



## Newsletter – Edition June 2026

# A Farewell to Kaisu and Grit during AGM in Mainz

During the EBBD Annual General Meeting and training event held in Mainz, Germany, this spring, members gathered to bid a heartfelt farewell to two valued colleagues: **Kaisu Luukka of Finland** and **Grit Arnold of Germany**.

Kaisu Luukka has been a member of the EBBD Board of Directors since 2018 and has served as the Second Vice Chairperson throughout that time. As one of the driving forces behind EBBD from its early days, she has made an outstanding contribution to the development and success of EBBD we see today. Her commitment, expertise and unwavering support have left a lasting mark. As Kaisu begins a well-deserved retirement, **Hilla Helasaari of Finland** has stepped into the role and will continue her work on the Board for the next three years.

The AGM also marked the departure of **Grit Arnold**, who has served as EBBD Secretary for the past three years. Grit's dedication, professionalism and passion for the organisation have been greatly appreci-



ated by colleagues across the network. As she moves on to new challenges, the role of Secretary has been assumed by **Tim Woytczak**.

EBBD extends its sincere gratitude to both Kaisu and Grit for their years of service, commitment and friendship. Their contributions have helped shape the organisation and strengthen its community. They will be greatly missed, and their legacy will remain an important part of EBBD's story for years to come.

Finally, we want to thank everyone who participated in the AGM and training event in Mainz. Once again, we experienced an inspiring get together with the EBBD family. Special thanks to GSW Mainz for hosting us and making everyone feel welcome.



# New EBBD colleges

## Welcoming Creascola Bilingual School to the EBBD Network

We are pleased to welcome **Creascola Bilingual School in Budaörs, Hungary**, as a new member of the EBBD network.

Creascola is a vibrant educational community of 380 students and 60 teachers across 12 grade levels. The school offers the full Hungarian National Curriculum, enriched with forward-looking subjects such as Business Studies, EU Studies, and 3D Technics. As a Cambridge-licensed institution, Creascola places a strong emphasis on English-lan-



guage learning, with subjects like Global Perspectives, Mathematics, and Science taught entirely in English—creating a truly bilingual and internationally minded learning environment.

Creascola joined EBBD with a clear vision: to provide its students with internationally recognised certificates that strengthen their prospects when applying to universities abroad. At the same time, the school sought to expand its European network and build meaningful partnerships—goals that align perfectly with EBBD’s mission.

The benefits are already visible. Students gain valuable, recognised credentials, while the school continues to grow its international connections and collaborative opportunities, reinforcing its identity as a globally oriented institution.

A great example of this collaboration in action is Creascola’s recent exchange with **Koning Willem College** from ‘s-Hertogenbosch in the Netherlands. During the visit, 24 students and two teachers took part in joint presentations, shared meals, and business classes. The exchange provided an enriching experience for all involved and showcased the real impact of EBBD partnerships.

We are excited to have Creascola Bilingual School as part of our network and look forward to future collaborations.

**Welcome to EBBD!**

## Bodø videregående skole – the first EBBD school outside EU

**Bodø videregående skole**, in English “Bodø Upper Secondary School” is located in the city centre of **Bodø, Norway**, the first Norwegian city north of the Polar Circle. It is a school combined with both general and vocational study programmes: With around 230 teachers and 1300 pupils, it is one of the largest upper secondary schools in Norway.

### Academic tracks:

- Specialization in General studies, focus on either languages/social sciences (incl. business subjects) or science subjects.
- Top Business study programme, as the previous but with primary focus on business subjects, international relations and EBBD.
- Dance and music studies
- Healthcare with general studies

### Vocational tracks:

- Building and construction
- Electrical engineering and computer technology
- Healthcare, childhood and youth development
- Restaurant and food processing
- Sales, service and tourism
- Technological and industrial production
- A study programme for Aviation mechanics for the whole country



Bodø Upper Secondary School was introduced to EBBD through collaboration with Rijn Ijssel and Cynthia Wooldrink. After attending the EBBD Annual Training Event in Den Bosch/Tilburg in 2025 to learn more, they realized that this could be relevant for them.

