1. **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair (Hélène Clark) welcomed the members of the Advisory Committee on Vocational Training (ACVT).

She welcomed the new spokesperson of the trade unions group, Hermann Nehls (DE), who had been designated by the trade unions group as a successor to Petri Lempinen.

The Chair updated the ACVT on the political developments which had taken place since the last meeting. She focussed in particular on the Commission Communication "Youth on the Move" which was adopted on 15 September.

2. **ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA**

The agenda was adopted.

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

The Chair informed the ACVT that the Belgian government representative and Business Europe had suggested amendments to the draft minutes which were integrated into the final version received by the Committee in September.

The minutes were adopted.

4. **BRUGES REVIEW: PREPARATION OF THE COMMUNIQUÉ**

The Chair explained that today's meeting would essentially focus on the short-term deliverables of the future Bruges Communiqué. The Belgian presidency had provided the Committee with the first draft of the "Council Conclusions on the priorities for the Copenhagen process for the period 2011-2020" and a first version of "short-term deliverables" to be included into the Bruges Communiqué.
The draft Council Conclusions are currently being discussed in the Education Committee and likely to be changed in the course of the discussions. Therefore, the chair invited the committee to concentrate their discussions on the short-term deliverables. She then gave the floor to the Belgian presidency to present the draft Council Conclusions and the list of short-term deliverables.

Reactions by group and chapter on the short-term deliverables

Government group

The comments of the group were presented by the Belgian presidency (Wilfried Boomgaert).

General comments

- The group wished to include an introduction into the Communiqué which would outline the European Commission's support to Member States in the implementation of the VET reform programme.
- Given the limited resources available, the list of short-term deliverable needs to be shortened and more focused.
- The group asked the Commission not to come up with new transparency instruments. For example, when referring to a "European Skills Passport", Member States wished to have confirmation that this would be an adaptation of the existing Europass.
- Member States were happy with the existing tools and warned against the publication of too many new guides, guidelines, handbooks, etc. Furthermore, in a majority of cases, these publications are only available in English, which makes the involvement of stakeholders in non-English speaking countries difficult.
- The group was in favour of increasing mobility in VET but asked for sufficient European funds to be made available to be able to achieve the increase.

Chapter 1 Improving the quality and efficiency of VET – Enhancing its attractiveness and relevance

- Questioned the need for a "European framework for VET promotion campaigns".
- Wondered how the Commission is going to organise a "Eurobarometer on VET attractiveness" as the difference between general education and vocational training is not always straightforward.
- Proposed to delete specific deadlines such as "June 2011" for "making use of EQAVET".
- Asked for the origin of the number of 5 mio apprentices by 2012.
- Regretted that "inter-sectoral" skills, i.e. transferable competences, were not mentioned when quoting "European Sector Skills Councils".
- Was concerned about a "competence framework for teachers and trainers".
Chapter 2  Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

- Regarding the proposed ECVET promotion and development framework, the group cautioned against introducing new initiatives and expressed the wish that new initiatives such as an ECVET label should be discussed with stakeholders beforehand. With regard to the proposed users' guides, the group warned against an overload of new material.

Chapter 3  Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

- List is too detailed and should be shortened and simplified.

Chapter 4  Promoting Equity, Social Cohesion and Active Citizenship

- Stated that the focus on youth in the context of a "charter with youth organisations" was incomplete as there are other groups which are relevant for VET.

Chapter 5 Transversal objectives, governance and ownership of the Copenhagen process

- Stated that for an effective implementation of the governance tools, good cooperation and additional funding were needed. Therefore, other funds should be mentioned apart from the Lifelong Learning Programme.

Trade Unions

General comments

- Welcomed the Bruges Communiqué
- The priority for the group was "Access to VET". However, not enough funds and apprenticeship/training places were being made available to allow an appropriate access to VET.
- Underlined that the headline target of 40% completion rate from higher education as described in the Youth on the Move Communication included graduates from "equivalent" tertiary education.

Chapter 1 Improving the quality and efficiency of VET – Enhancing its attractiveness and relevance

- "VET attractiveness campaigns" required specific proposals.
- Quality and relevance are described in too general terms. Clear structures for quality assurance should be established at national level.
- Even if the training of VET students varied in Member States, the group is in favour of establishing a "competence framework for teachers and trainers". This would help to develop a common standard for all those involved in the training of young people.
Chapter 2 Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

- The group proposed to involve social partners in the work of validation of non-formal and informal learning, in particular with regard to continuous VET.
- Proposed to use the formulation "Enhancing the labour market relevance of VET" included in the Belgian presidency presentation instead of the sentence "Provide integrated guidance services closely related with labour market needs" included in the short-term deliverables.

Chapter 3 Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

- Underlined that "entrepreneurship" meant teaching an attitude such as autonomy and personal competences.
- Asked for clarification on what was meant by "setting up mini-companies".

