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DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR EDUCATION AND CULTURE

Education and vocational training
Vocational training and adult education; Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig

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**MINUTES OF THE JOINT MEETING OF
THE ACVT BUREAU AND THE COPENHAGEN WORKING GROUP**

26 MARCH 2013

1. Opening

Mr António Silva Mendes, Director for Education and Vocational Training, welcomed the participants to the first joint meeting of the ACVT bureau and the Copenhagen Working Group. The meeting was chaired by Ms Alison Crabb, Deputy Head of Unit for Vocational training and adult education; Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig.

No comments had been received to the minutes of the previous meeting of the Copenhagen working group of 9 October 2012, so they can be considered approved.

2. Results of the consultation of the ACVT and DGVT "Strengthening European VET policy cooperation"

The Commission presented the results of the written consultation, highlighting the implications for the future work of the DGVT and the ACVT as well as the Copenhagen Working Group and the ACVT bureau. In summary:

- There will be a clearer division of tasks between DGVT and ACVT. The consultative role of the ACVT will be strengthened (consulted also on issues dealt with by other units of EAC as well as other DGs, if these issues are of relevance for VET). New observers, such as representatives of DG EMPL, DG ENTR and DG RTD, as well as representatives of VET providers and students will be invited to ACVT plenary meetings, if and when appropriate.

- ACVT would also have a role in the implementation and the follow-up of the Country Specific Recommendations (CSR) under the European semester. Mainly due to time-constraints, it would not be possible for the ACVT to be part of the CSR adoption procedure.

- The DGVT will be given a stronger forward-looking role, steering the direction of European cooperation. The DGVT meetings will be linked more closely to the Presidency priorities, without excluding other priorities to be taken on board. It will also be the main forum for discussion of VET-related OMC results, OMC clearly being a Member State-driven activity, with the support of the European Commission¹. In this role, it will steer the work of any future Thematic Working Group (TWG) on Vocational Education and Training.

- If possible, the ACVT and the DGVT meetings will be organized termly from 2014. The future Presidencies should take this into account when establishing a calendar for their Presidency events.

- A single governance group, an "enlarged ACVT bureau" (consisting of 5 Member States instead of the current 3, the 4 European-level Social Partners as well as the Commission, Cedefop and the ETF) will steer the functioning of the ACVT and the DGVT. The agenda of the bureau will make a distinction between items relating to the ACVT and those relating to the DGVT. While up to 2 persons from each country / social partner can attend, only one will be reimbursed.

- BusinessEurope and UEAPME would like to see the financing of the participation of the European Social Partners in the DGVT secured, and ETUC requested that the European Social Partners be considered as full members of the ACVT, i.e. with the same voting rights as their National counterparts. This would, however, be against the Council Decision laying down the rules of the ACVT, according to which the Committee consists of "three members for each Member State, there being one representative for each interest group of national governments, trade unions and employers' organisations". The European-level Social Partners are in fact not mentioned by the Decision.

The note on the consultation results will be updated taking into account this discussion, and sent to the DGVT and ACVT.

3. Events under the current and the future presidencies (DGVT meetings and conferences)

The programme of the DGVT meeting in Dublin on 21-22 May was presented. The main theme will be Quality Assurance.

The Lithuanian Presidency programme will include the DGVT meeting (11-12 November), followed by a conference (12-13 November). The Presidency themes of inclusiveness, role of VET in ESL, as well as access to C-VET will be reflected in the conference. Workshops are planned on special educational needs in VET, WBL and apprenticeships, as well as recognition of non-formal and informal learning. Suggestions for speakers are welcome.

Possible themes of the Greek Presidency, still to be confirmed, include work-based learning (with an emphasis on SMEs), skills for youth (with focus on skills mismatch),

¹ See Council Conclusions on ET 2020 of 12 May 2009. See also Council Conclusions on investing in education and training of 15 February 2013, which invite the Member States and the Commission to develop "procedures that increase the efficiency, effectiveness and Member States' ownership of the OMC process, for example at the levels of Directors-General and frontline senior policymakers".

and the articulation between VET and Adult Learning. A VET-related conference is planned. Synergies with the Lithuanian presidency are possible, as the themes overlap to a certain extent.

The Italian Presidency topics have not yet been decided, but ESL is a matter of interest to them, and this theme could be linked with Structural funds and financing. Other possible topics could include validation of competences and apprenticeships. More information about the themes of the Presidency would be available after the summer.

As for the Copenhagen priorities, and notably the adoption of a new set of short-term deliverables (for 2015-2017), the proposed timing would be as follows: the first orientation debate would be held at the DGVT meeting in Greece (around mid-April 2014). Cedefop would provide the first elements of the analysis of the current short-term deliverables by the ACVT meeting (in June 2014). Discussions at the Education Committee would be carried out under the Italian Presidency, with the adoption of the Council Conclusions by the November Council. The final approval of the new deliverables would take place at the informal ministerial meeting under the Latvian presidency early 2015 (with the new Commission in place).

4. ACVT meeting in July 2013

The Commission presented the intended set-up of the next ACVT meeting, which would be held in Leipzig on 2 July 2013, in the margins of the WorldSkills. Other events are also linked to WorldSkills, notably the launch of the European Alliance for Apprenticeships.

The proposed themes were found interesting, and they will appear on the agenda of the next ACVT meeting. Points for information and discussion: Attractiveness of VET and the role of skills competitions, European Alliance for Apprenticeships, and entrepreneurship education. Possible information points: EQAVET and EQF evaluation conclusions, European Skills Passport, and ET 2020 mid-term review.

It was proposed to send meeting documents well in advance via an electronic platform such as CIRCA.

The ACVT meeting exceptionally being hosted by the German Ministry for Education, due to the WorldSkills event, there will be interpretation from/into English, French and German at the plenary, and no interpretation at the group meetings.

The results of the workshop of 5 March 2013 "Work based learning and SMEs" will be distributed to all ACVT members. As for the document "WBL and Apprenticeships: policy pointers and country examples", discussed and prepared with the ACVT in 2012, a final version will be sent to ACVT members for written consultation before publication (preferably before the July meeting).

The year 2013 will mark the 50th anniversary of the ACVT. The meeting brainstormed on how to celebrate this, and more ideas are welcome.

The following ACVT meeting will take place in December 2013².

² Confirmed dates: Group meetings on 11 December in the afternoon, plenary on 12 December all day.

5. European Alliance for Apprenticeships

The Commission presented the first plans for the European Alliance for Apprenticeships, developed in close partnership with DG EMPL.

ETUC asked for clarifications about the mandate of the thematic working group foreseen under the Alliance and the representation of social partners therein.

Future OMC cooperation in VET will be discussed at the DGVT meeting in May in more detail. The intention is to launch the nomination procedure for any future Thematic Working Group around summer 2013.

6. Closing

The next meeting of the new "enlarged ACVT bureau" will be held end of September 2013. The invitations (to the past, current and 3 future Presidencies) to that meeting will be sent to the two DGVT members and one ACVT member. Two persons per Member State (from the 5 MS) can participate, but only one will be reimbursed by the Commission.

As for the invitations to the European Social Partners, the invitations will be sent to the DGVT and the ACVT representatives. Two representatives can participate, but only one will be reimbursed by the Commission (the normal reimbursement rules will apply). ETF and CEDEFOP will also be invited.

Annex: List of participants

Joint Meeting Copenhagen Working Group/ACVT Bureau

Brussels, 26 March 2013

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