

FLASH REPORT

Event name

SKILLS FOR SMART SPECIALISATION – FORESIGHT ACTION IN RIVNE REGION ON WOODWORKING AND FURNITURE MANUFACTURING, Zoom meeting (Online), 10-11 February 2021

Main objective/s

The meeting is part of the Foresight action implemented in Rivne region (STEP 1). The meeting was aimed to present and discuss findings of the ETF analysis on skills implications in “Woodworking and Furniture Manufacturing”, to share good practices from the EU countries on how current and future skills needs in this sector are addressed and to discuss external economic factors and regional drivers for change in Rivne region.

The foresight consists of five steps:

- STEP 1 is structured around a virtual meeting split into two half-day meetings with plenary sessions and group works aimed to exchange on drivers of change and scenario building on skills implications (10-11 February)
- STEP 2 consists of an online consultation (questionnaire) focused on skills implications, expressed e.g. as priority occupations, qualifications and transversal skills. (17 February – 3 March)
- Step 3 is a half-day technical meeting focused on priority needs for skills development to meet the emerging demand and policy implications. (10 March)
- Step 4 is an online consultation (questionnaire), focused on system’s implications e.g. planning, delivery, assessment of skills development; partnerships; school to work transitions, employability aspects; interinstitutional cooperation; centres of excellence etc. (15–29 March)
- STEP 5 is structured as final meeting to validate and share findings. (22 April)

Background

Vocational education and training (VET) and skills development have been recognised as framework conditions for innovation ecosystems. VET and skills are already partially reflected in the tools and methodologies that guide the design of smart specialisation strategies in the ETF partner countries. However, to fully connect VET to the broader drive for innovation, growth and competitiveness, in 2019 the ETF started to develop and test a practical guide for analysing the skills implications of smart specialisation strategies.

The ETF first tested the 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.

SHORT DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT

The ETF foresight action in Rivne has high political attention both at the national and regional level and the kick-off meeting was opened by a panel consisting of:

- Igor Garbaruk, Deputy Minister, Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine
- Petro Korgevskiy, Head of Department for Education and Science, Rivne Regional State Administration
- Oleksander Protsuyk, Rivne Smart Specialisation Team, Agency of regional development, Rivne
- Xavier Matheu de Cortada, Head of Knowledge Hub Department, ETF

ETFs smart specialisation expert, Pirita Vuorinen, provided an overview of the ETF approach to Skills for Smart Specialisation. Following this presentation, findings of the ETF analysis on skills implications of the 'Woodworking and furniture manufacturing' preliminary priority domain for smart specialisation in Rivne were presented by ETF National Experts, Rodion Kolyshko and Mykola Sudakov.

The following session covered the national practice perspective of Ukrainian furniture manufacturers and two EU inspiring practices from VET providers in the Netherland and Estonia: Oksana Donska, from the Association of furniture manufacturers, H el ene Overmeer and Tjalling Mulder, Hout- en Meubilerings College (HMC), from the Netherlands, and Mart Nilson, Manager of Centre of Competence for Wood Processing and Furniture Manufacturing, V oru County Vocational Training Center, Estonia.

As part of Step 1 of the ETF foresight action, participants exchanged their viewpoints on external economic factors and regional drivers for change in Rivne region.

KEY OUTCOMES/CONCLUSIONS

- Technological innovation, digitalisation, and strive for environmental responsibility and sustainability, and computerisation of design and manufacturing processes have resulted in enterprises operating more and more in global production networks and chains that are often buyer driven.
- The skills required and currently lacking in woodworking and furniture manufacturing in Rivne are:
 - Strong digital skills;
 - Computer programming and modelling;
 - Debugging of machines and equipment;
 - Technical drawing with the support of IT solutions;
 - Soft skills (variety).
- VET needs to support Rivne enterprises by improving access to high-quality training on internationalisation (import and export), global value chains and new business models and to proactively address the impact of global trends on the demand for green skills (regulations and policies).
- Constant innovation (new products, new production processes, and new ways of marketing oriented towards changing consumer demands etc.) requires review of VET curricula, technical training and IT equipment - and teacher training.
- SME growth will require more flexibility from VET to support business renewal i.e. modular formal training, non-formal training, provision of short-term training programmes – and innovation support services e.g. innovation hubs.

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