eiVET

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EIVET Emotional Intelligence for more effective Training

Project Reference:
2021-1-BG01-KA220-ADU-000033724

Intellectual output 1:

Analysis of the semi-structured interviews and training needs survey

Foundation for Developing Emotional Intelligence

The analysis of the semi-structured interviews is a part of the activities **in IO1 - Building teaching methodology in EI, training materials, and instructions, which will support the learning process and training providers** in VET centers, social support centers, social enterprises, business support organizations, or other, in the process of organization and conduction of training.

The analysis is based on the developed by us a guide for **applying structured and semi-structured interviews and questionnaires that are aimed at identifying the training contexts, and the trainers' needs according to the opinions of trainers and trainees in each of the four partner countries.**

Each project partner contributed to the process of collecting data and information for the respective country through the developed questionnaires. Based on the identified trainers' and trainees' needs in each country, a methodology and training materials will be elaborated, introducing a practical EI approach/element/tool/course in the vocational training process.

All project partners contacted respondents from VET centers and universities, having profound competence and expertise in providing training courses to different trainees (long-term unemployed, emigrants, employees, students, and trainers).

In this regard, all five project partners conducted 103 interviews in total – 32 tutors and experts were interviewed with a questionnaire designed for trainers, and 71 potential trainees were interviewed with the form for the trainees. As a preliminary part of the questionnaires of the semi-structured interviews, all the respondents were asked some more questions to assess some demographic features: nationality, sex differences, social status, job positions for tutors, the length of service in the VET center, and the reasons for educating trainees in VET centers.

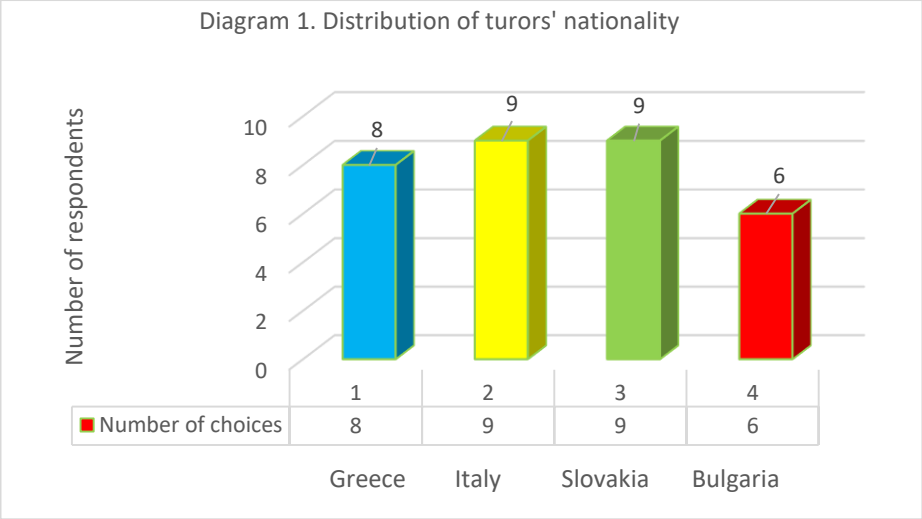
Analysis of tutors' demographics

Diagram 1 demonstrates the nationality of all tutors/trainers who participated in the survey.

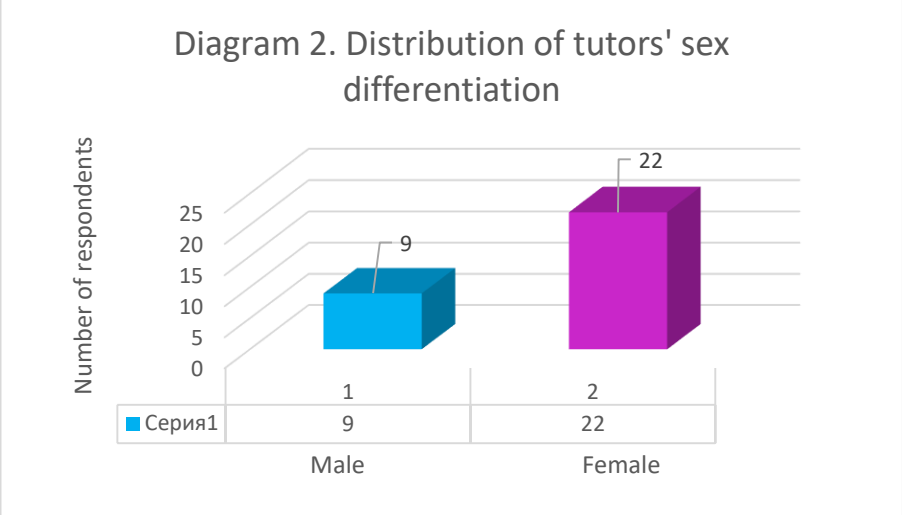
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. The number of respondents that took part is the same in the two countries - nine tutors/trainers /28,1%/ from Italy and from Slovakia /28.1%/. Tutors from the Greek VET Centres involved in the survey were eight /25%/, and trainers from Bulgaria that participated in the survey were six /18.8%/.



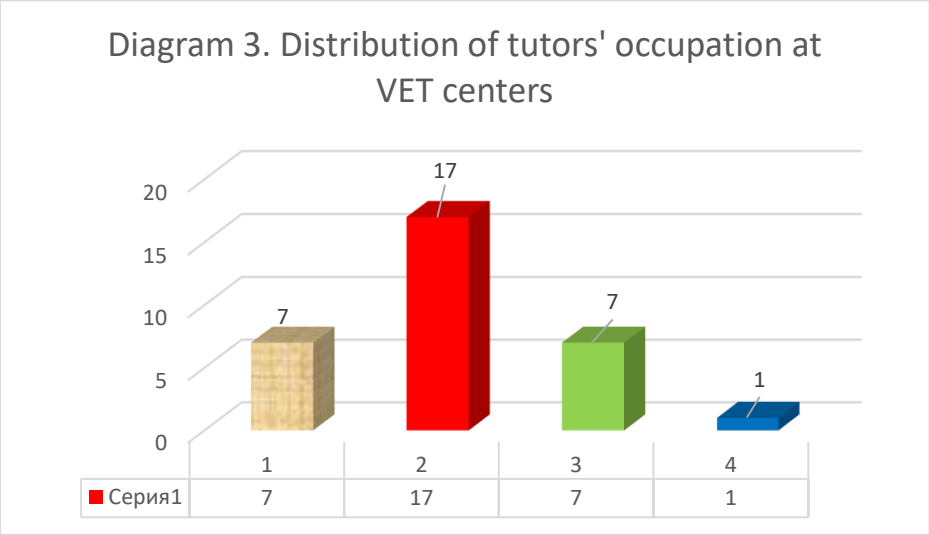
The distribution of participants' sex is shown on diag. 2. All participants in the survey who are tutors/trainers are divided into two groups as follows – nine are men /28,1%/, 22 are women /71.9%/.



All tutors/trainers shared that in the survey that they have different job positions in the VET centers, which can be seen in the diag. 3.

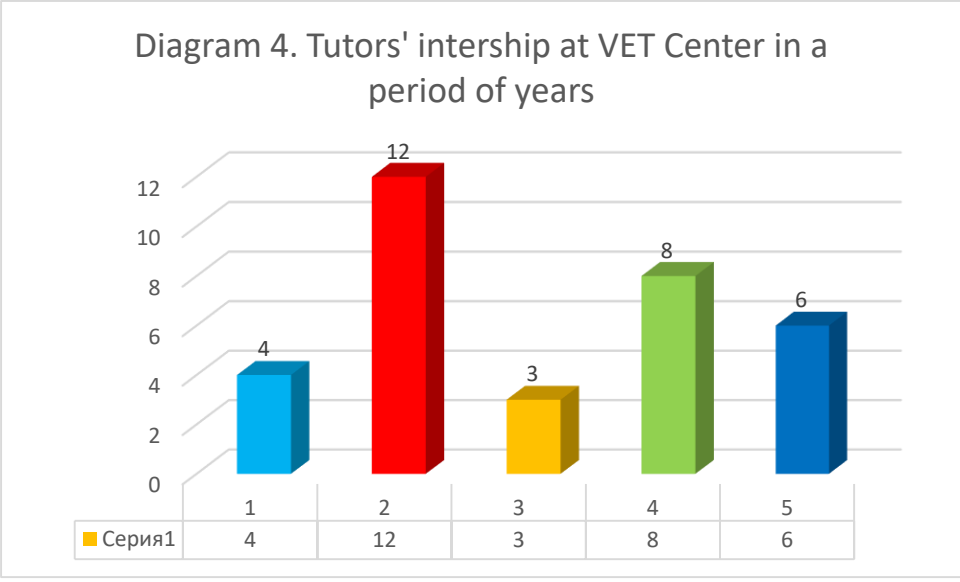
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The chart demonstrates that seven /21.9%/of respondents from the group of tutors are Administrators at the VET centers, 17 /53.1%/ of them work as Trainers, 7 /21.9%/ are Tutors and only one /3.1% identified himself as a freelancer who probably is involved at the VET center activities.

Demographics of the tutors include also their length of service in the VET centers. The analysis shows that 4 /12.5%/of tutors work there for a decade, and 12 /37.5%/ of the respondents work in the VET centers for 5 to 10 years. Three participants /9.3%/ reported that they have been working for 10 to 15 years, and eight tutors/trainers /25%/ have worked so far from 15 to 20 years. Six tutors/trainers /18.7%/, have worked at the VET centers in the partner countries for more than 20 years. The tutors' length of service in the VET centers is shown in diag. 4.



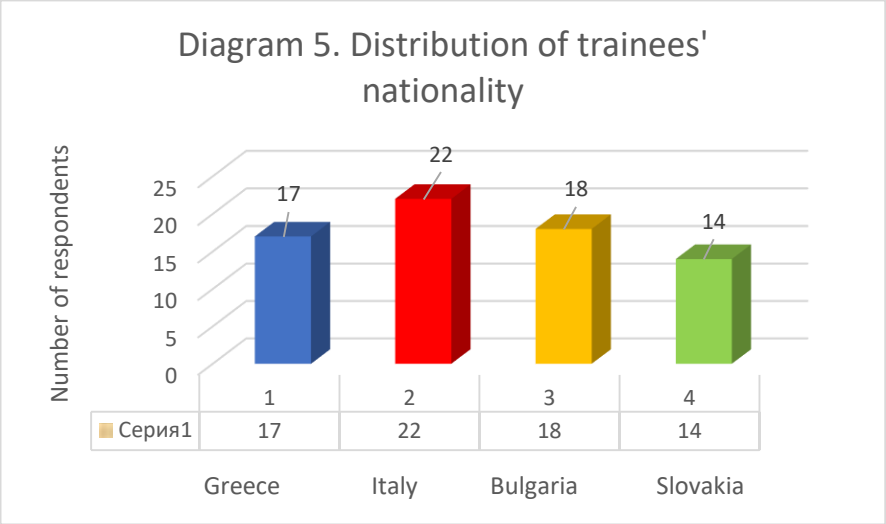
Legend: 1. 1 to 5 years; 2. 5 to 10 years; 3. 10 to 15 years; 4. 15 to 20 years; 5. 20 to 30 years

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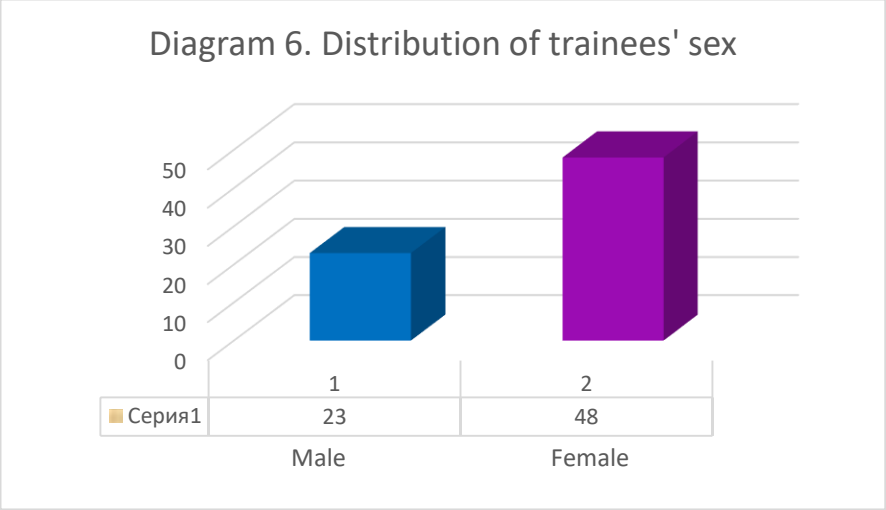
Analysis of trainees' demographics

Diag. 5 shows the distribution of the nationality of all 71 trainees that participated in the survey.