Bodø Upper Secondary School chosen Top Business Track (“Toplinje Business/TLB”) as one of the core areas. EBBD programme can be used to make the TLB program even more sought-after by offering students the opportunity to earn EBBD certification. TLB is a program where students earn a general college entrance qualification while also focusing in depth on business subjects such as marketing, entrepreneurship, and financial management. They also get an international focus through participation in the Business Game and Erasmus+ projects mostly with partners in Germany and the Netherlands.

Students currently in Vg1 will have the opportunity to earn EBBD certification upon completing Vg3, i.e., in the spring of 2028. EBBD-relevant activities are already planned for them this fall, when they will be in Vg2, as well as for the next Vg1 class starting in August.

Bodø Upper Secondary School is very happy to have become a part of the EBBD community and want to make the most of this opportunity in the years to come.

**Welcome!**

*Text by: Jan-Martin Sørensen*

# Students from International Seminar Volunteer Across Helsinki

In March Helsinki was filled with the spirit of helping as 150 international students spread out across the city to take part in volunteer work. During the day, the students had the opportunity to experience in practice how small actions can make a big difference.

The students participated in volunteer activities as part of Helsinki Business College's international seminar. The aim of the day was to bring opportunities for helping others closer to young people and encourage them to think about how they can pass on good deeds in their everyday lives.

## Helping Around the City

During the volunteer day, students visited 18 different locations across Helsinki. They helped with a variety of tasks, including food aid, organizing activities, event preparations, and everyday tasks within different community organizations.

The locations were found through the Commu platform, which connects people offering help with those in need of it. The day gave students the opportunity to learn about Finnish organizations and see in practice what volunteer work in Finland looks like.

Hilla Helasaari, Head of International Affairs at Helsinki Business College, explains that the goal of the volunteer day was to encourage students to think about helping others in a new way.

"This time we wanted to encourage young people to think about others instead of themselves, and about how they can pass on good with small actions. It is good for all of us to sometimes reflect on what we can do for others and focus, even for a moment, on the people around us.

When you start noticing the people around you and are able to offer help even in the middle of everyday life, it is truly valuable. It gives strength to both the



person offering help and the one receiving it. It is also a way to build a safer environment for all of us."

## Students Helping and Learning

Timo van Zandbrink, a teacher from Rijn IJssel in the Netherlands who participated in the seminar for the second time and described the volunteer day as one of the highlights of the event.

"The best part was visiting the organization Kaapatut Lapset (Abducted Children). We worked on their social media by updating their online training and planning and producing TikTok videos to raise awareness about child abductions and their prevention."

Students David, Letizia and Ivana from FIM in Munich also found the day especially meaningful. They spent their day at Maunula House baking cupcakes with children.

"It was a wonderful experience. The children were happy, and it was great to share the moment with them. It was also nice to talk with many different kinds of people."

## Small Actions, Big Impact

Helsinki Business College has organized international seminars for more than 20 years. This year the theme focused on helping others and building a sense of community—the idea that everyone can do good in their own way.

For many participants, a one-day volunteering experience can be the first step toward active citizenship. At the same time, it reminds us that helping others does not require big gestures—sometimes it is enough to pause for a moment and notice the people around us.

*Text by: Iida Blomqvist*



# ROC Midden Nederland, Utrecht, in Porto

PORTO  
2026



Our EBBD programme includes an overseas experience for every year group. We take first-year students on a two-day trip to Brussels, where we visit the European Parliament and the European Commission.

With the second-year students, we spend a week in a European city. This year, that was Porto. For a number of years now, we have had a partnership with a Portuguese vocational school, Profitecla, with whom we have set up a programme. Eight weeks prior to the trip, our students and the Portuguese students prepare for the visit. Together, they draw up a programme to be carried out during the week.

The main aim is to expose the students to the other culture through planned activities, but perhaps above all through unplanned activities. Once again this year, the Dutch and Portuguese

students managed to build a bond, which led to many extra-curricular activities (read: going out together).

In addition to the planned activities, there is also plenty of opportunity to explore the city and its surroundings. Porto is a wonderful city for this. The city centre is authentic, lively and easy to walk around. For the sporty student, there is also the option of heading to the beach and taking surfing lessons.

