

## Minutes of 2. Workshop „Doing Business International“ 8<sup>th</sup> - 9<sup>th</sup> September 2009 at BTZ, Schwerin

### Participants

Nr.	Name	Organisation
1.	Leszek Janowski	HWK Warschau
2.	Stefan Rynowiecki	HWK Warschau
3.	Zbigniew Sulżycki	HWK Szczecin
4.	Adam Tetela	HWK Szczecin
5.	Arve Haugan	HWK Trondheim
6.	Ewa Haugan	HWK Trondheim
7.	Alatinen Paulus	Pori College
9.	Dr. Max Hogeforster	Hanse-Parlament
10.	Lucyna Döding	Hanse-Parlament
11.	Dr. Jürgen Hogeforster	Hanse-Parlament
12.	Prof. Dr. Armin Stöhr	Private Wirtschafts- & Technikakademie GmbH WTA
13.	Prof. Dr. Werner Westphal	Westphal-Consulting
14.	Annett Kallweit	Holzbildhauer Nando Kallweit
15.	Edgar Hummelsheim	Handwerkskammer Schwerin
16.	Christiane Vorpahl	Handwerkskammer Schwerin
17.	Kathrin Fügel	Handwerkskammer Schwerin
18.	Ronny Papp	Handwerkskammer Schwerin

Powerpoint presentations available at  
[www.go-sme.eu](http://www.go-sme.eu)

*- First day -*

The participants introduced themselves, reporting on their person, function and organization.

### 1. Status quo of the project

Since a new partner joined the workshop for the first time, the objectives of the project, to support SMEs by increasing their international activities by drafting a further training course, test it practically and then transfer it to all partners, were summarized again.

The change of partnership regarding partner 6 was explained: Partner 6 from Latvia asked to leave the project, since Latvia was hit especially hard by the economic crisis and the partner from Riga can not ensure the further implementation of the project, but is still interested in transferring the result.

As a substitute for the former partner from Latvia, the College of Pori joined the project as partner 6.

The developments and first results succeeding the last workshop meeting were presented, i.e. the curricula for the training course, the printing of the marketing material (flyers) and the website.

The training course has been running for almost 6 months and is coming to an end soon (04.03.2009 - 07.10.2009). After half of the time the participants have been asked to fill out a questionnaire to help improve the curricula. The results were discussed.

## **2. Information regarding the implementation of the training course in Schwerin**

Subsequently Mrs. Fügel from the Chamber of Schwerin presented the experiences during the realisation of the training course. It was quite evident, that the winning of participants was not an easy task, but took quite some efforts. Accordingly most questions were asked, how to find and motivate participants. Besides the classical marketing activities, the personal contact to company owners seemed to be most helpful. In the end, 18 participants registered for the training course.

Additionally it has not been easy to find the right teacher. The Chamber Schwerin met and interview 8 different persons for this task and decided to cooperate with the WTA Schwerin, Prof. Dr. Stöhr who had the most experience in dealing and teaching with SMEs in the region.

During the implementation of the course some adjustments have been made to the curricula, i.e. a section regarding the use of making international calls via internet and the technique (Skype) has been introduced.

## **3. Experiences during course implementation**

Prof. Dr. Stöhr is the executing professor for the test run in Schwerin and shared his experience of the last couple of months. Overall his impression, based on the ongoing feedback of the participants, is very positive. Prof. Dr. Stöhr stressed out how important such a training is for SMEs. Less than 5 % of all small or medium sized companies have international contacts, even though those would be very beneficial for their services or products.

Of exceptional importance was the training of Business English. The different skill level of the participant was a challenge, which he tried to solve by forming smaller working groups.

He pointed out, that the size of the group was good, but should not be much bigger. Also he would welcome a more individual coaching of every participant, according to his or her needs. Prof. Dr. Stöhr repeatedly said, that the success of such a course depends on how much it is possible to create it according to the concrete needs of the businessmen and –women.