Four nationalities took part in the survey. The biggest group, 22 respondents /28.1%/ is from Italy. The next group is from Bulgaria – 18 /30.9%/, followed by the group from Greece 17 /25.3%/ and the smallest group from Slovakia 14 /19.7%/.

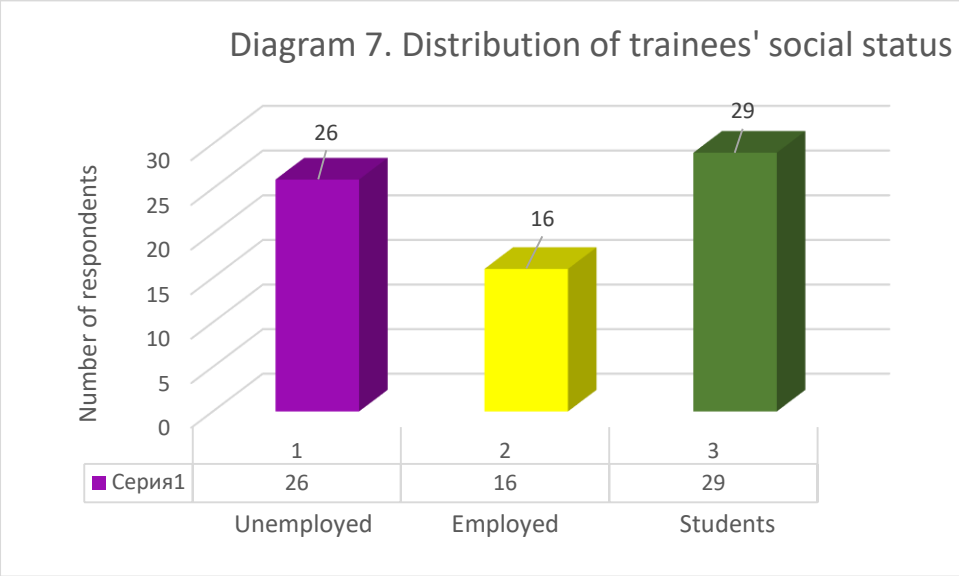
The data of the trainees' sex are exhibited in diag. 6. All the participants in the survey who are potential trainees included 23 males /32,3%/ and 48 females /67.7%/.



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All respondents from the group of potential trainees reported their social status. These data are presented in diag. 7.



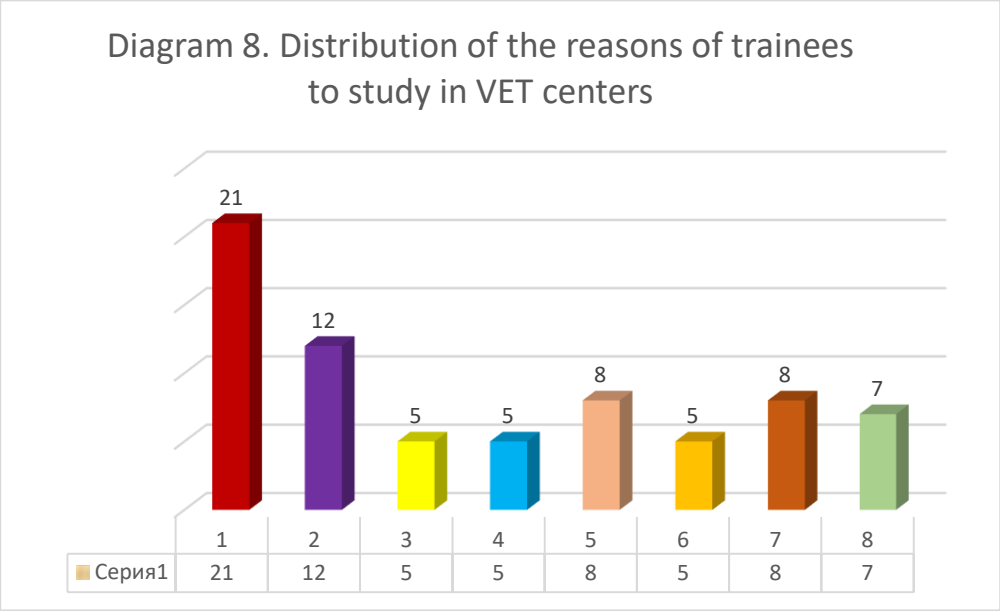
Of the 71 respondents, 16 /22.5%/ are employed, 26 /36.6%/ are unemployed and 29 /40.9%/ are students.

The distribution of the answers to the question of why the trainees are studying in the VET centers in different countries is shown in the diag. 8.

The answers can be separated into eight groups. The first group of 21 /29.5%/ trainees answered that they study in VET centers for professional development. The second group - 12 trainees /16.9%/ - reported that they seek further education. Five /7%/ trainees of the respondents shared that they have financial reasons. Another group of five /7%/of trainees was attracted to study in VET centers because of the offered educational programs. Unemployment is the reason that leads eight /11.2%/ of trainees. The last three groups have different reasons for studying in VET centers - personal development pointed by 5 /7%/of trainees, interest in the programs in emotional regulation and EI pointed by 8 /11.2%/, and development of their skills for finding a new job chosen by seven /9.8%/ trainees.

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The results from the semi-structured interviews revealed the training needs of both trainers and trainees. These findings are helpful to us in designing a training course that includes a program, a step-by-step educational process, and training materials. During the C1 training in Sofia, we will collaborate with experts from each partner country, who will give us their feedback on the adaptability and application of the developed materials.

We believe that the collected information from the survey on assessing the training needs will have the following important effects:

- It will affect the trainees because the training we will develop will promote individual success in learning, professional development, and growth for the long-term unemployed, emigrants, employees, students, and trainers.
- We can understand the needs of the target groups and analyze their employability skills and adaptation to the labor market.
- We will help to identify methods that will be used by experts and tutors to introduce and integrate emotional intelligence approaches into the vocational training process and to increase awareness of the role of emotional intelligence in an individual's success in learning, professional and personal life.

Essentially, Intellectual Output 1 presents the first step of our model - the identification of the training needs of EIVET.

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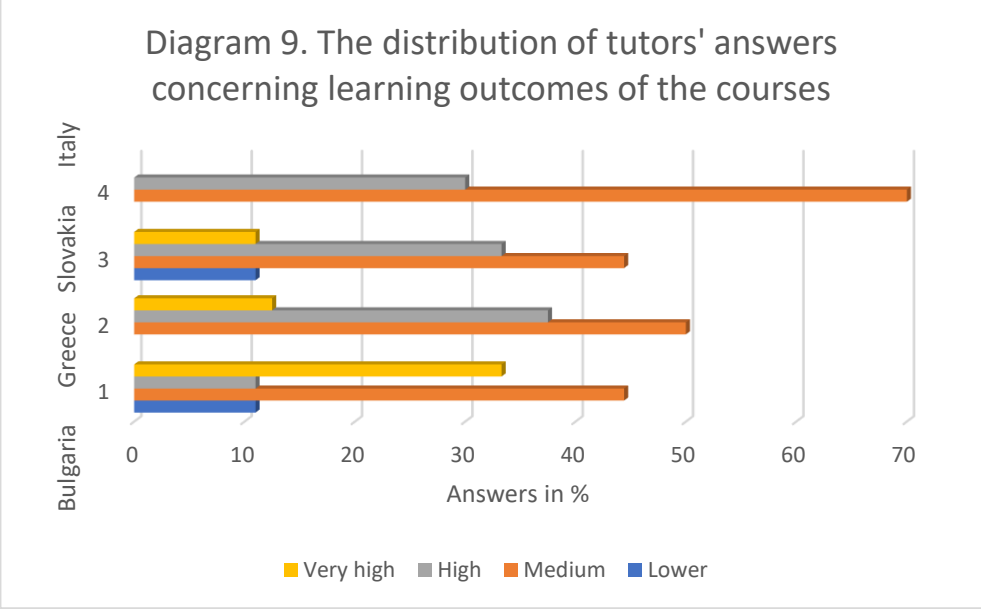
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STRUCTURED AND SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEWS ADDRESSED TO EXPERTS AND TUTORS

A. THE REALITY OF SERVICES AND OFFERED TRAINING IN VET CENTERS, CONSIDERING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS, LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE, AND COMPETENCIES IN THE AREA OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE.

Main conclusions

1. The results regarding **the learning outcomes** of the courses that the group of tutors/trainers teach at VET centers, are demonstrated on diag. 9.



About 33,3 % of Bulgarian tutors state that they seek for ***very high-level*** outcomes (Letting students work or study completely autonomously), followed by 12,5% of Greek tutors and 11.1% of the Slovak group.

The tutors from different countries who state they aim at ***high-level outcomes*** of the courses they teach are as follows: 37,5% of the Greek group, 33.3% in the Slovak group, 30% of Italians, and 11.1% of the Bulgarian group.

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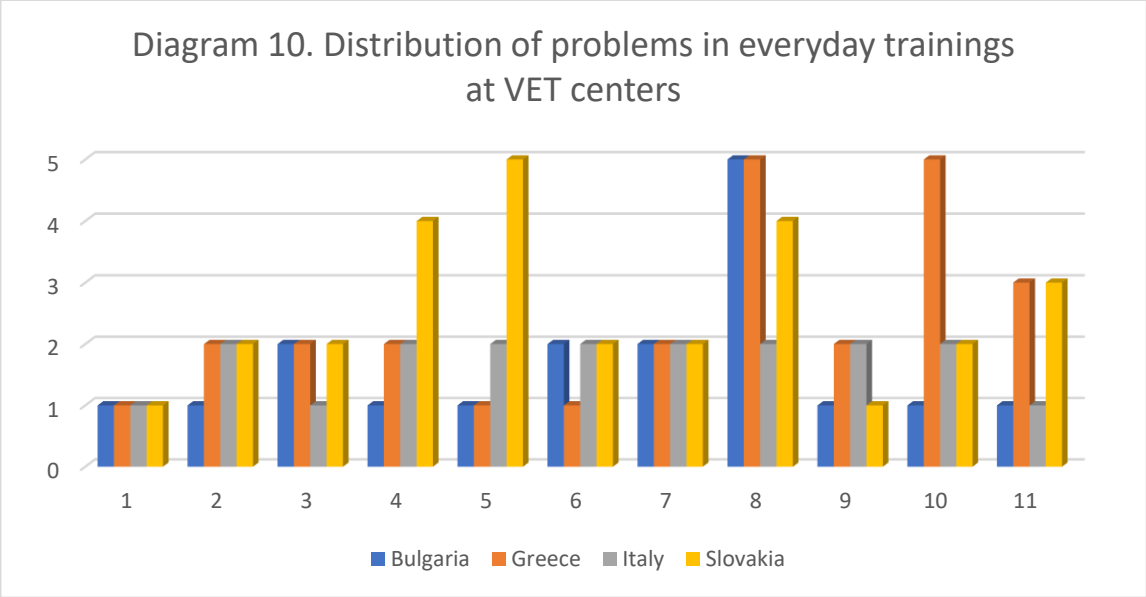
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Seventy percent of the Italian tutors' say that they aim at ***moderate-level outcomes*** (Helping students develop thinking and practical skills to use information that is important and simple rules and tools to do tasks and solve routine problems), followed by 50% of Greek tutors, and 44.4% of Bulgarian and Slovak group of tutors.

