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Celje, July 6th 2016

## National Problematisation Statement, Slovenia Ljubljana, July 5<sup>th</sup> 2016

### *Introduction*

The PROCSEE project aims at strengthening Professional Higher Education (PHE) in Central and South-Eastern Europe, through a collaborative evidence- and stakeholder- based approach. In line with it the Association of Slovene Higher Vocational Colleges as the coordinator of the PROCSEE project organised the 1<sup>st</sup> meeting of the recently established National Committee for Professional Higher Education Excellence – NCPHEE in Ljubljana at the premises of The Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, on July 5<sup>th</sup> 2016.

The participants of the NCPHEE were relevant national stakeholders in the area of Professional Higher Education – PHE representatives of students, employers (large companies and SME's), PHE providers, Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, Slovenian Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education, Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia, Chamber of Craft and Small Business of Slovenia, Employment service of Slovenia, regional development agencies, Associations of PHE providers, municipalities.

Within the PROCSEE project we focused on four thematic areas and each project partner selected (through an open call) an expert to help in the identification of national policy challenges related to the respected thematic area and propose solutions to these challenges based on best practice in the field. The selected Slovenian experts per thematic who are also active participants of the NCPHEE are:

Thematic Area	Expert	Institution	Contact
Alignment of PHE with Regional Development Strategies	Zdenka Steblovnik Župan	Municipality Ruše, Wood Technology College Maribor	<a href="mailto:zdenka.szupan@gmail.com">zdenka.szupan@gmail.com</a>
Promotion of PHE to respond to skill shortages	Brigita Vončina	Employment Service of Slovenia	<a href="mailto:brigita.voncina@gmail.com">brigita.voncina@gmail.com</a>
Organising and monitoring student placements in the world of work	Barbara Krajnc	Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Slovenia - Center for Business Education	<a href="mailto:barbara.krajnc@cpu.si">barbara.krajnc@cpu.si</a>
Personal Learning Environments in PHE	Robert Guštin	Markoma, Ltd.	<a href="mailto:rgustin2@outlook.com">rgustin2@outlook.com</a>

### *General Analyses of the PHE Sector in Slovenia Today*



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The NCPHEE participants identified the current situation of the PHE sector in Slovenia through a SWOT analysis as follows:

### Strengths

- ❖ The well-established link between PHE and the world of work that enables the involvement of stakeholders in identifying the necessary competences, taking responsibility for the outcomes
- ❖ PHE encourages the responsibility of learners for their own development (searching for employers, developing a suitable profile of competences, ensuring employability prospects)
- ❖ Short Cycle Higher Education – SCHE is an advantage due to its, substantial in company practical training in combination with theoretical institutional education enabling the integration of educational situations, modular and open educational curriculum

### Weaknesses

- ❖ Lack of strategy/policy at national level
- ❖ Divergent accreditation procedures (institutional, programme) that do not provide equal opportunities for various forms of PHE
- ❖ External accreditation affects the quality due to lack of autonomy and accountability of institutions
- ❖ Despite the large number and diversity of programmes and disciplines the educational system is rigid and does not provide sufficient quality and relevant employment competences
- ❖ Lack of transparency, inadequacy, shortcoming of professional competences of individuals for employment
- ❖ Inadequate definition of job related competences in certain areas
- ❖ Lack of jobs and in company practical training opportunities (in some areas to the extreme level)
- ❖ Insufficiently informative inadequate career guidance that should be present at all levels (learners and parent guiding) and all stages of life (LLL)
- ❖ Tertiary Professional Education does not have a coherent area (need for a study on the situation of PHE in Slovenia, no regulations for vertical permeability between some levels of PHE, lack of specific legislation and strategical directions for PHE, no systematic links, no open system for graduates' transition, colleges are predominantly within secondary school centres without an adequate autonomy

### Opportunities

- ❖ Existing links with the world of work to facilitate reskilling and upskilling of individuals (due to shorter duration of studies)
- ❖ PHE providers should develop qualitative approaches to education and training



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- ❖ PHE providers should develop programmes in strong cooperation with practical training and work of lecturers
- ❖ The world of work should take care to develop their mentors
- ❖ PHE providers should develop marketing activities
- ❖ PHE providers should introduce and develop more project work activities and methods
- ❖ E-learning is an opportunity to support practical education and training

### Threats

- ❖ Management of the network of study programmes (optimizing resources with emphasis on quality)
- ❖ Too many ventures in specialization and operational efficiency (neglecting generic competences)
- ❖ Risk of fluctuation (replacements of generations – staff) and to that connected availability of options for young people and the selection of appropriate staff
- ❖ Inadequate or deficient articulation of needs and expectations of the world of work
- ❖ Risk of the system remaining too fragmented

### ***Identification of Goals for the Ideal Future Development of PHE (Ideal Scenario)***

The national strategy/policy on PHE exists and is accepted as socially relevant. It also takes into account regional/local specifics. Regional/Local development strategy is supported at the national level to ensure an adequate overview of the labour market and to facilitate responsiveness of educational programmes and institutions to the needs of the world of work.

Promotion of vocational and professional growth and educational opportunities is a crucial part of an educational pathway of individuals, managed and strategically directed by higher level. For greater efficiency the world of work, PHE providers of all levels and stakeholders in regional development are involved. Individuals have the opportunity and access to upskilling and prefunding their professional expertise.

PHE has been established as a social paradigm and is based on two pillars: professional and academic HE. The professional combining different standardized levels of PHE regulated by national accreditations and quality assurance system in order to allow an easy transition and diverse education pathways. There is a single PHE legislation. The professional vertical is thus a strengthened and streamlined education system on the basis of strategic guidelines.

PHE is also properly positioned. It offers innovative graduates and graduates whose skills reflect the needs of the labour market. Each area of expertise also develops generic competencies such as critical thinking,



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proactive approach, employability and teamwork. Employers articulate their needs and expectations and proactively approach to take part in the development of necessary competences and programmes. Each stakeholder assumes liability for the mentoring network and clearly defines their expectations. Close cooperation within all the members of each stakeholder and all stakeholders among themselves has been developed.

### ***Identification of Barriers to achieve the Ideal Scenario***

A common, comprehensive strategy/strategic policy on PHE is crucial for its further development and has to include regional specifics. Strategy is a society consensus as a result of a wide cooperation of all PHE stakeholders. Its implementation needs also a strong political support of the government – but only on implementation level.

Understanding of professional and science paradigm – these two segments should be aligned.

The overall PHE area has to be united and coherent. PHE and academic HE need to maintain their specific identity but should also cooperate in synergy. It is necessary to adopt good experiences/practices of others and to further develop them.

The invitation, agenda and list of participants are attached to this document.

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