



TESEUS Policy, third sector and industry review in Europe

Provided by:

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A. Executive summary and main findings

After completing the content of your country report, please summarize the key facts and main findings into a brief section (maximum 1 page long) that will be displayed in the beginning of the document.

Since 2008 Europe has been suffering the effects of the most severe economic crisis it has seen in 50 years and in the majority of Member States small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) have not yet been able to bounce back to their pre-crisis levels. Unemployment rates reached the top levels ever and the EU policies are oriented to job creation and growth since many years.

Challenges to smart, sustainable and inclusive growth are structural and the European Commission released the Europe 2020 Strategy in 2010 to respond and laid the foundations to growth and competitiveness.

The European Commission firmly believes that entrepreneurship is a driver of economic growth and job creation, and that to ensure higher levels of employment Europe needs more entrepreneurs.

To do so, the VET and IVET systems are crucial and their effectiveness can help shifting people mindset towards entrepreneurship and self-employment. Indeed, recent statistics show that the majority of EU citizens would prefer to be an employee rather than a self-employed and that they lack adequate support to start a business.

Even if the European Commission is working for the modernisation of Initial Vocational Education and Training, much remains to do to improve the quality and responsiveness to labour market needs of the entire system.

While Firm Creation and Start-Up promotion is a developed mechanism in Higher Education, no such systems exist in IVET, that includes only theoretical entrepreneurial education (generic courses on entrepreneurship). Yet, in Europe, there are no real business incubation and firm creation mechanisms in IVET: at best, there are business plan competitions and simulations, but no real firm creation.

B. Brief overview of IVET system in EUROPE

Increasing participation in Initial Vocational Education and Training (IVET) is one way to improve competitiveness hence it is in the focus of several European policies. Modernisation of Initial Vocational Education and Training is one of the main topics of current discussions both at EU and Member State levels: in order to increase the attractiveness and prestige of IVET, Member States have to improve their quality and responsiveness to labour market needs.

At European level, IVET system has been subject to several reforms to improve its attractiveness:

1. The **Copenhagen Declaration** of 2002¹
2. The **Maastricht Communiqué** of 2004²
3. The **Helsinki Communiqué** of 2006³
4. The **Bordeaux Communiqué** of 2008⁴
5. The **Bruges Communiqué** of 2010⁵
6. The **Riga Conclusions** of 2015⁶

All these reforms have the aim of enhancing EU cooperation in vocational education and training, engaging young people in VET and working life, increasing investments in human capital and skills. According to the Eurydice Report on Entrepreneurship Education at school in Europe, Countries have implemented different strategies explicitly related to this policy area. Within the report, the strategies are divided into the following types:

- Specific strategies which focus exclusively on entrepreneurship education, often developing a common vision across government, reflecting policy priorities for a range of ministries such as education, innovation and economic development, and bringing together related actions from these policy areas;
- Broader education related strategies incorporating objectives for entrepreneurship education, such as education and training, youth or lifelong learning strategies;
- Broader economy related strategies featuring entrepreneurship education, such as entrepreneurship, employment or SME development strategies.⁷

¹“The Copenhagen Declaration on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training”, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/copenhagen_declaration_en.pdf, Copenhagen, 2002;

² “The Maastricht Communiqué on the Future Priorities of Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training”, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/communique_maastricht_priorities_vet.pdf, Maastricht, 2004;

³ “The Helsinki Communiqué on Enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training”, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/helsinkicom_en.pdf, Helsinki, 2006;

⁴“The Bordeaux Communiqué on enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training”, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/3972-att1-1-The_Bordeaux_Communique.pdf Bourdeaux, 2008;

⁵“The Bruges Communiqué on enhanced European Cooperation in Vocational Education and Training”, http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/bruges_en.pdf, Bruges, 2010;

⁶“The Riga Conclusions on a new set of medium-term deliverables in the field of VET for the period 2015-2020”, https://www.izm.gov.lv/images/RigaConclusions_2015.pdf, Riga, 2015;

⁷ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, “Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe”, Eurydice Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016;