The groups of tutors that state that the outcomes from the courses they teach are at the ***lower level*** are only two, Bulgarian and Slovak tutors – each group is 11,1% of all respondents of tutors.

Conclusion: The data of the survey of the tutors/trainers tend to outline that the ***outcomes*** of the courses they teach are at a ***moderate level*** (Helping students develop thinking and practical skills to use information that is important and simple rules and tools to do tasks and solve routine problems.

2. With regards to the question concerning the **usual problems tutors personally have during the everyday training** at the VET centers in the four countries, the following problems were highlighted in the diag. 10. We measure the answers of the 11 answers on the following scale: 1 – not at all, 2- a little, 3 – moderate, 4 – much, 5 – very much.



The diagram shows that tutors rate with the ***highest scores*** answers 5 - task load that causes tension or uncertainty, answer 8 - lack of course for training emotional resiliency in trainees, and answer 10 - feeling that trainees are concerned, and not knowing what to say or to do.

The tutors have ***many problems*** with language in training with foreign students and the lack of courses for training emotional resiliency in trainees.

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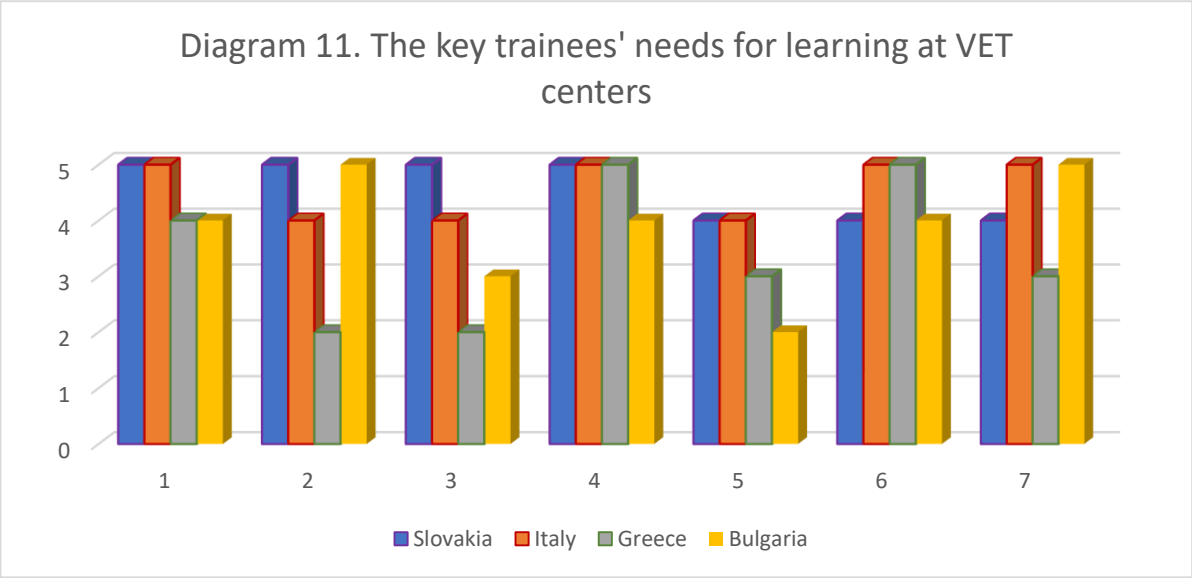
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The respondents state that there is a ***moderate problem*** with trainees because some of them do not share their troubles about the material, so they are not certain whether they can learn properly the material.

The tutors rate most of the ***problems*** at VET centers as ***little*** trouble, except one – the tight communication with their managers. They think that their communication with their managers is not a problem at all.

Conclusion: The analysis shows that the main problems that trainers encounter are the following: lack of course for training emotional resiliency in trainees, language problems in training with foreign students and task load that causes tension or uncertainty, experiencing challenges to control bad mood in classroom work. **All these problems have a close connection to areas of emotions and emotional regulation, time management and communication. These topics can be included in the EI methodology and training materials for trainers/tutors/lecturers at the VET centers.**

3. In terms of the **key trainees' needs for learning at the VET center to become employable and adapt to the market.** We measure the answers to the 7 questions through the following scale: 1 – not at all, 2- a little, 3 – moderate, 4 – much, 5 – very much. The following needs were identified and presented on diag. 11.



The data confirm that tutors at the VET centers in partner countries are careful about trainees' needs and think that they have to be taught in many important programs so that trainees become employable and adapt to the market. The diagram demonstrates that tutors evaluate all trainees'

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needs as very important, but they rated them as the key trainees' need - the knowledge of emotional regulation at work. The most important aspects of the survey which emerged are as follows: professional confidence in achieving work success, cooperation with other people, becoming an undependable and trusted person, and recognition and respect for other people.

The ability to communicate by talking and expressing emotions through body language probably is not so familiar to the trainers. They pay little attention that the knowledge of it can help trainees to increase their knowledge of emotional regulation and emotional intelligence. Despite this issue, the results indicate that there is a crucial demand for all these needs to be conceptualized in EI methodology, program and training materials.

***Conclusion*:** The semi-structured questionnaire is well designed and the results from the interviews satisfied the main purpose of the project - to understand the needs of target groups and their employability skills and adaptation to the labor market, and to Build teaching methodology in EI, training materials, and instructions. The latter will support the learning process and training providers in VET centers. In this regard, the tutors note that the key trainees' needs for learning at the VET can be satisfied by acquiring the skills and knowledge in the courses focused on communication skills, self-confidence, resilience, emotional regulation, social recognition, and respect for others. All these skills are in close relation to EI knowledge.

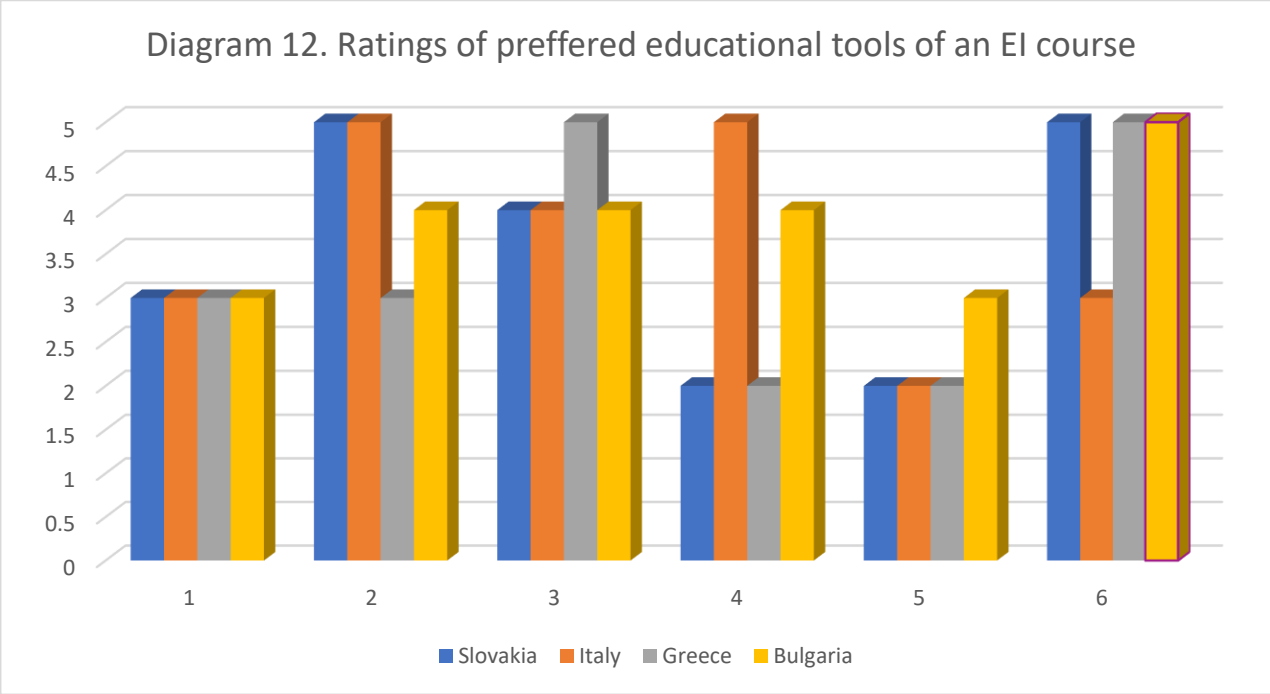
B. NEEDS TO PRESENT NEW APPROACHES OF HIGH-QUALITY LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ADULTS THROUGH THE INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE AND METHODOLOGY OF EI RESULTING IN LONG-TERM IMPACT ON THE TRAINEES, LEADING TO INDIVIDUAL SUCCESS IN LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND GROWTH.

Main conclusions

1. **Exploring new approaches to the education of adults through integrating science and methodology of emotional intelligence** that leads to individual success in learning, professional development, and growth. In our survey tutors rated different utilities of the following activities in an imaginary two-day EI course. We measured the answers of the 6 educational activities on the following scale: 1 – not at all, 2- a little, 3 – moderate, 4 – much, 5 – very much. The tutor's ratings are shown on diag. 12.

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The data from the diagram shows that tutors/trainers think that they can engage the trainees using different forms of classwork, rated as follows: ***playing form*** - games, role-playing, simulations, etc is the most preferred from partner countries, followed by ***oral form*** - states, questions, giving advice or an opinion, discussions, etc., followed by ***listening form*** - conversational discussions, music, speech, etc. Visual, writing and drawing forms are with fewer preferences.

