

magazine

Keeping you informed about the European Credit system for Vocational Education & Training

- 02 ECVET Secretariat : a team supporting the ECVET network to face new challenges**
- 04 The NETINVET VETPro**
Strengthen the position of NETINVET
- 06 The NETINVET VetPro**
Testimony from Lycée Maximilien Sorre
- 07 Involving teachers and trainers in implementing ECVET: new ways of working**
- 11 ECVET developments in national VET reforms**
Based on the findings of Cedefop's fourth ECVET monitoring report
- 14 ECVET and the Austrian Vocational Education**
The ECVET Expert Team for the Austrian Vocational Education System
- 18 The road map for ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector**
- 22 ECVET in Czech Republic: Work in progress**
- 24 The work of the Romanian team of ECVET Experts**
- 27 ECVET Team Work programme 2014**
- 28 ECVET forum 2014 - Programme**



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Edito

Didier Gelibert

ECVET Team - Executive board



ECVET Secretariat a Team supporting the ECVET network to face new challenges

institutions, and – alongside the Member States – has been playing an active role in that network with a view to expanding and supporting ECVET within the Member States and establishing an annual forum for the exchange of information and experience amongst the Member States.

In 5 years, the network has significantly expanded: from 101 registered members by the end of 2010 to almost 1400 in July 2014 (representing 607 institutions)! The ECVET Team has organised over 34 seminars (regulars, customised, thematic PLA) for 1051 participants. Let's focus on regular seminars that have been organised by the ECVET Team. Their objective is to assist the network members in the implementation of the ECVET Recommendation in their own contexts.

They are opened to any member of the network tackling specific issues and willing to use ECVET (e.g. for mobility or for VET qualification design).

This "standard" offer provides information, technical support, and supports modules and cycles for VET staff involved in the introduction of ECVET.

Here is a closer look at this offer:

- The 'ECVET For mobility' seminars address issues related to the guidance to learners before the mobility, the implementation of the mobility experience itself, and the assessment and documentation of the learning outcomes developed through it.
- The 'ECVET for VET qualification designers' seminars address the use



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Since January 2010, the ECVET Team has been on the one hand assisting the Member States in the implementation of the ECVET principles and technical specifications (as laid out in the Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council) by notably facilitating experiments, cooperation, two-way learning and promoting information. On the other hand, it has been promoting an ECVET European network bringing together the parties involved in vocational education and training and the competent national

of ECVET specifications in the design of qualifications and the allocation of ECVET credit points to units and qualifications.

- The 'ECVET Essentials for all users' seminars cover the basis of the ECVET Recommendation and its European context. These seminars are open to any public.
- Within 2014 a new type of seminar will be launched: ECVET and NFIL (non formal and informal learning).

In addition, the ECVET Team has been organising each year the Annual Forum of the Network. The objective of the annual forum is to gather hundreds of stakeholders involved by and large in the implementation of ECVET in order to exchange and share experiences and results, to discuss proposals applicable throughout the network and to communicate needs and expectations to the European Commission and the support team. So far four such events were organised. Each was focused on a specific issue: "Setting up the ECVET Network", "Towards necessary conditions for ECVET implementation", "Building the ECVET community of practice", "Stay connected to implement ECVET".

This year's Forum ("ECVET Forum 2014: trusting skills and qualifications in the Europe of tomorrow") will be future-oriented.

This fifth edition of the ECVET annual Forum lies in a very dynamic and ex-

**"The first step
will be crossed
by a joint ECVET -
EQAVET working group,
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for the first time
on 10 September 2014
in Paris."**

citing European context: 5 years after the official launch of ECVET 2014 stands as the year of the ECVET recommendation evaluation, the European Area of Skills and Qualifications consultation, and the start of closer cooperation between ECVET and EQAVET. This event puts ECVET in the European VET limelight, but more than ever it is necessary to keep in mind the other European transparency tools. Next October, in Vienna, the Forum will like always enjoin the participants to discuss ECVET-related issues in different rounds of lively workshops. Stocktaking will take place, as well as thorough discussions on what is coming up next: whether participants are dealing with operational aspects of ECVET or that they take a long-term strategic stance on the matter, all the views, inputs and comments matter to the network and are worth being shared.

Creating synergies between European tools is also an objective requested by the network's members. In recent years this has been explored through joint seminars involving ECVET, EQAVET

and EQF, now there is a need to go further. The first step will be crossed by a joint ECVET - EQAVET working group, which will meet for the first time on 10 September 2014 in Paris.

Detailed information regarding the seminars or the Forum, the technical support and the relevant documents are available on the ECVET Team website. Its new version has been launched in June 2013 as a new concept: from a simple register of the members of the ECVET network it has grown into a portal website that supports, informs and guides people involved in the implementation of ECVET.

The ECVET secretariat is much more than seminars, posters, an annual forum or a website. As its name says, the ECVET secretariat is a TEAM: it gathers permanent staff and external senior experts from 12 countries covering nine languages. They support the network by designing, facilitating, moderating and building upon seminars and forum, as well as managing the website and the community of practice. The ECVET Team looks at the future, gaining experience and skills to respond to the ECVET network's needs and expectations. ■

Elly van 't Hof, Albeda College - Hans Diemel, Consultant KCH International

The NETINVET VETPro

“Strengthen the position of NETINVET”



Elly van 't Hof



Hans Diemel

NETINVET is an independent network promoting European ECVET mobility for learners who complete vocational training in International Trade, Transport and Logistics.

NETINVET can be seen as:

- a network of training centres that can facilitate mobility;
- a quality approach based on charters and a label;
- a common reference for training in International Trade and Transport and Logistics;
- using ECVET to transfer training results and enhance learners' profiles;
- a tool that can be used to implement and monitor mobility for network members.

The network covers nine countries: Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain. For each country the competent authorities (e.g. Ministries, National Agencies and professional/trade organisations) have been involved and this has encouraged and supported the establishment of the network. The network includes more than 50 training centres.

At the General Assembly of NETINVET in 2012 the members decided to organise a VETPro study trip for professionals from training centres that were already working together. The objectives of the study trip were to:

- make the NETINVET network more visible;
- increase the professional skills of teachers at the operational level;
- increase the exchange of information between teachers;
- improve the alignment between the network's goals and the learners' programmes;
- develop professional exchanges of students using the ECVET principles.

On behalf of this network KCH International in association with Albeda College from the Netherlands took up the initiative and proposed a draft application form for the members. Following an approval process training centres in Italy, Belgium, France, Spain and the Netherlands participated in a one-week study trip.

The Steering Committee of NETINVET designed a common programme for this week. As well as visiting training centres an important part of the programme was the opportunity for professionals to discuss and exchange information with teachers from other schools, students and their company mentors. The discussions focused on opportunities for mobility based on the existing curriculum. The central theme for the study visit was **“mutual trust”**.



The first professionals experienced the one-week VETPro study visit on the 7 April 2014 in the Netherlands. The programme started with an information day about the host country and its educational system. On the second day the professionals visited Deltion College in Zwolle - one of the regional training centres and a member of the NETINVET network. The focus of this visit was to look at the implementation of study programmes which respond to the specific demands of the regional labour market. During the guided tour the hosts explained that Dutch VET centres see themselves as a part of the local community. This means, for example, that students' companies which provide retail services, auto repair and child care in the school are frequently used by residents from the surrounding neighbourhoods.

"In the Netherlands company mentors have a major role in these practice assessments"

After lunch with the Dutch professionals, the group visited a company - *Progress Europe Automotive* - where a student and his mentor gave a presentation about the international aspects of the company. After the presentation the visitors, the company mentor and the Dutch staff discussed the Dutch system of assessing students during their placements. In the Netherlands company mentors have a major role in these practice assessments.

Rotterdam harbour was the focus for the third day. A bus tour through the extensive harbour area allowed the visitors to see how transport and logistics has been modernised. As practical examples of these changes they visited two companies *ECT Delta Terminal* (container warehousing) and *Eurofrigo* (warehousing and storage of cool and frozen cargo).

The day finished with dinner in the Albeda College restaurant which is run by students.

On the fourth day the visitors worked with Dutch professionals to compare and research ways of working in relation to the curriculum. The intention was to take the first step towards developing a common task which could be used for study and/or work mobility using the ECVET principles.

On the fifth and final day, the group visited the Kröller Müller museum and took a bike ride through the National Park de Hoge Veluwe.