Previous research on entrepreneurship education has shown significant variations in practice both between European countries and within them, which has resulted from a different understanding and interpretation of entrepreneurship education, given by the European Commission Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education.⁸ In a field where government intervention has often been limited and where a shared and/or official interpretation has been lacking, there is a particular difficulty for stakeholders in reaching a common understanding. Since VET is shaped by the particular institutional and historical developments of each country, it is difficult to grasp as a single entity and consistently escapes attempts to be defined as such. This challenge is complicated by the fact that VET takes place, de facto, throughout an individual's lifetime, and in formal, non-formal and informal contexts.⁹

The coverage in the curriculum of the different types of learning outcomes related to entrepreneurship education is uneven across Europe. Overall, only around 15 Countries/Regions include a wide range of entrepreneurial learning outcomes in relation to compulsory subjects and/or cross-curricular areas at least for one education level.¹⁰

It has been demonstrated that specific entrepreneurship education strategies are found in two geographical areas, namely Northern Europe (the most southerly country being Belgium) and the western Balkan pre-accession region. The prominence of specific entrepreneurship education strategies in the Nordic Countries can be linked to their commitment to innovation, evidenced through the consistently high international innovation rankings. Sweden, Finland and Denmark take the top places in the European Innovation Scorecard 2015 and are placed in the top 10 globally through the Global Innovation Index, with Norway also in the global top 20.

While EU-level policy will not interfere in the content and structure of VET, its role in relation to transparency, transferability and portability of skills and qualifications will increase. Indeed, the main aim of EU-level policies in the last years was to support the distinct model by promoting cross-border cooperation and agreements on occupations and sectors, for instance setting common standards. It is still an important area for Europe: the most frequent strategy actions can be seen in the areas of practical entrepreneurial experiences, teacher education and teaching methods. All Countries with a specific entrepreneurship strategy included an action related to practical entrepreneurial experiences through different means such as *Junior Achievement* (highlighted in Estonia, Finland, Norway and Serbia) or curriculum-based practical entrepreneurial challenges (Flemish Community of Belgium and the United Kingdom). This is significant as it is a high priority at EU level for all Member States to include at least one practical entrepreneurial experience during compulsory education.

⁸ Thematic Working Group on Entrepreneurship Education, Final Report, <http://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=groupDetail.groupDetailDoc&id=17016&no=1>, definition of Entrepreneurship Education: “it is about learners developing the skills and mind-set to be able to turn creative ideas into entrepreneurial action. This is a key competence for all learners, supporting personal development, active citizenship, social inclusion and employability. It is relevant across the lifelong learning process, in all disciplines of learning and to all forms of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) which contribute to an entrepreneurial spirit or behaviour, with or without a commercial objective”;

⁹ Cedefop (2017), “The changing nature and role of vocational education and training in Europe. Volume 1: conceptions of vocational education and training: an analytical framework”, Luxembourg: Publications Office, Cedefop Research Paper; No 63, <http://dx.doi.org/10.2801/532605>

¹⁰ European Commission/EACEA/Eurydice, “Entrepreneurship Education at School in Europe”, Eurydice Report, Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union, 2016;

C. Brief overview of existing data and analyses for EUROPE

Europe 2020 is the 10-year strategy proposed by the European Commission in 2010 for the advancement of the economy of the European Union. It aims at "smart, sustainable, inclusive growth" with greater coordination of national and European policy. The strategy identifies five headline targets to boost growth and employment:

- To raise the employment rate of the population aged 20–64 from the current 69% to at least 75%.
- To achieve the target of investing 3% of GDP in R&D in particular by improving the conditions for R&D investment by the private sector, and develop a new indicator to track innovation.
- To reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 20% compared to 1990 levels or by 30% if the conditions are right, increase the share of renewable energy in final energy consumption to 20%, and achieve a 20% increase in energy efficiency - 20-20-20 target.
- To reduce the share of early school leavers to 10% from the current 15% and increase the share of the population aged 30–34 having completed tertiary from 31% to at least 40%.
- To reduce the number of Europeans living below national poverty lines by 25%, lifting 20 million people out of poverty.

