ECVET

maGazine

number 07 2012

ECVET
European Credit system for
Vocational Education & Training

Education and Training

EACEA
Education, Audiovisual & Culture
Executive Agency

Education and Culture DG
Lifelong Learning Programme

ecvet magazine

Editorial

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Social partners get actively involved in implementing the common European tools

Common to all the European tools and principles – ECVET, EQF, validation etc. - is their focus on learning outcomes, on what a person knows, understands and is actually able to do, rather than a concentration on how, for how long and within what setting he or she has been learning.

This focus encourages learners to rethink their own skills and knowledge, and clarifies the objective of any learning process they enter into. To employers, meanwhile, it shows what to expect from a particular qualification.

But this approach also provides the social partners with a set of tools that allow them to re-think and re-formulate the standards, assessment and qualifications of their own sector.

This is what emerged during the **conference Cedefop organised** at the European Parliament in Brussels last November, in cooperation with the social partners.

Indeed, initiatives such as validation and credit arrangements and qualification frameworks simply

will not work unless employers and employees are able to understand what they can achieve, and participate in their elaboration and implementation. Policy-makers involved in putting these tools into practice also need to take into account the sectoral social dialogue, the new sectoral skills councils, and the **revision of the Directive on professional qualifications.**

The keen participation of national social partners in this conference was particularly encouraging. National employers' associations and trade unions form a necessary link with EU policy-making and EU-level social partners, on the one hand, and workers and employers on the other. For the national actors, the EU-level tools are an opportunity to reflect on education and training, and how to improve its links to the labour market.

It has to be admitted that such reflection and participation depends in part on the capacities and traditions of the social partners in each country. Participants from some Eastern European countries, for instance, voiced concern over organisational gaps.

But for many, engagement in European projects and cooperation across borders can form a convenient entry point into policy issues that are related to education, training and qualifications.

The conference offered some real-life examples of how sectors can work together at a pan-European level. One of the most striking was the **European Observatoire of Sport and Employment**, a social partner-led body which has succeeded in mapping the needs and standards for several qualifications in the field. It has done so through 18 European Leonardo Da Vinci partnerships. As a result, sports organisations across Europe have been able to use the European common tools and principles to organise the sector.

The wider implementation of the tools will have an impact on rights and obligations. This means that it may become more controversial as it impinges on the interests of various actors (individuals and companies). We need to take this on board now, and get to work finding how to resolve such conflicts.

The European tools are intended to ensure that qualifications are directly relevant to the labour market, and to make them easier to use, assess and validate outside the country, context or sector in which they were acquired.

The active and continuous involvement of social partners in implementing the tools – that is, in decisions affecting qualification levels, credit and validation arrangements, quality assurance, and guidance – is absolutely necessary if the tools are to achieve these objectives.

The value of such a development for citizens is self-evident. To achieve it, we will need everyone to work together – and to put in the necessary time.

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FOCUS   An article by Anette Curth, GHK Consulting

First generation of ECVET pilot projects in the process of finalisation:
Final projects meetings and conferences in December 2011 and January 2012

The first generation of ECVET pilot projects are currently in the final stages of their work. During the last month, they have been collecting the results of three years' work; analysed, compared and exploited the outcomes. Between December 2011 and January 2012, eight projects implemented a final event to disseminate their conclusions and findings. In the following, key messages from the events are summarised.

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The **ASSET** project held its final event at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry in December 2012. Over 70 delegates from all four participating countries (France, Hungary, Romania and Finland) and from across Europe attended the event.

The project partners emphasized that their experience with the testing and implementation of ECVET was as a success. The following key outcomes have been stated:

- All four participating countries agreed on four units of learning outcomes. Two exchange partnerships were then established to truly test the mobility period.
- A Memorandum of Understanding and a Learning Agreement were also established to facilitate mutual trust. Analysis showed that more tools need to be in place to effectively ensure the recognition of learning outcomes. In presenting the final outcomes of the study, establishing bi-lateral agreements has therefore been proposed (see below).