Chapter 4 Promoting Equity, Social Cohesion and Active Citizenship

- Stressed the importance of providing continuous VET to all learners, not only to the low-skilled.
- Enquired about the "charter with youth organisations" and whether other civil society organisations could also become involved.

Chapter 5 Transversal objectives, governance and ownership of the Copenhagen process

- Asked to clarify the meaning of a "European communication strategy on the European tools".
- Wished to keep the sentence "Encourage social partners to develop an initiative of their own to support the above objectives at EU and national level".

Employers group

General comments

- Welcomed the Bruges Communiqué.
- The list of short-term deliverables is too long.
- The two priorities for the group are "Increasing the attractiveness of VET" and the "Shift to learning outcomes".

Chapter 1 Improving the quality and efficiency of VET – Enhancing its attractiveness and relevance

- Wished to add the word "excellence" to the title "Attractiveness".
- Welcomed VET campaigns but asked to ensure complementarity between skills competitions such as Euroskills and Worldskills.
- Asked to clarify the meaning of the proposed "European framework for VET promotion campaigns".
• Asked for the origin of the number of 5 million apprentices by 2012. The group referred to bureaucracy as the biggest obstacle for work-based learning.
• Enquired about the operational glossary of key terms by Cedefop.
• The group was not in favour of a "competence framework for teachers and trainers". There was no added-value to have a separate framework for trainers. The representative of UEAPME underlined the diversity of qualification requirements for teachers and trainers and therefore the value of good practice in this area.
• EQAVET should be implemented as a "tool-box".

Chapter 2 Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

• Favoured a more comprehensive approach for supporting host and sending enterprises involved in mobility.
• Wondered about the meaning of an EU benchmark for VET mobility (2011), while drawing attention to the different types of mobility that existed in Member States.
• Agreed with the government group not to introduce new transparency instruments without building upon the existing ones (e.g. Europass).

Chapter 3 Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

• The group missed a methodology for teaching entrepreneurship in VET.
• Asked for clarification on what was meant by "setting up mini-companies".

Chapter 4 Promoting Equity, Social Cohesion and Active Citizenship

• To increase the transparency of qualifications, the group suggested linking continuous VET qualifications to national qualifications frameworks.
• On early school leaving, UEAPME proposed that Member States should increase schools' accountability to provide their students with basic numeracy and writing skills.

Chapter 5 Transversal objectives, governance and ownership of the Copenhagen process

• Suggested replacing "coordination mechanism" by "cooperation mechanism" in the sentence "Setting up an enhanced coordination procedure for implementation of common European tools".
• Suggested deleting the sentence "Encourage social partners to develop an initiative of their own to support the above objectives at EU and national level."

Commission response:

Chapter 1
The Chair explained that the number of 5 million apprentices in Europe was a reference of the Commission Communication "Youth on the Move". The idea was to send a signal to encourage Member States to considerably increase the number of apprentices in Europe.
She further explained that "Sector Skills Councils" were a follow-up to the "New Skills for New Jobs initiative" of December 2008. This did however not mean that "inter-sectoral skills" or transversal competences would not be taken into consideration. On the contrary, DG Employment was currently conducting a study on this type of competences.

With regard to a "Competence framework for teachers and trainers", the Commission wishes to further deepen its understanding of the issue.

João Delgado (DG EAC/B.4) added that campaigns are needed to make VET attractive but that the wording of a "European framework for VET promotion campaigns" might be changed. He further re-assured the Committee that EQAVET would be implemented in a "tool-box" approach.

**Chapter 2**
On the EU benchmark for VET mobility, the Chair recalled that the Council had called upon the Commission to develop before the end of 2010 a benchmark on mobility which would cover higher education, VET and the mobility of teachers. A proposal was currently being prepared.

Regarding the request made by the Government group to make enough resources available for increasing the mobility in VET, the Commission replied that one should make use of different sources of financing and not only rely on European programmes. Furthermore, it would be for the EU budgetary authority to ensure that enough financial means are made available for mobility, and Committee members should make their views known to their representatives in EU negotiations.

**Chapter 3**

The idea behind "mini-companies" was that VET schools should make use of methods based on real experience to make students simulate the complete lifecycle of a company.

**Chapter 4**
Regarding a "charter with youth organisations", the Chair agreed that other groups should be included.

**Chapter 5**
In response to the remark of the employers group to replace "coordination mechanism" by "cooperation mechanism", the Chair explained that the common European tools should be implemented in a coordinated way. Hence the term seemed appropriate.

In response to the question by the trade unions group on what was meant by a "European communication strategy on the European tools", the Belgian presidency explained that the idea was to expand the group of people aware of the Copenhagen process by developing a consistent communication strategy on the tools at national and European level.
Following the discussion at the ACVT, the Belgian presidency sent an updated version of the short-term deliverables to the Education Committee. The final version, adopted by the Education Committee, is annexed to the minutes.