It is quite evident that the Europe 2020 strategy mostly revolves around entrepreneurship and jobs creation to sustain growth and promote inclusion. However, the economic crisis is affecting entrepreneurial attitude:

- 58% of Europeans prefer to work as employees (49% in 2012)
- there are fewer "early stage" entrepreneurs in EU (2.3% Italy; 4.2% Germany) than elsewhere in the world¹¹:
 - 7.8% USA
 - 14% China
 - 17% Brazil

A recent survey carried out on behalf of Directorate-General Enterprise and Industry of the EU Commission in the 27 Member States of the European Union and in Croatia, Island, Israel, Norway, Switzerland, Turkey, Brazil, Russia, the United States, China, India, Japan and South Korea¹² highlighted that European citizens are less interested in themes pertaining to entrepreneurship, start-ups, and business failures and are less prone to start a business or to take risks.

The survey showed that in 2010, 45% Europeans considered starting their own business as a first choice while in 2013 only 37%. Other interesting findings are:

- In 18 out of 27 countries, a majority of respondents say that they would prefer to be an employee
- A majority of respondents think self-employment is unfeasible for them in all but two EU Member States. The exceptions are Latvia and Sweden

¹¹ Source: Global Entrepreneurship Monitor

¹² EU Commission Eurobarometer 354 "Entrepreneurship"

- Men are more inclined than women to regard self-employment as a feasible alternative, by a margin of 35% to 26%
- A large majority of EU respondents think that it is difficult to start one's own business due to a lack of available financial support (79%); and that it is difficult to start one's own business due to the complexities of the administrative process (72%)
- 51% of EU respondents think that it is difficult to obtain sufficient information on how to start a business
- There are wide national differences on these questions. For example, 96% of people in Greece cite a lack of available financial support, whereas only 52% of people in Finland do so. And while 77% of respondents in Greece say it is difficult to obtain sufficient information, only 20% of respondents in the Netherlands complain about this.

Regarding the role of education in entrepreneurship activity, the survey showed that:

- Just under a quarter (23%) of EU respondents say that they have taken part in a course or activity about entrepreneurship; 76% have not done this
- Country results range from the 39% of people in Finland who have done this to the 15% in both Malta and the UK
- 34% of people who regard self-employment within five years as a feasible prospect have taken part in an entrepreneurship course, but only 18% of people who do not see self-employment as feasible have done so
- Half of EU respondents (50%) agree that their school education helped them to develop a sense of initiative and a sort of entrepreneurial attitude
- Country variations are substantial on this question. For example, 65% of respondents in Portugal agree that their school education made them interested in becoming an entrepreneur, but only 17% of those in Germany and the UK think this

The above mentioned data and results clearly confirms the key role played by school education and VET in building an entrepreneurial mind-set and accompanying citizens to self-employment and, at the same time, calls for more efforts by EU stakeholders and policy makers in providing educational and training tools and support for start-up promotion and firm creation across EU.

Even if the Commission's objective is to encourage people to become entrepreneurs and also make it easier for them to set up and grow their businesses, the situation across EU Member States are still characterized by fragmentation and lack of adequate interventions, resulting in notable differences among Member States.

D. State of existing start-up promotion and firm creation support for IVET students in EUROPE

European institutions do not have a direct competence on VET and IVET systems, but their strategies are applied within Member States.

Entrepreneurship is a key competence in the European Framework¹³, and the European Commission is focusing on encouraging unemployed people to start businesses, on improving the sustainability and quality of work of self-employed businesses and on supporting social entrepreneurs. Some of the challenges to be tackled include:

- Education should offer the right foundation for an entrepreneurial career
- Difficult access to finance and markets
- Difficulty in transferring businesses
- The fear of 'punitive' sanctions in case of failure
- Burdensome administrative procedures

The European Commission released in 2013 the Entrepreneurship Action Plan¹⁴ following the idea that to bring Europe back to growth and higher levels of employment, Europe needs more entrepreneurs. The Action Plan contains several initiatives to promote entrepreneurship and is aimed at reigniting Europe's entrepreneurial spirit by:

- Educating young people about entrepreneurship
- Highlighting opportunities for women and other groups
- Easing administrative requirements
- Making it easier to attract investors

The European Commission promote and support entrepreneurship education through the following:

- Funding to European projects that will create reference models for further exploitation, through calls for proposals
- Promoting exchanges of good practice and experiences at the EU level
- Organising of workshops for policy makers and practitioners
- Helping policy makers and other stakeholders network
- Publishing guidelines based on existing good practice in Europe
- Releasing studies, indicators, and data collection

The European Commission provides financial support through the Erasmus+ Programme and the European Social Fund.