This year, we had another great opportunity to connect. After having had good discussions in Mainz with our Portuguese colleague Antonio Peres, we continued these discussions on site at the Externato Santa Clara in Porto.

We had an in-depth discussion about potential collaborations and met some of Antonio's enthusiastic and dedicated colleagues. I am confident that this will lead to a fruitful partnership.

*Text by: Mark van Oosten*

## Alumni EBBD

As the end of the school year is near we hope that you have been able to reward (part of) your students the certificate of excellence EBBD. An excellent moment to invite your EBBD alumni to join the EBBD alumni LinkedIn group. This offers graduates the opportunity to (re)connect with their peers while allowing EBBD e.V. to maintain contact with them.

A strong alumni network increases the visibility and impact of the EBBD programme and supports both current students and graduates.

***All EBBD coordinators should have admin rights in the LinkedIn group. Please reach out to Cynthia Woolderink, if you are not connected yet and/or do not have the admin rights to add your alumni.***

LinkedIn



# Towards a European VET Qualification in International Business

*From a European joint certificate to a European VET qualification in International Business Studies with a focus on sustainability, work-based learning, transversal skills, internationalisation and innovation.*

*Five EBBD colleges, together with a VET academy in Malta, EfVET, CINOP and the University of Leipzig submitted a proposal to experiment on a European VET qualification in International Business, with EBBD as basis, on 8 April 2026.*



*The proposal was submitted in the Erasmus+ call for policy experimentation 2026, on topic 8: 'Vocational Education and Training: Improving transparency and recognition of VET qualifications'*

The current EBBD certificate is implemented, by most colleges, as an additional certificate and not (fully) recognised as a joint VET qualification, nor systematically embedded in quality assurance mechanisms and continuously updated in structured dialogue with employers. These gaps in formal recognition, system connectivity and sustainable governance are being addressed in this project and will lead to increased potential for learners' mobility and employability across borders. One of the key parts in this project and joint qualification will be a 'mobility window' in which learners rotate among partner colleges.

## The core objectives of the project are to:

- 1. Design and pilot a European VET qualification at both EQF level 4 and 5 in International Business Studies, with a strong accent on, sustainability, work-based learning, innovation, mobility and transversal skills, that:**
  - a. is based on the foundation of this existing joint certificate and network: EBBD ([www.ebbd.eu](http://www.ebbd.eu)),
  - b. is integrated fully or partly in at least two regional/national frameworks and or systems in the participating countries referenced to EQF of these countries or regions;
  - c. has a mobility window embedded in which learners rotate among partners. These mobilities are recognised and certified by the partner colleges using European Digital Credentials for Learning issued from the Europass platform
  - d. has a clear added value for learners, addressing regional, national, and or international labour market needs
  - e. has a learner centred approach, is modular- designed, fostering personalised learning pathways in a work-based learning environment
  - f. is transparent and learning outcomes focused, comparable, and recognisable across European countries, supporting mobility and employability
  - g. has a solid quality assurance system, using EQAVET
  - h. has European competence frameworks, (DigiComp, LifeComp, EntreComp and GreenComp), integrated.
- 2. provide evidence based policy recommendations for further steps and improvements needed to enhance development, implementation and the acceptance and understanding of transnational joint VET programmes within national and/or regional systems across countries**
- 3. provide support for VET colleges to implement a joint VET qualification**

EBBD provides a valuable and relevant real-life platform for this policy experimentation. Five out of six colleges in this consortium already offer EBBD to their learners, bringing proven implementation experience, while the sixth partner – a non EBBD VET college – will provide crucial insight into the requirements, opportunities and challenges of introducing the joint qualification from scratch in a new institutional and regional context.