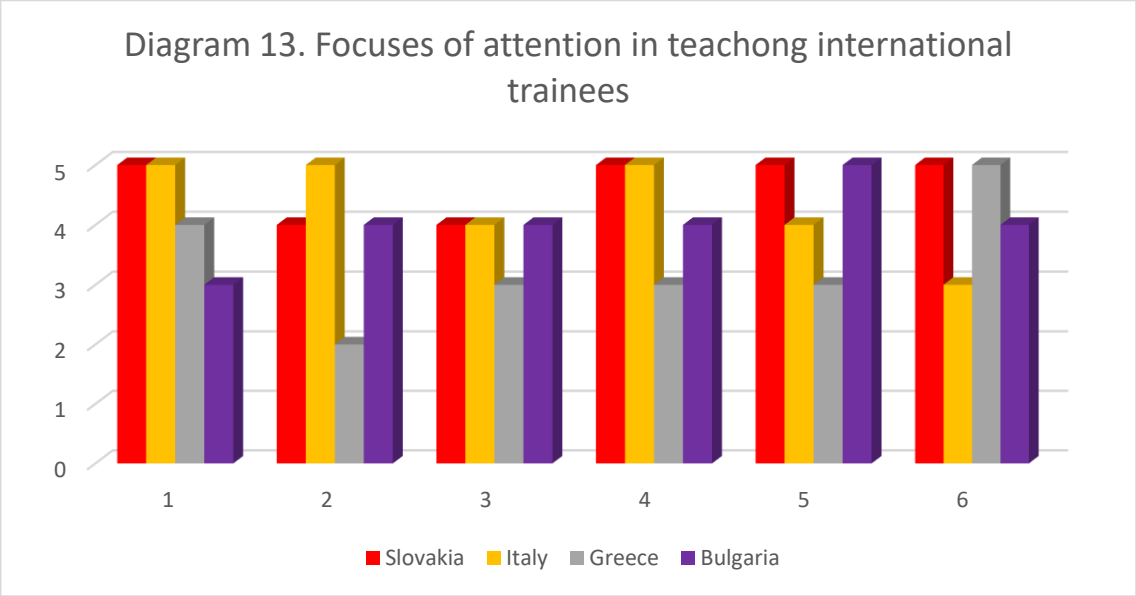
***Conclusion*:** Based on this analysis, it seems experts believe that playing, oral, and listening work approaches are more important than writing or drawing. This reflects their hope that the trainees will develop more skills and increase their knowledge if they take an active role in the learning process through role-playing, simulations, and discussions.

The results show tutors have an active position to change the old model of classwork and use more interactive approaches during the courses. It underlines the statement that in many VET centers' schooling systems where the teaching of theory is still of high importance and individual work is preferred, where less attention is being paid to practical experiences. The high value of this result will help us plan more practical approaches in elaborating EI methodology, program, and material.

2. Aspects of trainers' attention in training international trainees. We measured the variation of six focuses while working with international trainees at the VET centers on the following scale: 1 – not at all, 2- a little, 3 – moderate, 4 – much, 5 – very much. The results of these focuses are shown on diag. 13.

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The trainers from the VET centers in partner countries focus on all aspects of the survey: individual differences in students' behaviors can affect the performance of individual and group tasks, the correlation between different cultures and expression of emotions, emotional regulation, communication, reaction to difficulties in materials or tasks. The highest rate is given to the individual differences in students' behaviors that can affect the performance of individual and group tasks. We identified the most important aspects - rated from moderate to much – that trainers seem to focus on the regulation of trainees' emotions and how trainees deal with the emotions of their classmates.

***Conclusion*:** The results underline the necessity of elaborating multicultural EI methodology, programs, and materials that help international trainees to know more about their emotions in multicultural aspects, the correlation between different cultures and expressions of emotions, and emotional regulation. It is relevant to the main purpose of trainees to learn at the VET to become employable and adapt to the market with knowledge of EI and the processes of emotional regulation.

C. GOOD PRACTICES IN THE FIELD FOR ESTABLISHING THE EXCHANGE OF KNOW-HOW

Main conclusions

The good practices in the field for establishing the exchange of know-how reported by all 31 participants in the semi-structured interviews are separately shown by every project partner because all of them share a variety of own practice experiences.

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1. How do you measure trainees' needs and expectations at the beginning of the course?

The analysis from Italy

The Italian respondents from the group of trainers shared that when it comes to measuring the trainees' needs and expectations, it emerges that there is an important focus on listening, observation, and practical activities such as roleplaying.

The analysis from Greece

The Creek respondents from the group of trainers shared that they use questionnaires about the expectations of the trainees for the program they will attend. They record the expectations and re-read them at the end of the program. They use discussion, interviews, individual questionnaires to detect training needs, and top-down questionnaires. Before the start of the program, some of them ask the trainees to answer a series of open/semi-structured/ questions to explore the training needs and the additions to the program.

The group of Greek trainers also used mutual appraisal on family issues and then on professional experience and used it to record needs and expectations with a short interview during the first lesson.

The analysis from Slovakia

The Slovak respondents from the group of trainers shared that they use various tools to measure training needs—open questions set in questionnaires, leading a dialogue to understand trainees' expectations, mapping needs and expectations, interviews or discussions. It was mentioned that having written expectations at the beginning of every course brings readily available information and it is a useful tool for the trainers to set the program. They also use interactive games to measure trainees' needs and expectations.

The analysis from Bulgaria

The Bulgarian respondents from the group of trainers shared that they use individual interviews at the beginning of every course to ask trainees to formulate their needs and expectations, preferably by measurable criteria. The trainers also use questionnaires, discussions, and structured dialogues. They mentioned that reviewing every trainee's CV provides information for the level of motivation and expectations. They also use the feedback after the courses to determine to what extent the training needs are met during the courses.

Conclusion: The analysis of good practices underlines a variety of tools, measuring training needs before the courses, and they are relevant for all the project partners—questionnaires, discussions, interviews, interactive games, and role-playing.

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2. How do you measure trainees' level of satisfaction with education at the end of your course?

The analysis of measuring the level of course satisfaction states that every group of trainers in each project partner country uses similar tools, as follows:

The analysis from Italy

The Italian respondents from the group of trainers shared that at the end of a course, the methods mostly used are discussions in focus groups and questionnaires.

The analysis from Greece

The Greek respondents from the group of trainers shared that the set of tools they use contains tests, individual questionnaires, or interviews in groups. At the end of the courses, trainees fill in forms of feedback, discussion regarding the lessons, trainees' evaluation questionnaires, dialogues, or assessments at end of the program.

The analysis from Slovakia

The Greek respondents from the group of trainers shared that they usually use feedback questionnaires or interviews to determine needs fulfillment. The set of tools they used concerning training satisfaction contained: feedback questionnaires, interviews with trainees about their own satisfaction, reflection reviews about the course, feedback diagrams,

The analysis from Bulgaria

The Bulgarian respondents from the group of trainers shared that they usually use feedback forms/questionnaires or discussions/interviews to measure the level of met expectations from the beginning to the end of the courses. Some trainers gauge satisfaction based on the level of knowledge and skills acquired.

Some trainers report that during the course's final session, participants share their impressions of the training, evaluate their progress and the facilitators' work, and make recommendations for improvement.

Conclusion: The analysis of the measurement of the trainees' level of satisfaction at the end of the courses in VET centers shows high similarities across all the groups of respondents in the project partner countries. Trainers employ feedback questionnaires, interviews, course reflection reviews, feedback diagrams, discussions, and evaluations of trainee progress.

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3. What innovative approaches do you usually apply to achieve long-term impact on trainees - their professional development, employability, and adaptation to the labor market?

The analysis of exploring the innovative approaches that are usually applied to achieving long-term impact on trainees in VET centers states that every group of trainers in each project partner country uses a variety of teaching approaches, as follows:

The analysis from Italy

The Italian respondents from the group of trainers shared that the approaches being used are: practical experience, involvement of experts, video tutorials, and role-playing.

The analysis from Greece

The Greek respondents from the group of trainers shared that the approaches that are mostly being used in their VET centers are: role-playing, case studies, consulting support, brainstorming, using interactive media, using the method of simulation, interactive games, action learning, and discussion. applicability of information during the courses.

The analysis from Slovakia

The Slovak respondents from the group of trainers shared that the approaches that are mostly being used in their VET centers are: projective group activities, brainstorming activities, experiential learning, active learning methods, active personal approach for implementing the course information in practice, videos, recorded self-presentations, supervision, coaching, self-management, critical thinking, tasks for self-guided study, and self-activation.

The analysis from Bulgaria

According to the Bulgarian respondents from the group of trainers, the approaches that are most frequently used in their VET centers are group role-playing games, educational techniques for identifying personal unique abilities, Project-based learning Suggestopedia, techniques to improve problem-solving and critical thinking skills, research work, group work for interactive sessions, humor, storytelling, workshops, and Makarenko's approach/discipline and structured work during the courses/.

Conclusion: A thorough analysis conducted with the aid of the project partners reveals that trainers in every VET center employ a variety of tools and techniques to gauge creative approaches to having an active, long-term impact on learners. We discovered that every VET center employs a different strategy to energize learners and provide them with more chances to enhance their professional competence, employability, and labor market readiness.

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We will use the majority of the techniques to improve trainees' professional development, employability, and adaptation to the labor market while developing EI methodology and a program for a three-day training for trainers. These techniques include case studies, storytelling, videos, group workshops, problem-solving and critical thinking approaches, coaching, discussions, etc.

4. **Competences the experts would like to develop in their trainees**. We measured 11 competencies that trainers want to develop in trainees at the VET centers on the following scale: 1 – not at all, 2- a little, 3 – moderate, 4 – much, 5 – very much. The results are placed in diag. 14.

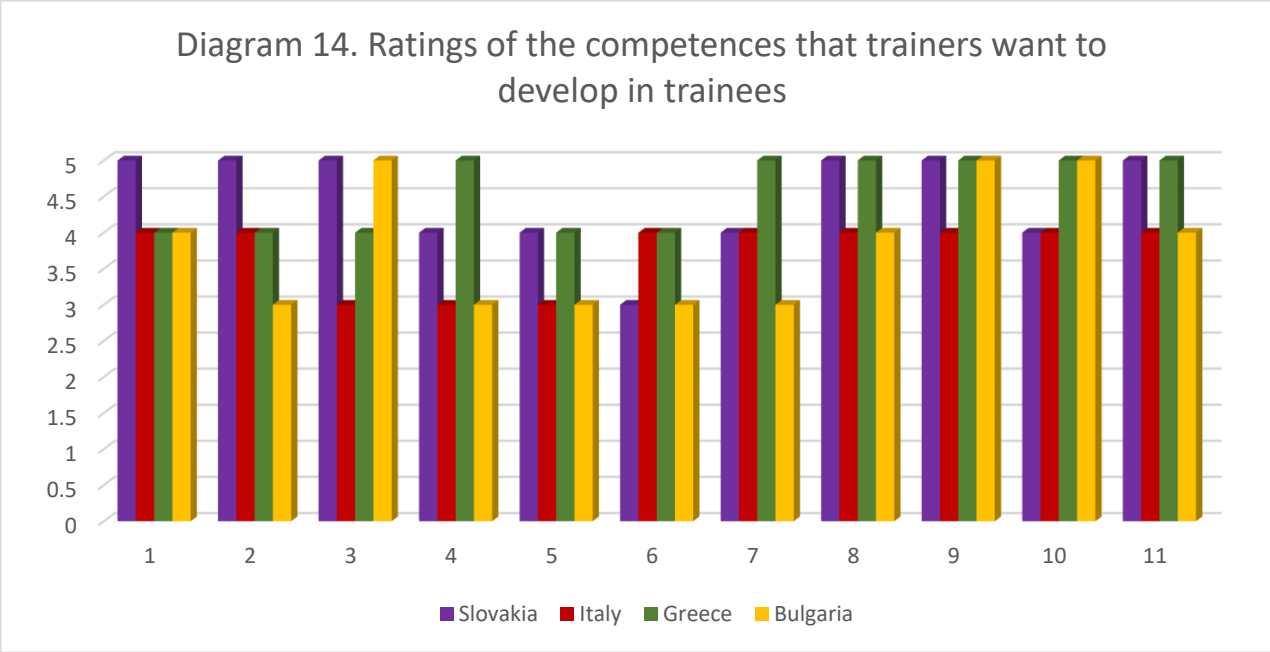


Diagram 14 demonstrates that all respondents from the partner countries rated from level 3 moderate to level 5 very much all competencies: self-awareness of their needs, perceptions of emotions – their own and others, understanding the emotion, using emotions in different situations, problem-solving, resilience and stress management, conflict resolution, emotional regulation. Bulgarian trainees have more varied ratings of their competencies than trainers from other countries.

