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ARISTOTLE  
UNIVERSITY  
OF THESSALONIKI

## ***“Joint VET Course for Export Experts”***



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### *E-networking Report*

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This report was prepared for and submitted to the “EXPOVET” Project by:



ARISTOTLE  
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# E-networking Report

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The “EXPOVET” partnership consists of:

Name	Role	Country
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)	P1 (Lead Partner)	Greece
Federal Institute for Vocational Education & Training (BIBB)	Partner 2	Germany
Greek Exporters Association (SEVE)	Partner 3	Greece
Euricon Consultants	Partner 4	Greece
Institute for Postgraduate Studies (IPS), division of the University of National and World Economy (UNWE)	Partner 5	Bulgaria
Bucharest University of Economic Studies (ASE)	Partner 6	Romania
Association of Economic Universities of South - East Europe & Black Sea Area (ASECU)	Partner 7	Greece

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## 1. Executive Summary

The e-networking report describes the implementation of the pilot e-network activities via specific e-sessions mainly through the relevant platform existing in the website, between the participating universities, VET and continuing education providers at tertiary level, possibly interested learners, as well as business associations and representatives.

The realized e-sessions revealed necessities and possibilities with respect to the mobility during theoretical training and learning, the work-based learning part, as well as the administrative communication and co-working. After presenting briefly the main characteristics of the realized pilot activities, the present report concludes with useful deductions and proposals for the actual application of the developed course.

## 2. Introduction

Recognizing the continuous intensification of cross-national and -regional socioeconomic interconnections, as well as the special content of the developed course itself intending to develop the skills of professionals that expand and serve the international mobility of goods and services, ExpoVET includes many aspects, which, in order to be served, require efficient distanced communication and collaboration.

Moreover, the present pandemic revealed the necessity and at the same time the possibilities of setting up well-functioning distanced-working and communicating patterns. In fact, especially in academia and the relevant research and education activities, stakeholders become aware of the existing, continuously improving, relevant e-methodologies and e-technologies, while, moreover, they have been practically trained in using them.

Because of these two reasons – the international character of ExpoVET course itself and the introduced distanced communication and co-working patterns – developing the aspect of e-networking for the future actual application of the course is of crucial importance. Therefore, as this has been initially foreseen in the frame of Work-Package 5, pilot e-networking activities were implemented via specific e-sessions mainly through the relevant platform existing in the website, between the participating universities, VET and continuing education providers at tertiary level, possibly interested learners, as well as business associations and representatives. In the following pages we describe the implementation of these pilot e-networking activities of relevant stakeholders, in order to promote:

- (i) mutual recognition of skills and other administrative activities,
- (ii) mobility during the standard, theoretical part of training and
- (iii) mobility during work-based learning.

The Lead Partner (AUTH) of ExpoVET was mainly responsible for the below presented activities and the present reporting, nonetheless with the significant contribution of all partners. E-network sessions were designed on the project’s website but also by using existing e-platforms, in order to support e-networking activities between the members of the common co-operation structure as a pilot implementation for the preparation and the realization of the joint course.

In the following pages we present the way how this pilot activities were scheduled and implemented and we draw relevant conclusions, useful for the future, actual application of ExpoVET.

### 3. Administrative e-networking

The possibility of distanced e-collaboration for the necessary administrative activities has been tested in two ways: (i) in the frame of the necessarily (due to the pandemic) distanced realized meetings and continuous communication of ExpoVET partners and also (ii) through pilot application of administrative arrangements for the future realization of the course.

**TABLE 1: Distanced meetings and continuous communication during the project**

<b>Description of the Activity</b>	Foreseen managerial meetings according to the project	
Participants	Partners of ExpoVET	7 main representatives plus 3 administrative supporters.
Used software	Existing e-platforms (in our case “zoom”).	
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Experience and skills of the staff in using these methods and technologies has been substantially improved.</li> <li>– Possibilities for e-recording the sessions – therefore, in order to utilize this, the organizers have to give special attention to the protection of personal data.</li> <li>– Arrangements like the time differences between countries and regions, or the technical characteristics of the PCs used and the applied software have to be carefully considered.</li> </ul>	
<b>Description of the Activity</b>	Foreseen dissemination activities according to the project	
Participants	Partners of ExpoVET	7 main representatives plus 3 administrative supporters.
	Stakeholders from participating countries	Number of participants varies – see the relevant reporting of the project.
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Experience and skills of the staff in using these methods and technologies has been substantially improved.</li> </ul>	

