

**REPORT ON THE PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION BASED ON  
DOCUMENT ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATION DURING PAGOSTE  
PROJECT WORKSHOP FROM 5.6. - 7.6.2023 AT THE  
UNIVERSITY OF KONSTANZ, GERMANY.**

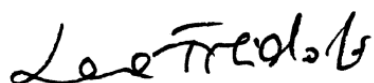
Author of this report and critical friend of the project:

Dr. Lena Freidorfer (University of Zurich)

PLACE: Zurich, Switzerland

DATE: 10<sup>th</sup> August 2023

SIGNATURE:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lena Freidorfer".

## PREFACE

The author of the report has been invited to be ‘a critical friend’ of the Erasmus+ CBHE Project PAGOSTE “New mechanisms of partnership-based governance and standardization of vocational teacher education in Ukraine” (No. 609536-EPP-1-2019-1-DE-EPPKA2-CBHE-SP).

The main task of the critical friend is to provide a constructive feedback to the current project implementation and specifically clarify what strengths and weaknesses can be identified by an external expert as well as potential improvements either the project consortium or the individual partner can make in order to achieve the project goal.

The project report is based on the careful study of the project website, project documentation sent by the coordinator and the most importantly on the observations and communication with project partners during the project workshop on 05-07.06.2023.

### **Disclaimer:**

This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

The European Commission's support for the production of the content of this publication does not constitute an endorsement of the contents, which reflect the views only of the author, and the Commission cannot be held responsible for any use which may be made of the information contained therein.



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Partnership-based Governance	PBG
Vocational Education and Training Teacher	VET Teacher
Vocational Education and Training System	VET System



## INTRODUCTION

In the course of the PAGOSTE project meeting at the University of Konstanz in June 2023, the focus was, among others, on the following questions:

- What further development steps have been taken since the last project meeting in Rome around the further development of VET teacher training, its structure and organisation in Ukraine?
- To what extent has its governance developed further, especially regarding an implementation of PBG-mechanisms?
- What is the state of the art of the implementation of PBG strategies at regional and national level in the Ukrainian VET system and in VET teacher education?

A theoretical framework around PBG strategies was again provided by the partners accompanying the project (University of Konstanz, Università Tre Roma and Vienna University of Economics and Business Administration), as it was also the case at the project meeting in Rome the previous year. The importance of implementing PBG mechanisms in the Ukrainian VET system was also held out during the meeting. What was noticeable is that since the last meeting in Italy, some partners have addressed their own ideas on PBG mechanisms to varying degrees. During the project meeting and the presentations prepared by the Ukrainian partners, it was particularly noticeable that the partners are increasingly able to perceive the advantages of PBG-mechanisms and are also becoming increasingly aware of its importance for the further development of their VET- and VET teacher training system. The Ukrainian partners reported during the project meeting in great detail, for example, on newly established formal and informal networks and partnerships within the individual partner institutions but also across institutions. Advantages that the partners see in PBG approaches are, to name a few of many points mentioned, the following:

- Exchange and flow of knowledge
- Possibility of making joint decisions and bearing joint responsibility for them
- Mutual support through experience already gained (e.g., in development processes)
- Learning from and through the expertise and the problems and experiences made by others.

Since the last meeting in Rome, the Ukrainian partners have also worked intensively on formalising and managing their partnerships and cooperations (e.g., internships for students in technical companies or language stays). Some institutions reported, for example, on partnership agreements that they had drawn up to ensure the binding nature of cooperation. It would also be important to define concrete strategies for cooperation with the cooperation partners in the future and to record them in writing. This includes, for

example, the distribution of tasks in cooperating teams, the definition of regular meetings with the cooperation partners, regulations on the communication channels with them or also strategies for decision-making processes.

On the following pages, some aspects that were discussed during the project meeting in Konstanz and which seem to be relevant for the further course of the project will be taken up and briefly explained.

## **STRONG EXCHANGE AMONG THE UKRAINIAN PROJECT PARTNERS**

- Based on the oral contributions of the Ukrainian partners in the course of the meeting in Konstanz, it became obvious that the exchange among the partners has become stronger since the last meeting in Rome and that a kind of constant exchange of experience and knowledge is taking place.
- The points listed below represent smaller interim goals in the project, which the partners worked together to achieve with great motivation and in a well-coordinated manner:
  - A recent student exchange in cooperation with the project leaders at the University of Konstanz.
  - The joint formulation and creation of professional and educational standards (this is a national legal basis for the training of VET teachers).
  - The advertising and distribution of information on the training of VET teachers via various digital platforms.