Conclusion: As a result of the survey data, we conclude that all the mentioned competencies that were rated by the experts can be included as modules in an international program for all VET centers to facilitate the development of trainers' and trainees' EI abilities.

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Results of the structured and semi-structured interviews with the trainees and conclusions

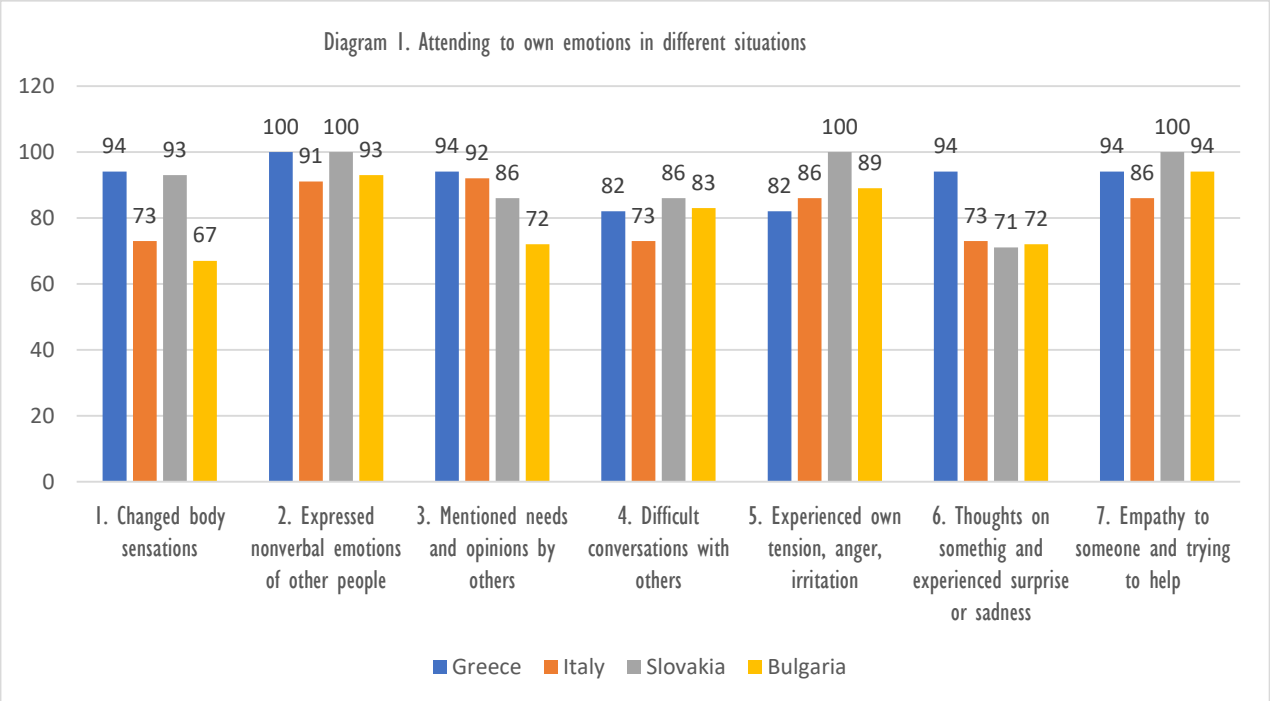
A. INCREASING TRAINEES' COMPETENCIES IN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE INDIVIDUAL'S SUCCESS IN LEARNING, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, AND GROWTH, VOCATIONAL SELF-ESTEEM, DECISION-MAKING, ADAPTATION, AND WELL-BEING.

To be able to strengthen the emotional intelligence competencies that make trainees successful, we studied first the components of emotional intelligence.

Main results and conclusions

COMPONENTS OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

1. Awareness of own emotions. We analyzed the answers to seven situations that can activate participants to vigorously process emotional information measured by a dichotomous scale of yes/no. The results in diag.1 illustrates two types of emotional variations.



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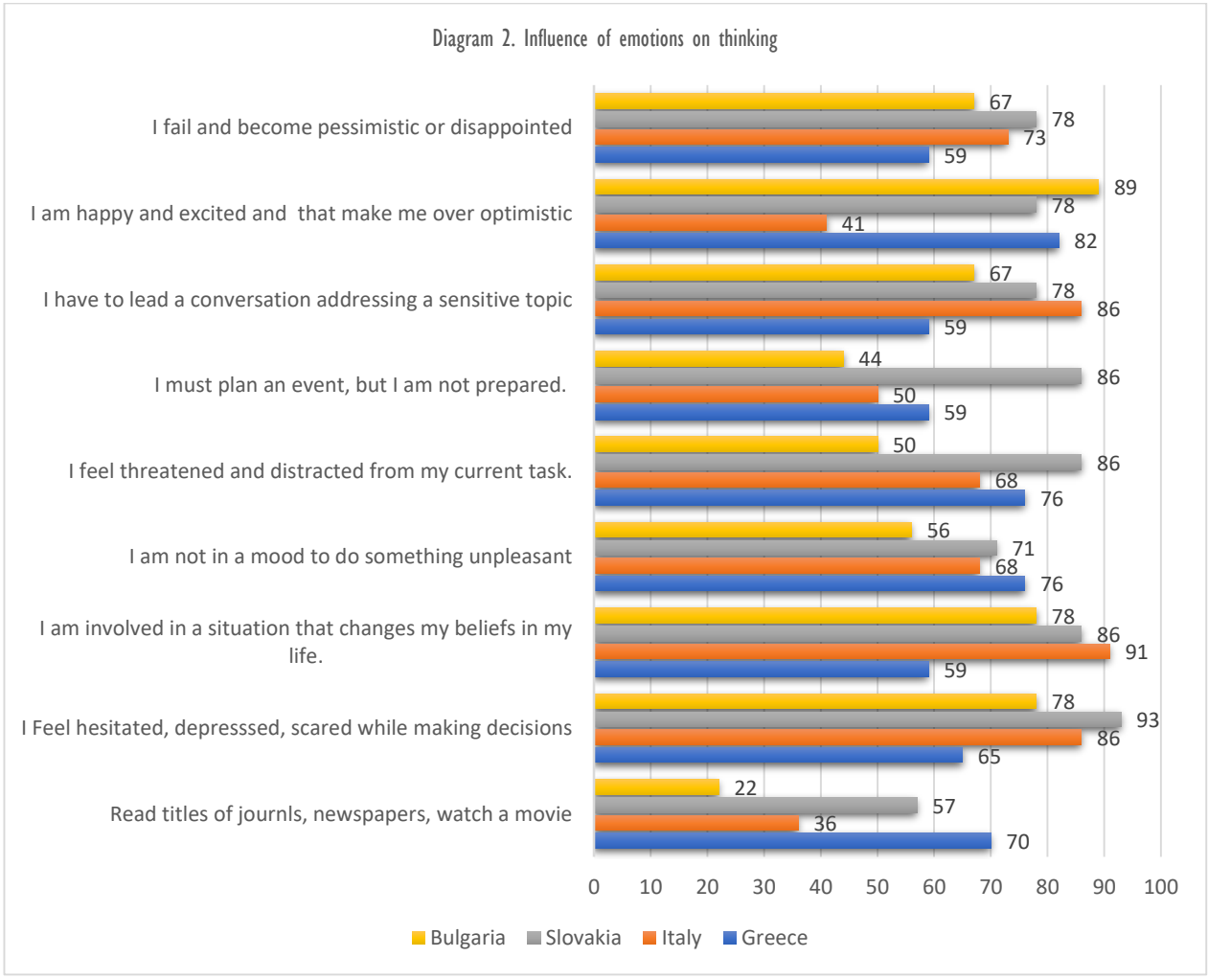
The first type is the different emotional potential of the studied situations. For example, the most emotional situations present noticing the nonverbal emotions of other people and expressing empathy for someone's emotions, and helping her/him. Ninety to 100% of the participants in the survey said that in these two situations they respond emotionally. The other two situations have a little less emotional potential, namely the dynamics of own body sensations and experiencing negative emotions, such as own tension, anger, and irritation. People attend less in social interactions with others when hearing others express their needs and hearing contradictory thoughts and when see something unexpected.
The second type of emotional variation is the cross-cultural differences in the emotional reactivity of the trainees from different countries. First, in general, trainees show a significantly higher amplitude of thinking about their emotions actively in the first, third, fourth, and fifth situations compared to other situations. Second, in most situations, the Greek trainees pay more attention to their emotions than the trainees of other nationalities.

Conclusion: The results of the survey show the need for trainers to teach trainees in a VET center to use various focuses of attention, i.e., to outline what situation trainees to pay attention to and to differentiate elements in various circumstances as sources of their emotions.

2. ***Effects of own emotions on thinking.*** Emotions of people direct their thoughts about important things in their life. We measured nine moments in which the trainees' emotions can change their thinking by using a dichotomous yes/no scale. The results of the answers are shown in diag. 2, and they reveal the following aspects:

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(a) In general, most situations that we included in the survey are evaluated as contexts where the trainee's emotions can change their thinking. The percentage of participants who have pointed out such moments vary from 45% to 93%.

(b) However, there are significant cultural differences in the evaluation of the situations by the trainees from all four countries. Slovak trainees point to four situations that strengthen the effects of their emotions on their thinking, e.g., reading materials and watching movies and when doing what they do not want to do. Italian trainees focus on a situation that brings life changes when they are engaged in conversation on sensitive topics. Slovak trainees note the negative emotions in decision-making, threatening, and distracting situations, planning without preparation, and negative emotions resulting from failure. In contrast,

(c) Bulgarian trainees mention that happiness and optimism direct their thinking.

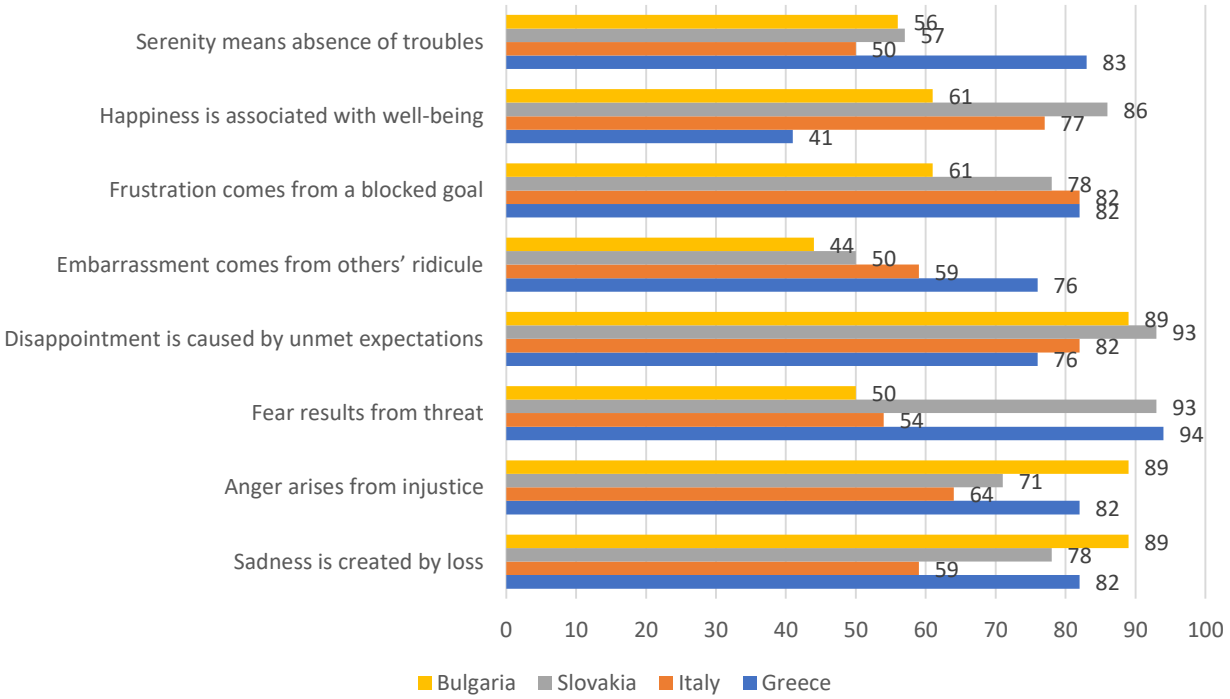
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***Conclusion*:** The results demonstrate that in all contexts experiencing negative and positive emotions may determine the ways people think about their emotions. Analyzing in class such situations from different points of view, such as goals, and interactions with others, to process different pieces of information about the circumstances they face could help trainees to learn how to use their emotions and undertake behaviors that can lead to successful outcomes.

