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**MEETING OF THE DIRECTORS GENERAL FOR VOCATIONAL TRAINING
RIGA, LATVIA, 21 JUNE 2015**

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

I. Welcome and introduction by the Latvian Presidency and the European Commission

Ms Evija Papule, Acting State Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Science, welcomed the participants and explained the main aims of the meeting: a) finalisation of the draft Riga Conclusions and b) discussion on the approach to monitor the new set of medium-term deliverables. Mr Detlef Eckert, Director for Europe 2020: Employment policies, from the European Commission's DG Employment, thanked the Latvian Presidency for organising the Ministerial Meeting and assisting the Commission in the organisation of the afternoon session of the event - the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

II. Riga Conclusions

The aim of the session was to:

- Finalise the draft text of the Riga Conclusions
- Exchange views on the discussions during the break-out sessions of the Ministerial meeting on 22 June
- Explain the proceedings and timeline of the Ministerial meeting in the morning of 22 June

Mr Eckert summarised briefly the process leading to the adoption of the Riga Conclusions, which started with a consultation of the main stakeholders at the Athens DGVT in March 2014. He stressed that the substance and the text of the Riga conclusions had been agreed at the ACVT meeting of 21 May 2015. The purpose of today's discussion was mainly to fine-tune the preamble which includes the declaration of Ministers in charge of VET.

The comments focused on three main points in the preamble of the document:

1. Reference to the European Commission skills agenda
2. Reference to EQF as a common reference for recognition
3. Inclusion of Torino process in the text of the preamble

For the first one, several delegates commented on the concept of skills agenda and missing references to the Copenhagen process as well as the need to mention Member States, social partners and stakeholders as partners in their development. The final text was amended as follows:

"Invite the European Commission to develop, in cooperation with Member States, social partners and stakeholders, a VET and skills agenda with a view to strengthening European cooperation in VET and to boosting employability and competitiveness."

For the second one, delegates raised concerns about including the concept of recognition in relation to the European Qualifications Framework. It was agreed to leave out the references to recognition in the text of the preamble. The final agreed text reads as follows:

"We will combine our efforts to encourage the effective use of EU transparency tools, and in particular of the European Qualifications Framework, as a common reference for EU comparison and transparency to facilitate mobility of students and workers in Europe."

For the third one, the French delegate proposed to include a reference to the Torino process. It was concluded that the reference to the Torino process did not fit into the text and the text remained unchanged for this point.

Finally, the Danish delegate reported on the current political situation after the parliamentary elections. He had been given the instructions to condition the support to the Riga conclusions by the endorsement of the new government. A corresponding footnote was added to the draft of the Conclusions.

After the finalisation of the draft of the Riga Conclusions, Mr Eckert briefly explained the content of the Commission discussion paper on the skills agenda with the three main pillars. He also described the timeline for the adoption of the agenda (most probably in the beginning of 2016).

The Latvian Presidency explained how the morning session of the Ministerial meeting on 22 June would proceed. They stressed the welcome session during which the Latvian Minister would welcome the heads of delegations one by one. Doorstep statements to the press would take place during the welcome session. The Presidency also outlined how the break-out sessions would be organised as well as the procedure for the endorsement of the Riga Conclusions. The Latvian Presidency invited delegates to sign up to the list of interventions during this session.

Mr Joao Santos (Acting Head of Unit, Vocational Training and Adult Education, DG EMPL) described the afternoon session of the Ministerial meeting on the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

III. Monitoring of future deliverables

Ms Lore Schmid (Cedefop) presented the proposed approach to monitor the future deliverables. The revised approach was a result of the discussion during the ACVT meeting of 21 May 2015 and the written comments which had been received after the meeting.

Delegates raised several concerns, notably on the reporting burden and the importance to involve social partners in this exercise. They asked for clarifications regarding the macro-level approach, the links to the annual reporting taking place within the European Semester exercise and the involvement of ACVT and DGVT members. Ms Schmid explained that annual data collection through ReferNet has been taking place since the last reporting period (2011-2014) and that ACVT and DGVT members would only be asked to validate the analysis carried out by Cedefop on the basis of ReferNet –inputs.

It was concluded that further discussions on the monitoring approach would take place at the next meeting of the ACVT Enlarged Bureau which is planned for September/October 2015.

IV. ET 2020 Joint Report

Mr Youri Devuyst (DG EAC) explained briefly the current state of play of the review of the ET 2020 Strategic Framework. He briefed the delegates on the main outcomes of the Education Council debate which took place on 18 May 2015. He highlighted that a lot of attention had been given to VET at the Education Council and that there was broad coherence between the draft Riga Conclusions and the ET 2020 Review (also in terms of the 5 year policy cycle).

He reiterated the main steps towards the adoption of the ET 2020 Joint Report, including the Commission Communication and the adoption by the Education Council in November 2015. The new set of medium-term deliverables as adopted in Riga would be integrated in the Commission Communication.

V. Riga Conclusion (continued) and conclusions of the meeting

The final draft of the Riga Conclusions was handed over to the delegates and generally accepted. The Latvian Presidency concluded the meeting and thanked all participants for their active participation.