## **PREPARATION OF A POLICY STRATEGY PAPER AS A FORMAL BASIS FOR THE TRAINING OF VET TEACHERS**

- As already mentioned above, the partners are jointly developing a political strategy paper with a binding character for the training of VET teachers. It is particularly praiseworthy that the partners are giving intensive thought to the structure of their training programs. For example, they are considering theoretical, subject-related, and practice-related components in the training of VET teachers. It is noticeable that the individual Ukrainian partner institutions still have very different ways of handling company internships or company visits for their students. For the completion of the strategy paper, it would be important to jointly determine the extent to which theory and practice are anchored in the training programs and, in conjunction with this, to clarify the urgent question of the importance of the individual learning locations (companies, vocational schools, etc.) in the training.
- Together, the partners are developing an online platform for the training of VET teachers as well as corresponding information networks. These exchange platforms and networks for the training of VET teachers are considered to some extent in the

strategy paper. However, it would also be important to clearly show the social and educational added value of these platforms and organisations in the strategy paper, as well as their potential for increasing the general attractiveness of VET in Ukraine.

- In relation to the preparation of the strategy paper, the Ukrainian partner institutions also think about how they can establish principles or rules for entering into internal or external partnerships (e.g., with companies for the implementation of internships or other institutions for the implementation of language stays for their students). These considerations should be made concrete and written down. It is advisable to include principles on the following points in the strategy paper: Potentials and added value of the partnerships for both sides, guidelines on the duration and extension of the partnerships, information on how to deal with network competences, etc.
- As it already became apparent during the last project meeting, the project partners are intensively concerned with quality measures and standards in the training of their prospective VET teachers and, for example, conduct surveys and evaluations among prospective VET teachers. It would also be important to include the procedures for quality assurance measures in the strategy paper that is being developed and to compile empirical values that can be used again at a later date.
- The partners also deal intensively with the inclusion of newer technical equipment or tools in their teaching and learning settings. It would be advisable to also include the handling of these technical tools and future desired procedures in dealing with them in the classroom in the strategy paper.
- In the course of the project meeting in Konstanz, the partners agreed on a cross-partner synthesis of important points that they would like to include in their strategy paper. It would be important for the further course of the project to deepen this agreement and to identify further aspects to be included in the paper as well as to provide reasons for their desired inclusion.

## **IMPLEMENTATION OF EDUCATIONAL AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS**

- During the project, the partners also worked on the formulation of education and training standards for their aforementioned policy paper.
- It is particularly positive that the partners have formulated the standards in a comprehensible and understandable way. For example, they have clearly formulated competences that future VET teachers should acquire. Good comprehensibility and understandability can ultimately also ensure that the standards are accessible to the various target groups in the education and training sector.
- One point that the partners were still working on in the course of the last meeting is the structuring or stringing together of their standards.

## **AWARENESS AND KNOWLEDGE OF THE RESPECTIVE PARTNER-RELATED COMPETENCES AND EXPERTISE**

- As it became clear during the presentations and discussions at the project meeting in Konstanz, the partners are increasingly able to assess their own competences and expertise in VET teacher training (e.g. some partners are intensively involved in the implementation of internships in companies and have already gained a lot of experience in this field; others bring further expertise in the implementation of evaluations, others have great networks in VET and strong networking competences, etc.).
- The assessment of one's own competences and, if you like, areas of expertise, is an important basis for the further efficient cooperation of the partners in the PAGOSTE project.
- It would certainly be important for the partners to get to know each other's main competences and expertise even better, to put each other to good use and thus to benefit even more intensively from the cooperation.
- For further cooperation in the PAGOSTE project, it could be valuable if each Ukrainian partner institution were to create a competence portfolio for itself and make it available to the other partners, and then enter into an intensive exchange with the partners. This could conceivably enrich the further cooperation as well as the upcoming project conclusion and also make it even more efficient.

## **SYSTEMATISATION OF THE MANY AND VARIED PBG-RELATED ACTIVITIES (WITHIN AND ACROSS INSTITUTIONS)**

- In the meantime, the individual partner institutions have implemented numerous internal activities with clear PBG references. For example, the implementation of language courses or the implementation of internships for which they enter into cooperation with other partners and institutions. It would be important for the partners to continuously document and systematically compile these many different PBG-related activities in order to be able to maintain an overview over a longer period of time.
- The creation of such an overview would be very useful for ensuring transparency within the PAGOSTE project team, both internally and across partners. Such overviews could also enable the other Ukrainian partner institutions to more easily and time-efficiently identify synergies in terms of approaches to PBG-related activities. Ultimately, this would certainly positively strengthen cooperation among the PAGOSTE partner institutions.