In the evaluation of the week the participants highlighted the value and learning that arises from working with colleague from abroad. They suggested that they would like more opportunities for discussion with their colleagues from the NETINVET network.

Finally the participants agreed that the main target of "mutual trust" had been achieved and the VETPro study visit had been a successful experience which supported their professional work! ■



Sylvia Rouxel
International trade teacher and internship
coordinator, Lycée Maximilien Sorre,
Cachan France

The NETINVET VETPro Testimony from lycée Maximilien Sorre

The international trade section at the technical College Lycée Maximilien Sorre is located in the southern part of Paris. It has been able, thanks to the NETINVET network, to establish contacts with other training centres in Europe including working with the Institut Provençana in Hospitalet de Llobregat in Barcelona for five years and the Centre za Poslovno Uspesabljanje in Ljubljana for three years. These connections include professional exchange programmes for students using the ECVET principles.

Until this year, it was 'only' an internship exchange for five Spanish and five French students. Approximately 50 students have been involved in this exchange throughout the duration of the partnership.

Each training centre helps the student to find an internship that meets the international trade curriculum. The Spanish students would usually rather work in an export department or would be assigned sales administration tasks. Whereas the French students prefer to

mostly deal with canvassing and focus on the markets in South America or France.

It takes approximately two or three weeks for a student to be able to communicate with ease in a foreign language. This gives them time to adapt and then they become perfectly integrated. In both countries the mentors were satisfied with the skills displayed by the students. They said the training matched the company's expectations. The internship exchange was our first step, the second step was to create student exchanges which cover training.

The VETPRO programme which facilitates teachers' exchange took place from 6 - 12 April 2014 in the Netherlands. During my visit I met Piet Korte from ROC Flevoland in Almere near Amsterdam, and we decided to move one step further and look at teacher exchanges. To make this endeavor successful some issues have to be tackled. Piet Korte has already visited our training centre Lycée Maximilien Sorre in May 2014, and was introduced to our deputy head master. I'm planning to visit ROC Flevoland at the end of June 2014 to meet the whole teaching team and make the first contact with the students. During my visit I will present a lecture on culture and "what it is"? Making a comparison between French and the Dutch cultures.

To succeed in our staff exchange, many steps will need to be taken. We plan to discuss further:

- how to build a strong relationship of trust between the two learning centres. This requires two prior steps to be in place - the exchange of students during their internships and their studies;

- planning for an exchange – the arrangements and timings of any mobility will need to be the same in both schools. This will need to be scheduled one year in advance to ensure it meets each school's needs;
- teachers from both the host and receiving country will need the right professional skills and be able to present in English;
- the subjects that will be taught to the students must be agreed (e.g. negotiation in English, market surveys or cross cultural issues) and discussions are needed on how to implement ECVET and transfer the results of the training;
- what extra work will be required from the teachers involved in this venture? They will need to be aware of the expectations of an exchange programme. In the interest of building strong relationships between countries, and in the spirit of the exchange programme, the teachers' participation will be on a voluntary basis.

Our meeting will lead the way to new partnerships and strengthen the European relationships between teachers and students of international trade and logistics in the NETINVET framework. Getting involved - that is the key to success!



VETPRO program
in Ljubljana, Slovenia

Involving teachers and trainers in implementing ECVET: new ways of working



The ECVET team's first session of the thematic seminar on "New ways of working with ECVET for teachers and trainers" took place on 16 – 17 April in Budapest.

This was part of a new set of activities dedicated to teachers and trainers. It was hosted by the Hungarian National Labour Office, VET and Adult Directorate, and attended by 14 stakeholders from 11 countries⁽¹⁾.

The seminar results are numerous and instructive. They reflect the intensity of the debates and the high quality of the contributions. This article can only pre-

sent some of the observations made by participants - readers can refer to the full report and supporting material which is available on the website of the ECVET network⁽²⁾. The seminar encouraged participants to become actively involved and share their experiences, practices and lessons learnt. Through a series of case studies, participants were able to examine the role and tasks of teachers and trainers in designing educational or organisational arrangements which supported the effective and efficient use of ECVET.

The seminar provided 'food for thought', ideas for further developments and tools for facilitating the involvement of teachers and trainers in the implementation and use of ECVET. The aim of this first seminar was to contribute to the development of tools which can support teachers and trainers.

Teachers, trainers and ECVET: a crucial topic

The first question to consider concerns how teachers and trainers are described in the institutional and technical documents: what does the ECVET literature say about teachers and trainers and their role in its implementation or use?

The literature (the ECVET Recommendation, additional guides and brochures, institutional and scientific reports, surveys etc.) is silent on this subject. The literature focuses on the beneficiaries of ECVET's implementation (the learner in their learning and qualification pathway) and qualifications. The focus is on the system level dimension of ECVET's implementation and the stakeholders seem to be policy makers, authorities or institutions in charge of qualifications and the VET system. The seminars' participants agreed that this situation reveals a paradox. In-so-far as teachers and trainers are ECVET users, they are responsible for applying the principles (which they must at least be aware of) and technical arrangements to their practice in their educational and training organisation.

Devoting time and thought to the role of teachers and trainers in ECVET seems essential, to "reinstate" a group of stakeholders who have been neglected until now. It is also important because using ECVET may have a considerable impact on the practice of teachers and trainers who have a major role in VET, together with other stakeholders, as stated in the Bruges communiqué: "Shaping VET is the shared responsibility of national governments, social

(1) The second session on ECVET and teachers and trainers will focus on "mobility". It will take place on 9 and 10 December 2014 in Warsaw.

(2) <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/training-and-events/ecvet-thematic-seminar-teachers-and-trainers-session-1>

partners, VET providers, teachers, trainers, and learners: all have a mutual interest in closer cooperation"⁽³⁾.

The potential impact of ECVET on teachers' and trainers' practice

The implementation of concepts and approaches, such as the unit based description of qualifications; the learning outcomes approach or the validation of non-formal and informal learning; start with the design of qualifications, curricula and programmes.

"Teachers and trainers did not decide on these principles and technical components, but they are responsible for using them in their daily practice"

The involvement of teachers and trainers as users of ECVET is necessary from an operational perspective. ECVET affects them as they are asked to organise and implement training and learning pathways within the spirit and letter of ECVET once it has been transposed into a local system. These affects include using the principles of ECVET (learner-centred approach, assessment and accumulation of learning outcomes, progressive achieve-

ment of a qualification, etc.) and the technical components (units, learning outcomes). Teachers and trainers did not decide on these principles and technical components, but they are responsible for using them in their daily practice.

For participants in the seminar, the use of ECVET may support lifelong learning (see Box 1) but it requires an educational approach which is open to the concepts of individualised learning paths and "modularisation" of training supply. This is not a decision that can be made by teachers and trainers -however they do need to adapt their teaching practice accordingly. Teachers and trainers follow the principle **the PDCA quality cycle**⁽⁴⁾: they must

plan (by preparing lessons, practical activities, teaching arrangements and assessment processes), **do** (by providing lessons and practical sessions, assessing learning), **check** (effectiveness and efficiency of their activities through the evaluation of the results) and **act** (in order to improve their activity).

Using ECVET in the context of a mobility programme requires teachers and trainers to re-organise students' learning pathways and training provision. In addition, teachers and trainers need to consider the important question of how to assess learning outcomes in line with the concept of "delegating authority" for the assessment of learning outcomes achieved abroad⁽⁵⁾.

BOX 1

What does it mean for teachers and trainers when they "use ECVET for lifelong learning and make training pathways more flexible"?

- ECVET opens new possibilities for the effective validation and recognition of prior learning for individuals and facilitates learners' access to education and training;
- ECVET and lifelong learning refer to the process of identifying learners' capabilities in order to define the type of learning, the teaching and assessment processes which help individuals to acquire any missed learning outcomes;
- ECVET can be particularly useful for some target groups of learners e.g. adults who leave school early, and people likely to be excluded from school and the labour market (e.g. migrants, prisoners);
- ECVET can support individuals to update their skills:
 - people without earlier experience in formal education may not have the motivation to start a course leading to a qualification if they already work in a profession where the qualification is needed;
 - adults who gain units of a qualification and need to update their knowledge of their professional field can apply for the validation and recognition of their prior learning through a practical skills demonstration.

