
	MINUTES OSA CONFERENCE	 European Association of Regional and Local Authorities for Lifelong Learning
	Agreement Number (190692-LLP-1-2010-1-IT-KA1ECETB)	
	21 ST – 22 ND February 2013, Florence	

“A Guarantee System for Youth Policies- One Step Ahead towards Employment and Autonomy”

OSA Conference 21-22nd February 2013

This conference was organised by the Tuscany Region within the framework of the OSA- One Step Ahead project supported by the European Commission. The OSA project is a collaboration between Regional Governments to identify effective models of youth policies (lifelong learning, employment, housing, health etc). Within this project regional reports have been prepared by involved partners, analysing the available data on youth situations within concerned regions, and describe measures undertaken for the youth in each region. The result of the project is in terms of additional Regions learning about youth strategies indentified within OSA regions and subsequently further institutions benefitting.

21st February 2013, Via San Gallo, 25, Firenze

Opening of the conference

Earlall President and Tuscan Minister of Economic Activities, Employment and Training **Gianfranco Simoncini** opened the conference with a welcome to all and statement on the current youth crisis. He thanked the European Commission for their support in the OSA project and suggested the conference be a great format for the sharing of best practices and success models.

The European Strategy for an active and competent young population



Angela Gaurino from the DG Employment at the European Commission made a presentation calling for the reduction of youth unemployment and assessing the Commission programmes for the facilitation of this. Miss Guarino also identified new measures soon to be implemented such as the Youth Guarantee.

Discussion - Chaired by **Paolo Federighi**, University of Florence

1. Completing education and acquiring the right skills

The first presentation by **Stephen Fletcher**, Senior Evidence Liaison Manager, Department for Education and Skills, Welsh Government, introduced and assessed measures adopted by the Welsh Government and the factors felt necessary to be introduced in the future. He focused specifically on the ‘rolling out’ of the Welsh BaccaLaureate qualification and discussed the development of vocational qualification within the framework of adopting European recommendations.

Victor Arias, TKNIKA-Internationalization monitor, The Basque Country, discussed in detail programmes adopted by the Basque Country and TKNIKA, the centre for innovation in Basque

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Vocational Training. This was the HEZIBI programme specifically, based upon the German Dual System which integrates academic and vocational learning.

2. Supporting income and fiscal incentives

Ms Savino, Officer Employment Department, Tuscany Region, presented on the employment strategies of the Tuscan region discussing the deployment of fiscal incentives as a measure to promote entrepreneurship in the region. She also highlighted the importance within the region of promoting female entrepreneurship.

Mr Härtel, Steirische Volkswirtschaftliche Gesellschaft, Styria, discussed the new strategy for education brought into place in January 2013, the Regional Education Plan, which focused on individualised and organisational development within school. He also discussed incentives in the manner of education and training cheques and cash to provide easier access education and support, and financial family support.

3. Limiting disadvantaged situations

Mr Arias discussed the law on Basque youth that is currently in the process of being introduced, which aims to focus on lifelong learning and VET, increasing participation cooperation and information. The law will also affect industry, energy, health and housing for the young.

The discussant, **Mr Girardi**, Director of ESF office, Autonomous Province of Trento, talked about avoiding the NEET condition all together through a variety of measures including enhancing practical skills, basic apprenticeships, quality assurances and assistance for youth who quit their jobs to study.

4. Inclusion and growth into the labour market



Mr Biagi, Director Training and Guidance Sector, Tuscany Region, raised the Tuscan companies use of solidarity contracts utilised through times of recession where everyone works fewer hours but retains their roles. He also raised the importance of traineeships being established and regulated effectively due to the possible abuse of conditions.

Mr Härtel reiterated the strong impact of policy measures on youth unemployment in Styria, and talked about the region defining what success was for them.

Ms Estany, Department for employment, Generalitat de Catalunya, discussed the need for fixed contracts offered by companies, and queried what sectors were the most effective ?

5. Developing an appropriate social and cultural life

Andrea Bernert-Bürkle, Volkshochschulverband, Baden-Württemberg, discussed the attention in Baden-Württemberg to society, the cultural world and people at a very early stage. She emphasised the importance in the region of partnerships between schools and non educational partnerships, and introduced the concept of the alliance for youth. She also depicted the

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framework of support around this area ; structurally, politically and financially. This was emphasised in the depiction of programmes of support currently in place, the youth companion programme, pupils monitoring programme and the implementation of summer schools.