- Writing the units of learning outcomes was based on the job profile. All partners participated in a working group to determine the activities associated with the job profile and the associated competence requirements. This approach could easily be transferred.
- The project succeeded in allocating credit points to the designed units of learning outcomes.

On-going commitment to testing and implementing ECEVT
ASSET enabled different countries and partners to establish links, communicate in new ways and develop and maintain effective working relationships. There was a strong message that mutual trust is growing and that strong leadership is key. A shared desire to continue working together was stated. Working with ECVET needs experience, and since all ASSET partners (especially at a national level) have moved on considerably in terms of how they understand the notion of ECVET and mobility, an on-going commit-

BE-TWIN Final conference in Paris

ment would be helpful to facilitate further testing and implementation.

The project **BE-TWIN** also organised a conference at the Paris Chamber of Commerce and Industry (CCIP) in December 2012. The meeting was titled "Fostering learning mobility in Europe". Approximately 50 participants attended the conference; about half of them represented higher education institutions.

The project explored the links and relationship between ECVET and ECTS and developed a methodological approach that was made concrete by a translation tool facilitating transparency between qualifications acquired in the area of VET or Higher Education. At the core of the Be-TWIN methodology is a matrix which can serve as a translation device between ECTS and ECVET, by requiring qualifications from both systems to apply identical and thus comparable information parameters.

The matrix was presented and several case studies were introduced, which described practical examples of transparency and permeability between both credit systems at different EQF levels. One case study addressed geographical mobility of learners between France and Germany in the plastics industry, another case study focused on geographical and vertical mobility in the hospitality management sector (between UK and France), and the third case study focused on vertical mobility (training of trainers in Italy and France).

In conclusion, it was emphasized that a need for a comprehensive area of education and training in Europe is perceived and more tools and methodologies to facilitate a common implementation of ECTS and ECVET should be developed.

In a round table discussion, it was stated that a joint implementation of both credit systems will enable greater permeability between VET and HE, thus contributing to greater mobility (horizontal and vertical) in Europe. It was also stated that the Be-TWIN project and its results can be regarded as a milestone in moving towards a single credit system for HE and VET in Europe.

Long-term cooperation in partnerships established

The **CAPE-SV** project implemented a final meeting among the project partners in December 2011 in Prague that was also open to all interested parties. Besides the institutions involved in the project, social partners and other stakeholders also attended.

The project partners in CAPE-SV went through a pilot experience that was set up to be of benefit to professionals in the performing arts sector, namely stage lighting installation tecÚicians, stage lighting managers and stage lighting designers. It was acknowledged that applying the ECVET system facilitated a process in which seven partners from five countries, with five different approaches to training, and five different certification and validations systems, succeeded in developing a common approach to understanding, recognition and transfer:

- Understanding: A common method of defining units of learning outcomes has been developed; based on an approach related to the work process, focused on specific professional achievements, taking into account all learning pathways related to the selected profiles.
- Recognition: Transnational agreements between the partners formalizing the recognition process applied to two units of learning outcomes ('production of transmission documents for a show' in the lighting sector, 'time management and work planning', in the fields of tecÚical and administrative supervision practised in the theatre industry).
- Transfer: the partners are planning to continue their work and set up two mobility programs to implement the transnational agreements and procedures for validation that were developed.

In this context, all partners signed a Memorandum of Understanding stating the conditions for long-term cooperation and the future organisation of mobility projects. The project partners will also explore the option of developing a distance learning program with a mobility phase permanently integrated as an inherent part to the program.

CAPE-SV partners signing a MoU

The **NETWORK project** also held its final event in December 2011. The project analysed existing training pathways in the chosen areas of qualification (receptionists) in the partner countries (France, Italy, Portugal, Slovenia); aiming at providing a shared framework for the development and testing of ECVET and eventually, national implementation. An 'observed experimentation' was conducted in every country, applying the set of tools produced in the previous comparison and coordination phases to the various training pathways. On the whole, five institutions were involved in the testing (two Vocational Training Agencies, one public and one private VET-provider and one private Higher Education institution.