(3) Communiqué of the European Ministers for Vocational Education and Training, the European Social Partners and the European Commission, meeting in Bruges on 7 December 2010 to review the strategic approach and priorities of the Copenhagen process for 2011-2020; http://ec.europa.eu/education/library/publications/2011/bruges_en.pdf

(4) The Plan, Do, Check, Act is the basis for the quality assurance process set out in the EQAVET Recommendation from the European Commission and Council in 2009

(5) To be developed during the second session of the thematic seminar.

ECVET and roles and tasks of teachers and trainers

VET teachers and trainers use of ECVET depends on the local context of training. First and foremost it depends on the level and extent of the autonomy of training centres and within centres, the autonomy of the teaching staff. Depending on the local context, scope and autonomy, the actions of teachers and trainers may cover some or all of the functions that are specific to VET and to the implementation of ECVET (see “get to know ECVET better, p35⁽⁶⁾).

This first seminar was an opportunity to explore different approach to the diversity of functions, roles and tasks of VET teachers and trainers in EU countries. It looked at the design of the curricula; developing learning/teaching methods and materials; designing assessment methods and criteria. To understand

the differences and commonalities of the impact of ECVET’s implementation in their respective training systems, participants considered the question of autonomy of teachers and trainers. This has a strong and direct impact on the ability of teachers and trainers to use the learning outcomes approach, assess learning outcomes, and design the syllabus in accordance with ECVET principles.

Based on the seminar’s presentations and subsequent analysis, participants stressed that, from one country to another and from one training and qualification system to another, teachers and trainers do not have the same range and level of autonomy and responsibility in relation to the tasks and functions set out in Box 2. This is an example of the information from the ECVET survey – the full results are on the ECVET team’s website⁽⁷⁾.

"Some adaptation of the procedures and regulations are required to make ECVET more attractive for teachers and trainers to use"

In most situations, teachers and trainers are only partially autonomous and responsible for the definition of the content of programmes or for adapting the content of programmes. Similarly, they are not responsible for the time allocated to different subjects and they can act only marginally. They do not decide on the assessment methodology but they have some latitude for organising and delivering assessment based on learning outcomes. It could be helpful to develop this type of survey in relation to the potential added value of teachers and trainers (see Box 3) being able to:

- design individuals’ flexible learning pathways;
- manage and plan flexible training programmes;
- recognise prior learning - this would give teachers and trainers real autonomy.

These changes would mean that, in addition to the support mechanisms and instruments that are needed for VET teachers when using ECVET, some adaptation of the procedures and regulations are required to make ECVET more attractive for teachers and trainers to use.

BOX 2

Are the following tasks and functions included in a VET teacher’s or trainer’s role?

	Fully	Partially	Not at all
Designing the content of programmes	14 %	72 %	14 %
Adapting the content of programmes	21 %	71 %	8 %
Deciding time allocations	14 %	72 %	14 %
Deciding the assessment methodology	14 %	50 %	36 %
Deciding the assessment method and criteria	29 %	35 %	36 %
Organising and delivering assessment during training	46 %	46 %	8 %
Choosing and using various methods for assessing learning outcomes	46 %	46 %	8 %
Establishing the level requirements for the validation of learning outcomes	14 %	43 %	43 %

(6) http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4900-att1-1-ECVET_QA_Final.pdf

(7) <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/training-and-events/ecvet-thematic-seminar-teachers-and-trainers-session-1>

BOX 3**Participants identified some of the benefits and requirements of using ECVET as part of a training process:**

- the size of modules matters when it comes to managing the costs of training. If the training modules are too small then this can increase the number of assessments and this means there is less time for learning;
- the implementation of modularisation requires units (for qualifications) that can be used to design training modules;
- working with units of learning outcomes helps to improve the relevance of training modules and the whole VET system;
- even though ECVET is not a system, it can be used to create a system when it is combined with the validation of non-formal and informal learning (NFIL) and the use of standards (which could be occupational standards or national qualification standards);
- only implementing ECVET in the formal education sector is not enough. The validity of learning outcomes is more likely to be more secured if there is greater transparency between the education and training sub-systems;
- the seminar's participants recommended avoiding systems which pre-define everything in relation to learning outcomes. There would be more involvement from teachers and trainers in the learning outcomes approach if there was some space for them to define the pedagogical methods associated with learning outcomes;
- to strengthen teachers' and trainers' involvement, participants emphasised the importance of using practical examples. This helps to make the benefits of ECVET clear and understandable and encourages an incremental approach to implementation.

In conclusion, the participants of the first seminar identified that teachers and trainers needed to be more involved. The following recommendations would help to further promote and facilitate the involvement of teachers and trainers in implementing ECVET (Box 4). ■

BOX 4**Some recommendations for initiatives at the European level**

- Enhance the opportunity for mobility projects which helps teachers and trainers to share their experiences, knowledge of approaches and current practice
- Design support materials which support the training of trainers and teachers in relation to foreign VET and qualifications systems, and ECVET
- Prepare "tool boxes", "good practices" and success stories which are specifically designed for teachers and trainers
- Develop practical and closer links between the EU initiatives in the field of learning outcomes, qualification frameworks and credit system
- Support more peer learning activities and seminars which look at current and future practice

Some recommendations for initiatives at the national level

- Organise training activities on ECVET for teachers and trainers including training in the work place
- Adapt VET and the legal framework for qualifications to make ECVET easier to use
- Strengthen teachers' and trainers' awareness through the work of the national ECVET expert teams
- Design guides and self-assessment instruments from the perspective of the ECVET principles
- Support actions and projects which transfer the lessons learnt from using ECVET principles for mobility to the whole curriculum
- Support activities which enhance the design of curricula based on learning outcomes and qualifications which are based on units of learning outcomes

Ramona Carmen David Craescu, CEDEFOP Expert

ECVET developments in national VET reforms

Based on the findings of Cedefop's fourth ECVET monitoring report



The idea of a European credit (transfer) system for VET was introduced into the policy discourse in 2002 with the Council resolution on promoting better European cooperation on VET (Council of the European Union, 2009), and the Copenhagen declaration of 30 November 2002. ECVET was formally launched with the 2009 Recommendation (European Parliament and Council of the EU, 2009).

"ECVET is still mainly seen as a toolbox serving different purposes, rather than a system"

The UE Recommendation also gives Member States a roadmap for implementing ECVET. It foresees that as from 2012 – in accordance with national legislation and practice and on the basis of trials and testing – it should be possible for ECVET to be applied gradually to VET qualifications at all levels of the EQF and used for the purpose of the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes achieved in formal and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts.

Five years after the recommendation and 12 years after the first ECVET-related meeting at a European level⁽¹⁾, what is the current stage of ECVET in relation to national VET reforms?

Cedefop has analysed and monitored ECVET developments in national VET reforms since 2010. This includes gathering information from and opinions of national authorities, representatives of social partners, experts that are directly involved in ECVET developments in the EU, EFTA, and candidate countries. In its latest report⁽²⁾, Cedefop reviewed developments from 2009 - September 2013. The total number of

responses collected was 73, representing 37 national authorities, 10 social partners and 26 ECVET experts across the 38 countries/regions. Through a comparative analysis of these responses, as well as country-related information, Cedefop's latest monitoring report of ECVET developments attempts to shed light on the state-of-play, opportunities and challenges ahead for ECVET.

ECVET is still mainly seen as a toolbox serving different purposes, rather than a system. Thus, there is no single way to implement it. It is thus unsurprising that respondents expressed the need for more clarity of purpose and streamlining on the basis of what works or does not work in practice; plus acknowledgement that ECVET is not a system containing technical specifications. This streamlining, and increased clarity is perceived as essential in support of national policy-making. For the time being, ECVET has received mixed support in the context of national VET reforms.

According to respondents only 13 countries/regions (i.e. EE, HR, HU, PL, BE (FR), EL, IT, LV, LT, MT, RO, SK, FI) out of 38 countries/regions are committed to embedding ECVET in their national VET reforms - and not all of

(1) The first meeting on a credit transfer system for VET took place in November 2002.