Concluding he shared his vision for the future, creating a European wide Product Brand "DIB": European Competence for Doing International Business in EUROPE, consisting of four key stones :

1. Training foreign Languages
2. Training Intercultural Competence
3. SMEs Doing International Business in EU-Europe
4. Meeting Point for SMEs cooperation and best practice examples

The project partners welcomed this idea.

#### **4. Experiences of a participant**

Mrs. Kallweit, a participant and spokeswoman of the group of students, shared her experience. She was quite pleased with the whole concept and implementation of the course.

She pointed out, that such a heterogeneous group of participants is much better than a group, where all participants come from the same sector. That way, without being competitors, people are less hesitant to share their business information, reveal their plans etc. Also it was a good way to get contact with other businesses from the region. Mrs. Kallweit stated the good relationship between all course participants, that she considers not only nice to have, but fruitful also for future business relations.

Asked if she would prefer such a course as a 4 week compact course, she said that she thinks that is hardly possible. She is working 80 hours or more a week, like most participants who run their own business. She could not afford to leave her office for such a long duration. Even attending a course once week can be quite demanding and is not easy for a self-employed person.

Mrs. Kallweit pointed out, that the course helped her to better understand how important a good presentation of a company is. She is very active in the Italian market and visiting a annual fair for handicraft. She received lots of new, good ideas for the upcoming fair in December and is currently working on a multilingual manual to better present her products there.

#### **5. Challenges of a knowledge based economy for SMEs, Prof. Westphal**

Prof. Westphal, who is working in Germany and Poland, shared his experience with SMEs and education in both countries and developed a vision. He highlighted why it is important to develop innovative products and services. He then explained the necessity of regional and international networks and their added values. He shared his vision for the future of such a training "Dream of Schwerin".

This initiated a short discussion on how to implement the course in the next years in Schwerin.

- Second day -

## **6. Consultation of the concept „International Training“**

An international training of the participants of the course is optional at the moment, but highly recommended. However, due to the time consuming nature (not less than six weeks) it is quite difficult for self-employed people. Still, it was agreed that at least the younger employees joining the course should participate in such a training abroad. It was discussed, on how to attract more young people to a training in another EU member state and thus boost their international cultural competence.

The partner from Warsaw agreed and pointed out, that such an international training could be organised by the Hanseatic Parliament.

## **7. Legal conditions for the adaption of official examination regulations in the respective partner countries**

The partner from Finland, who recently joined the project, gave a very good in-depth overview of their education system and the necessary regulations, i.e. how to implement a new course with an official regulation.

The procedure in Poland was debated, based on the sheets that the partners were asked to fill in preparation for the meeting. The approach is rather similar to the German one : The chamber is drafting an official regulation which then must be approved by the ministry of economy or ministry of education. So far, the chambers offer only few training courses which end with an official examination.

## **8. Preparations for the transfer of the training course**

The transfer of the course to other partner countries was elaborated. Finland showed a high interest, as well as Poland. The partner from Warsaw shared his opinion, that such a course should be concentrated on a specific country, for example “Doing International Business in Norway or Germany” . A general course would not be very interesting for their companies. Target group would be young craftsmen and young businessmen.

The Partner from Norway pointed out, that the – in Germany and Poland very important section – section on Business English is not of significance for his SMEs, since most speak very well English already, especially the ones that are interested in doing international business.

## **9. „Meisterkampagne“**

A new publicity campaign by the HWK Schwerin to attract young people for a vocational training was of interest to the foreign partners. Therefore, Mrs. Wolf, responsible for the campaign, presented the idea behind it as well as the newest pictures and movies.

## **10. Visitation of the Education – and Training Centre of the HWK Schwerin**

The group went for a tour of the Education – and Training Centre of the HWK Schwerin with one of its managers, Mr. Rene Scheibe, who explained the different educations.

## **11. Further Procedure**

The course will have his last meeting in October 2009. In this last meeting, the participants will present their concepts and share their experiences. The Lead Partner will attend this session.

Until November 2009 examination regulations for the official approval of the training course by the federal ministry shall be drafted.

The third and final workshop, 2010, could take place in Szczecin, Warsaw or Pori.