

Special Focus Session – Draft

Theme: E-Learning Policy and Practices

Project title

The private sector in education and training reforms in the Mediterranean Region – The example of ELIG¹.

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Abstract

Context

The Lisbon strategy “to become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-driven economy in the world” stresses the importance of information and communication technology skills for the workforce and citizens. Thus, Commission initiatives mobilise both the public and the private sectors to adapt education and training systems in the EU Member States. A recent example is the communication on “Improving knowledge transfer between research institutions and industry across Europe². Still Europe’s educational and professional training systems do not sufficiently deliver the 21st century skills - highlights a recent communication of the Commission³. Evidence points to growing e-skills gaps. The communication is in line with findings of an ICT impact report⁴ that most schools in Europe are in an early stage of ICT adoption and do not show profound improvements in learning and teaching. However a report of the ICT Cluster on “Infrastructure and digital content”⁵ recently demonstrated that ambitious reforms, coupled with an early understanding on how to best integrate ICT in education and training, can be successfully implemented.

Complementary to the developments in the European Union Member States, the EU Barcelona Process and the European Neighbourhood Policy consider education and training vital to build up a knowledge society and to prepare for a free-trade-zone by 2010. In this context public and private sector are requested to propose new learning solutions to address skills need in a global market. Moreover co-operation and exchange between the European Union (EU) and its neighbours shall be increased.

Objectives of the round-table

The roundtable discussion aims at sharing experience and knowledge with conference participants on the role of the private sector in education and training reforms. Focus will be on the countries in the Mediterranean region⁶ and the role of the European Learning Industry in developing innovative learning systems.

Issues for discussions

The discussion will look into new learning solutions to address skills gaps in the MEDA region. It will investigate how public-private partnership can shape the learning society and innovation in schools, universities and lifelong learning at large. It will also look into the awareness of countries for new learning solutions and how relevant stakeholders can be supported with implementing new programmes. In this context innovative pedagogical approaches for quality education and training and the unique role of the Learning Industries will be discussed. How can teachers and students be best guided in applying new learning solutions? Are there tailor-made learning solutions for a fast growing young population in the region? Also obstacles and challenges for

¹ European Learning Industries

² COM (2007)182)

³ E-skills for the 21st Century: Fostering competitiveness growth and jobs³, COM (2007) 496

⁴ A review of studies of ICT impact on schools in Europe, 2006, European School Network (EUN)

⁵ A review of infrastructure and digital content, Budapest 2007; Hungarian Ministry of Education, Danish Technological Institute, Centre for Policy and Business Analysis, DG education and Culture

⁶ In the context of this discussion the Mediterranean region includes: Algeria, Egypt, Israel, Jordan, Morocco, Tunisia, and Turkey.

reforms will be discussed such as cultural and language barriers or the volatile political situation in most of the countries. How can experience gained in the European Union or other parts of the world be helpful in reforming education and training systems in the countries concerned? Possible solutions and suggestions for well targeted learning solutions in emerging markets will be shared.

To initiate the discussion cases of good practice of the European Learning Industry Group (ELIG) as well as from partners in the region will be presented and discussed. The General Secretary of ELIG, Dr Richard Straub, will introduce the subject from the Learning Industry point of view. The Director of the European Training Foundation⁷, Dr Muriel Dunbar, will emphasise the role of the private sector for education and training from an EU angle. Dr. Martina Roth, Intel Education Europe, Middle East and Africa, will share the companies experience with new learning solutions in the region. Prof. Guessoum, CEO, ICDL Algeria, will complete the picture from a country point of view and in particular in the light of the Algerian education and economic reform agenda.

Participants will be invited to share their experience and to provide recommendations for future interventions in the region to contribute to a knowledge society and the global economy as a whole.

Results of discussions

Findings of the round-table will feed into a publication of the European Learning Industries and the European Training Foundation which shall support policy makers in the countries concerned to make decisions in their reforms. The report will identify good practices and future possible intervention areas for discussion with the partners in the countries in the region and the European Commission.

⁷ European Training Foundation (ETF) : an Agency of the EU, www.etf.europa.eu