(2) Cedefop's fourth monitoring report of ECVET developments is available at:

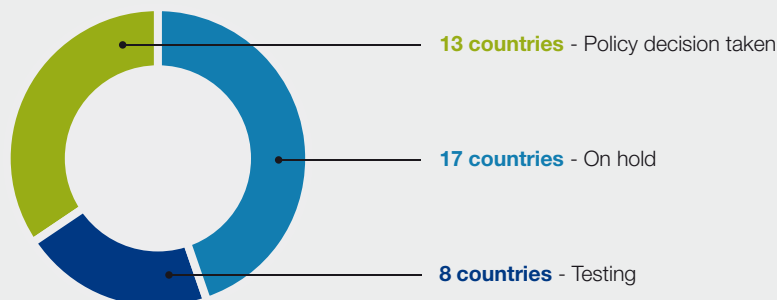
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6122_en.pdf

these have actually started developing and applying it. Gradual implementation has started in six countries/regions - Belgium (French-speaking community), Estonia, Hungary, Malta, Poland, and Finland. Romania needs to make its ECVET-compatible credit system operational. In most of these countries, the transfer of learning outcomes was reported to be difficult (e.g. due to structural characteristics of VET systems), thus the role and added value of ECVET was easily acknowledged. ECVET seems not to reach those countries that already have transferable units/modules or credit transfer systems for VET in place nor those with predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET. In these countries, the main argument why ECVET is on hold is the concern that its technical components and principles require reorganisation of a qualification system and corresponding procedures that already work well.

"In all countries where commitment was formalised, ECVET is being, or will be, developed in parallel with NQF developments, as part of broader reforms"

There is also concern that any changes towards ECVET may result in a heavier administrative burden. In particular, the countries with predominantly apprenticeship-based IVET seem to have the lowest interest in the principles of unitisation and accumulation. As the International Network on Innovative Apprenticeship points out⁽³⁾, the architecture of traditional apprenticeship

Status of ECVET: all countries



Source: Cedefop (2014). Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union.
http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6122_en.pdf

systems is built so that young people gain a holistic competence in an occupation at the end of an apprenticeship programme.

The respondents relate ECVET added value to its use of the learning outcomes approach and its support for NQF developments, thus confirming one of the main findings in Cedefop's 2013 monitoring report⁽⁴⁾. In all countries where commitment was formalised, ECVET is being, or will be, developed in parallel with NQF developments, as part of broader reforms. ECVET may reinforce the clear trend towards the introduction of units/modules of learning outcomes in national qualification systems and of systemic arrangements to support transfer that started before 2009.

However, in IVET, this is not accompanied by a move towards awarding VET qualifications based on the accumulation of certifiable units or modules and countries generally do not follow the ECVET distinction in terms of units and modules. To what extent ECVET will strengthen the 'unit' approach (e.g. as opposed to the module approach), improve transfer arrangements and/or determine a shift towards accumulation is still to be seen. In IVET, ECVET

currently does not seem to have found solid ground to fulfil its credit transfer and accumulation function. On a different level, use of certifiable units or modules may be beneficial to people who are already in the labour market to help them to update or upgrade their skills or to complete a qualification.

Current evidence shows that certification in most IVET systems is carried out at the end of a full learning cycle, after a student has gained the learning outcomes leading to a full qualification. There is also evidence that single certified units/modules or partial qualifications may not be valued on the labour market. As a result, certification following assessment at the end of an education and training programme may be used as a way to encourage young IVET learners to work towards the full state-recognised award, before they enter the labour market.

Moving from IVET to higher levels of the qualification frameworks (i.e. EQF Level 5 and above), a pending issue is the relationship between the two European credit transfer and accumulation systems: one for Higher Education (i.e. ECTS) and one for VET (i.e. ECVET). At these higher levels, the two European

⁽³⁾ http://www.inap.uni-bremen.de/dl/memorandum_inap_commission_architecture_apprenticeship_2012.pdf

⁽⁴⁾ http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6118_en.pdf

⁽⁵⁾ The papers presented at the expert workshop are available at the event webpage: <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/events/22602.aspx>

credit systems co-exist. According to what was stated by VET and HE experts at the Cedefop Expert workshop 'The role of credit transfer systems in opening access, admission and exemption between vocational education and training (VET) and higher education (HE)⁽⁵⁾, it would be more beneficial and less confusing for the learners to have, ideally, one credit transfer system or, at least, two compatible ones.

In many countries, VET qualifications at tertiary level fall under the remit of higher education and are compatible with the European credit transfer and accumulation system (ECTS). Additional analysis and evidence are needed on the status of VET qualifications at tertiary level and their relationship with higher education. This will inform the policy discourse on the compatibility and complementarity between ECVET and ECTS.

While ECVET receives mixed support in the context of national VET reforms, its role in cross-country mobility is widely acknowledged, even though it raises concerns of bureaucracy and increased workload for VET providers. The latter join with partners abroad, develop units of learning outcomes and define corresponding assessment criteria for cross-country mobility, as a mean to overcome the quality concerns in the provision of learning and assessment in foreign contexts. The learning outcomes acquired by the learner abroad are taken into account in their learning pathway so they do not repeat the same learning. ECVET currently does not fulfil its credit transfer and accumulation function, and it may not fulfil it in the near future. The additional main obstacles hampering credit

transfer are the existing assessment and award approaches at national level (a reluctance to assess and certify units and/or modules) and the short duration of VET mobility (shorter than one national unit/module). It is expected that the priority attached to ECVET in national policy agendas will go hand-in-hand with mobility in VET and the number of VET students participating in overseas mobility.

The reform potential of ECVET is still to be asserted, and it will broadly depend on the extent to which it will be streamlined and its purposes clarified.

Currently, its success relies on the participation of VET providers in EU-funded cross-country mobility projects. They are using it as a method to apply the learning outcomes approach in practice, accumulating a wealth of valuable experience. For the time being, however, the results of ECVET are scattered at the micro-level. Finding a way to mainstream these important experiences into permanent and sustainable solutions would benefit not only ECVET, but also other European tools and principles in education and training. ■

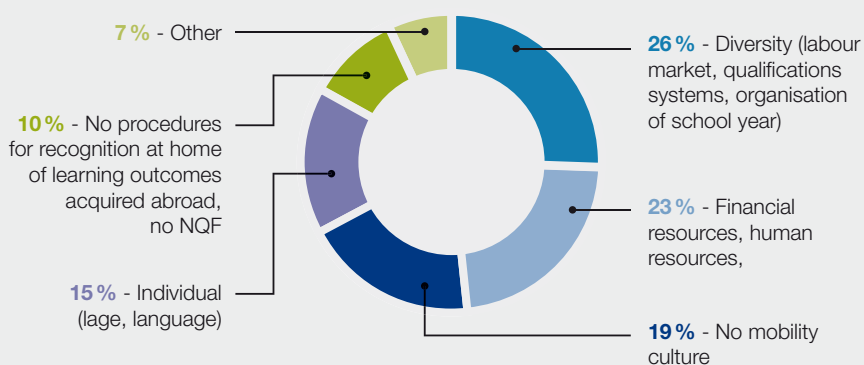
Time line for the implementation of ECVET



Source: Cedefop (2012). Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation. Luxembourg: Publications Office. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/4113_en.pdf

Obstacles to cross-country mobility

(% of the total number of expressed opinions: 144 opinions)



Source: Cedefop (2014). Monitoring ECVET implementation strategies in Europe in 2013. Luxembourg: Publications Office of the European Union. http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6122_en.pdf

Franz Heffeter, Direktor Tourismusschulen Salzburg Klessheim

ECVET and the Austrian Vocational Education

The ECVET Expert Team for the Austrian Vocational Education System



school system. Despite addressing the same issues, our understanding of the opportunities offered by the ECVET system are at an early stage.

