

Joint and bilingual classes to strengthen intercultural relations in VET

North Macedonia

DESCRIPTION

In vocational education schools in North Macedonia, **teaching is separately delivered in three languages: Macedonian, Albanian and Turkish**. To enhance **cooperation and interaction among students who learn in different languages, several educational policies and practices have been introduced in recent years**.

Since 2020, for example, intercultural relations in education have been strengthened through the organisation of **joint classes** in which students not only learn together professional subjects but also learn **professional terminology in another local language**. These classes enable students to **connect with peers from different ethnic backgrounds, communicate, and collaborate to achieve common goals**.

To further develop intercultural competences, schools have started planning and implementing **bilingual classes and extracurricular activities** (Macedonian-Albanian or Macedonian-Turkish). This organisation depends on the capacity and the awareness of the school.

Currently, **more than 20 vocational schools** across North Macedonia organise **joint classes** where instruction is provided in two or even three languages.

IMPACT

This practice has led to a **reduction in prejudices and stereotypes** among young people as they recognise that what truly matters are the **skills and competencies** they acquire, since the **labour market values qualified and capable workers**, regardless of the language of instruction in secondary school.

This approach represents a **good model** for countries where teaching is conducted in two or three languages and students from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds are often separated in their education.