Erasmus+ has an overall indicative financial envelope of 14.774 billion EUR, out of which almost €3 Billion is assigned to VET over the period 2014-2020. Every year around 130.000 VET learners and 20.000 VET staff benefit from Erasmus+ mobility opportunities. In addition almost 500 VET projects

¹³ The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 on key competences for lifelong learning

¹⁴ <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52012DC0795&from=EN>

per year are financed under Erasmus+ Strategic partnerships. The programme also finances other activities such as Sector Skills Alliances (including sectoral Blueprint).

In addition, the Erasmus for Young Entrepreneurs offer youngsters a cross-border experience to facilitate the exchange of entrepreneurial and management experience. The exchange sees a newly established or potential entrepreneur make a one to six month visit to an experienced entrepreneur running an SME in another country. In the last five years, more than 2 500 pairs of entrepreneurs have benefitted from the programme.

The European Social Fund (ESF) is an important financial lever for VET. From 2014 until 2020 the ESF has a thematic objective which assigns a significant budget to actions supporting VET. Nearly 15 Billion were dedicated to enhancing equal access to lifelong learning and promoting flexible pathways, as well as improving the labour market relevance of education and training systems.

The European Social Fund is also working to support entrepreneurs through business support services and it is also assisting female entrepreneurs, as well as disadvantaged or disabled people, who are interested in starting their own businesses.

The European Commission provides support and information to people who wish to start their own business through support networks:

- The Your Europe Business Portal: a practical guide to doing business in Europe. It provides entrepreneurs with information and interactive services that help them expand their business abroad
- The Enterprise Europe Network: helps SMEs and entrepreneurs access market information, overcome legal obstacles, and find potential business partners across Europe
- The SME Internationalisation support page: provides information on foreign markets and helps European business internationalise their activities
- The single portal on Access to Finance: helps SMEs find finance supported by the EU

E. Short description of specific examples from EUROPE

Short description of specific examples of existing start-up promotion and firm creation support practices (for example, you can look among categories of practices named above). Be very brief here, as the selected ones will be described in more detail as case studies.

Specific examples of existing start-up promotion and firm creation support practices across Europe are the following¹⁵:

- South East European Centre for Entrepreneurial Learning (SEECEL) - Western Balkans: SEECEL measured the impact of its provisions across countries and in different types of schools. The measurement undertaken looked at participants' entrepreneurial attitudes and knowledge, and impact on schools.
- JA-YE – Junior Achievement - Young enterprise - 19 EU countries: JA-YE is probably the best-known entrepreneurship education provider (especially regarding mini-companies programmes) across Europe and in many other countries globally. Several examples measuring impact of a similar programme exist, which allows for a comparison across different countries and different education levels.
- Youth Entrepreneurship Strategy (YES) and Action Plan - Wales (UK): The Welsh government measured the impact of the YES Strategy based on specific indicators in several surveys (run under the YES Strategy or run on a national level (GEM) or UK-level). The indicators used aimed at monitoring the long-term cultural shift towards entrepreneurship, which is one of the main goals of the Strategy.
- EEP – The Entrepreneurship Education Project - Global level: EEP is a global, longitudinal research initiative which offers insights into the impact of entrepreneurial education on (1) the motivational processes underlying students' road to entrepreneurship and (2) the process of identity transformation from student to entrepreneur. Data from more than 70 countries and over 400 universities were gathered.
- National Action Plan 2010-2014 - Norway: Norway has a strategy (Action Plan) on entrepreneurship education in place for many years already (since 2004). An evaluation was undertaken which involved pupils/students from several schools across the country and showed regional differences in impact.
- Impact of Entrepreneurship Education in Denmark - Denmark: A longitudinal study was launched in Denmark in 2011 which measures the impact of entrepreneurship education in different age/student cohorts. Denmark is a country with significant experience in entrepreneurship education. This on-going measurement provides data which offer significant depth to the understanding of how entrepreneurship education has positive impact on Danish students of different age groups.

¹⁵ ICF International on behalf of European Commission - DG Enterprise and Industry; *Entrepreneurship Education: a road to success - 13 case studies*, 2015
(<http://www.seecel.hr/UserDocsImages/Documents/Case%20studies-EE-a%20road%20to%20success-final.pdf>)

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