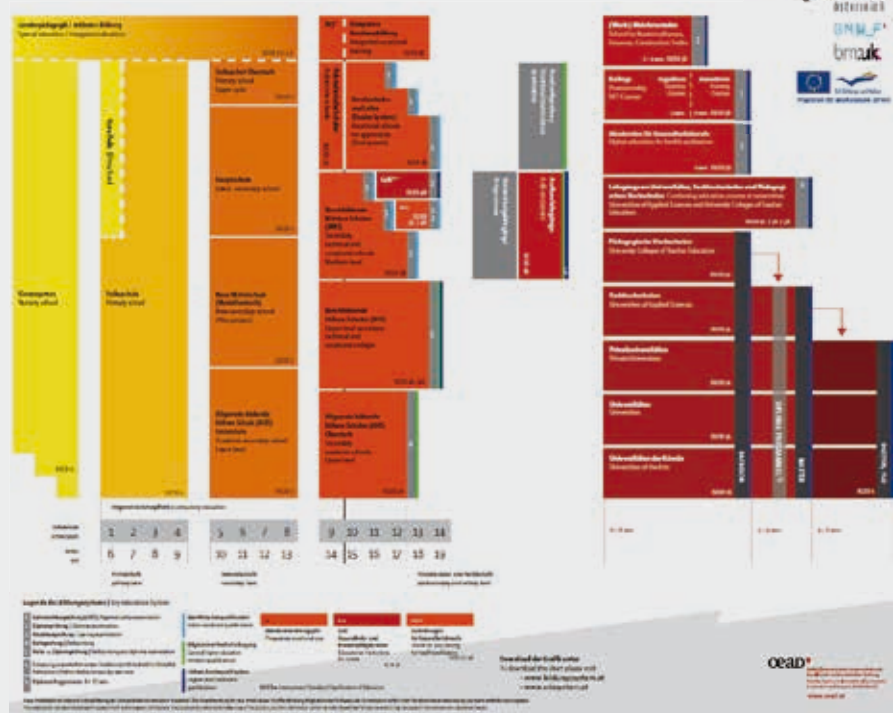
The vocational school system is very well known in Austria and it is actively considered when young people decide how to continue their education. More

than 50 per cent of those who successfully complete higher secondary education gain their degree through a five year programme in a vocational high school. Alternatively they complete four semesters of training at a vocational college as these institutions provide excellent professional qualifications for those joining at 18 or 19.

The Austrian system for vocational education follows a long tradition which goes back to the 19th century. It is based on regulations which cover education provided by schools as well as the dual system.

ECVET's competence based approach focuses on the same issues which form the core of the structural reforms currently taking place in the Austrian

The Austrian Education System



http://www.oead.at/fileadmin/III/dateien/lebenslanges_lernen_pdf_word_xls/euroguidance/bildungssystem_grafik/faltblatt/de_Faltblatt_euroguidance_jaenner_2013.pdf

The intention to use an ECVET approach, based on learning outcomes would allow for the enhancement of vocational and learning mobility i.e. an ECVET approach could be used to support EUROPASS mobility, the descriptions of an internship or to describe learners' activity records etc. Central to the idea is the plan to broaden and intensify the use of EUROPASS tools. This will allow the learner's evidence of mobility to be recorded in their CV and the diploma supplement which is in common use in Austrian schools.

“The system helps to define a clear set of activities and this leads to improved levels of learner satisfaction”

A national group of ECVET experts was established in November 2011 as part of a project led by the national agency - OEAD. The main focus, alongside geographical mobility for work and learning, was the importance of laying a foundation for ECVET in vocational education. This was particularly important in the context of progression and enabling learners from the dual system or vocational high schools to move to higher level qualifications. In this area Austria's vocational qualifications are well respected as they are seen as being the products of an excellent vocational school system.

Learning outcomes have been used in the new framework of educational standards which are based on competences. The learning outcomes will need to be organised into units to align with the ECVET system. In Austria we

are in the final stage of creating learning and teaching guidelines for the vocational colleges that use the four semester based curricula. The main focus of our evaluation of this approach will relate to learners' development of the required competences.

It is important to assist learners who want to improve their learning by working on those areas where they have not succeeded. The ECVET approach to learning outcomes and assessment based on the ECVET principles can assist with our plans to offer more transparency and the possibility to compare qualifications across Europe.

ECVET aligns with the Austrian educational system and supports sending and receiving institutions involved in mobility programmes. It helps both institutions to define clear goals and set tasks which support their co-operation. This is especially true when learners go abroad for an internship placement. The system offers opportunities for each partner organisation, the learners and the enterprises. The system helps to define a clear set of activities and this leads to improved levels of learner satisfaction. For the new Lifelong Learning programme, Erasmus+, the 'Learning Agreement' is one of the main documents which has to be signed by all partners in Austria - the sending institution (usually the VET school), the receiving organisation (usually the enterprise) and the learner (the trainee).

The ECVET system includes the validation and recognition of the learner's results. The home institution can benefit from learners' skills and competences acquired abroad as mobility provides an additional way to improve the quality and effectiveness of VET. Integrating the competences which have been achieved during learners' time abroad into the learning processes in the home institution creates a new dimension to learning. Learners who are mobile often demonstrate their ability to take responsibility and find creative solutions in new situations. They are able to show how they apply knowledge and skills in new environments – these are important competences that underpin higher level vocational training. In Austria these competences are part of an important debate about the nature of EQF Level 5 qualifications which is being led by the Ministry of Education.

From 2016 each student who takes a higher vocational education programme will complete a written report at the end of their school career. This will give them an opportunity to show their subject specific competences. It is also a great chance for them to show the quality of their professional education during their time in secondary and post-secondary vocational high schools and colleges and the written report enables comparisons with outcomes from the tertiary system when there are programmes in the same field. The results can be used to find connections between ECVET and ECTS as the output of learning will be measured through a common system.

The team of ECVET experts and its activities

The Austrian National Agency, OeAD, began to establish a team of ECVET experts at the end of 2011. The members were chosen on the basis of their professional experience and ability to work with networks linked to vocational education.

The team includes two principals from vocational high schools and a school inspector. Other team members are from institutions which focus on adult learning and agencies which organise European mobility schemes for learners. The team provides consultancy services and organise seminars for those working in the educational system. Typically participants will be involved in the development of learning and training plans as well as working in institutions and enterprises which want to participate in mobility programmes.



ECVET Austrian experts

The team's members understand how mobility projects work in the formal education sector and have a good knowledge of ECVET. The team also includes individuals who have just started using ECVET.

The Austrian ECVET team represents the most relevant stakeholders in the Austrian VET sector - as such it has been able to achieve an impressive increase in the awareness of the objec-

“The Erasmus+ conference provided an excellent platform for the ECVET expert project”

tives of ECVET. In 2011 when the project started ECVET was a not a well-known term for those who were not directly involved with European mobility projects. In the autumn of 2013 about 300 participants were welcomed to the first national ECVET conference in Vienna. The head of the department for vocational education in the Ministry

The Austrian Team of ECVET Experts

- Franz Gramlinger, Managing Director of the Austrian Reference Agency for Quality in Vocational Education and Training (ARQA-VET)
- Franz Heffeter, Principal of the Salzburg Tourism School in Klessheim
- Renate Kanovsky-Wintermann, school inspector in Carinthia
- Susanne Klimmer, Managing Director of IFA – International Exchange of Professionals in Vienna
- Karin Luomi-Messerer, Coordinator of 3s' research laboratory in Vienna
- Sabine Tritscher-Archan, project manager with ibw – Research and Development Institute for VET in Vienna
- Johann Wiedlack, Principal of the HTBLuVA Technical High School in St. Pölten

http://www.oead.at/projekte_kooperationen/qualitaet_transparenz/ecvet_expertinnen_und_experten/

of Education and Women's Affairs, SC Christian Dorninger, participated and followed the discussions and presentations with great interest. In the spring of 2014 more than 800 participants attended the inaugural conference for Erasmus+ in Vienna. What a change in just three years! The Erasmus+ conference provided an excellent platform for the ECVET expert project as members of the team hosted several presentations and workshops.

Eduard Staudecker from the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs has co-ordinated a project to support the implementing of ECVET in schools – this has included producing examples of best practice which illustrate successful school projects. Those ECVET team members with a school background supported this project which has helped to reduce concerns about using ECVET in a VET school context.

Following an invitation from the Ministry of Education and Women's Affairs it was agreed that inspectors could use time during their inspections to inform teaching staff and school principals about ECVET. These briefings created a multiplier effect as this systemic approach to sharing information with senior staff quite often led to schools asking for assistance to integrate ECVET into their projects. Those VET institutions which co-ordinated projects were also asked to assist in creating ECVET-compatible structures in their applications. The ECVET team provided consultancy support to these institutions during the set-up phase of their projects.

