

PRESS RELEASE

Serbian school taking the lead in entrepreneurial skills development

During the European Vocational Skills Week, taking place in Vienna between 5 and 9 November, Subotica School for Chemical Technology received by the European Training Foundation a best practice award in developing students' entrepreneurial skills. By placing learners in real-life situations, such as creating companies selling products in local shops, the school emerged as outstanding among examples from countries surrounding the EU. Through learning-by-doing students develop a real entrepreneurial mindset, including competences such as identifying opportunities, sustainable thinking, and working in teams. The prize was awarded by ETF Director, Cesare Onestini, in the presence of the EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen.

Vienna, 9 November 2018 – In Subotica, a town in western Serbia, the students of the School of Chemical Technology acquire entrepreneurial competences by setting up real companies. Developing businesses from the initial idea right up to actually selling products in their local community at competitive prices, students work on a variety of topics ranging from chemicals, to textiles and baked goods (watch video [here](#)).

A best practice in the EU neighbourhood

The school, which selected the production of liquid soap as a success story, was awarded by the European Training Foundation as an example of best practice in the development of entrepreneurship as a key competence. Emerging as best among candidates from 8 countries in the EU neighbourhood, the Serbian school proved outstanding in applying the EU's Entrepreneurship competence framework (EntreComp), a tool which promotes the entrepreneurial mindset of students. The prize was given by ETF Director, Cesare Onestini, in the presence of EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility, Marianne Thyssen, [on the occasion of an award ceremony taking place in Vienna on 9 November](#), during the European Vocational Skills Week.

“This year's European Vocational Skills Week confirms that breaking down the boundaries between education and work is a value shared by the EU and its neighbouring countries”, said **Marianne Thyssen**, EU Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs, Skills and Labour Mobility. “I congratulate the School of Chemical Technology of Subotica for having succeeded in transforming the EU's EntreComp model into outstanding learning paths focusing on entrepreneurial skills: preparing students through concrete experience is key to providing the right skills to match labour market needs, in the EU and beyond”.

“To meet the demands of fast-changing economies and respond to the impact of technology on labour markets, education providers need to put key competences at the heart of training activities”, said **Cesare Onestini**, ETF Director. “This is true for the EU and just as relevant for transition and developing countries. Young people today are aware that they need to acquire a broad range of skills to build their own future, including

adaptability and entrepreneurship. ETF supports reforms efforts and innovation in the education and training sector in the EU's neighbouring countries. This award is one great example of what can be achieved with dedication and vision. ETF is proud to support the award, now in its third edition".

Students, real active players

The students of the award-winning project attend school and are active players in the production chain: they choose the colour of the soap and its scent; they design the logo, and packaging; they check the sales in the local shop, and make sure that the whole production process is undertaken in an eco-friendly way. As a consequence, beyond learning to become chemical lab technicians, they acquire entrepreneurial skills such as vision, planning, creativity and sustainable thinking.

"We decided to invest in entrepreneurship as a key competence for our students to make them more competitive in the job market", said school Director, **Nikola Matković**. "This method is about modernising the teaching process where students have an active and central role", added **Jadranka Vojnić Purčar**, Practical learning coordinator in the school, "by taking responsibility, students develop competences such as identifying opportunities, taking initiative, integrity and ethics". "When we sold the liquid soap in the local store I felt very proud because it was something that we had made", said **Milica**, 16, student.

A school inspired by the EU's drive in entrepreneurial skills

The school is inspired by EntreComp, an EU tool for building entrepreneurial mindsets. The school has set concrete learning outcomes in the field of entrepreneurial skills development. Moreover, as far as teaching methodologies are concerned, it has put strong emphasis on self-directed learning, learning-by-doing and acquiring entrepreneurial experience by working on a school-based business. Finally, it proved to be a leader in the field of local business eco-system integration, by putting strong emphasis on environmental protection.

The discussion on competences will continue in Turin, Italy, on 21-22 November during the 'Skills for the Future: Managing Transition' conference – an event organized by the European Training Foundation which will put a spotlight on the skills needed to prepare people for the job market in a rapidly changing world. Participants from more than 50 countries – entrepreneurs, training providers, policy makers, innovators – will be attending with the aim of exploring how transition countries can respond to global trends shaping the labour market of tomorrow from a skills perspective. For more information: www.skills4future.eu

Background

The European Training Foundation is the EU agency supporting the countries neighbouring the EU to reform their education and labour market systems, in line with the EU's external action policy. Each year it launches a call for good practice in entrepreneurship key competence promotion in vocational education and training, specifically targeting countries in the EU neighbourhood. The purpose is to promote the sharing of examples of best practice, and to raise the awareness about EntreComp, a tool developed by the EU to promote the entrepreneurial mindset of citizens.

The winner is awarded during the European Vocational Skills Week, an event organised annually by the European Commission. This year's edition, taking place in Vienna, is organised in cooperation with the Austrian Presidency of the EU.

The winners of the previous ETF best practice awards for entrepreneurship as key competence development were the Technological Entrepreneurship Programme implemented in schools in Israel (2016) and Palestine Polytechnic University for its innovative teaching and learning approach (2017).

More information

- [The EU Vocational Skills Week Award Ceremony](#)
- [The School of Chemical Technology, Subotica, Serbia](#)
- [The European Training Foundation](#)
- ['Skills for the Future: Managing Transition' conference](#)

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