It was stated that:

- The testing has demonstrated enough consistency to establish some gateways between different training pathways and different national contexts of the participating partner countries, which will have a positive influence on the promotion and implementation of students' mobility in the future.
- The experimentation has been perceived by most of the VET professionals involved as an opportunity to better understand the on-going innovation in VET systems and was also identified as a core issue for training and teaching staff;

- In particular the Portuguese and Slovenian partners perceived the experimentation as an opportunity to innovate the system and test the functioning of National Qualification Frameworks and Standards;
- However, there are still persisting barriers and difficulties in applying the ECVET system in those contexts where VET systems and qualification descriptions/standards are not yet based on units and/or learning outcomes, or were training pathways are not the result of a joint national effort.

The partners also acknowledged that they created a strong opportunity to validate the experimentation results and thus add to the preconditions of integrating ECVET at VET System level. Thus, the testing phase has been perceived as a small, but nevertheless important step towards the national implementation of ECVET.

Shift to Learning Outcomes fosters transparency and understanding

The three projects promoted by German project partners (**AEROVET, CREDCHEM, SME Master Plus**) held a common conference in January 2012 at the German Confederation of Skilled Crafts in Berlin that generated considerable interest. Approximately100 participants took part in the event. All three projects tested and implemented the tecÚical specifications of ECVET in the context of a specific sector: The chemical industry (CREDCHEM), the aeronautics industry (AEROVET) and the skilled crafts sector (SME Master plus). All three projects also implemented a mobility phase, organising the exchange of students between project partners; thus testing ECVET mobility in practice.

The projects agreed on the following conclusions:

- The shift to learning outcomes to describe the qualitative dimension as a coherent set of acquired knowledge, skills and competences, and the approach to structuring learning outcomes in units is regarded as very useful to foster transparency and understanding between international partners in VET. Using those units to structure the mobility of learners has also proven to be helpful;
- However, practitioners recommend not to follow a too radical approach; they claim certain input and/or process data assures quality and fosters mutual trust and certain learning outcomes cannot be achieved independent of the learning venue;
- The ECVET-related documentation, such as the Memoranda of Understanding and Learning Agreements between partner institutions, and Transcripts of Records

to document the individual learning achievements, are regarded as very useful to support and facilitate the process of learners' mobility. They are also regarded as a means of quality assurance and mutual trust;

- German training regulations facilitate validation and recognition of learning outcomes in a formative manner (validation and recognition of the time spend abroad). Since the award of a qualification is based on a final (holistic) exam, which states a comprehensive professional ability to act, it is not foreseen to validate and recognise the learning outcomes acquired and assessed abroad summatively. The competences acquired are an integral part of the holistic exam.
- Consequently, the necessity of ECVET points, stating the relative value of learning outcomes in relation to the entire qualification (thus the quantitative dimension) was also questioned. Since the holistic German VET-system is not based on accumulation of units or modules, the allocation of ECVET points to units of learning outcomes would not add much to the process.

Feedback from the social partners and other stakeholders showed that there is no intention to foster a systemic change that would facilitate the accumulation of learning outcomes in form, of units or modules. However, it was also stated that this applies particularly to the field of initial VET. It was acknowledged that in relation to lifelong learning and continuing VET, the situation is different.

Compatibility of qualifications creates mutual trust

The project **VaLOGReg** (Value Learning Outcomes in the Grande Région) organised a meeting in the Chamber of Commerce in Luxembourg in January 2012. The aim of the project was to foster cross border learning agreements, enhance the possibility to recognise learning outcomes and develop mutual trust and understanding between the different actors of vocational training in the five regions involved. This includes Saar (DE), Lorraine (FR), Luxembourg (LU), Rheinland-Pfalz (DE) and Wallonie (BE). The project partners focused on comparing qualifications in the partner regions – concentrating on two professional qualifications in the fields of electronics in energy/building tecÚology and car mechanics.