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Possibilities for e-recording the sessions – therefore, in order to utilize this, the organizers have to give special attention to the protection of personal data.</li> <li>– The time differences between countries and regions have to be carefully considered.</li> <li>– Making use of social networks for succeeding in having more dissemination effects.</li> </ul>	
<b>Description of the Activity</b>	Continuous communication of ExpoVET Partners (during the whole project)	
Participants	Partners of ExpoVET	Number of participants varies.
Used software	ExpoVET Website – relevant platform of limited / controlled visibility and usability.	
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Experience and skills of the staff in using these methods and technologies has been substantially improved.</li> <li>– Problems may arise from lacking efficiency of platforms introduced in the website – in our case there have been improvements that resulted out of this testing.</li> </ul>	

**TABLE 2: Pilot application of administrative arrangements for the course**

<b>Identity of the Activity</b>	Four (4) e-meetings of an ad-hoc appointed managerial committee of the future application of the course. (Realized in the period Sep 2020-March2021)	
Participants	ASECU Board of Governors and ExpoVET representatives	Tripartite Managerial Committee appointed by ASECU Board of Governors plus 7 main representatives of ExpoVET Partners.
Used software	Existing e-platforms (in our case “zoom”) and the relevant platform of ExpoVET website.	
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordination of universities that will provide the course in the future (for this pilot application, the three universities of the consortium): (i) it is important to have common time scheduling of the provided course in order to sustain the foreseen mobilities; (ii) special attention is needed so that the provided ECTS and / or ECVET will be according to the course; (iii) there is also a need for a coordinated setting of fees in the different universities.</li> <li>– Coordination with the business sector for both, the content of the theoretical part and especially the application of work-based learning: it is crucial to secure the participation of at least one association representing businesses in each country where the course will be provided.</li> </ul>	

### 4. E-networking in theoretical part

In the frame of these pilot e-networking there have been tested two different kinds of activities: (i) preparatory activities for the provision of the education in the theoretical part, which include coordination of key-dates, disseminating and securing participation of

learners in the foreseen virtual mobility, as well as (ii) the realization of the virtual mobility itself.

**TABLE 3: Pilot application of administrative arrangement in the theoretical part**

<b>Identity of the Activity</b>	Two (2) e-meetings of an ad-hoc appointed managerial committee of the future application of the course. (Realized in the period January 2021-March 2021)	
<b>Participants</b>	ASECU Board of Governors and ExpoVET universities representatives	Tripartite Managerial Committee appointed by ASECU Board of Governors plus 3 main representatives of ExpoVET universities.
	Students “playing” the role of future participating learners.	5 students from each partner university
<b>Used software</b>	Existing e-platforms (in our case “zoom”) and the relevant platform of ExpoVET website.	
<b>Main Conclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordination of universities that will provide the course in the future (in this pilot application the three universities of the consortium): (i) it is important to have common key-dates for the dissemination and the realization of the foreseen mobilities; (ii) dissemination activities among the learners of alternatives for taking virtual courses in other universities is very important – possible it will be necessary to have obligatory participation of the learners.</li> <li>– For the learners (in the pilot application the participating students) it is necessary to simplify even more the usability of the platform in the existing website of ExpoVET and/or to provide an introductory course for them as soon as they will be included in the course.</li> </ul>	

**TABLE 4: Pilot application of virtual mobility in the theoretical part**

<b>Identity of the Activity</b>	One (1) pilot virtual mobility in the frame of the course. (Realized in the March 2021)	
<b>Participants</b>	Lectures of ExpoVET universities	3 Lecturers of ExpoVET universities.
	Students “playing” the role of future participating learners.	5 students from each partner university
<b>Used software</b>	The existing e-platform (zoom) has been used for the virtual course and the relevant platform of the website for uploading the relevant material.	
<b>Main Conclusions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– For the first (the virtual lecturing) no problems have been reported, given that both, lecturers and learners (students) are already familiarized with the specific way of participating in webinars. There is only a need to carefully choose lecturers having the necessary linguistic and modern lecturing skills.</li> <li>– For the second part, the uploading of material in the website’s platform, there have been two types of problems: (i) functionality of the platform and (ii) usability of the uploaded material for learners from different countries and / or institutions. Therefore, a well-prepared protocol for way and types of material to be uploaded is necessary.</li> </ul>	

