

Third Annual Report: Network Upper Styria East STVG – Austria

Reporting period: January 2025 – July 2025

Overview

In the period from January to May 2025, the Reality Check Network Upper Styria East was dedicated to testing, evaluating and further developing the pilots. After two years of intensive work at the interface between school, business and career orientation, the network was able to bundle the results and prepare them for the final conference. The three Styrian RealityChecks – **MINI-MINT**, **MINT-Boxes** and **Bring your child to work with TAG** – were successfully piloted and evaluated in schools, companies and with parents. The feedback confirmed the effectiveness of the concepts, but also highlighted the need for further development. At the same time, the network prepared for the international final conference on 14 May 2025, which took place simultaneously in hybrid form in all partner regions and marked a worthy conclusion to the project.

Progress of the network

The **6th network meeting on May 14, 2025** at the HTL Kapfenberg was designed as a compact short meeting (45 minutes) and served primarily to coordinate for the immediately following final conference. The focus was on the results of the evaluations:

- **MINI-MINT:** Very high level of approval, easy integration into the classroom, great motivation gain among the children. Need for improvement: additional accompanying materials, in-depth tasks, multilingual information for parents.
- **MINT boxes (Sek II):** Positively evaluated, practical and motivating. What is needed are differentiated tasks for different performance levels, more time for reflection and supplementary digital elements.
- **Bring your child to work with TAG:** Great approval from students and teachers, valuable connection between school, parents and companies. The challenge remains the organization (registration processes, communication).

In addition, it was agreed at the meeting how the results should be presented at the conference. Schools and companies contributed practical examples, STVG and BFB took over the coordination.

Key decisions and milestones

In spring 2025, several important decisions were made in the network:

- **Presentation of the RealityChecks:** All three Styrian formats (MINI-MINT, MINT-Boxen, Bring your child to work with TAG) will be made visible as core examples at the final conference.
- **Further development of the materials:** Adjustments such as differentiated tasks, multilingual parent information and digital support services were defined as the central next steps.
- **Strengthening sustainability:** The question of how RealityChecks can be anchored and continued regionally even after the end of the project was discussed – in particular through stronger involvement of companies and systematic feedback with schools.
- **Final conference as a milestone:** The hybrid conference on 14 May 2025 was seen as a key moment to put regional work in an international context, present results and strengthen the network in the long term.



Sixth Network Meeting

Date & Time: May 14, 2025 – 13:00–13:45

Location: HTL Kapfenberg, Viktor-Kaplan-Straße 1, 8605 Kapfenberg

Participants: 11 representatives of industrial companies (Pankl Racing Systems, RHI Magnesita, voestalpine Böhler Aerospace), Regional Management Upper Styria East, STVG and BFB

Description / Minutes The sixth network meeting of the Reality Check Network Upper Styria East took place on 14 May 2025 as a compact short meeting at the HTL Kapfenberg and served to prepare the content of the subsequent final conference.

The focus was on the feedback from the pilots of the three Styrian RealityChecks:

- **MINI-MINT:** Very high approval from students and teachers, easy integration into the classroom. There is a need for change in additional accompanying materials (multilingual parent information, in-depth tasks) and motivational incentives (e.g. certificates).
- **MINT boxes (Sek II):** Positively assessed, practical and motivating; differentiated tasks for different performance levels, more time for reflection and, if necessary, digital additions are important.
- **Bring your child to work with TAG:** Particularly valuable for the connection between school, parents and companies. Organizational challenges remain, especially when it comes to registration and communication; clear information documents are crucial.

In addition, the joint presentation of the RealityChecks was coordinated during the conference. Companies and schools will contribute practical examples, coordination is in the hands of STVG and BFB.

Next steps:

- Further development and supplementation of the materials, in particular differentiated tasks and multilingual information for parents.
- Collection and evaluation of additional feedback.
- Discussion about a continuation of the RealityChecks beyond the project.
- Ensuring visibility at the regional level and moving on to the final conference.