As opposed to other projects, **VaLOGReg** did not start by developing common units of learning outcomes but rather

discussed the preconditions for validation and recognition. It was found that:

- The implementation of ECVET should be an answer to the policy goals developed within each system and be aligned with the principles of subsidiarity;
- In general, all competent institutions involved in the process accept the principle of transfer of learning outcomes;
- The VET systems in the partner countries currently do not apply units of learning outcomes to structure the content of training programs and are not ready to change in order to enhance the mobility of learners;
- The compatibility of qualifications should be measured by experts – comparing learning outcomes;
- Each competent institution involved agreed to recognise the evaluation process of competent institutions in the partner countries – given that compatibility has been found;
- VaLOGReg proposes a different way for the implementation of ECVET: The first step to implement ECVET is not the building of units, but the development of tools for transparency, recognition and validation of learning outcomes. The common units will be built then, if the partners wish to do so.

In summary, the partners felt that it does not help to foster mobility in the region if the partners start by looking for common learning outcomes. They would prefer a more flexible process, accepting the differences and particularities between countries based on an assessment of the compatibility of qualifications and mutual trust between competent institutions.

However, the whole process would still be based on qualifications described in terms of (units) of learning outcomes and the existence of pre-conditions (agreements between countries) that allow for total or partial compatibility between qualifications.

The other three projects selected under the Call 2008 (OPIR, M.O.T.O. and RECOMFOR) had already finalised their work and held disseminations events earlier in 2011 (cf. ECVET-Magazine issue 4 and 6).

All eleven projects will take part in the transnational Final Event on 22-23 February in Brussels (cf. page 24).

FOCUS   An article by Daniela Uličná, GHK Consulting

CPU- Europe: Certification based on units (*Certification par Unités*)

Context
CPU is much more than a European project. This project (called CPU-Europe) is an element of a major reform of the vocational education and training (VET) system in the French Speaking Community of Belgium (French speaking Community later in the text). The VET system of the French speaking Community faces a number of important challenges (see below). Since 2010, a reform of the VET system focusing on certification by units (hence the name CPU - *certification par unites***) is being progressively implemented. This reform is based on the principles of ECVET as well as those of lifelong learning.**

certification par unités

The challenges faced by the VET system in the French speaking Community of Belgium can be summarised as follows:

- Large numbers of students fail (some fail more than once) and have to repeat all the courses of the failed academic year. If they drop out and return to VET after a certain period of time they must start from the beginning. This deficit-driven approach results in a lot of failure and learners' demotivation and is seen as a major waste of human capital as well as public resources.
- Mobility between different training providers is difficult due to differences in the organisation of VET programmes. Learners who drop out and wish to reintegrate VET in another training institution face major difficulties in getting recognition for previous studies. Use of common units will enable learners to pursue their studies in another training centre – even after a temporary interruption in a pathway.
- Learners who are oriented towards VET pathways are typically those who face difficulties in general education. VET is not seen as attractive and choice of VET pathways is often forced and socio-economically de-termined. Learners frequently choose pathways (or are oriented towards pathways) which are not aligned with their aspirations or with real perspectives on the labour market.
- At the same time employers observe shortages in a qualified workforce.

The certification reform is accompanied by other complementary initiatives in areas such as cooperation between VET schools and businesses or information, advice and guidance. It has the below objectives:

- Develop and support pathways within the VET system but also between VET and general as well as higher education;
- Combat failure and repetition;
- Strengthen the focus of VET qualification on professions/crafts; and
- Enable and valorise individualised pathways.

