

FLASH REPORT

Event name

Skills for smart specialisation – Foresight action in Rivne Region on "Woodworking and Furniture manufacturing" - Technical Meeting

Main objective/s

The first objective of the foresight action in Rivne region is to help policymakers, VET schools and centres, and businesses to anticipate change, prepare responses, and create more robust strategies to address skills needs of a priority area for smart specialisation.

The second objective of the foresight action is to lay the ground for peer learning with EU regions with matching smart specialisation priorities.

In order to reach these objectives, the foresight action seeks to bring into the discussion the broader regional development planning, business conditions and the external economic environment.

Background

The ETF first tested the Skills for Smart Specialisation methodology in 2019. The first tests were implemented at national level in Montenegro (renewable energy and health tourism) and Moldova (renewable energy and food processing). In 2020, the methodology was tested at regional level in two pilot regions in Ukraine, Rivne (woodworking and furniture manufacturing) and Kharkiv (high-value added manufacturing). As a result of the testing, in 2021, the ETF is introducing two new elements to the methodology which will be applied in Rivne and Kharkiv regions: a foresight action and a peer learning partnership.

The foresight consists of five steps, all carried online due to the COVID19 pandemic.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

A half-day technical meeting focused on priority needs for skills development to meet the emerging demand and policy implications was organized on the 31/03/21 for the Rivne region.

The meeting was held online, and structured as a working group discussion on 3 topics:

- 1) Rivne vision in Woodworking and furniture manufacturing
- 2) What skills will be required for the Rivne vision in Woodworking and furniture manufacturing to be achieved
- 3) How will education and training provision need to adapt in order to meet the demand for skills in Woodworking and furniture manufacturing

KEY OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS

- 1) Rivne wood processing and furniture manufacturing sector is **innovative, highly competitive and export oriented** with unique suppliers and specialised human capital that leverage cutting edge technology and build on **sustainable regional natural resources** (renewable sources, circular economy) that provide crucial inputs. The woodworking and furniture manufacturing sector is contributing to rising prosperity in the region and in Ukraine. VET provision builds on an **intensive cooperation with local businesses and regional administration**, provides various training for different target groups (e.g. students, employees), integrating design, combination of traditional and new materials, development of

entrepreneurship, sustainable production, doing business at different markets, research and innovation.

- 2) Today's education - neither higher nor VET - is of interest to businesses seeking innovative solutions. Science, education and business live and function in different planes and at different speeds.

The basic level of skills should cover the basic properties of wood, determining its quality and characteristics for different types of products.

Important skills are working with traditional and new materials based on wood and their ways to combine, but also product design and engineering software skills, Woodworking equipment programming skills, Knowledge and skills of waste-free (low waste) production, processing and reuse of woodworking waste and basic business knowledge in furniture and woodworking industries.

Among the desirable soft skills we can mention: English, communication, design and modelling, programming, work with the client, rules for doing business in different markets.

- 4) Factors contributing to increasing the level of adaptability of education to the requirements of the labor market at the **national level**:
- The mechanism of public-private partnership should be adapted to the needs of cooperation between business and education
 - Centralized regulatory framework of the Ministry of Education and Science, and a low level of autonomy of VET institutions,
 - The possibility of introducing tax and other financial and non-financial incentives for businesses that cooperate with the education system
 - Ensuring the development and financing of the process of developing smart specialization of the region at the expense of the State Development Budget
 - Increasing the autonomy of educational institutions and expanding the range of employers involved in the learning process
 - Supporting involvement of employers to the education system (dual education)
 - Establishment of a system of internships and continuous professional development of teachers
 - Dissemination of positive entrepreneurial cases among graduates, involvement of graduate entrepreneurs in cooperation with the educational provider

Factors contributing to increasing the level of adaptability of education to the requirements of the labor market at the **regional level**:

- Flexible and adaptive system of regional order for education and training .
- Actual data on the state of the labor market and the education system (the key to the right regional order)
- System of scientific and methodical centers as platforms that promote constructive cooperation between business and the education system in the field of educational programs

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