

## The Final Conference concludes the Get Involved in EP4A: European Partnerships for Apprenticeships project

On 12 September 2018, the final conference of Erasmus+ project Get Involved in EP4A: European Partnerships for Apprenticeships was held in the hotel Dubrovnik in Zagreb. The implementation of the project started in October 2016 with the aim to promote apprenticeships by building partnerships between all relevant stakeholders in vocational education and training – i.e. public institutions, chambers, social partners, vocational schools and employers. The leading project partner was the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts while remaining partners were Rinova Ltd from the United Kingdom, the Regional Development Agency Senec-Pezinok from Slovakia, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Serbia – Regional Chamber of Moravice and Raška Administrative Districts from Serbia and Chamber of Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria from Germany as the associated partner.

„Croatian craftsmen accepted and took the responsibility to teach young people. They were the first to see the importance and need for work based learning. That way of learning gradually prepares young people for life. We could say that craftsmen have been implementing “life-ready school” for years“, said **Mr Dragutin Ranogajec, the President of the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts** in his welcoming speech.

At the conference, the project activities in project countries were presented which produced main EP4A project results: partnership formation between all key stakeholders and raising the awareness of employers about the benefits of apprenticeship through targeted attractiveness campaign. Ms Irina Jemeljanova from CEDEFOP presented novelties in the development of vocational education and training on the EU level as well as “Thematic Country Review for Croatia”. **The study has the special focus on the unified model of education (JMO), which has been recognized as the Croatian model of dual education.**

The panel discussion was organised under the topic “Cooperation and partnership for quality apprenticeship”, and it gathered experts in the area of vocational education and training from all partner countries. Ms **Barbara Peinel** from the Chamber of Crafts for Munich and Upper Bavaria, Ms **Ruth Richardson** from Creative & Cultural Skills, from the United Kingdom, Mr **Milan Kuzma** from the State Institute for Vocational Education in Slovakia, Ms **Ana Mandac**, the assistant minister in Croatian Ministry of Economy, Entrepreneurship and Crafts, Ms **Mirjana Kovačević** from the Chamber of Commerce and Industry Serbia. Also, Ms **Irina Jemeljanova**, the CEDEFOP representative participated in the discussion and, concluded that the unified model of education (JMO) should be considered as “the Cinderella who requires more care and attention in order to turn into a princess”.

In the final part of the conference, **apprenticeship ambassadors** were presented, who received the „**trademark**“, which was designed as the sign of quality for crafts, small and medium enterprises which participate in the apprenticeship. Ambassadors who received the “trademark” were Ms Klaudija Fadljević Gomerčić, Mr Petar Klopotan, Mr Slavko Petrinec, Mr Josip Ribičić, Ms Mirjana Šeb Čišmežija, Mr Tomislav Šimić, Mr Joško Tafra and Mr Miljenko Vuk. Also, ambassadors signed the Statement of Support to Apprenticeship Partnership.

„We hope that all project partners will continue to work on improving the vocational education and training in their countries“, concluded Mr Zoran Varga from the Croatian Chamber of Trades and Crafts. With this aim, all project partners have signed the **Declaration of Intent on the future cooperation in the area of vocational education and training and future projects related to work-based learning and apprenticeship**, in order to secure the sustainability of project results.