

Press release

Wednesday 16 June 2020



Virtual Conference “Centres of Vocational Excellence: Skills ecosystems for innovation regional development and social inclusion”

TKNIKA, the Basques VET Applied Research Centre organised a virtual Conference on **Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs)**: “Skills ecosystems for innovation, regional development, and social inclusion” gathering more than 1700 participants from 105 countries.

The event counted on the participation of high-level speakers from EU institutions and was the opportunity to showcase the five pilot initiatives of VET excellence platforms selected for funding in 2019, goal and activities, including **PoVE Water**.

The Conference began with the introduction world by **Mr Iñigo Araiztegui** (Director of Internationalisation, TKNIKA) followed by **Mr Jorge Arévalo**, Basque Vice-Minister of VET who reminded of the uncertain and challenging circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic. Moreover, he pointed out that the 4th Industrial Revolution is still going on and the future needs to be human centred to face such challenge.

The speech was followed by the EU presentation of **Mr João Santos**, Senior Expert at the European Commission, DG-EMPL, who explained the VET centres of excellence is willing to contribute to building adequate competences working with the regional bodies, sharing knowledge and support to achieve the development of innovation and the private sector.

Mr George Zisimos, Senior Officer at the European Training Foundation (ETF), focused on systems of VET excellence as a next step for the CoVEs initiative.

Mr John Edwards, Project Leader at EC’s Joint Research Centre (JRC), also reminded of the importance innovation not only in economic growth but also in sustainable development goals.

Ms Michele Grombeer, Head of Sector at EACEA, introduced the support to project development, including the pilot calls launched in 2019 and 2020.

The second part of the online conference consisted of a presentation from the 5 pilot projects to build up platforms of centres of vocational excellence, which were selected from funding in 2019 by the **European Commission**.

Pilot PoVE Water was presented by **Mr Pieter Hoekstra**, Project coordinator, saying: “*Water is one of the main concerns for the future of the planet*”.

- The [EXAM 4.0](#) project coordinated by TKNIKA focuses on the innovation in the advanced manufacturing sector through two key actions.
- The [Talent Journey](#) project coordinated by Šolski Centre Nova Gorica, aims to narrow skills gap in manufacturing sector, in the field of Connectivity Devices and Services/CDS (IoT in smart manufacturing), which focuses on user-oriented, user-friendly and eco-friendly solutions.

- The [DIHUB](#) project coordinated by Helsinki Business college and will develop a digital Innovation Hub that will consist of a cluster of 5 interconnected nodes, allowing collaboration among VET students, and education providers.
- The [DEUS](#) project, coordinated by Foundation Matera-Basilicata 2019, aims to create a European-wide learning and training approach to design, critical thinking, entrepreneurship, to find participatory, creative and cost-effective solutions to local challenges, by unlocking the potential of the cultural and creative sector, by unlocking the potential of the cultural and creative sector.

The concluding remark was made by **Prof Shymal Majumdar**, TVET Expert and Advisor, and former Head of UNESCO-UNEVOC.

[Watch the Conference](#), and the PoVE Water presentation.

[Platform of CoVE](#), European Commission.

PoVE Water

[PoVE Water](#) is a transnational project that draws on existing and emerging vocational competences and skills needs in the water sector, translating them into an approach of vocational excellence. The project kicked off in January 2020 in Brussels. The project unites VET institutions, the water industry, research centres, H.E., (semi-) governmental institutions and water sector representatives from the Netherlands, Scotland, Latvia, Malta and the Czech Republic that share a common interest in developing the full potential of VET institutions to play a proactive role in support of growth, competitiveness and innovation of the water sector.

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Contact:

More information? Contact Valentina Chanina, EfVET at vc@efvet.org

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