The motivation driving the reform is to *'valorise achievements rather than punish failure'*. As part of this reform VET qualifications are re-defined based on units of learning outcomes and VET programmes are redesigned by training

centres to enable progressive achievement and accumulation of units. At the same time a new process to define (and revise) qualifications standards (and standards of units of learning outcomes) by tripartite sectoral entities is put in place. The organisation of qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes (accompanied by assessment criteria) on one hand improves the quality of qualifications (due to the process through which units are designed) and ensures that all persons qualified have reached the minimum requirements. On the other hand it maintains the autonomy of training centres in designing and organising VET programmes.

The objective of VET training remains to ensure that all learners achieve the full qualification. Training centres are not allowed to make learners repeat a year. If they do not succeed in completing one unit, their training programme should be redesigned to enable them to improve their knowledge, skills and competence required to achieve that specific unit without asking them to redo what they have already mastered in the past. Units are designed so as to embed knowledge, skills and competences in a progressive spiral-like manner. The units to achieve at the beginning of the pathway combine the basic knowledge, skills and competence. As learners progress, more complexity is required and the basic knowledge, skills and competence are further developed. At the end of the pathway learners have to demonstrate that they are capable to combine the different knowledge, skills and competence by carrying out complex tasks and activities. Contrary to some other VET systems this does not take the form of a final examination but the final unit of a given qualification integrates knowledge, skills and competence that are complex and require higher levels of autonomy. In the future it is possible that the structure of qualifications in units will also allow for the possibility to diversify profiles by adding certain optional units.

The format of describing units of learning outcomes in three columns distinguishing between knowledge, skills and competence is welcomed by teachers and trainers. The French speaking Community already used qualifications standards which were based on descriptions of competences. However teachers considered the previous format as difficult to work with (difficult to link the competences described with the learning activities they offered). The feedback received shows that they appreciate the structure of units and the fact that knowledge, skills and competences are explicitly defined. They find that this approach provides a clearer framework to structure their work and the learning activities.

The reform is being implemented progressively:

- In 2010 new unit-based qualification standards have been developed for five profiles (in three sectors)[1];
- In 2011-2012 these new profiles are tested by VET schools and two new profiles are being prepared (in the professions of hairdresser and group leader/coordinator)
- In 2013 the approach will become compulsory for all new programmes in these professions; and
- As of 2013 the approach will be progressively generalised to other qualifications.

In the academic year 2011-2012 all VET schools concerned by these profiles are testing the CPU approach. They do so in two manners:

- 39 VET schools (out of 85 that prepare for these qualifications) put in place the units and use VET programmes which are linked to units, without however changing the certification process at this stage (this will be done as of 2012);
- Other schools are familiarising themselves with this new approach and are developing the VET programmes they will put in place as from the upcoming academic year.

One of the issues faced by schools is that as they will not be able to require learners to repeat a year they will have to put in place remedy measures. This requires some additional resources. To meet these costs it was decided by the Ministry of Education that all the resources saved by eradicating repetition will be reinvested back into VET schools to fund remedial measures.

Project characteristics

As discussed above, the project CPU-Europe is an element of this reform. Through the European project, the Ministry of Education of the French speaking Community brings the European dimension into the national reform. The European funding supports the communication about this reform and its progress to social partners and stakeholders in Belgium but it also enables those in charge of the reform to exchange with partners from France, Luxembourg, Romania and Spain-Catalonia. All four countries have a unit-based structure of qualifications in place and the French speaking Community is interested in learning from their experience in dealing with issues that arise in the implementation process.

One of the issues discussed with European partners is the place of general knowledge and competences in units of learning outcomes (see below).

Example of a specific issue: How to articulate general knowledge and competences in a unit-based approach

The place of general education and related knowledge as well as of key competences in units of learning outcomes was one of the issues discussed during the second meeting of the project CPU Europe. Should this knowledge and competences be grouped into separate units or should they be integrated into the vocational/professional units?