Final Conference Reality Check – Regional Hybrid Conference Styria

Date & Time: May 14, 2025 – 2:30–4:30 p.m

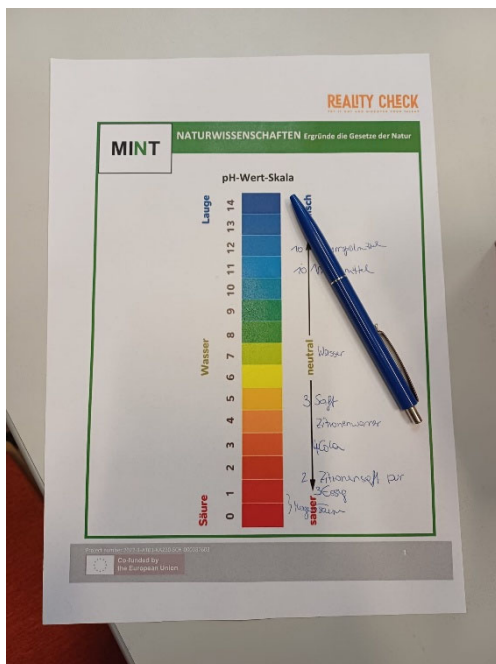
. Location: Festhalle der HTL Kapfenberg, Viktor-Kaplan-Straße 1, 8605 Kapfenberg

Participants: 25 representatives from schools (Volksschule Gai, MS Kapfenberg, MS St. Barbara, HTL Kapfenberg), companies (Pankl Racing Systems, voestalpine Böhler Aerospace, RHI Magnesita, Boehlerit), Regional Management Upper Styria East, STVG, BFB as well as educators and students

Overview

The final conference marked the highlight of the two-year project period of *Reality Check* in Styria. It took place simultaneously in all four partner regions – Berlin, Skellefteå, Vicenza and Kapfenberg – and thus connected regional actors with the international dimension of the project. The Festhalle of the HTL Kapfenberg offered a symbolic setting: a school with a strong technical orientation in the middle of an industrial region that stands for close cooperation between education and business.

Procedure and design



The first part of the conference was a **hybrid kick-off video conference** in which the partner regions presented themselves to each other. All project partners briefly presented their highlights and emphasized the importance of cooperation across national borders. This international opening, which took place in English, highlighted the European character of the project and gave the participants on site the feeling of being part of a larger network.

After this joint start, the conference in Kapfenberg was continued independently. The focus was on the **training simulation for Module 2 of the Modular Training Concept (MTC)**. The aim was not only to present the methods developed theoretically, but also to test them in practice and to test their transferability to schools and career orientation.

Training Simulation Module 2 – Practice and Reflection

18 participants from schools, companies and institutions took part in the simulation. They were divided into two working groups and worked on the following key questions:

- How can reality checks be applied in different contexts?
- What steps are necessary to successfully implement a reality check?
- What adjustments make sense for different age groups?

First, the groups dealt with existing reality checks, reflected on the development process and discussed how the concepts could be integrated into their own practice. They then developed ideas on how the methods could be further used in schools, career guidance or companies.

The work was strongly practice-oriented: teachers and company representatives worked together on scenarios in which reality and school are systematically connected. The young people who were present actively contributed their perspective. They emphasized how important real insights into companies are for them – *"we want to talk to real workers before we decide"* – and made it clear that practical, interactive formats have the greatest added value for them.

Results and feedback



The simulation confirmed the great potential of Module 2, but also showed a need for adaptation:

- **More time for reflection:** The rotation between groups was too short to sufficiently deepen content.
- **Differentiated examples:** Teachers wanted materials for all school levels – from elementary school to upper secondary level – in order to expand applicability.
- **Greater company participation:** The contributions of the companies were experienced as particularly motivating and authentic. Their involvement should be even stronger in the future.
- **Concrete transfer aids:** Clearer instructions are needed on how the methods can be embedded in

lessons or counselling practice.

- **Digital additions:** Suggestions included apps or digital tools for deepening and follow-up.

Plenary discussion and conclusion

At the end of the conference, all participants came together again in plenary. Here, the results of the groups were presented, commonalities were highlighted and next steps were discussed. The contributions of the young people were particularly appreciated, as they made the view of the actual target group visible.

The atmosphere was lively, constructive and characterized by mutual respect. Many participants described the conference as a kind of "laboratory for career orientation", in which schools, business and young people worked together on questions of the future.

Conclusion and takeaways

- The hybrid conference impressively illustrated the European dimension of the project and combined international and regional perspectives.
- Module 2 of the MTC was perceived as practical, structured and immediately applicable – with adaptations, it can become an effective instrument for career orientation in Austria.
- The voices of the young people confirmed the necessity of real, in-company experience spaces as a central element of career orientation.
- The involvement of companies strengthens authenticity and motivation; their role as learning partners should be institutionally anchored even more strongly.
- The conference not only offered technical input, but also space for networking and exchange – an important success factor for sustainability and continuity.