3. Understanding of emotions. To understand their own emotions, people ascribe meanings to different emotions. We studied eight emotions that trainees were required to ascribe meanings. We evaluate this process of sense-making by applying a dichotomous yes/no scale. As we introduced meanings of emotions that are consistently confirmed by research, we believe that acceptable interpretations of emotions that are shown by less than 80% of the participants are not accurate or trainees think simultaneously about different things. The results in diag. 3 reveal important tendencies of trainees' understanding of the listed emotions.

Diagram 3. Distribution of the meanings of emotions



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(a) Disappointment has the most precise interpretation with variations of 76% to 93% of the trainees. In contrast, less accurate are the meanings of four emotions - fear, embarrassment, happiness, and serenity, which values vary from 50% to 85%. It is important to emphasize that the low accuracy may reflect a lack of knowledge or combinations of emotions. Fear and happiness are basic emotions, but social emotions are more complex. For example, the experience of anger resulting from injustice can be connected with feeling respect for some colleagues. In addition to that, based on personal experience in work and life, people make different associations between circumstances, events, social interactions, and the emotions they experience.
(b) Another finding is the significant cultural variation of emotional understanding. Greek trainees provided more accurate interpretations of fear, embarrassment, and serenity, Italian trainees – of the experienced frustration, Slovak trainees – of their fear, disappointment, and happiness, and Bulgarians – of their emotions of anger and sadness.

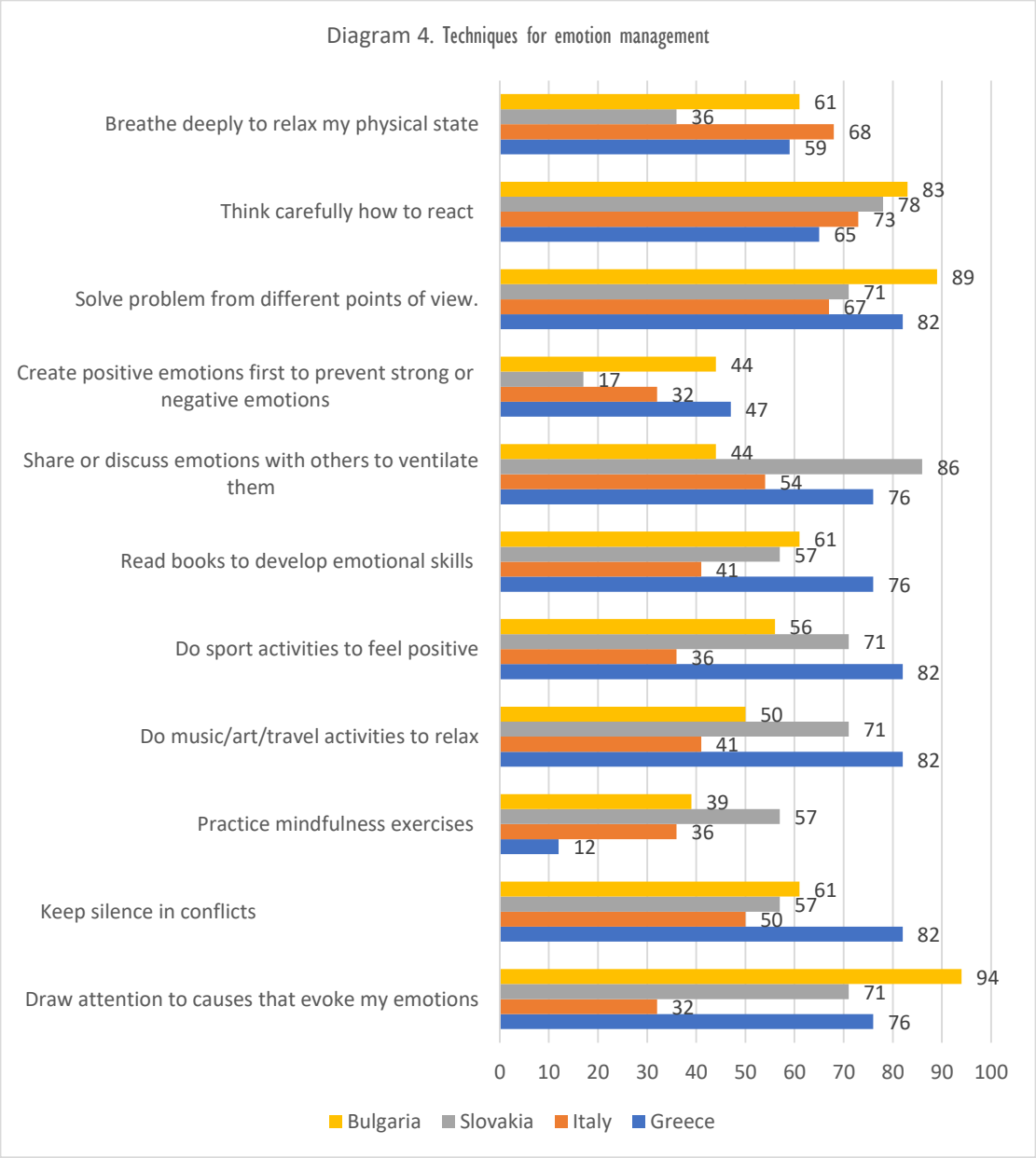
Conclusion. Given the above empirical facts, we believe that the training in emotional intelligence must include a module on understanding emotions. Such content of a course can directly facilitate the communication among people, mutual exchange of ideas, opinions, and construction of meanings in work and life, or cooperation. Trainees can become more confident and develop clearer professional self-esteem.

4. Management of emotions. People use various practices to reduce or transform their negative emotions. We studied eleven approaches for emotion management, which trainees can accept or reject by using a dichotomous yes/no scale. In general, to feel emotionally comfortable, managing emotions is an immensely helpful method. The results are placed in diag. 4 illustrate several aspects of individual preferences for managing emotions.

(a) The practices to manage emotions vary on their activity. For instance, trainees prefer less to practice mindfulness exercises and to create positive emotions to prevent the emergence of strong negative emotions, varying from 36% to 60%. Much more trainees prefer to analyze the reasons for their emotions, undertake sports activities, deep breathing, read books, solve problems from different points of view, and plan their reactions to various circumstances, varying from 60% to 90% of the participants.
(b) The analysis of the empirical data established substantial cross-cultural differences in the emotion management approaches. Greek trainees are more active in applying approaches to reduce negative emotions in conflict situations, making art, sports, or entertaining, and creating positive emotions to prevent the emergence of negative experiences varying from 47% to 83%. Eighty-three to 94% of Bulgarians prefer more than others to think about the reasons for their emotions creative problem solving apply different points of view and plan their reactions on various occasions. Slovak trainees prefer more than others to practice mindfulness and to discuss their emotions with other people (57%). Italian trainees choose more than other trainees to use mindfulness and breathing to overcome their negative emotions (54% to 68%).

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Conclusions. Our survey results confirm our idea that many approaches are applicable to trainees to feel in a positive way. Therefore, it is reasonable to include such techniques as an essential module in education in emotional intelligence in the VET centers.

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B. INCREASING TRAINEES' OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT THROUGH INTRODUCTION OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE TRAINING

Main results and conclusions

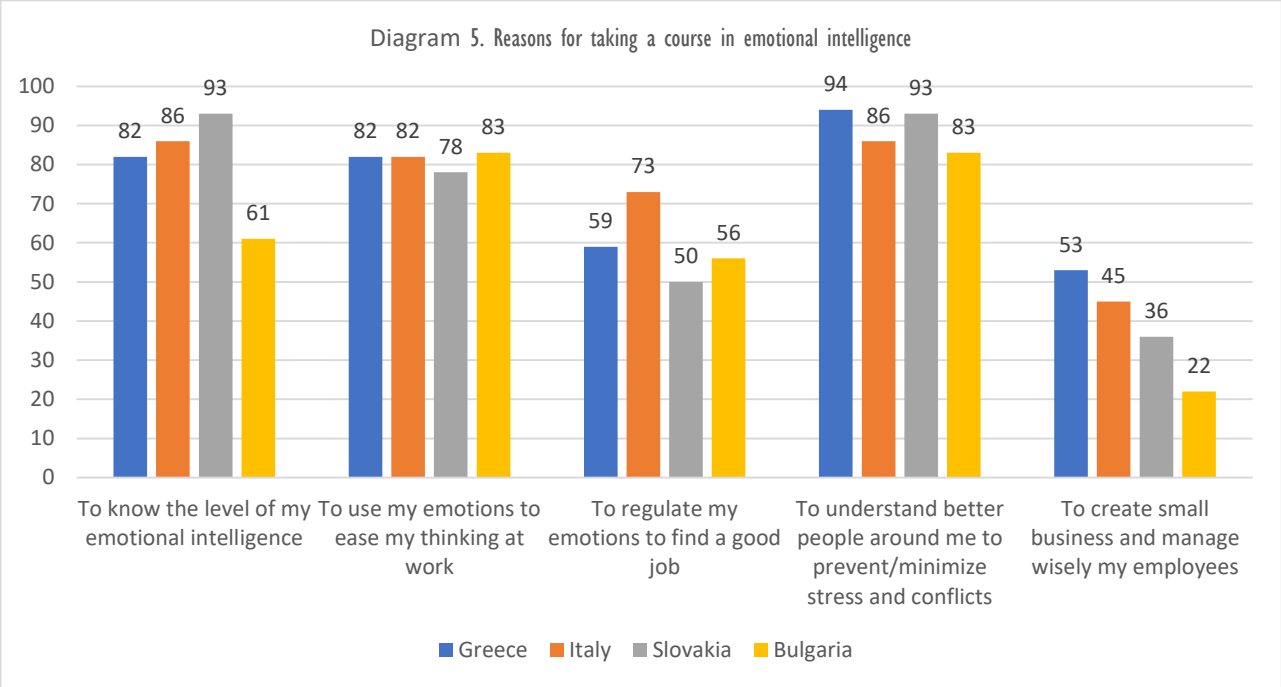
1. The **trainees' impression of the current education in the VET centers** in the four countries that we studied, reveals a different picture of the inclusion of knowledge of emotions. It seems that emotional knowledge is available for trainees at different levels in the four countries. Emotional knowledge is mostly taught in Italy (59%) and Greece (53%), then in Slovakia (43%) and the least in Bulgaria (33%). However, we believe that such knowledge should be provided in all European countries because emotional intelligence competencies are related to all areas of people's personal and professional lives.