As mentioned above, learners' failure is common in the French speaking Community. Most learners fail a school year because of the requirements in general education. They are not motivated by general education subjects and often they have accumulated delays in the academic fields from the general education (before enrolling in VET). Teachers of general education subjects in VET schools are worried that if the academic components are embedded in vocational units and no longer a separate requirement, learners will lose motivation and interest in these fields even further. At the same time the academic requirements are an important component of VET qualifications if these are to enable progression to higher education. Furthermore, key competences are required by employers and are the basis of lifelong learning.

The CPU reform brought up these questions around the articulation of general education and VET:

- Is it possible to dissolve general education in VET components? Isn't there is a risk of using these learning outcomes to meet purely functional objectives while they also have a broader goal in education?

- Will the key competences required by employers (such as communication – written and oral) be fully developed through professional units?
- General education disciplines have their own pedagogical requirements and learning sequences - is it possible to combine these with the logic of vocational units?

The CPU reform suggests that certain academic/general education learning outcomes can be embedded in the vocational units while the others remain apart. For the latter it is also proposed to develop units however certain questions remain unanswered for the moment:

- What criteria should be chosen to develop these general education units (how to divide learning outcomes into units)?
- Should units be based on one discipline or combine several disciplines?
- Is it possible to accommodate for the progression requirements of a specific discipline and how?

PROJECT DATA:

Duration: 2011 – 2013

Leader: French speaking Community of Belgium (BE-fr)

Partners: Ministry of Education Luxembourg (LU), Ministry of National Education France (FR), National Association for Training in the Automobile service sector (ANFA) (FR), National VET institute Romania (RO), Department of Education Catalonia Community (ES)

FOCUS

An article by Daniela Uličná, GHK Consulting, based on presentations[1] and on-going documentation of the project MENECVET prepared for the second European partnership meeting

MENECVET –
How do French qualifications of the Ministry of national education compare with ECVET?

What is MENECVET?

The project MENECVET aims to examine how VET qualifications of the French Ministry of National Education compare with principles of ECVET. Based on this comparison the project will develop recommendations to be used for VET qualifications falling under the Ministry of National Education, regarding:

- Description of qualifications and more specifically the description of learning outcomes;
- Organisation and practical arrangements that will enable the recognition of learning outcomes achieved through mobility (international geographical mobility);
- Use of ECVET points.

The project is based on five qualifications, all of the same type and level (vocational leaving certificates EQF 4 – Baccalaureat Professionnel), but covering different sectors (production and services),

The project is structured in three main phases:

- March to December 2011 – an analysis of the **legibility of qualifications** of the French Ministry of National Education compared with the ECVET Recommendation;
- January to September 2012 – **transfer** of learning outcomes: does the norm in place in France enable the recognition of learning outcomes abroad and under what conditions;
- August to December 2012 – how to allocate and use **ECVET points**.

Note: This article refers only to those VET qualifications that are governed by the Ministry of National Education.

Context

The French Ministry of National Education is the main certification authority for learners in initial VET[2] even though the qualifications of this Ministry can also be achieved by adults (through continuing training or through the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning). The Ministry is the competent authority for designing VET qualifications that fall under its competence. This is ensured through national bodies called « Consultative professional committees », (**commissions professionnelles consultatives**) involving the economic world, that are chaired by the Ministry. It is also the competent authority for defining assessment requirements as well as for awarding VET qualifications. The last competence is devolved to the regional representations of the Ministry – Rectorat (local education authority). Using ECVET terminology, this means that the Ministry is the competent authority for several functions that are engaged in the implementation and use of ECVET.

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1 This article is in particular based on presentations of Maryannik Malicot and Martine Paty both from the Ministry of National Education
2 Other certification bodies are other ministries (such as higher education, agriculture but also others), sectoral organisations, chambers of trade and crafts as well as private entities.