## 5. E-networking in work-based learning

Also here, there have two different kinds of pilot activities: (i) preparatory activities for the provision of the work-based learning, which include coordination of key-dates, disseminating relevant information and securing participation of learners in the foreseen firms, as well as (ii) the realization of the virtual and the actual mobility during the work-based learning part itself.

**TABLE 5: Pilot administrative arrangement for the work-based learning**

<b>Identity of the Activity</b>	Two (2) e-meetings of an ad-hoc appointed managerial committee of the future application of the course. (Realized in the period January 2021-March 2021)	
Participants	ASECU Board of Governors and ExpoVET universities and business association representatives	Tripartite Managerial Committee appointed by ASECU Board of Governors plus 4 main representatives of the three universities and the one business association participating in ExpoVET.
	Students “playing” the role of future participating learners.	5 students from each partner university
Used software	Existing e-platforms (in our case “zoom”) and the relevant platform of ExpoVET website.	
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Coordination of universities and firms that will provide the course and especially the work-based learning in the future: (i) it is important to have common key-dates for the dissemination and the realization of the foreseen mobilities; (ii) dissemination activities among the learners of alternatives for taking virtual courses in other universities in collaboration with local business associations is very important – possible it will be necessary to have obligatory participation of the learners.</li> <li>– For the learners (in the pilot application the participating students) it is necessary to simplify even more the usability of the platform in the existing website of ExpoVET and/or to provide an introductory course for them as soon as they will be included in the virtual and actual mobility.</li> </ul>	

**TABLE 6: Pilot application of virtual and actual mobility in the work-based learning**

<b>Identity of the Activity</b>	One (1) pilot virtual mobility for work-based learning in the frame of the course. (Realized in the March 2021)	
Participants	ASECU Board of Governors and ExpoVET universities and business association representatives	Tripartite Managerial Committee appointed by ASECU Board of Governors plus 4 main representatives of the

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		three universities and the one business association participating in ExpoVET.
	Students “playing” the role of future participating learners.	5 students from each partner university
Used software	The existing e-platform (zoom) has been used for testing the virtual work-based learning and the relevant platform of the website for uploading the relevant material.	
Main Conclusions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– For the first (the virtual work-based learning) no problems have been reported, given that both, representative(s) from the business sector (actually the business association) and learners (students) are already familiarized with the specific way of participating in webinars.</li> <li>– For the second part, the uploading of material in the website’s platform, there have been two types of problems: (i) functionality of the platform and (ii) usability of the uploaded material for learners from different countries and / or institutions. Therefore, a well-prepared protocol for way and types of material to be uploaded is necessary.</li> </ul>	

## 6. Concluding remarks

Overall, the pilot application of e-networking activities has substantially improved our experience and our ability to proceed right after the completion of the project with the actual provision of ExpoVET course.

Coordination of universities that will provide the course in the future is extremely important and demanding for the key-dates and overall time-coordination, the provided ECTS and / or ECVET, as well as the setting of fees in the different universities. Similarly, it is also important to strengthen collaboration with the business sector for both, the content of the theoretical part and especially the application of work-based learning. This speaks first for the importance of having ASECU in the overall coordinating role and also to secure the participation of at least one association representing businesses in each country, where the course will be provided.

Experience and skills of the staff (lecturer and business representatives) and the learners in using these methods and technologies has been substantially improved, due to the pandemic and the resulting adjustments. For the learners, it is necessary to simplify even more the usability of the platform in the existing website of ExpoVET and/or to provide an introductory course for them as soon as they will be included in the course.

There are also some special requirements that need to be considered carefully like the possibilities for e-recording the sessions and therefore, in order to utilize this, the organizers have to give special attention to the protection of personal data. Also,

arrangements with respect to the time differences between countries and regions, or the technical characteristics of the PCs used and the applied software have to be carefully considered. Finally, making parallel use of social networks will be important for succeeding in having more dissemination effects.