Before addressing the next point on the agenda, the Chair extended her best wishes to the Spanish member of the employers group who would take up a new position with the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions in Dublin.

5. THE ROLE OF GUIDANCE IN SUPPORTING COOPERATION IN VET

The co-ordinator of the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN), Raimo Vuorinen, presented this point. An information note on the ELPGN had been distributed to the ACVT beforehand.

The French government representative expressed his satisfaction with ELPGN's excellent work and the impact it has had at national level.

The employers group stressed the importance of the ELPGN but regretted that the network was not open to companies.

The Chair (João Delgado) gave the floor to Mara Bragia from Cedefop who shortly described the work on Cedefop lifelong guidance policy review which monitors Member States progress in implementing the Lifelong Guidance Council Resolutions of 2004 and 2008. The full report would be published by mid-2011.

Mara Bragia further informed the ACVT on the key messages of a recent Cedefop study "Socially responsible restructuring - Effective strategies for supporting redundant workers". The study identifies 5 success factors for restructuring strategies. Copies of the executive summary of the study were distributed at the meeting.

6. UPCOMING PRESIDENCY EVENTS

Zsófia Lux gave a presentation on the upcoming events under the Hungarian presidency.

The Chair (João Delgado) informed members that the next meeting of the ACVT was planned for the first half of 2011. He then closed the meeting.
Using the strategic (long-term) objectives as a basis, and following discussions among the Directors-General for Vocational Training (DGVT) and within the Advisory Committee for Vocational Training (ACVT), a number of short-term deliverables have been determined by the Education Committee for the next four years (2011-2014). These are set out below:

### 1. IMPROVING THE QUALITY AND EFFICIENCY OF VET – ENHANCING ITS ATTRACTIVENESS AND RELEVANCE

#### 1.1. ENHANCING ATTRACTIVENESS AND EXCELLENCE

**Actions at national level:**

- a) Organise activities aimed at promoting VET attractiveness and excellence, which may include campaigns and skills competitions;
- b) Support activities, which enable young pupils in compulsory education to become acquainted with vocational trades and career possibilities.

**Support at EU level:**

- Policy document on the role of vocational excellence for smart and sustainable growth;
- Consider European support for VET promotion campaigns, including Eurobarometer on VET attractiveness;
- Encourage skills competitions at European and/or global levels.
1.2. IMPROVING QUALITY AND RELEVANCE

**Actions at national level:**

a) Take adequate measures to implement the EQAVET Recommendation and make progress towards national quality assurance frameworks for VET;

b) As appropriate, ensure that key competences and career management skills are adequately integrated in I-VET curricula and that they can be acquired through training opportunities in C-VET;

c) Governments, social partners and VET providers should make the necessary arrangements to:
   o maximise work-based learning, including apprenticeships, in order to contribute to increasing the number of apprentices in Europe by 2012;
   o create opportunities for enhanced cooperation between VET institutions and enterprises (profit and non-profit), for example through traineeships for teachers in enterprises;
   o provide VET institutions with feedback on the employability of VET graduates;

d) Pursue work on setting-up monitoring systems on transitions from learning to work.

**Support at EU level:**

- Guidance and technical support for EQAVET implementation;
- Review the implementation of EQAVET at national level in 2013;
- Thematic networking of Quality Assurance projects within the Leonardo da Vinci Programme;
- Vademecum/study on successful work-based learning models (with input from Cedefop);
- Strengthen the anticipation of skills and competences development, notably through skills forecasts (Cedefop) and by setting up European Skills Councils;
- Develop a common language aimed at bridging the world of education & training and the world of work (ESCO), consistent with other EU instruments, such as the EQF;
- Consider the adoption of an EU benchmark for employability on the basis of a Commission proposal;
- Work on best practices and guiding principles with respect to the changing profiles of VET teachers and trainers (together with Cedefop).
## 2. MAKING LIFELONG LEARNING AND MOBILITY A REALITY

### 2.1 SUPPORTING LIFELONG LEARNING

**Actions at national level:**

- **a)** In order to maximise the contribution of VET to the "ET2020" 15% benchmark on the participation of adults in lifelong learning, review the use of incentives, rights and obligations for all stakeholders involved, and take appropriate action to encourage participation in C-VET;

- **b)** Implement the EQF Recommendation:
  - development of comprehensive NQFs based on the learning outcomes approach. Use the NQF as a catalyst for creating more permeability between VET and higher education, for developing or maintaining VET at post-secondary or higher EQF levels, and for realising flexible learning pathways;
  - referencing NQF levels to EQF levels by 2012;

- **c)** Develop and promote the use of procedures for the validation of non-formal and informal learning supported by EQF/NQFs and guidance;

- **d)** Provide integrated (education, training, employment) guidance services closely related with labour market needs;

- **e)** ECVET implementation: see section 2.2 below.

