



skillME

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PREPARED BY: CCIS – MPIA

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skillME PROJECT

Enhancing competencies in the metal and electro industries throughout Europe

Despite a relatively high level of unemployment, there are still vacancies in the metal and electro industry. Due to the rapid development of technology and knowledge, companies are finding it increasingly difficult to find competent workforce that could meet the requirements of their production processes, as out-of-date educational systems and the lack of flexibility are in large part responsible for the widening skill gaps.

Workers, on the other hand, are facing the challenge of keeping up with the ever-changing requirements of the industry and the need to constantly educate themselves in order to **remain employable, competitive and productive**. These are important issues that require our urgent and sustained attention. In order to fulfill the goal of reindustrialisation of Europe, it becomes obvious there is a **substantial need for extensive measures** to be taken if we want to meet the demands of the market.

skillME project is designed as a response to those needs. It is a collaborative project between vocational education and training (VET) providers, national regulatory partners and representatives of the metal and electro industries of the EU member states Croatia, Latvia, Slovakia and Slovenia, which aims at **identifying the most endemic skill gaps in the metal and electro industries and at developing state-of-the-art curricula** to fill those gaps in order to ensure sustainable development of the European metal and electro markets.

Many companies of the sectors find there is a significant discrepancy between the knowledge their workers had acquired in the educational system and the skill set necessary for them to gain employment or the expertise required to successfully tackle given work tasks. Failing to see the importance of **advanced and life-long education** that aims to equip workers with the necessary competencies to enter the labor market and stay employed may therefore result in a drop in productivity for companies and in a higher risk of unemployment for workers.

As a response to those pressing issues, participating countries designed the skillME project to **improve employability of workers, raise the employability rate and improve the competitiveness of the European metal and electro companies** on both the European and the worldwide level.

In its essence, the three-year skillME project strives to improve competencies in the metal and electro industry in the long term. This is why it aims not only to determine the most **current and widespread skill gaps**, but also to identify the areas of competencies



that are going to be **most sought-after in the future**. To respond to those requirements, project partners wish to create suitable curricula that will fill those skill gaps and permanently integrate them into VET education systems in project participating countries and throughout Europe. As a result, the project will enhance competencies in the respective industries Europe-wide, make learning outcomes of VET trainings comparable and transferable among EU members, and foster mobility of trainees and workers.

These objectives are reachable only through **strong international collaboration between state partners, private sector partners and VET providers**. Due to the innovative approach of the project, which will fill industry skill gaps in a new way through the collaboration of key actors in the field of VET curriculum design, the project consortium consists of regulatory partners, industry representatives and VET providers, who will jointly conduct extensive research as to the most common challenges workers and employers are facing in the field of skills management and engage metal and electro companies into talks about the skills that workers and companies are lacking the most.

Most companies of the electro and metal industries in the participating countries report **similar skills gaps observed among their** workers. The most common ones are identified in the field of intelligent installations, automation and robotics, reverse engineering, and computer-assisted modeling. Project partners will try to establish the main skill gaps in their countries with a thorough research that will include representatives of the sectors.

In 2015, partners will conduct interviews with HMR representatives of electro and metal companies in their countries. Each national representative partner will visit member companies, consisting of small, medium-sized and large enterprises, to jointly identify competences and skills they are lacking the most through a thorough discussion of their main skill management challenges. National regulatory partners will also meet with focus groups of metal and electro company representatives from project participating countries to further assess technical skill gaps. Talks with the companies will provide an invaluable opportunity to gain insight into the current challenges, training needs, and potential areas of development of the industry.

Based on the observations of the most topical skill gaps of all participating parties, project partners will make a selection of the most needed skills in the respective sectors and develop a framework for filling those skill gaps. Each of the four project countries will form curricula, which will be adopted by the other three countries and incorporated into all national VET systems of the participating countries. This will benefit greatly not only the pupils, who will be able to acquire state-of-the-art knowledge to successfully enter the job market and will have comparable skills with other EU metal and electro



workers, but also workers already employed, who will be able to fill the observed skill gaps by taking part in these courses.

In this way, project partners will be able to jointly cooperate on defining skill gaps and designing curricula and work together to **modernize vocational education and training systems** in their respective countries, which will help workers gain adequate qualifications to improve their competitive position in the market and help fill vacancies in the industry sector. Project partners will also benefit greatly from the international cooperation as it will offer a unique opportunity for them to learn from each other and exchange examples of good practice. It will also be a platform for future cooperation among EU countries in VET for electro and metal industries.

We are positive that the skillME project will have **far-reaching beneficial effects** on improving the quality of services and the extent of knowledge in the metal and electro industry due to the interlinked, synergetic and international nature of the project, and foster mobility of EU workers by creating unified curriculums that will enable comparable competencies.

The project is co-funded by the European Commission and is part of the Erasmus+ programme.