trained labour force may well make the difference between being competitive and profitable or being out of this business."

Alberto Gomez Otero, Secretary General of Pymetal Cantabria (ES), www.pymetal.net

"Visiting the VETAS family: Passing by beautiful Oldtimers one entered the VETAS Network Con-



ference in order to participate in an exchange about a wide variety of questions related to continuous education and training. The examples presented by Robert Bosch (ES) and AMTEC (US) proofed once again that innovation and qualification need to be siblings. Hugh Lauder showed, based on his global field research on continuous training and education in the automotive sector, that and how traditional industrial key aspects need to move in the light of new players in the field and of globally oriented technological advancements with partly new challenges.” Dr. Karin Bockelmann (DE)

“Visiting the VETAS Network Conference in Brussels was an interesting and inspiring experience. Stakeholders of the automotive industry had the opportunity to discuss today's challenges with regard to qualification.

How to keep up with technological innovation, how to achieve an improved mobility across Europe's borders, how to respond to demographic trends and how to ensure that training and education improve the quality of work are but a few of the challenges that we face today which were discussed in the framework of the VETAS conference.

Good practice examples of networks working for increased quality of training and qualification, such as AMTEC in the US or the Forteco Network in Spain highlighted how cooperation in the sector is the way forward to ensuring that skills requirements are met.

All in all an inspiring event that once again highlighted the need for greater European cooperation, for the sake of competitiveness, and for the sake of better living and working conditions.”

Hanna Schrankel, IG Metall (DE)

The VETAS monitoring and evaluation report on VET related to the automotive industry

The European automotive industry is currently exposed to intense global competition: as a consequence, the qualification and upgrading of skills of the existing workforce is paramount and is becoming a decisive factor for innovation processes. Moreover, ongoing skill shortage requires broad band industry responses with VET being one enabler to assist with the attraction and retention of people in the industry. Some fundamental re-evaluation of the industry's approach to formal VET

programmes and qualifications are required as one element of this response. Against this background, VETAS partners have selected and investigated innovative good practices regarding ongoing training/education activities in the automotive sector in their countries. The methodological approach has entailed the elaboration of an analytical framework for describing the approaches underpinning the innovative elements in the contents, in the delivery methods, in establishing new partnerships and networks, in forging multi-stakeholder approaches and at institutional level.

The approaches selected for further investigation also represent different geographical levels of implementation, with examples ranging from regional and national initiatives to projects with a European or international dimension, involving umbrella organisations and actors from different countries.

The results of the analysis combine several goals:

- to promote and deploy innovative practices and approaches in VET in the automotive sector;
- to contribute to the development of training opportunities taking account of qualitative changes;
- to provide policy-makers, practitioners, VET providers, etc. with a set of updated information and tools enabling them to identify topics for further discussions on innovative ways to deliver training in the automotive sector, including reflections on their utility, effectiveness and impact at sectoral level.

For further information please consult the VETAS project website www.project-vetas.eu and download the overall report on “Monitoring and evaluating ongoing training and education”.

News and tips on the VETAS Network Conference

All presentations contributed by the different speakers have been uploaded to the projects website (www.project-vetas.eu).

If you want to be kept informed about next steps within the VETAS network and/or about next steps on the GATEN initiative with the US sister network AMTEC, please send an e-mail to EU-project.akademie@dekra.com.

What's next for VETAS?

The project VETAS has been finalised with the 1st VETAS NetCon. But this conference was just the VETAS networks start.



During the past two and a half years the VETAS project partners worked – thanks to the support of the European Commissions Lifelong Learning programme - on the basis for the establishment of the *Vocational Education and Training in the Automotive Sector* (VETAS) Network. VET related to the automotive sector has been analysed in terms of its structure in the different countries involved in the project, role of the public VET systems, innovative approaches and in terms of considering the work process in setting up occupational profiles. All the collected information is now available on the VETAS portal (www.vetas.eu) that builds the virtual common point of reference for the emerging VETAS network members.

The VETAS core partners are committed to keep the network running and to extend the VETAS partnership also after the funding period has ended. Therefore a number of initiatives have already been started for further steps in the framework of VETAS:

_The portal and its databases will be continuously promoted and maintained by the network partners in order to provide a virtual forum for sharing and exchange on topics of relevance for the sector and the network members.

_A follow up conference is already under preparation in the framework of the GATEN initiative (Global Automotive Technical Education Network). This time not in Europe but in the US in order to pave the way to extend the European network VETAS and the American network AMTEC to other parts of the world and to discuss further joint activities related to VET in the automotive sector.

_A European project on VET in the automotive sector “AutoEdu” has been submitted for funding to the European Commission. This project will, if successful, provide a framework for further extended activities within the VETAS network and with Russian (and US) partners.

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission. This newsletter reflects the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



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