

## REPUBLIC OF BULGARIA

### Results from the held consultation process for European Credit system in the field of Vocational Education and Training

#### 1. Objective and reasons for the implementation of ECVET

We consider that the objectives, the reasons and the principles for the implementation of the system are clearly and precisely identified and the benefit of its introduction at national and European level is obvious in some aspects:

- Facilitation of European citizens' mobility;
- Development of cooperation between all parties concerned in the field of vocational education and training through validation of partnership mechanisms;
- Enhancement the transparency of qualifications;
- Recognition of lifelong learning outcomes, nevertheless when, where and how they are acquired;
- Ensuring possibilities for the learners to plan alone the process of their qualification, moving from one training to another, through accumulation of quantitative measures – credit points;
- Strengthening the transparency of the educational and training systems, which will increase the attractiveness of the European VET;
- Enhancing the motivation of European citizens to join to lifelong learning activities.

The necessity according to which each country has to define by itself the competent bodies responsible for the implementation and the realization of ECVET at national level is clearly indicated in the working paper. However, all the recommendations of the European structure which will coordinate the activities under the introduction of the system, related to the functions and responsibilities of the competent bodies at national level, will be very useful for us. For example we need clarity, related to the role and the functions of the competent bodies at a sector level. Does the conception “National authorities” include the sector competent bodies?

#### 2. ECVET Characteristics

Taking in account the significance and the introduced content of the accumulation process of credits we propose the name of the system to be “European system for transfer and accumulation of credits in vocational education and training”.

We find that a concretization and more detailed examination of characteristics of ECVET are necessary to be done because of its practical implementation.

Technical specifications of the ECVET are a basis for a strong cooperation between institutions and organizations of the Member states, with a view to realize an effective process of

accumulation and transfer of credits. By introducing technical specifications it will ensure an exchange of models and methods and acquisition of common principles and criteria for quality assurance in VET. We think that technical specifications have to be agreed through common consensus at European level. The system has to be open for updating in compliance with dynamic changes in social and economic development in Europe.

Technical specifications will provide to the learners an opportunity to plan their training and, before they have made an agreement for training, to obtain information whether the proposed training modules/units will give them the necessary credit points, which will be accumulated with a view to acquire the desired qualification. A variety of methods, used by the institutions for VET requires a maximum clarity so that ECVET to be a working system. The system has to be accessible and understandable for all users in order to be practically realized and effective. A clear regulation is needed for the evaluation of learning outcomes.

The transparency of qualifications depends on the indexes, which define the number, the type and the content of the training modules/units, so we think that the units of learning outcomes for each qualification have to be elaborated through unified approach and one and the same criteria. This transparency will give possibilities for comparison of learning outcomes, which are a result of different trainings, including informal and non-formal learning.

The information for the technical specifications evaluation, validation, recognition, accumulation and transfer is useful, but not enough. WE find that more concrete definitions are needed as elaboration of exemplary instruments which will be used for elaboration of the system at a national level.

We consider also that it is necessary to have more detailed definition and clarification of the basic concepts and terms in ECVET and their logical standardization in all Member states.

We think that the idea concerning the allocation of credit points with the duration of training at school (the years of school training in formal education system) is not a good one. An analysis has to be made, concerning the implementation of credit system which is based on that principle, so the priorities and the disadvantages have to be indicated and then the decision whether the number of credits to be linked with the duration of training to be taken. We think that the training outcomes have to be linked with definite number of credit points according to the importance of the content of each learning outcome and according to the achieved mark.

The problem concerning the recognition of competences, acquired outside of the training institutions from the formal education and training system is still not resolved in Bulgaria. It is not so clear for us how these competences could be recognized and compared on the basis of 120 credits for 1 year of training. It is also good in such case the system “outcome-credit” to be used.

We find that the mark for a degree of acquiring a certain outcome (knowledge, skills, and

competences) must have a crucial importance when the credit points are awarded. When there is a top mark, the number of credit points has to be full; when the mark is lower the learner must receive a percentage of these credit points. For the implementation of such system it is necessary to elaborate a national scale for comparison.

In spite of the differences between ECVET, based on learning outcomes and the credit system in the field of higher education ECTS, based on the training process will be made a Common European Credit System which will include both VET system and Higher education system. For that purpose we propose the usage of 180 credit points for the professions in VET system, so it will ensure a maximum compatibility between ECVET and the already introduced European credit system in higher education in future.

### **3. Implementation of ECVET**

For achieving maximum transparency, compatibility and confidence among the national credit systems of the European countries, we think that indexes through which each one of the qualifications would be described in terms of learning outcomes must include:

- Knowledge, skills and competences, similar or close for the whole economic sector;
- Specific knowledge, skills and competences, necessary for practicing of a concrete profession.

We find that criteria for the allocation of credit points can be the number of training classes /in formal education and training system/ and evaluation of the acquired knowledge, skills and competences;

Bulgarian vocational education and training system has an experience in awarding credits for training on different professions, carried out at a modular principle which will help us to reduce the experimental period and the time need for the introduction of ECVET. The implementation of the new structure of the State Education Standards for acquisition of qualification on professions in Bulgaria, with an accent on learning outcomes is a precondition for introducing a National system for transfer and accumulation of credits in VET. The credit points awarded for achieved learning outcomes could be written in the State Education Standards. The total sum of them will bring information for the number of credits for the obligatory vocational training of the relevant qualification. However, the separation of qualifications must be specified and the learning outcomes of eligible vocational training should be included. The working paper for ECVET doesn't give an answer of the question how the learning outcomes to which can be given 1 credit should be laid down. If we want a definite learning outcome to bring the same number of credits in all EU countries, we have to discuss this question.

Taking into account that the EQF and ECVET documents are coherent towards the time framework, the implementation of ECVET should be linked towards this time schedule of

activities that will be accepted for implementing the EQF, the national and sector qualification frameworks, respectively. It should be defined 2011 as a real term for the elaboration of ECVET.

#### **4. Measures for support the implementation and development of ECVET**

It will be useful if the pilot introduction of ECVET should be done for qualifications, under which there are concluded international conventions /a shipman, aviation technician, a pilot, a driver of motor vehicle). The pilot approbation of the system will facilitate its elaboration and implementation in the national systems of the Member states.

We consider that it will be useful the following documents at European level to be elaborated:

- Guidance with a unified methodology for defining the desired learning outcomes;
- Qualification passport into which the responsible institutions have to write the acquired learning outcomes and credits for each of them;
- A linking mechanism between the credit transfer system in the field of higher education and the proposed ECVET system which to ensure opportunities for transfer and accumulation of credits, achieved in VET towards higher education or vice versa when there is a desire for acquiring a new profession in VET system.
- Guidance for a description of qualifications in each Member state through learning outcomes - some Member states, including Bulgaria have already elaborated such documents (In the case of Bulgaria these are the State Educational Standards (requirements) for professions in VET in their new format).

#### **5. Potential of ECVET for enhancement of mobility**

Practical implementation of ECVET requires joint actions and cooperation of all EU countries and it is a precondition for establishment and development of bilateral and multilateral partnerships.

EUROPASS-documents, and especially EUROPASS application towards a certificate would be able to contain information about achieved credits, which will ensure the transparency of qualifications and it will help for enhancing the mobility.

ECVET is an instrument for quality enhancement useful also in a mobility aspect in order to enhance the motivation of the participants in the European educational programmes.