The rules for designing and awarding VET qualifications are set in a national framework composed of two elements:

- The education code which sets the regulatory framework; and
- A National guide on the development of vocational qualifications[3] (Guide later in the text)

According to this framework, all VET qualifications must have the following structure and content:

- The professional activities standard which describes the activities and tasks that a holder of the qualification will be able to carry out;
- The certification standard that describes the professional competences expected to be achieved by the graduate. In particular, this concerns the description of competences using active verbs and defining the conditions in which these competences are to be realised in addition to the associated knowledge;
- The assessment standard which is a document that defines the conditions/terms of certification. This part contains the units that constitute the qualification. The assessment regulation and the conditions of assessment (such as the type of assessment, who can assess, etc.);
- Description of the compulsory on-the-job training period.

In summary, the qualifications are based on competences and use the structure of units that indicates convergence with the ECVET principles. The objective of this project is to analyse in more detail how the national framework fits with ECVET, to identify points that could be used to update the existing National guide and to develop specific guidelines that will support the use of ECVET for the geographical mobility of learners (particularly in initial VET).

First phase of project work – structure and content of VET qualifications compared to ECVET

In the first phase of this project, the five qualifications selected (vocational leaving certificates EQF 4 – Baccalaureat Professionnel), were analysed and compared with:

- The national framework for qualification design and description (the education code which sets the regulatory framework; and the National guide on development of vocational qualifications); and
- The ECVET tecÚical specifications.

The preliminary results of this analysis are summarised as follows:

With regard to the first component of French qualifications' description, **definition of professional activities**, this element is not part of the ECVET tecÚical specifications. In the description of French qualifications this is a core element of the qualification design. It describes the objective of the qualification – what the person holding the qualification will be capable to perform in the workplace. This description justifies the existence of the qualification in the eyes of employers and employees' representatives. It situates the qualification in the reality of the professional field. It sets the basis for understanding the remaining aspects of the qualification and enables discussions about the qualification with stakeholders in France **and also partners from other countries**. It also gives a clear reference for the assessment of learners: this component of the French framework governing qualifications therefore seems to be an important element in the perspective of ECVET implementation.

The analysis of the five qualifications selected for the project showed that certain differences exist in how a part of a qualification is defined and described. In particular the following questions were identified, and will require further consideration:

- What is the unit of analysis for describing professional activities – is it the activity, the task or the basic operation?
- How to group professional activities – according to functions or according to professional situations?
- How to articulate transversal elements that are common to all or many qualifications?

The **qualification standard** is the core of the qualification. It defines the competences to assess as well as the associated knowledge and groups these into units which are coherent with regard to a given professional situation. The qualification standard is the part of the qualification description in which ECVET meets the national standard. The French rules in this area do not distinguish between the terms knowledge, skills and competence (KSC see the ECVET definition of learning outcomes) but instead use the terminology of competences, aptitudes and capacities as well as associated knowledge.

The analysis of the five qualifications selected for the project showed that there can be semantic differences among qualifications: this semantic aspects will have to be clarified later in the project.

The analysis also showed that the French terminology should not constitute a major obstacle for the use of ECVET in the French context: we can consider that French units are units of learning outcomes, covering all: knowledge, skills and competence. It is also important to underline that in the French context the different components (competences, aptitudes, capacities and associated knowledge) are not considered separately one by one (even though they are separated in the description). The term: competence is seen as an encompassing term - the combination of skills and knowledge resulting in the capacity to carry out a given activity...

The **assessment standard** of French qualifications systematically contains:

- The assessment regulation which defines how units will be assessed, the assessment mode (e.g. oral, written or practical) and their coefficient (the coefficient gives the weight of each unit in the overall assessment);
- Definition of assessment situations for each unit (list of competences to assess, assessment criteria, duration of the assessment situation, etc.);
- The possibility to assess the unit through either a one-off final assessment or continuous assessment. Continuous assessment takes into account the assessment made in the workplace. The conditions of continuous assessment (objectives, duration, context – place) are also described in the standard.

