



The project “*Balkan Women Coalition for Professional Qualification and Training in the field of Business and Economic Science*” (*B-WCo*) is developed between 8 countries from the Balkan Region and it is based on the longstanding cooperation and work between the participating organizations on their common aim for supporting the Women Business Qualification and competitiveness in the labor market. The main idea of the project is the establishment of a coalition between organizations and NGOs from the countries in the Balkan Region - Greece, Romania, Croatia, FYROM, Serbia, Turkey, Albania, and Bulgaria. This new *coalition* will work on the development of the common training contents or concepts, the integration of skills needs of the labor market into VET and the Reinforcing links between education and working life. The Balkan region has been changing in a very fundamental way under the impact of various interacting forces of economic integration and transition that are shaping the new European economic landscape. The old structures of internal economic organization and external economic relations have collapsed, while new economic, political and institutional structures are, often forcefully and painfully, in the making. The ability of the Balkan economies to respond positively to the new economic environment and take advantage of the expected increase and shift in demand depends to a large extent on the economic structure that they have inherited from the previous political systems and the adjustments that have taken place in this structure because of the reforms.

Overall, it seems that the best strategic reaction for the region as a whole to the pressures generated by economic integration and transition is based on regional cooperation and regional integration. This strategy will basically overcome fragmentation and will allow the other advantages of the region, such as its proximity to the new European frontiers in the Black Sea or the Middle East, its pleasant climate or its low cost base to become more visible and more appreciable. Of course, within this strategic framework each country may follow specialized policies according to its national priorities.

It's important through joined educational projects to overcome difficulties and to establish a spirit of Unity and Co-operation based on common basis and mentality of the Region.

In this background situation it is important the establishment of network supporting the **COMPETITIVENESS** of the **WOMEN** in the labor market, their education on seminars and pre-qualification in activities and knowledge. The participating organizations choose this field of education because of the importance of the educated personnel for the economy in the crisis.

Despite the progress achieved in *promoting gender equality* and narrowing gender gaps in many fields over recent decades, the persistent under-representation of women in public life and



political decision-making remains one of the most important issues to be addressed. Gender equality issues in the Balkans differ widely from one country to the other and from one social group to the other. Mostly, Gender Equality issues in Balkans differ more from the rest of Europe. However, it is possible to draw general lines for the region. Major challenges to gender equality in the Balkans are however still present currently. We do not intend to explore in an exhaustive manner the challenges facing the region; we will rather illustrate our purpose with selected examples.

Women are noticeably under-represented in decision-making roles. In the political realm, women have seen their representation fall from relatively high levels during the socialist period. Despite adopted laws that ensure equal representation of women in, and their access to, active politics, there are significantly fewer women in the parliament, all levels of government, central public administration, and political parties. Very few political parties have undertaken concrete steps to include gender equality issues in their party programs; even women, when they hold leading political positions, rarely advocate for placing gender equality issues on the agenda. The participation of women and men of the region in the labour market is high. Unemployment of women has a direct impact on the women themselves but also on the wealth of the household. Women's unemployment is linked, amongst other things, to the quality of the early child care system. A weaker child care system makes the women less available for work outside of the household since she is traditionally responsible for the care of the children. Despite the fact that gender gaps in earnings in the Balkans are quite small by international standards, their unexplained component is relatively large. Explained component include difference in jobs characteristics and gap in human capital (e.g. level of education, previous work experiences). An unexplained gap suggests a large degree of wage discrimination. This inequality is the effect of cultural factors and preferences and is also linked to the double burden women face (work within and outside the household).

The public policy frameworks are instrumental in reinforcing an individual's entrepreneurial learning opportunities. The sub-dimension comprises four indicators which aim to encourage participating countries to develop a comprehensive policy framework to support lifelong entrepreneurial learning. Partnership is central to this indicator: efforts to promote an entrepreneurial society require inputs from all levels of education and training (both formal and non-formal) acting as a collective; and partnership ensures coherence with relevant national strategies (e.g. education, SME, employment, research and development). A second indicator focuses on financial support for lifelong entrepreneurial learning. A third addresses the formal education system, prompting separate but inter-related policy instruments for primary, secondary and higher education, and linked to the wider economic policy framework. A final indicator focuses on systemic monitoring and evaluation of entrepreneurial policy and practice.



Countries generally approach this by way of compulsory or elective subjects, as well as outside-school activities, including co-operation between schools and enterprises. Again, a phased development of entrepreneurship at upper secondary level schooling is encouraged through the indicator.

The main Aims/Objectives of the presented *B-WCo project* are:

- to exchange experiences, good practices and methods for quality management in VET organizations;
- to develop a common good quality web-site in English and partner countries' languages;
- to carry out several bi- and multilateral placements in order to train managers in practical elaboration and implementation of quality management systems in VET providers from different type and to improve their competencies, practical knowledge and skills in quality management;
- to establish a women entrepreneurship educational Coalition, to increase the level of knowledge and skills of women entrepreneurs or those who want to start a new business or trade;
- to help and support women who want to develop their skills and qualifications;
- to promote social disadvantaged groups - the elderly or persons with no qualifications;
- to identify current, emerging and future needs and to specify aspects where European Cooperation would be particularly beneficial;
- to provide on-the-job-training for new women entrepreneurs and men who participate in business with women in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in order to facilitate a successful start-up and development of their business ideas;
- to foster sharing of experience and information between entrepreneurs on the obstacles and challenges of starting up and developing their businesses.

The achievement of these goals will be met with a number of planned actions. Firstly, the creation of a Balkan Coalition between the participating organizations for a better cooperation and achievement of the objectives of the project. The purpose of this Coalition will be to maintain, support and intervene to educate women and disadvantaged people and the acquisition of qualifications and opportunities for development and exchange of experience. There will be organized workshops and meetings where there will be discussed the objectives of the operation and the ways for their implementation. There will also be organized educational and retraining seminars where individuals in need and interested in those activities can participate. There will also be formed and composed advertising information materials and the website will be updated constantly in order to inform all those who wish to participate in the events.