**Support at EU level:**

- Policy handbook on access to and participation in C-VET;
- Guidance and technical support for EQF implementation, notably with view to applying a learning outcomes approach;
- Mapping of developments of NQF by CEDEFOP and ETF;
- Council Recommendation on the validation of non-formal and informal learning (2011);
- Progress report on the development of lifelong guidance policies, systems and practices -2011 (CEDEFOP, ETF and ELGPN).
2.2. ENHANCING MOBILITY

Actions at national level:

a) Progress towards ECVET implementation in line with the Recommendation, and participate in testing ECVET for mobility;

b) Take appropriate measures to boost mobility in VET, including:
   - Encourage a greater number of I-VET students and VET professionals to participate in transnational mobility;
   - Encourage local and regional authorities, as well as VET providers, to develop an internationalisation culture and internationalisation strategies, including cross-border mobility;
   - Address legal and administrative obstacles related to the transnational mobility of apprentices and trainees;
   - Encourage professional chambers, business organisations and other relevant organisations to support the host and sending enterprises in providing appropriate conditions for apprentices and trainees in transnational mobility;
   - Ensure the provision of language learning and intercultural competences in VET curricula;
   - Make optimal use of other EU tools (e.g. EQF, EQAVET, Europass) for enhancing the mutual recognition of qualifications and competences.

Support at EU level:

- Guidance and technical support for ECVET implementation;
- Periodic review of ECVET implementation (together with Cedefop);
- Thematic networking of ECVET projects within the Leonardo da Vinci programme;
- Recommendation on learning mobility (2011);
- Consider the adoption of an EU benchmark for VET mobility on the basis of a Commission proposal (2011);
- Proposal for a quality framework for traineeships;
- Promote mobility for apprentices, including by means of a support portal, within the framework of the Lifelong Learning Programme/ Leonardo da Vinci Programme;
- Develop a European skills passport as part of Europass by 2012.
3. ENHANCING CREATIVITY, INNOVATION AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

**Actions at national level:**

a) Encourage partnerships for creativity and innovation (VET providers, higher education institutions, and design, art, research and innovation centres);

b) Encourage effective and innovative, quality-assured use of technology by all VET providers (including public-private networking and partnerships) supported by the necessary equipment, infrastructure and networks, with continuing improvements that reflect developments in technology and pedagogical understanding;

c) Take measures to promote entrepreneurship, e.g. by promoting the acquisition of relevant key competences, enabling practical experiences in enterprises, and involving experts from businesses.

**Support at EU level:**

- Set up an EU-level VET / Business Forum with a focus on the following themes:
  o role of VET in the knowledge triangle;
  o transitions from VET to business: how to support VET graduates in starting up enterprises.

4. PROMOTING EQUITY, SOCIAL COHESION AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

**Actions at national level:**

a) Take preventive and remedial measures to maximise the contribution of VET in combating early school leaving;

b) Consider specific measures aimed at raising the participation of low-skilled and other "at risk" groups in education and training, including by developing flexible pathways in C-VET and using appropriate guidance and support services;

c) Use ICT to maximise access to training and to promote active learning, as well as to develop new methods in both work- and school-based VET, in order to facilitate the participation of "at risk" groups;

d) Use existing monitoring systems to support the participation of "at risk" groups in VET:
   see section 1.2. (d) above.

**Support at EU level:**

- Vademecum of best practices on inclusion of "at risk" groups through a combination of work-based learning and key competences;
## 5. TRANSVERSAL OBJECTIVES, GOVERNANCE AND OWNERSHIP OF THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS

### Actions at national level:

a) Establish communication strategies for different stakeholder groups, focused on implementation and the added value of tools (ECVET, ECTS, referencing of NQFs to EQF, quality assurance systems in line with EQAVET);

b) Set up structured cooperation mechanisms between VET sector and employment services at all levels (policy and implementation), including the social partners;

c) Contribute to improving EU level data on I-VET students, including mobility and employability.

### Support at EU level:

- Support the achievement of the above objectives through the Lifelong Learning Programme and, where appropriate, the European Structural Funds;
- Support peer-learning between Member States and innovative projects;
- Setting up an enhanced coordination procedure for the implementation of common European tools in the field of education and training;
- European communication strategy on European transparency tools;
- Develop structured cooperation with VET provider associations at EU level;
- Strengthen structured cooperation between the education and training and the employment policy fields;
- Improve EU level data on I-VET students, including mobility and employability;
- Social partners at all levels should continue to play an active role in the Copenhagen process (governance and ownership) and contribute to the realisation of the above mentioned short-term deliverables;
- Report on VET developments in Member States and partner countries;
- Reinforce exchanges with enlargement and neighbourhood countries.