Anna Hansen, Head of Research in Jamtli, Jämtland, presented different cultural issues for her regions, establishing the problem of retaining the young within the region. She also highlighted the lack of traditional culture for young in Jämtland, an area where nature makes up the culture. To combat this, the region is looking at musical education, libraries, free entrance to museums and study circles.

6. Reaching autonomy and parenthood



Ms Bernert-Bürkle discussed within her presentation the problem of parenthood's compatibility with a career. She went on to describe measures that the national government were currently working on to combat this, including benefits such as the Elterngeld which would replace part of a salary dependent on means for a year.

Ms Hansen discussed autonomy in her region, and the problem of forced autonomy given the distance of schools from some homes in rural areas. With regards to parenthood, the Jämtland has 480 days per child for parental leave.

Mr Andorlini, Tuscany Region, Coordinator of the GiovaniSi Project, raised very different issues with regards to this area in Tuscany, where the role of the family often undermines autonomy. The economy too has exacerbated this issue.

Mr Federighi ended this part of the conference with his conclusion that individualised approaches have to be taken to combatting youth unemployment in different regions.

-End of conference part 1-

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22nd February 2013, Regione Toscana, Piazza del Duomo, 10, Firenze

Regional policies and measures supporting improvement of youth condition. Results of the comparative analysis in six European Regions

Mr Federighi opened the second day of the conference by inviting discussion on his paper for youth employment approved during the conference. He also reiterated the problems facing Europe with regards to unemployment, the skills mismatch, NEETs and early school leavers and the risk of stigmatisation as a result of this.

Different strategic models and their efficacy based on:

1. Cooperation between public policies and families

Gianni Biagi explained the complexities of keeping together public policy and social cohesion stating that public policy often helps in safeguarding in times of redundancy for example, but in Tuscany there are external factors such as the family seen as safeguards. **Mr Biagi** discussed family habits, with offspring staying close to their parents or living at home at a later age, and also the role of food. This gives stacicity to the Italian social system.

Ramón Martínez de Murgia, Vocational Training Director, The Basque Country, agreed that the Basque Country had a very similar family characteristics to the Tuscan regions, and promoted free health care and education. He identified the priority to increase the Basque employment rate and reiterated the commitment of the HEZIBI programme for VET.



2. Individual responsibility

Mr Fletcher identified oddities within Welsh NEET statistics in that they have not fluctuated in recession, he did however state the cost and statistics were both still too high. He discussed the Youth Engagement Plan of 2011 which targeted work experience, data development and pathways to work.

3. Integration in the labour market

Ms Bernert-Bürkle identified that good and safe jobs were the best guarantee for welfare. She discussed this in the context of guidance schemes and educational partnerships within schools and educational centres within the region, and talked about the dual system as an anchor of youth employment.

Mr Härtel discussed the nature of more individualised systems in Styria, not conforming to one typical welfare model. He identified the Styrian way as combining development of all strategic areas with common cooperation and a good school to work transfer system.

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4. Holistic welfare

Lena Bäckelin, Regional Commissioner, Jämtland, discussed the universalistic welfare approach of her region. There are still however problems with a generational gap and demographic challenge in the region. She also raised the implementation of the plug in project, a cooperation with social services and employment agencies.

Round Table: Cooperation among Regional Governments to implement a system of guarantees for youth in Europe

Mr Simoncini, Earlall President and Minister of Tuscany Region, opened the round table by asking what elements of the conference had been useful. **Ms Gaurino**, European Commission, answered that it had become very apparent that one model for recovery and employment does not fit all, and that there has to be some level of individualised approach.

Mr Petersen, Vice President of the Committee for South Denmark Region, stated that the skills mismatch in his region was one of the biggest issues and some of the strategies presented over the last two days had been very useful in a European context.

Mr Martins, General Vice-director of Programmes - Generalitat de Catalunya, discussed the drastic effects of the financial crisis on his region indicating a problem developing where more people went to University which resulted in graduate NEETs. Interestingly though, he pointed out the high percentage of adults returning to VET training.

Mr Turri, Veneto Region, talked about the importance of building partnerships with other actors such as trade unions and 3rd sector organisations, as a different approach to finding solutions within his area.

Conclusions

Mr Simoncini concluded the conference by thanking all speakers and attendees for their participation, and emphasised the importance of both the conference and the project. He called for further investment and for European policy to act effectively at a regional level.

-End of conference part 2-

The presentations made during the conference will be available shortly. Please contact the project coordinator at francesca.torlone@meliuitaly.eu for any further queries.



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