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REPUBLIC



OF CYPRUS

MINISTER'S OFFICE

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE
NICOSIA – CYPRUS

Mr Jan Figel
Commissioner of the European Union
For Education, Culture and Multilingualism
Rue de la Loi 200
1049 Brussels
Belgium

Nicosia, 3 April 2007

Dear Commissioner,

Subject: Consultation regarding ECVET

I wish to inform you that the Ministry of Education and Culture has proceeded to a series of consultation actions on ECVET, in accordance to your letter of December 1, 2006.

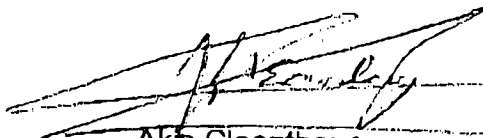
The consultations have been carried out at the level of the various Ministries and State Authorities which are related, in one way or another, to Vocational Education and Training and the representatives of Social Partners.

We believe that the adoption of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training could contribute to the cooperation of European Countries and could facilitate the mobility of learners and workers.

However, I would like to point out that the issue is complex and has many parameters. For example, the relation between ECVET and EQF is such, that the adoption of EQF would facilitate the establishment of ECVET, and vice-versa. As our late Minister Pefkios Georgiades has stated in his letter to you, dated 19 January 2006, Cyprus does not have its own NQF, on which the establishment of EQF depends. The process for the establishment of the NQF include many prerequisites - including legislative changes, influencing the working and social life in Cyprus.

Furthermore, the validation and recognition of non formal and informal learning, which is an element of ECVET, is not considered to be a main priority for Cyprus, Further more any relevant decision influences the recruitment, the promotion and career development of a big sector of population, in public and private sector. Therefore, any procedures must not put time pressure on the development of consultations, given that education and training in under the full responsibility of Member States [subsidiarity principle]. Thus the M-S participate on a voluntary basis and they have the right to decide according to their own priorities and national conditions. Nevertheless, Cyprus will continue to follow the developments concerning ECVET both at the European and national level of Member States.

I herewith enclose our answers to the Questionnaire of the Commission. Our answers should be viewed as presenting Cyprus preliminary position, which will be elaborated according to our priorities at national level.


Akis Cleanthous
Minister of Education and Culture

**Answers to the ECVET consultation document questions
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We consider that the creation of ECVET and its use on a voluntary basis could undoubtedly facilitate the transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes of European learners and could consequently contribute to the mobility of learners and workers.

We note that the actual implementation of ECVET is linked with EQF, which entails complex and complicated procedures, both on a national and European level.

We agree that the validation of non formal and informal learning is another aspect of ECVET. For Cyprus this implies legislative changes for recruitment and promotion of personnel in public and private sector. Thus Cyprus does not consider this issue as a priority of its Education and VET systems.

Hence, the issue of ECVET is not simple. Therefore, any consultations at any level must not exert pressure on the time that is necessary for the developments of the consultations, if we wish to have a serious and effective approach to the issue.

We cannot consider the adoption of ECVET as one of our main priorities. Nevertheless, we will follow the development of ECVET at European level.

The general views of the VET stakeholders in Cyprus on the Commissions' consultation document on ECVET are presented below.

Questions	General answers
<p>Purpose of and reasons for an ECVET system</p> <p>1. Are the most important objectives and functions of a European system of credits for vocational training and education and the role of competent authorities fully outlined in the Commission's consultation document? If not, what is missing?</p> <p>2. What would be the main added value of the planned ECVET system?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally, yes. However we consider that does not take into consideration the relation and impact to national legislation and education-training systems • It could improve the transparency and comparability of vocational qualifications and the quality of VET systems• Due to the expected benefits of the accumulation of credits, an increased interest for participation in continuing training and lifelong learning programmes could can be expected• It would increase the mobility of learners within the Member States

Technical basis for ECVET	
<p>3. 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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There are different national conditions in each member state. However greater analysis and more concrete examples are needed• Some concrete examples for the recognition of non-formal and informal learning
<p>4. Do ECVET's technical specifications take sufficient account of the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ evaluation▪ validation▪ recognition▪ accumulation▪ transfer <p>Of learning outcomes whether formal, non-formal? If not, please give details.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Generally yes, but not in practice and how these could be applied.
<p>5. Are the allocation of credit points to qualifications and units and using a reference figure of 120 credit points sufficient to ensure the convergence of approaches and the coherence of the system at European level? If not, what would you suggest?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The allocation of credit points to qualifications and units and the idea to have an indicative number of credit points for a certain amount of full time VET learning is correct. However this is subjected to national conditions and characteristics of the Education and VET systems in the various M-S.

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Implementing ECVET	
<p>6. 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?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• This something that should correspond and be related to the national education and training systems. Commitment and engagement of all stakeholders in VET at national and European level
<p>7. Which criteria or combinations of criteria for allocating credit points could be selected and used?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volume of the subject matter• Level of difficulty • Particular characteristics of the subject matter
<p>8. Are there any features in your qualifications system which would favour the introduction of ECVET? What constraints, if any, do you foresee?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is not any decision yet for the establishment a NQF in Cyprus nor a decision for recognising the non-formal and Informal learning.• There is though a reform project going on, which gradually will promote the establishment and the operation of a competence based System of Vocational Qualifications In Cyprus.
<p>9. How and within what time frame (launch, introduction, experimentation, widespread introduction) could ECVET be implemented in your country?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• VET in Cyprus is mainly offered in Secondary Technical and Vocational Schools, on a full time basis.• Considering that a major education reform process is underway, it cannot be predicted that ECVET can be promoted and implemented soon.

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<p>Measures for supporting the implementation and development of ECVET</p> <p>10. What kind of measures should be taken at European national and sectoral levels to facilitate the implementation of ECVET?</p> <p>11. What documents, manuals and guides could be developed to facilitate the implementation of ECVET?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop further the cooperation and exchange of information and experiences. • Since ECVET concerns the fields of education and training, further consultations are necessary at national level, since this will influence the working relations and careers in all sectors • Manuals and model documents explaining and highlighting in detail the procedures and the methodologies at each step of the implementation process.
<p>ECVET's potential for enhancing mobility</p> <p>12. To what extent and how will ECVET be able to contribute to the development of transnational and even national partnerships?</p> <p>13. To what extent and how will ECVET be able to help improve the quality of Community programmes on mobility and participation in these programmes?</p> <p>14. To what extent and how do you think that ECVET and Europass could complement each other to enhance mobility?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of transnational partnerships could be expected, especially between countries which have mutual interest in various aspects of the VET provision • The adoption of ECVET, would improve the cooperation and mobility in general and within the Community programmes • Europass increases the transparency of national qualifications, while ECVET could give the opportunity to European citizens to benefit from VET experiences in other European countries. In this respect, they both enhance mobility and complement each other.