

## ***Statement on the ECVET consultation process***

Having monitored the process of the ECVET development for the past two years on a continuous basis, the signers of this statement welcome the effort to design an instrument capable of promoting young people's mobility as early as in the phase of initial vocational education and training. Yet their interest in the availability of such an instrument is also based upon the expectation that the introduction of the ECVET, apart from the mobility context, will both lead to more flexible forms of learning outcomes documentation and help to make visible the results of life-long learning; furthermore, it is expected that by way of promoting a European culture of learning outcomes evaluation in the long term the reliability of certificates awarded in VET will increase.

The signers consider it as a decisive condition for the success of ECVET that it is formed as an instrument easily manageable for the enterprises.

Expressing these concerns the following comments on the consultation paper will therefore merely focus on a few selected items of the questionnaire contained therein.

### **What would be the main added value of the planned ECVET system?**

The main value the envisaged ECVET system would additionally create is the establishment of a *learning outcome* perspective whose significance will reach far beyond the context of mobility during IVET. The aim of vocational education and training is to convey vocational competence; forms of examination and certification that place the emphasis on successful completion of programmes do not cater for the needs of an economy subject to rapid change. From the development of "fit-for-Europe" procedures for the evaluation of vocational competence in the narrower context of mobility projects, a positive impact on European VET as a whole may be expected. In this context, the microperspective taken by the ECVET is a key supplement to the EQF which is directed both towards an *outcome*-oriented description and fitting into a multi-level system of *full qualifications*.

To mention yet another key added value factor, introduction of the ECVET might lead to increased permeability of educational and training systems, in particular between vocational and higher education.

- This, however, presupposes action directed towards the establishment of the ECVET and implementation of the EQF being taken in close coordination – what seems to be dictated also by mere efficiency considerations.
- Secondly, the relationship between the ECVET and the ECTS has to be clearly defined in this context. In our opinion, it has to be ensured that the principle of *outcome*-orientation is consistently safeguarded.

**Do some technical specifications need to be set out in greater detail with a view to the practical implementation of ECVET? If so, which ones?**

At present, we see major gaps in the procedures proposed in regard of the description of “units” in the context of ECVET. In this respect, the Technical Specifications worked out in 2005 by the Technical Working Group were much more concrete, than is the consultation paper – even though not to the extent as would be required in some respect. This is certainly not least because decisions concerning procedures that could be applied by all actors in European VET cannot be made at the Round Table – rather, this requires practical piloting. Still, it has to be ensured that results obtained in work placement projects are made accessible by a reliable feedback system to anyone wishing to work with ECVET within short time. Apart from good examples, proposals on generally applicable procedures for learning outcomes documentation would be required since case-to-case decisions in fundamental, methodical questions relating to learning outcomes documentation in the context of ECVET (at the operational level of mobility projects) would overburden those who are working in the sphere of education and training. Large-scale implementation of the new instrument will not be ensured unless some progress has been made in this field.

What also remains to be done is to clarify the relationship between knowledge, skills and competences. In particular, it seems to be arguable whether competences – as dispositions accounting for vocational competence in a comprehensive sense – might also be the outcome of smaller dimensioned learning units. It therefore has to be examined whether schematism in describing “units” – in terms of “knowledge, skills and competences” – will not undermine the concept of competences.

**Under what conditions could describing qualifications in terms of learning outcomes and expressing them in units effectively improve the transparency of qualifications and contribute to the development of mutual trust?**

For the enterprises, descriptions of *learning outcomes* are of concern not least because they allow a well-founded cost-benefit calculation to be made in regard of education and training thus contributing to quality management in this field. Hence, in the signers' view, transnational recognition of learning outcomes will gain impetus only if linked to accompanying measures in terms of quality assurance as well as the provision of appropriate tools

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