2. Reasons for taking a course in emotional intelligence. To effectively deal with their own and others' emotions, people need to acquire specific knowledge and competencies in a specialized course in emotional intelligence. Trainees can learn how to recognize and be aware of their and others' emotions and to use these emotions to achieve a variety of goals, namely, to become confident in their potential to succeed in everything they do, to find better jobs, or create their own business, to practice sophisticated management skills, to prevent conflicts, make decisions, to communicate effectively with other people, etc.

We measured five key motivations of trainees to participate in an emotional intelligence course in the VET center by using a dichotomous yes/no scale. The motivations to learn emotional intelligence competencies, as seen in diag. 5, vary in importance.

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(a) What people want to learn most is to understand other people to manage conflicts and stress, and a little bit less to learn what their emotional intelligence is to use their emotions at work (varying from 82% to 94%). They want to a moderate to a high extent to learn the level of their emotional intelligence (varying 61% to 93%) and to use their emotional skills to think more effectively (varying 78% to 83%) and to a lower extent - to control their emotions (varying from 50% to 73%). Trainees want at the least extent to establish a small business and manage people (varying 22% to 53%).

(b) The motivations for participating in a course in emotional intelligence to use emotions for enhancing thinking and reducing stress at work are similar across the four countries. Greek and Slovak trainees are more motivated to take such courses (82% to 94%) than Italian and Bulgarian trainees (50% to 86%.) More apparent are the cross-cultural differences of the other three motivations – the knowledge about own emotional competencies and regulating them, to establish a small business and undertake management functions varying from 22% to 70%.

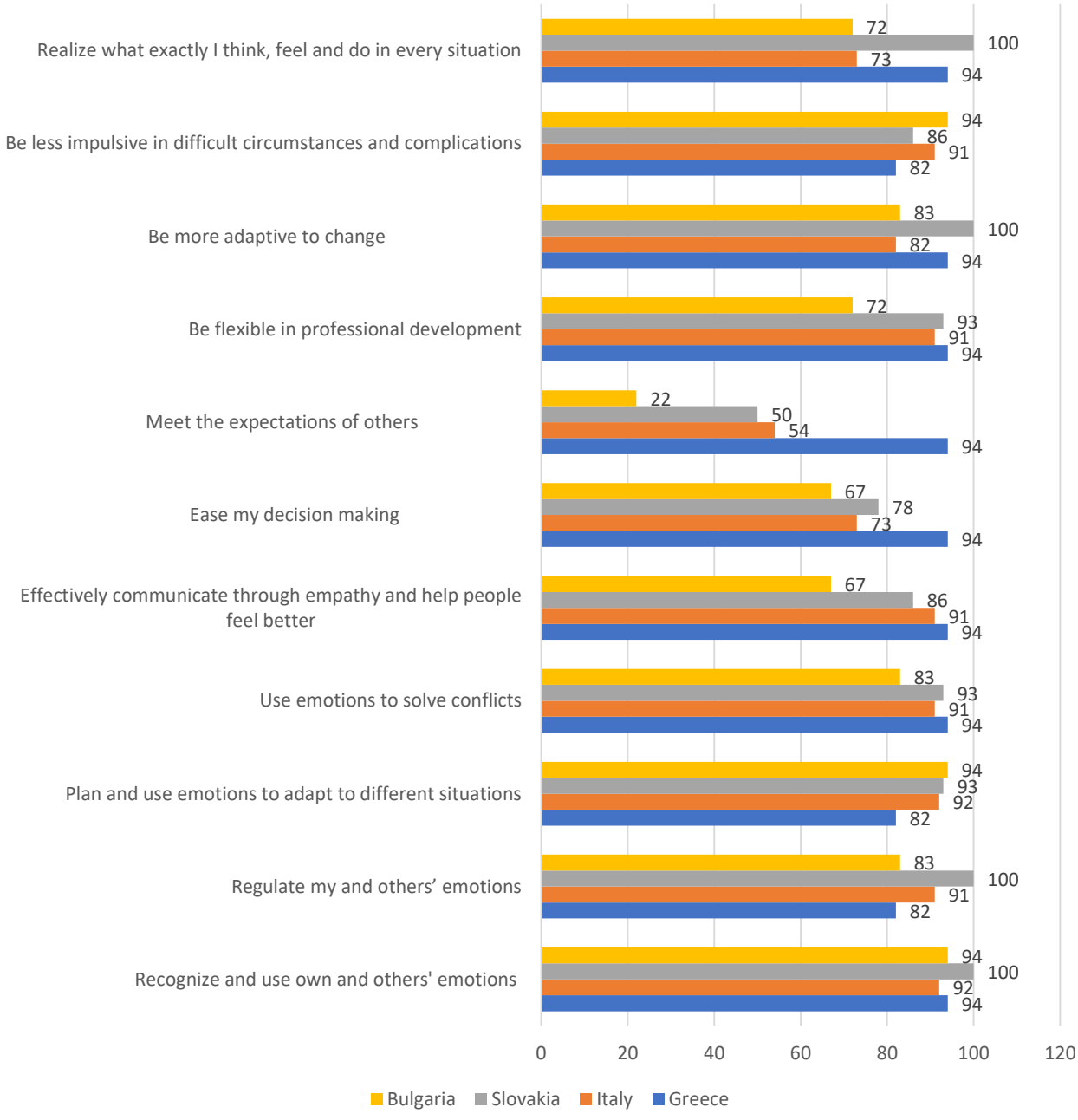
Conclusions. Considering the motivational differences among the trainees, it makes sense to suggest that trainers may flexibly address a variety of needs when building different emotional competencies of their trainees. The same emotional competency could satisfy the unique needs and desires of trainees. The multiplicity of trainees' desires has strong motivational potential for the effective building of training materials and for teaching emotional intelligence.

3. Expectations of trainees to develop emotional skills in a VET course. We asked the trainees to evaluate whether it is possible to develop knowledge and emotional intelligence competencies during their education in a VET course. We applied a dichotomous yes/no scale. The results regarding this possibility are exhibited in diag. 6.

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Diagram 6. Expectation of trainees to develop emotional intelligence competencies



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The trainees have extremely elevated expectations for building emotional intelligence competencies, especially the participants from Greece and Slovakia varying from 70% to 100%. Relatively lower are the expectations of Italian and Bulgarian trainees. Only two expectations –meeting others' expectations andfacilitatinge the process of decision-making – vary among the trainees from the four cultures varying from 22% to 74%; again, a small percentage of Bulgarians (22%) and a substantial number of Greeks (94%) expect to build emotional intelligence competencies.

Conclusions. No matter how realistic the trainee's expectations are, they point to the need for the introduction of the specialized educational program of VET centers to update their approach in teaching trainees to develop not only professional but also emotional intelligence competencies. These competencies would help trainees to achieve a variety of occupational and job-related goals, occupational esteem, and well-being. The practice of trainers to establish the needs and expectations of trainees is a helpful practice and it is reasonable to be extended with a focus on emotional intelligence too.

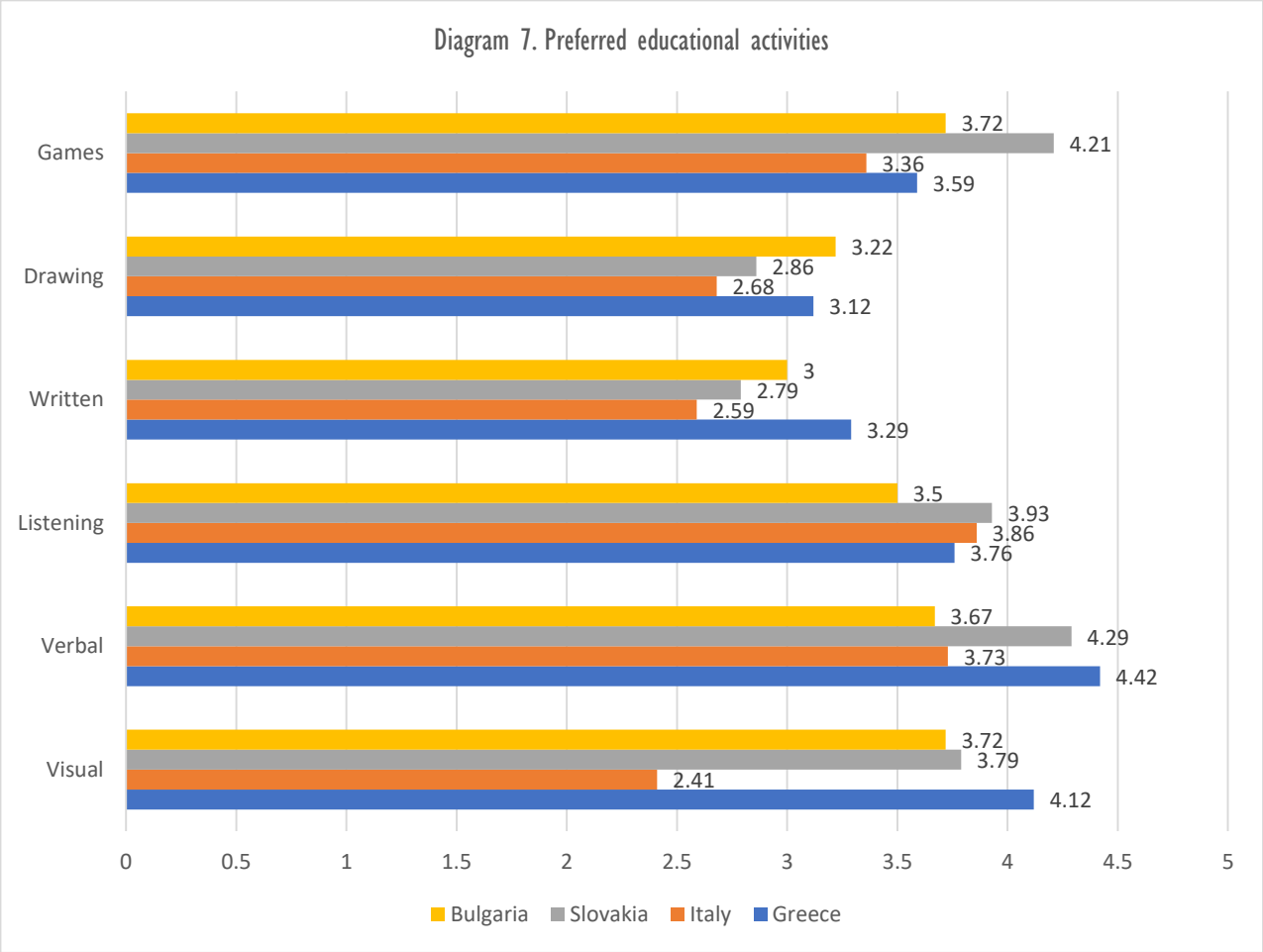
B. IMPROVING TRAINEES' EMPLOYABILITY SKILLS AND ADAPTATION TO THE LABOR MARKET THROUGH STRENGTHENING THEIR KNOWLEDGE AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE COMPETENCES

Main results and conclusions

1. Preferred educational activities during a course in emotional intelligence. We studied six educational tools to facilitate trainees' learning: (a) *visual* - reading, case studies, watching, (b) *oral* - states, questions, giving advice or an opinion, discussions, (c) *listening* – conversations, discussions, music, speech, (d) *writing* - stories, reports, checklists, (e) *drawing* - graphs, maps, diagrams, and (f) *playing* - games, role-playing, simulations. The tools were assessed on personal preference on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 – not at all to 5 - very much. The results regarding the activities trainees like better are seen in diag. 7.

