

## **COMETA – Final Conference minutes**

**18 September 2014 – Brussels**

On the 18<sup>th</sup> of September took place in Brussels the COMETA Evolution Final Conference.

The Event has been the occasion to present the project results, confront with experts, and discuss the tools developed by COMETA.

The project has worked on the soft skills of workers in the health-care sector to promote both geographical and sectorial mobility. During the conference, various aspects of mobility within the health-care (that may represent risks and opportunities) have been discussed.

The first part of the Conference focused on the project results and tools. In particular, after the presentation made by the Project leader, DROM, partners presented the results of the testing phase and the Memorandum of Understanding.

Giulia Casu (AnS) presented the tools developed by the project. In particular, the project developed two tools which aimed at supporting workers mobility by promoting the mutual recognition of competences and skills of workers from the care sectors. The two tools are: a questionnaire and a Memorandum of Understanding.

The questionnaire developed by the project is based on scenarios (rather than multiple choice questions). The scenarios put the respondents in a real situation and ask them to decide how they would behave. Each scenario has two possible solutions. Both of them are ethically correct but only one is right since only one answer is associated to one of the six common transversal competences related to the profiles the project has worked on. The questionnaire was evaluated very positively and proved to be a fully-functional tool.

The MoU, a formal agreement signed by different organizations, companies and business associations, is a tool for the recognition of formal and informal competences. The participants recognised the importance of MoU. Enrico Libera (Aris) presented the MoU and explained in details its function. In particular, the Memoranda of Understanding provides a general framework of cooperation and networking between a group of partner organizations and, when appropriate, assist

them in the design of specific arrangements for mutual recognition of skills and credit transfer for learners. To apply ECVET to learning outcomes achieved in a non-formal and informal learning context or outside the framework of a MoU, the competent institution which is empowered to award qualifications or units or to give credits, should establish procedures and mechanisms for the identification, validation and recognition of these learning outcomes through the award of the corresponding units and the associated ECVET points.

The second part of the conference saw high level experts, representative of important organisations or local authorities gather together in a round table on Social Services in Europe. In particular: Mathias Maucher (European Federation of Public Service Unions - EPSU), Valentina Caimi (Social Platform), Pedro Blazquez (COCETA), Adriana Cheber (Lombardia Region representative), Antonio Mascia (General Director of the Health-care sector - Sardinia Region), Enrico Libera (Scuola Nazionale Servizi). The session was chaired by Federico Camporesi (DIESIS)

The discussion immediately moved to the problem of the recognition of skills and competences in health and social sector in different countries. 17 million of people work in Europe in the social sector. Many of them are immigrants. The majority does not have a certification.

Valentina Caimi, Policy and Advocacy Adviser at Social Platform, opened the round table observing that COMETA initiative is in line with some of the recommendations on care Social Platform developed in 2012. She then presented the point of view of her organisation and the challenges that social services face at EU level: low quality jobs, part-time, temporary contract, and black market. In particular, she stressed that the EU must urgently develop policy actions to raise the professional status of care workers and to improve their working conditions. Particular attention should be paid to migrant care workers, who should be guaranteed equal treatment comparable to the rights of EU citizens. This should include measures to recognise the qualifications of migrant care workers obtained in third countries, and to reduce the extent to which these workers are driven towards undeclared work.

Mathias Maucher, the representative of EPSU, outlined that initiatives for the mutual recognition of skills such as COMETA are useful if they are framed in a system that recognises the professional status of workers; curricula and skills passports should be recognised both by employers and workers. These initiatives should be brought forward through dialogue with employers and trade unions. He has briefly illustrated the importance, to regulate different professions in the social service sector, pointing out that there is a big difference between « skills » and « professions ». People can have 15 skills, but they don't have a profession.

Pedro Blazquez (COCETA) spoke about the recognition of skills in Spain : 490 social cooperatives and many people use their services, especially children, elderly, disabled people, immigrants and ex drug

addicted, but nobody has a recognition of skills, for this reason this kind of projects are accepted with a big support.

Adriana Cheber (Lombardia Region) and Antonio Mascia (Sardegna Region) made an excursus about the situation in Italy and in particular in their regions. She highlighted the importance of the lifelong training and update of skills and competences, because people who had training in 1990 are not able to take advantage of it in 2014. In the health-care sector there are no many employment contracts. It is important to develop the skills acquired on the labour market in order to regulate this situation. People must have stronger tools to be more competitive on the labour market.

Mr Mascia explained that the Sardinia Region used a similar way to include immigrants in the health social sector. There is a program, which is called « microcredito »: 25.000 euros that should be reimbursed in 5 years without interests.

Enrico Libera made the conclusions expressing the partnership thanks to all the participants and speakers who replied expressing their satisfaction in being part of the Conference.