These institutions have shown great interest in ECVET even though the overall national participation of VET schools is relatively low. One reason for the slow take-up could be the tendency for tea-

chers to plan projects for their students on a stand-alone basis. Even when they are convinced of the importance of such projects because they lead to improvements in the quality of education, they know each project takes a lot of effort. This commitment is not part of their usual responsibilities and is not in their job descriptions. It is often not appreciated and it does not lead to pecuniary rewards. Sometimes the teachers suspect that ECVET could lead to a lot more complexity and increase their workload for an advantage which is not visible at first glance. These suspicions mean that the work of the team of experts is not yet over. On the contrary, we are still at the start of the process of integrating ECVET into the Austrian vocational education system. The process started two and a half years ago. Now the first achievements have to be built on and the work needs to carry on. ■



First national ECVET conference in Vienna

Mihail Ceclan, Ulrik Von Estorff - European Commission, Joint Research Centre,
Institute for Energy and Transport - The Netherlands

The road map for ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector



Mihail Ceclan

As part of its support to the introduction of ECVET in the nuclear energy sector, the Institute for Energy and Transport (IET) of The Joint Research Centre (JRC), European Commission (EC), through the ECVET Team of the European Human Resources Observatory for the Nuclear energy sector (EHRO-N), has developed in the last five years a strategy and a road map for ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector.

This article describes the process that led to the JRC road map for ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector.

Qualifications in the Nuclear Energy Sector

The nuclear industry has certain special requirements that need to be considered when developing projects related to training, education and professional qualifications.

It is obvious that there are omnipresent safety and security aspects in any nuclear activity, and there are environmental and public opinion issues associated with energy production by atomic fission. As a result there is an extensive regulatory framework, developed over decades, which has led to a highly regulated regime for nuclear activities. The role of the national regulatory bodies leads to a great diversity of practices in relation to the supply, demand and accreditation of education and training. This makes the implementation of ECVET additionally challenging.

Although transferability and comparability between ECTS and ECVET is an overall issue, it is especially relevant in the nuclear field as most qualifications are at the upper levels of the European Qualifications Framework (5 and above).

The nuclear industry is international both in relation to the regular move-

ment of workers and materials and for the transnational agreements that, to a large extent, govern it. Moreover, safety concerns, intrinsically linked to nuclear activities make the availability of a sufficient and well-qualified workforce crucial. The competence of this workforce must be up-to-date and this requires lifelong training schemes alongside the initial learning that takes place once someone gains employment.

The international nature of the industry, the restricted availability of suitable facilities and expertise encourages the movement of learners – either students or professionals. In this context, synergies arising from mobility become not merely beneficial but essential. Completing in-house and on-the-job training with learning periods in different organisations and countries is often necessary for acquiring and maintaining an appropriate level of competence.

Finally, the likely demand for nuclear experts in the medium term suggests that it will be necessary to find ways of developing professionals who initially have a non-nuclear background.

How ECVET supports the qualifications of the nuclear energy sector

It is generally accepted that ECVET is the second major reform programme in European leave space, that has a positive impact on the whole of the EU and in particular on the nuclear energy sector. This is illustrated in Figure 1.

Figure 1

The impact of ECVET's implementation on the European Union



In the light of the specific requirements in the nuclear energy sector, the EC-VET system can support the following improvements to the qualification system (as suggested in Figure 2):

- the shift to a competence based qualification system (CB-QS) that is more flexible;
- the CB-QS enables the accumulation of competences (or Learning outcomes/LOs) no matter in which

education system or sector they are acquired or how long they take to achieve;

- the CB-QS permits flexible learning pathways: formal; non-formal; work based; lifelong learning and training abroad (this supports permeability between education systems and sectors);
- the CB-QS enables geographical mobility.

Figure 2

The features of the competence based qualification system



The Joint Research Centre's road map for the NUVET implementation

In the last five years (2008-2013), the JRC, through the European Human Resources Observatory for the Nuclear

energy sector (EHRO-N) has developed a sectorial approach and a road map for NUClear VET (NUVET) implementation. The main features of this sectorial approach to ECVET's implementation process are:

- ECVET implementation is on a step-

by-step basis;

- there are six major components of the NUVET system (see table 1);
- all aspects of ECVET can be assembled in six steps;
- each step has specific goals and activities as explained in table 1.

Table 1

The NUVET components and the JRC road map for ECVET implementation

	Goal	Activities	Findings/Achievements
1	Scanning the human resource demands in the nuclear energy sector market	EHRO-N completes its first survey in 2012	by 2020 there will be a shortage of nuclear experts – the deficit will be 50 % of the required staff numbers
2	The shift from knowledge based to competence based qualification standards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • nuclear job taxonomy is prepared; • job descriptions and job requirements are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences • competence catalogue is developed to help employers to define job requirements in terms of knowledge, skills, competences and abilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 155 jobs are described in this way • 140 job descriptions use this approach • 2200 new entries to the competence catalogue <p><i>Each of these aims to support the definitions of learning outcomes</i></p>
3	Developing a competence based qualification system for the nuclear energy sector	Designing nuclear energy qualifications based on the ECVET approach	First exercise to design the NPP Operator qualifications at the second ECVET Seminar in Budapest (Oct. 2013)
4	The development of mobility instruments for the nuclear energy sector	Develop memoranda of understanding, learning agreements and learners' transcripts of records	Not yet tackled
5	The qualification achievement process for the nuclear energy sector	Developing sector-specific tools for assessment, validation, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes	Not yet tackled
6	Supporting ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • by organising a series of five workshops • by requesting an ECVET customised seminar 	It is time to test ECVET's implementation through a pilot project

The JRC created two instruments for NUVET implementation: the workshop and an ECVET customised seminar. The way of using the two instruments for ECVET's implementation in the nuclear energy sector and the time schedule are illustrated in table 2.

Conclusions

ECVET's implementation in the nuclear energy sector is an ongoing process. It will enter the final phase at the end of 2014 (after the 3rd ECVET seminar for nuclear energy sector) when there will

be pilot project for testing the implementation of NUVET based on learners' mobility. ■

Table 2

Using the workshop and the ECVET seminar for ECVET implementation

	Goal	2011	2012	2013	2014	Findings/Achievements
1	Scanning the human resource demands in the nuclear energy sector market		1 st EHRO-N survey			by 2020 there will be a shortage of nuclear experts – the deficit will be 50 % of the required staff numbers
2	The shift from knowledge based to competence based qualification standards	Workshop: Bergen, NL (Oct 2011)	Workshops: • Petten, NL (Feb 2012) • Thessaloniki, EL (Oct 2012)	Workshops: • Bergen, NL (May 2013) • Madrid, ES (Nov 2013)		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 155 jobs are described in this way • 140 job descriptions use this approach • 2 200 new entries to the competence catalogue <i>The focus is on the design of nuclear qualifications at EQF Level 5 and above.</i>
3	Developing competence based qualification system for the nuclear energy sector			2 nd ECVET Seminar, Budapest, HU (Oct. 2013)		First exercise to design the NPP Operator qualifications
4	The development of mobility instruments for the nuclear energy sector				3 rd ECVET Seminar 2014: Pilot project to test ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector	Aspects covered by the pilot project
5	The qualification achievement process for the nuclear energy sector					Aspects covered by the pilot project
6	Supporting ECVET implementation in the nuclear energy sector		1 st ECVET Seminar, Brussels, BE (Sept. 2012)	2 nd ECVET Seminar, Budapest, HU (Oct. 2013)		

Lenka Crouchley, ECVET Expert, Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth, National Institute for Education, Czech Republic

ECVET in Czech Republic: Work in progress



It all began in Prague!
It was in June 2009,
when the ECVET
Recommendation
was first introduced to
the European audience.
After five years, it is time
to take a look how much
work has been done in
the “ECVET homeland”.
Furthermore, it is time
to plan the next steps!

At the very beginning, Czech potential ECVET users were not keen about the new tool. ECVET was being presented with a focus on credits, or credit points and the lack of a credit system in the Czech VET system seemed to be a big challenge. As time went by, credits changed to credit, mobility and units of learning outcomes became the key ideas. The response to this change has been positive and ECVET is now finding its role in the Czech VET system.

The National Institute for Education (NUV formerly the National Institute for Vocational and Technical Education, NUOV), supported by the Ministry of Education, Sports and Youth (MSMT) is responsible for ECVET's implementation.. NUV is run directly by the MSMT. Its general aim is to assist the development of education in the Czech Republic by participating in creating concepts and strategies and assisting in their implementation. NUV activities cover primary and secondary education, as well as both formal and informal learning. And last but not least, NUV covers other areas such as careers guidance, labour market analysis and EU related activities. This range of topics enables ECVET to be considered from different perspectives. NUV's long tradition and established

relationships with schools allows ECVET's implementation to have strong connections to practice.