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In general, the trainees prefer more three activities – verbal, listening, and games (from 3.26 to 4.29) over the other three activities – visual, written, and drawing (from 2.4 to 4.12). The latter three activities seem less acceptable for the Italian trainees (from 2.4 to 2.6) in comparison to the trainees from the other three countries.

To summarize, all practices are acceptable for participants to build emotional intelligence competencies, as the mean values exceed the theoretical average value.

Conclusion. All practices make sense to trainees and are useful for educating a course in emotional intelligence. Therefore, the trainers in the VET centers can flexibly combine the practices in patterns depending on their educational goals. More effective would be the active learning approaches, which require practical and discussion exercises for developing trainees' emotional competencies.

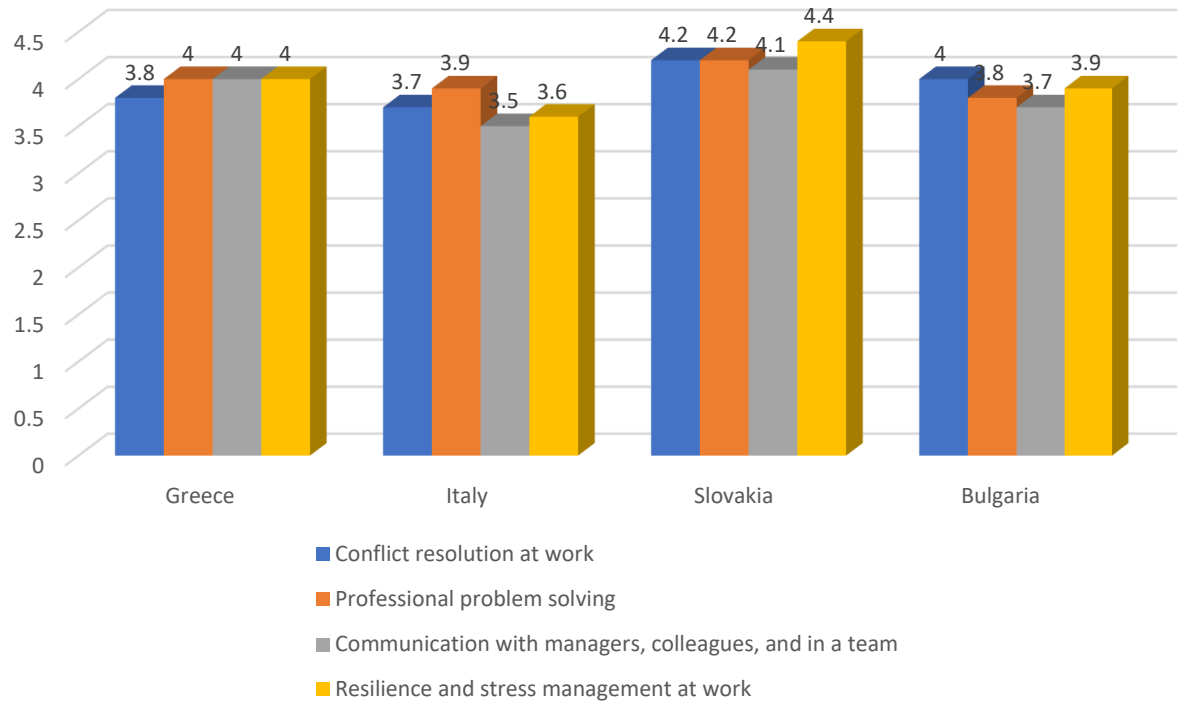
2. Utility of the competencies acquired in a VET course for personal employability. We studied two types of skills: (a) four transferrable skills – problem-solving, communication with managers, colleagues, and in a team, resilience and coping with demanding situations, and conflict resolution, and (b) seven emotional intelligence competencies related to personal needs, various situational, and using emotions.

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The competencies were assessed on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 – not at all to 5 - very much. The results regarding the utility of the two groups of competencies for finding an appropriate job are placed in diag. 8 and 9.

Diagram 8. Utility of transferrable competencies for trainees' emplyability

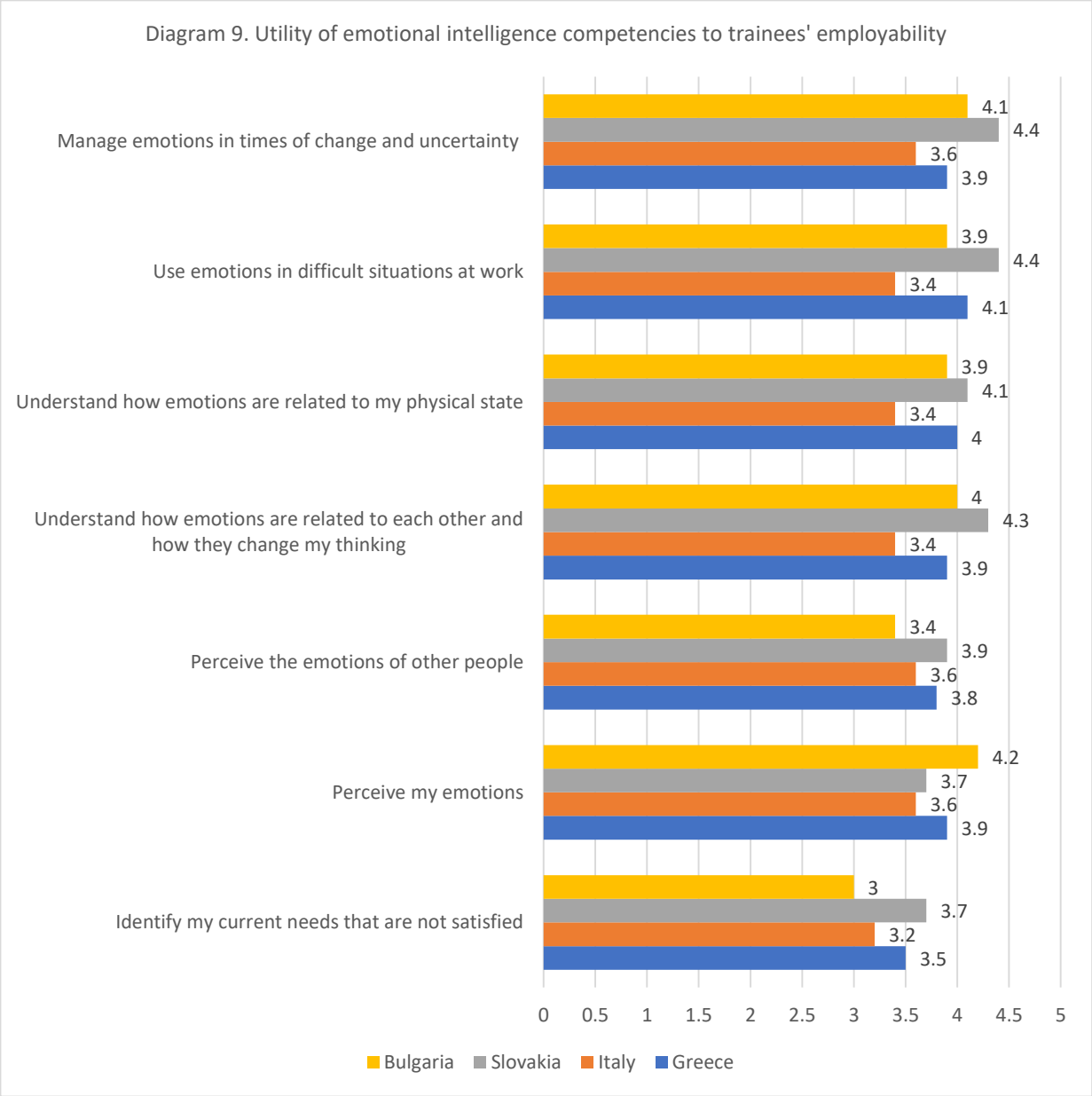


All trainees with a slight predominance of Slovak trainees (from 4.1 to 4.4) express the opinion that their transferrable competencies are especially useful for them to find the jobs they desire. In contrast, Italian trainees think that these four skills have less utility for being employable (from 3.5 to 3.9).

Conclusion. This survey result illustrates, as other research data across the world, that the professional potential of the four competencies – problem-solving and resolving conflicts, communication, and resilience - is particularly important for trainees to be flexible in their job search because this potential is the core of working in many occupations. Consequently, educators in any VET center need to put special effort to teach trainees to acquire these competencies by applying the above-analyzed practices above.

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All studied emotional intelligence competencies vary from moderate to a high extent (from 3.3 to 4.4). Somewhat less is the expected utility of the awareness about the satisfaction of own needs varying from 3 to 3.5. These results are remarkably similar to the common trend of transferable competencies. Therefore, emotional intelligence is as important for trainees' employability as the work-related transferrable skills of decision-making and solving problems, communication with colleagues, and stress resilience.

Another important finding is that Slovak and Bulgarian trainees assess the emotional competencies as particularly useful (from 3.7 to 4.4), whereas the Italian trainees evaluate the utility of these competencies as low (from 3.2 to 3.6). No matter these cultural differences all the utilities of emotional competencies are important for getting employability.

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Conclusion. First, based on the current findings, we can conclude without any doubt that emotional intelligence competencies are among the essential individual factors for doing successful job searches and employability and should be trained in a specialized course in the VET centers. Second, such course could be beneficial not only for trainees from the same culture but also for teaching an international group of trainees in any VET center, as the cross-cultural interaction in education extends the opportunity to work with different points of view in developing both transferrable and emotional intelligence competencies.

FINAL CONCLUSION:

The results of the semi-structured interviews showed that both trainers and trainees needed more training in recognizing emotions, using and labeling emotions, emotional regulation, and as a whole, EI. With the help of these discoveries, we now have all the information to create a training course that contains a curriculum, a step-by-step educational procedure, and training materials.

The survey data on determining training needs has the following significant effects:

1. As a result of this survey and the data analysis, we are having enough information to elaborate a methodology that will support individual learning success, professional development, and growth for long-term unemployed, emigrants, employees, students, and trainers based on survey data.
2. The training program based on declared training needs from both groups of respondents will be adjusted to the multinational and intercultural differences.
3. The training program and courses will be designed mainly in a practical approach, focused on the learning process through group work, role-playing, storytelling, case studies, simulations, and discussions.
4. The survey results demonstrate the key competencies of the target groups that they want to develop during the courses. The topics that were identified and will be set in the program are as follows: problem-solving, communication with managers, colleagues, and in a team, resilience and coping with demanding situations, conflict resolution, and emotional intelligence competencies such as perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions.
5. The survey data shows the level of trainees' employability and labor market readiness and can be developed successfully if we add in EI courses topics like time management, communication skills, self-confidence, resilience, emotional regulation, social recognition, and respect for others.
6. We determined the approaches that professionals and instructors have employed and would like to employ in the courses to introduce and integrate the knowledge of emotional intelligence into the process of vocational training in VET centers.

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7. We have the resources to elaborate a methodology in EI that can raise awareness of the importance of emotional intelligence in a person's success in the learning process, and in trainees' professional life. The progress of the learning process during the EI program with several courses can be measured by using different assessment tools such as feedback questionnaires, interviews, course reflection reviews, feedback diagrams, discussions, and evaluations of trainee progress

During the C1 training in Sofia, we will work with specialists from each partner country, who will provide us with their input on the applicability and adaptation of the prepared materials.

The Analysis is written by the team of FDEI,
Bulgaria

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