## Consortium:

1. Rijn IJssel, the Netherlands – coordinator
2. Nazaret Fundazioa, Spain
3. Andrassy Catholic Business Academy, Hungary
4. BSZ1 Leipzig, Germany
5. Business College Helsinki, Finland
6. EfVET, Belgium
7. European Vocational Academy (EVA), Malta
8. University of Leipzig, Germany
9. CINOP, Netherlands

## Associated partners:

1. EUproVET (Europe)
2. European Entrepreneurs (Europe)
3. EBBD e.V. (Europe)
4. ADEGI (Spain)
5. Helsinki Region Chamber of Commerce (Finland)
6. Heves County Chamber of Commerce and Industry (Hungary)
7. Eszterházy Károly Catholic University (Hungary)
8. TKNIKA/ Basque Government (Spain)
9. Malta employers association (Malta)
10. OKA (business association (The Netherlands))

**Fingers crossed that this proposal is granted and of course we will keep you updated.**





# Update EBBD GRACE

## *2024-1-NL01-KA220-VET-000255535, Green competences & Recognition of Achievements through Credentials in EBBD*

After having concluded the research, results were validated and reflected on together with associate partners. This resulted in the selection of six green competences to be implemented in the Unit on Sustainability:

1. valuing sustainability
2. supporting fairness
3. critical thinking
4. systems thinking
5. adaptability
6. action- both individual and collective

### **Plus two pilot micro credentials:**

1. 'Europe and Democracy'
2. 'Internship abroad including international competences'

The research results provided clear guidelines for the design of the unit and the pilot micro-credentials. In Mainz at the EBBD annual training event, members worked on the design of learning activities based on the selected green competences. This provided relevant insights and inspiration for the design of both the unit and the sample learning activities for the test with students and teachers in December 2026 and for the final deliverables of the project on this topic. Both the unit on sustainability and the pilot micro-credentials are ready to be finetuned and evaluated by the project team during the next transnational project meeting in September 2026.

### **Next steps:**

finalising of the unit Sustainability, the sample learning activity, the micro-credentials and the clarification of the steps needed to transfer the micro-credentials and the EBBD certificate to the Europass platform. In December 2026 students and teachers will test the concept deliverables and provide input for further improvement. In January 2027 the team will come together to reflect and validate the results of this test and to prepare the multiplier and training event in Arnhem.





# EBBD Training and EBBD GRACE Multiplier Event April 2027 at Rijn IJssel in Arnhem.

The EBBD training event 2027 will take place in Arnhem. The training will be combined with the EBBD GRACE multiplier event and an EBBD student challenge.



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The event will start with an informal get together on **Wednesday 7 April and continue on Thursday 8 and Friday 9 April. The student challenge will start on Tuesday 6 April.**

Details and the possibility for registration will follow in the December newsletter. If you can't wait to learn more about Arnhem or Rijn IJssel, please have a look at: [Visit Arnhem](#) | [Visit Arnhem](#) and

[150+ mbo-opleidingen in Arnhem en Wageningen! | Rijn IJssel.](#)

## Student challenge

In addition to the training and multiplier event we will invite two students from each EBBD country to take part in the EBBD student challenge. We will initially reach out to the schools that are taking part in EBBD GRACE as full or associate partner. The outcomes of the student challenge will be presented to all of you on the final day of the training and multiplier event.

## Accommodation

**Holiday Inn Express Arnhem, Nieuwe Oeverstraat 50, Arnhem 6811 JB Netherlands (Holland).**

The hotel is located in the city centre of Arnhem and is offering a discount for you on rooms. If you want to make use of this you can book a room using the following link:

<https://www.ihg.com/redirect?path=rates&brandCode=EX&localeCode=en&regionCode=1&hotelCode=zymex&checkInDate=07&checkInMonthYear=032027&checkOutDate=10&checkOutMonthYear=032027&PMID=99801505&GPC=ei8&cn=no&adjustMonth=false&showApp=true&monthIndex=00>



When accessing the booking tool through this link, you will see that the dates are already given. Should you wish to stay different dates, please make sure to change these in the tool.

## EBBD training event 2028.

We are searching for an EBBD school that would like to host the EBBD training event in 2028. Should you be interested, or wish to know more, please reach out to Nereba Peña, 1<sup>st</sup> vice chairperson.

**If you have any questions about the EBBD AGM, training or multiplier event in Arnhem, please reach out to Cynthia Woolderink.**



**Co-funded by  
the European Union**

***We wish you a relaxing and joyful summer break  
and look forward to cooperating and continuing  
to strengthen our joint programme.***

***Hilla Helasaari, Tim Woytczak, Nereba Peña,  
Holger R ath and Cynthia Woolderink  
Board of Directors EBBD e.V.***





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