The ECVET implementation plan was proposed and approved by the Ministry (MSMT) in 2012 after extensive discussions with education and labour market experts. A coordination centre was established as a platform for further discussion and development. It was decided to use ECVET as a tool to support domestic and geographical mobility through the accumulation of units of learning

“Time went by, credits changed to credit, mobility and units of learning outcomes became the key ideas. The response to this change has been positive and ECVET is now finding its role in the Czech VET system”

outcomes as this is important in recognising non-formal and informal learning. ECVET principles which are relevant for the Czech education system are used in initial and continuous VET, and they support national projects at the system level. A special focus is given to enhancing partnerships between VET providers and employers. As in other countries, many activities are connected to the National Agency for European Programmes. A key feature advantage of the implementation process is developing ECVET alongside the other European instruments in one government department. This ensures that the work on ECVET, Europass, EQAVET and EQF is synchronised and heading in the same direction.

In the field of international mobility, cooperation with the National Agency for European Programmes plays a key role. Information on ECVET has been incorporated into the Agency's materials and guides for all Erasmus+ grant applicants. As a result, more and more Czech users are familiar with ECVET principles and many grant receivers use them in their projects. Raising awareness of ECVET was also the task of the National Team of ECVET Experts - another project supported by the National Agency. The team includes representatives from the Confederation of Industry, the National Training Fund, Chambers of Commerce, the Labour Office and the National Institute for Education. The team produces information on ECVET e.g. articles, brochures, leaflets, a short video etc. A survey of employers and VET providers identified that ECVET could fill the gap between these two types of organisation and could work as an instrument to improve communication. Using learning outcomes enables enterprises to specify the real needs of the labour markets and schools are then able to adjust their study programmes appropriately and respond to this demand. In addition, for parents it is easier to understand the content of different programmes which makes it easier for them to help their children choose the right study pathway.

In terms of national mobility, ECVET is currently being tested. Selected ECVET principles have been implemented in a national project to enhance cooperation between VET schools and employers. The project Pospolu ("Together" - the full project title is "Fostering Cooperation between Schools and Enterprises with a Focus on Vocational Education and Training in Practice") was launched

in December 2012. It aims to promote cooperation between secondary schools and employers, to design and test the optimal systems of cooperation for these partners in selected fields of secondary education. The use of elements of ECVET in the project creates conditions for fostering learning mobility of students at the national level; and the use of units of learning improves the transparency which underpins collaboration between schools, students and enterprises. Within the scope of the project, plans include opportunities for practical training based on learning mobility. One expected outcome is that students' practical training helps them to become familiar with the working environment while acquiring practical skills and improving their self-confidence. This will strengthen their ability to find employment and enter the world of work after concluding their studies.

In continuous education, ECVET developments are mainly related to the National Register of Vocational Qualifications (NSK) and are being piloted in its development. This public register describes the skills necessary for a specific occupation or work activity. The NSK defines the requirements for vocational competences of individual qualifications regardless of the method of obtaining them. This will lead to increased movement of the work force in a national and international context and increase the transparency of qualifications. Both ECVET and NSK share a number of objectives as they are based on common building blocks:

- the description of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes;
- assignment of qualifications and learning outcomes to the eight levels of the European Qualification Framework;

- more transparency in describing both the qualification system as well as individual qualifications for pupils/students, job seekers, vocational education and training providers, and employers;
- involvement of all parties (including social partners and educational institutions) in the description of qualifications;
- simplifying transferability between the qualification levels as well as between sectors;
- clear connections between initial and continuing education;
- a commitment to ensuring and increasing the quality of vocational education;
- ensuring the quality of qualifications in order to meet the needs of the labour market.

What is next? Activities to raise awareness are still a priority in the implementation process. Representatives of the ECVET coordination centre attend seminars and inform potential users about the latest developments. Since the ECVET principles are already well known, the focus is on giving examples of good practice and explaining the benefits for different target groups. Hopefully, this will help to fight the Czech euro-scepticism which remains one of the biggest challenges. In the near future, outcomes from the Pospolu project will show the practical side of ECVET. As for continuing education, a lot of effort is being put into creating stronger links between ECVET and NSK. ■

Useful links:

www.nuv.cz
www.dzs.cz
www.narodnikvalifikace.cz
www.nuv.cz/pospolu

Olivia Maria Jidveian, Coordinator of « National Teams of ECVET Experts » project – Services Departement
Studies and Research - National Agency for Community Programmes For Education and Professional Development

The work of the Romanian team of ECVET Experts



In 2011 there were several important changes designed to improve the Romanian national education and training system, and to harmonise it with similar systems in Europe.

The most important changes were:

- implementation of new education legislation (January 2011);
- the establishment of the National Qualifications Authority (NQA).

The new legislation contained special provisions which could support ECVET, such as:

- transnational mobility periods, like those funded through Leonardo da

Vinci could be part of the compulsory curriculum for initial VET;

- establishing the NQA with responsibility:
 - > to develop a National Qualifications Framework (NQF) NQF based on the EQF;
 - > to ensure the compatibility of the national qualifications system with other systems in Europe;
 - > to coordinate and control national occupational standards and the implementation of training which meets these standards.

In order to ensure the law was effectively put into practice, new approaches and guidance were developed. The National Centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CN-DIPT) and NQA developed new occupational and training standards. In this context, the National Agency for LLP realised there was a favourable climate for implementing ECVET in Romania and designed an ECVET project aimed to offer support for the:

- implementation of the reforms envisaged by the new law concerning IVET and CVET;
- harmonisation of national qualifications and curricula with ECVET technical specifications.

These aims would be achieved through:

- promoting the development and use of ECVET at all levels of the NQF in

order to facilitate transnational mobility, the recognition of learning outcomes in VET, and the creation of borderless lifelong learning;

- creating the necessary conditions (and the adoption of measures) so that ECVET would be gradually applied to VET qualifications at all levels of the NQF and EQF. This would enable ECVET to be used for the transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals learning outcomes achieved in formal and, where appropriate, non-formal and informal contexts.

To support the aims, the following specific objectives were established:

- support for relevant VET stakeholders to develop their ECVET expertise;
- provision of assistance to stakeholders to move towards ECVET implementation;
- facilitate stakeholders' and individuals' access to information and guidance on using ECVET;
- ensure that the application of ECVET to qualifications is properly publicised and that associated 'Europass' documents issued by the competent authorities contain explicit relevant information;
- promote the Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects as opportunities for transparent and flexible professional development. In addition other lifelong learning projects and mobility

schemes (e.g.: Comenius, Study visits etc.) would focus on the development of trainees' competences and increasing the quality of initial and adult training processes and activities.

The eight national experts (Mihaela Tania Sandu Irimia: Director of Life-long Learning and Programmes Department – Ministry of National Education, Gabriela Ciobanu: General Director-CNDIPT, Zoica Elena Vladut: Deputy Director-CNDIPT, Dana Stroie: Head of Unit for training programmes and quality assurance-CNDIPT, Viorica Radulian: Senior expert in Development of occupational standards and professional qualification- NAQ, Mihaela Ștefănescu: expert - CNDIPT, Tatiana Gheorghiu: VET teacher, Camelia Ghețu: VET teacher) have worked with the National Agency to ensure all the objectives have been reached. The following activities helped to ensure the aims were met:

- promotion seminars which provided information for stakeholders on the project's activities;
- training for the ECVET experts and their subsequent involvement in training sessions;
- seminars/forums and peer learning activities which bring together all the experts on a monthly basis to share their experience in the field of VET and ECVET;
- strong cooperation between all the relevant partner organisations such as: the ECVET team, the Minister of National Education, The National Qualifications Authority, the National Centre for IVET, Sectoral Committees, County Schools Inspectorates, Chambers of Commerce, Agriculture and Industry, Agencies for Employment.