## STRUCTURING AND MAINTAINING COOPERATIONS AND PARTNERSHIPS

- In the course of the last meeting, the Ukrainian partner institutions showed that they are intensively involved in formalising partnerships that they enter into with other VET institutions or training actors or companies. For example, as already mentioned above, they drew up partnership agreements that stipulate the mutual binding nature of the partnership.
- Some partners are also in the process of documenting the partnerships entered into within the institution. For reasons of overview, traceability, and visibility (also externally), it would make sense for all partners to work more intensively on models or schemes for structuring partnerships.
- Some partners also seem to be interested in including partnerships and cooperations that have been entered into and maintained in the internal strategy papers of the institutions and to record their obligations as well as benefits there.
- It could be valuable to also record the benefits of the partnerships entered into for both sides, in order to keep each partner involved motivated in the partnership in the long run.
- If necessary, the partnerships should also be explained to the target groups (e.g., prospective VET teachers) of the partner institutions. In this way, prospective students can also be informed at an early stage about, for example, company internships or internships at VET schools and their usefulness for the training. This would also ensure sustainable transparency.

## DEALING WITH SHORT-TERM COLLABORATIONS AND COOPERATIONS

- Some partner institutions also reported entering into more temporary collaborations. For example, publication projects in international journals to increase their own scientific visibility as well as networking in scientific VET networks were reported. This seems to be equally important in terms of strengthening PBG concerns.
- Particularly in the case of short-term cooperations or partnerships, which can be associated with an increased workload due to their short duration, it seems to make sense to assess and weigh up the added value for one's own institution, the time expenditure associated with the short-term partnership and, for example, the personnel resources.



## **STRENGTHENING AWARENESS OF THE BENEFITS OF COOPERATION WITH COMPANIES (E.G. WITH REGARD TO PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE IN THE TRAINING OF VET TEACHERS)**

- Since the last meeting, some partners seem to have recognised the importance of partnerships not only with VET schools (e.g., to carry out internships for their students), but also the great importance of cooperation with companies. The partners increasingly recognise the importance of companies (especially companies in technical professions were mentioned) as places of learning in the education of their students. This is an important finding regarding the structure of the Ukrainian VET system.
- Practical training phases, among other things, are increasingly mentioned in the study programs of the individual institutions.
- At this point, it becomes clear once again that the Ukrainian partner institutions participating in the PAGOSTE project clearly benefit from the support of the partner universities, in whose countries dual VET systems (with both learning venues of company and VET school) exist.
- As already mentioned above, the partners are also thinking intensively about the distribution of practical and theory-based training components. It would be important to record the distribution in the future in the political strategy paper to be drawn up.

## **VET ASSOCIATIONS AND EXCHANGE PLATFORMS AS A MEANS TO INCREASE THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF VET**

- For some time now, individual partners have also been working on or already have exchange platforms (e.g., organisations or digital platforms) concerning issues related to the training of VET teachers and the discussion of other VET-related issues.
- For the entire PAGOSTE project and thus the further development of the Ukrainian VET system, such platforms that ensure a critical-constructive exchange between people from VET practice and research seem extremely important and fruitful.
- Furthermore, it seems extremely sensible to create a framework through such initiatives in which a critical-constructive exchange is also desired and valued. The organisations or networks founded for this purpose therefore already have a strong symbolic character for the Ukrainian VET system and the training of VET teachers.
- In the course of the project meeting, these existing exchange platforms were also made accessible to the other PAGOSTE members by the responsible project partners. The platforms also seem to offer a possibility to remain in a fruitful exchange beyond the end of the project.

## CONCLUSIONS

Despite the continuing tense situation in Ukraine, all partners involved in the project are contributing in a motivated way to further positive progress in the project. This was also evident in the recently implemented student exchange between Ukraine and the University of Konstanz.

The remaining project goals and milestones (such as a forthcoming joint book publication) seem to be realistically assessed and realisable. The associated expectations of the partners also seem realistic. It is particularly noticeable that the partners are very concerned about a functioning cooperation as well as regular agreements.

It is also noticeable in a positive sense, as was already the case at the meeting in Rome, that the Ukrainian partners can learn and experience a lot of new things from the accompanying universities, the people involved in them and their insights into the respective country-specific vocational education and training structures. The accompanying partners strongly contribute their expertise and a view of the respective country-specific vocational and educational system in Germany, Austria, and Italy. In the course of the last project meeting, for example, students or prospective VET teachers were invited to a panel discussion. This gave the Ukrainian partners the opportunity to learn more about VET teachers in Germany from a student perspective.

Based on the expertise of the accompanying partners from Germany, Austria, and Italy, it seems possible for the Ukrainian partners to reflect critically and analytically on the VET and training-related structures and developments in their own country (also in the past) and, based on this, to arrive at new insights that can contribute to the further development of the VET system and the training of VET teachers.

In conclusion, the valuable comparative character of the project as well as its great application and development orientation should be emphasised as particularly positive and fruitful.