The following activities were planned and completed:

- ECVET information and promotion events for different types of stakeholders (e.g. representatives of national and county employments agencies, those who participate in study visits, VET teachers, and head-teachers of VET schools) – there have been five events with more than 270 participants;
- information and training events for:
 - > organisations involved in Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects – six events and more than 230 participants;
 - > VET and community project inspectors from the County School Inspectorates – two events with almost 100 participants;
 - > representatives from Sectoral Committees– one event for 39 participants;
- workshop for 24 participants from the National Centre for IVET to discuss the national strategy for ECVET implementation;
- ECVET presentations made by members of National ECVET experts team and/or experts of the National Agency involved in the project, during events organised by different departments of the National Agency or by other institutions. Three events were organized by National Agency departments and 5 were organised by other institutions;
- initiating an ECVET FORUM on the NA site;
- drafting a study regarding the barriers encountered by mobility beneficiaries in the transfer and recognition of the learning outcomes;
- publication of two booklets on using ECVET for VET providers and stakeholders. One focused on lifelong learning, the other focused on geographical mobility;
- creating a user-friendly ECVET page on the National Agency site which operates as an online handbook for using ECVET;
- translation from English to Romanian of the three booklets produced by the

ECVET Users' Group: "Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility", "Using ECVET for LLL", "Get to know ECVET better Questions and Answers";

- participation of the National Agency staff and ECVET experts in training and information events organised by the ECVET secretariat, CEDEFOP or other national agencies;
- regular meetings and workshops for ECVET experts;
- articles in the monthly e-newsletter AVERTIMAIL which has 6,000 subscribers.

The outcomes and the results of the project are:

- at the individual level:
 - > a better understanding of the importance of using ECVET for participants involved in geographical mobility;
 - > a proper use of the technical specifications concerning ECVET.
- at the institutional level:
 - > widespread use of ECVET to support the geographical mobility of learners;
 - > a proper implementation of ECVET for IVET in Romania (i.e. qualifications are described in terms of learning outcomes which are conceived as knowledge, skills and competences; the appropriate description of units of learning outcomes; the validation of learning outcomes; the transfer of learning outcomes when the context of learning changes; mechanisms for facilitating the accumulation of learning outcomes, and the use of ECVETpoints);

- > improvements in the quality of Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects. This is due to the improved quality of Training Agreements which are based on ECVET;
- > learning agreements and Memoranda of Understanding based on ECVET.

- deliverables:
 - > seminars and workshops for those interested in ECVET;
 - > a standard set of powerpoint presentations which support participants attending the seminars and workshops;
 - > 673 people informed/trained face to face concerning the use of ECVET;

- > articles in the online NQA newsletter;
- > one study on the barriers faced by those involved in mobility who wish to transfer and recognise learning outcomes;
- > guides concerning ECVET for geographical mobility and for lifelong learning (on line and in print);
- > a dedicated website to support the ECVET project;
- > a draft strategy concerning the implementation of ECVET in Romania. ■



ECVET team

Work programme 2014

January	WEB platform: state of play and survey of potential users of CoP
20-21	Customised Seminar "Metal Sector Turkey" - Istanbul
February	Web platform: development of CoP support
12	Participation in EQAVET steering committee
13-14	ECVET Thematic Seminar "Learning Outcomes" session 1- Barcelona
March	Web platform test
13	UGM extra-workshop on EASQ (organised by the Commission)
18-19	Customised seminar "French National Team of ECVET experts"
19-20-21	Regular ECVET seminar "Mobility" – Prague
	ECVET Mag
April	
11	ECVET Steering Committee - Brussels
16-17	ECVET Thematic Seminar "ECVET teachers & trainers" session 1 - Budapest
May	Web platform test
13-14	UGM workshop and meeting – Brussels
June	Web platform assessment results
12	ECVET costumised seminar , Slovenia
17	EASQ conference
	ECVET Mag
September	
10	ECVET and EQAVET joint working group - 1
23-24	ECVET Thematic Seminar "Learning Outcomes" session 2- Bucharest
October	
2-3	Regular ECVET seminar "ECVET and LLL" - Amsterdam
30-31	ECVET Forum "Trusting skills and qualifications in the Europe of tomorrow" - Vienna
	ECVET Mag
November	
5-7	Regular ECVET seminar "Mobility" - Riga
6	ECVET Steering Committee - Brussels
12-14	3rd ECVET costumised seminar for the nuclear sector, Rome
December	
1-2	UGM workshop and meeting - Brussels
3	ECVET and EQAVET joint working group - 2
9-10	ECVET Thematic Seminar "ECVET teachers & trainers" session 2 - Warsaw
16-17	ECVET Thematic Seminar "Learning Outcomes" session 3- Brussels

Trusting skills and qualifications in the Europe of tomorrow

Vienna

**NH Hotel
Danube city**

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**30 & 31
OCTOBER
2014**

This fifth edition of the annual ECVET Forum lies in a very dynamic and exciting European context: 5 years after the official launch of ECVET, 2014 stands as the year of the ECVET recommendation evaluation, of the European Area of Skills and Qualifications consultation and of the start of closer cooperation between ECVET and EQAVET. This event puts ECVET in the limelight, but it is more necessary than ever to take into account all European transparency tools.

Last year in Prague, at the occasion of the 2013 Forum, there was a major consensus around the notion that ECVET is working - this year again, the European Commission, with the support of the ECVET Team and the Cedefop, will give you the opportunity to share your views with all the 300 expected participants (VET policy-makers and providers, social partners, sector and branch repre-

sentatives, researchers...) on how ECVET is useful in the services you provide to learners and society.

Next fall, in the international city of Vienna, the Forum will like always enjoin the participants to discuss ECVET-related issues in different rounds of lively workshops. Stocktaking will take place, as well as thorough discussions on what is coming up next: whether you are dealing with operational aspects of ECVET or that you take a long-term strategic stance on the matter, all your views, inputs and comments matter to us and are worth being shared.

And obviously, a great deal of room will be given to networking, so you can create or maintain work relationships!

Trusting skills & qualifications in the Europe of tomorrow

The 2014 ECVET Forum is organised by the European Commission with the support of the CEDEFOP and ECVET Team.
The Forum is open to any interested member of the European ECVET network and interested parties

The documentation of the previous ECVET annual forums is available at <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/event/ecvet-annual-forum>

PROGRAMME (DRAFT)

Day 1 | 30 October 2014

08:00 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 09:15	Welcome & Introduction - Mrs Dana-Carmen Bachmann, Head of Unit B2 « Vocational training & adult education », Erasmus +, DGEAC European Commission - Representative of Austria
SESSION 1- TAKING STOCK TO MOVE TO THE FUTURE	
09:15 - 10:05	Setting the scene: « experience gained from ECVET » - Mr Carlo Scatoli, European Commission - Mrs Ramona David-Craescu, CEDEFOP - Mr Hugues Pouzin, Confédération française du commerce interentreprises - France - Mrs Külli All, Advisor at the Ministry of Education and Research - Estonia (tbc)
10:05 - 10:15	Question collection (for discussion with the European Commission after lunch)
10:15 - 10:45	Coffee break
10:45 - 12:30	9 parallel workshops – 8 in English, 1 with translation (FR, DE, EN) Taking stock to move to the future
12:30 - 14:00	Lunch
SESSION 2- PREPARING THE FUTURE	
14:00 - 14:20	Keynote speaker - Mr Borhène Chakroun, UNESCO (tbc)
14:20 - 15:20	Round Table: Users Group Views - Mr Eduard Staudecker, Head of the Austrian ECVET working group - Austria - Ireland (tbc) - Italy (tbc) - Mr Piotr Bartosiak, Head of European initiatives Unit, Ministry of National Education - Poland - Mr Philippe Perfetti, UEAPME
15:20 - 15:50	Coffee break
15:50 - 16:10	Questions and answers session with the European Commission
16:10 - 17:30	ECVET Market place - Opportunity to look at successful ECVET practices (projects, national teams of ECVET experts, LLL agencies, etc)
19:30 - 21:30	Networking and Dinner

Day 2 | 31 October 2014

SESSION 3- ENGAGING WITH THE FUTURE	
09:00 - 09:05	Welcome
09:05 - 09:35	Setting the scene: « what the future might hold ? » - Mr Carlo Scatoli, European Commission - Mrs Ramona David-Craescu, CEDEFOP - Mrs Elena Camilletti, ECVET Team
09:35 - 10:50	9 parallel workshops – 8 in English, 1 with translation (FR, DE, EN) Part 1: short term perspectives for ECVET
10:50 - 11:15	Coffee break
11:15 - 12:10	9 parallel workshops – 8 in English, 1 with translation (FR, DE, EN) Part 2: long term perspectives for ECVET
12:10 - 12:20	ECVET Team news - Mrs Elena Camilletti, ECVET Team
12:20 - 12:50	Observer's feedback from the workshops - Mrs Isabelle Le Mouillour, BIBB - Germany (tbc)
12:50 - 13:00	Conclusion from the European Commission



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