Compared with ECVET, this means that there is a clear framework for the assessment (per unit) that leads to certification. The fact that the option to use continuous assessment exists makes it possible to share the assessment between different actors (potentially including assessors abroad). However, it is necessary to clarify and refine the conditions in which such shared assessment (shared between the training centre and a French company or a foreign training centre/company) takes place. In particular the following questions arise:

- How are we sure of what we assess – is it the competence or the result of professional activities?
- How can we develop trust between assessors who are French teachers and assessors who can be professionals in the enterprise, or assessors 'abroad'? Consequently how can we develop trust in assessments made 'by delegation'?

In summary, the first phase led to the following preliminary conclusions:

- the fundamentals of the national framework for designing and awarding qualifications are close to the ECVET specifications. The national framework contains aspects such as the definition of qualification in terms of learning outcomes, grouping of learning outcomes into units, partial delegation of assessment to actors such as training centres, companies and possibly foreign actors competent for such intervention in the future;
- the analysis of specific qualifications showed the need to clarify certain aspects in the French context: review and/ or deepen and precise the definition of the concepts (activities, tasks, competences), eliminate some aspects of the norm which currently make the presentation of qualifications somewhat complex to read;
- there is a need to extend and clarify what regulatory, operational and human conditions will enable the extension of the principle of 'shared assessment' to other actors without derogating from the principle of a national qualification (i.e. a qualification that is guaranteed to be homogeneous across the whole territory, ensuring that all persons qualified have reached the same minimum requirements).

Next stage of project work

The next stage of this project will analyse the conditions for credit transfer in the French context in particular. It will among other things build on the experience of French organisations involved in earlier ECVET pilot projects such as OPIR, VaLOGreg, Recomfor and others.

PROJECT DATA:

Duration: 2011 – 2013
Leader: French Ministry of National Education (FR)
Partners: French speaking Community of Belgium (BE-FR), Department of Education of Catalonia (ES), German National VET Institute (DE)

FOCUS   An article by Anette Curth and Cecile Mathou, GHK Consulting

EASYMetal:
European Credit System
for Basic Qualifications
in the Metal Industry

EASYMetal develops and tests methods and tools to enhance transparency and permeability at the interface between pre-vocational training and vocational training in Germany. The aim is to facilitate the comparability of learning outcomes obtained in a pre-vocational training year to learning outcomes of qualifications in the metal industry - an important precondition to encourage permeability between those different learning schemes. Moreover, the learning outcomes described should be transparent and mutually recognizable in other European countries.

The dual system of Vocational Education and Training in Germany and the pre-vocational system

The dual system of Vocational Education and Training in Germany is based on the duality between learning in vocational schools and work-based learning: theoretical learning content is acquired in school and practical learning is acquired in the workplace. These two elements complement one another.

The system is based on a longstanding tradition that has at its core in the so-called 'trade principle' that allocates a high degree of responsibility to the representatives of the respective trade. Employers, through economic chambers, are the lead partners in preparing the curriculum, supervising the provision of work-based training, and regulating examinations, while the state governs vocational schools and the school curricula. Thus, the duality of the system does not only refer to the duality of learning venues, but also to the duality of actors involved in this public-private partnership.

A large proportion of all school leavers per year enter the dual system (approximately 50% in 2010). The drop-out rate is relatively low and students who successfully finalise their training usually do not experience problems finding jobs. Certificates of the dual system are highly regarded in society, while learning outcomes acquired outside the system suffer from lower acceptance.

However, the characteristics of the dual system also cause a lack of permeability. The dual system is a holistic system that requires 2 to 3 ½ years of training (depending on the qualification) and requires the passing of a final exam. The system does not allow for recognition of parts of the training (e.g. in the form of modules), thus accumulation of a partial qualification is not practiced.

Pre-vocational education and training

Each year, a certain proportion of school leavers do not manage the transition from compulsory schooling to VET. One reason is that some young adults do not meet the requirements of the companies offering training places (e.g. early school leavers, learning impaired or socially disadvantaged students). Another reason is that the supply of training places is insufficient in relation to the number of school leavers and applicants, due to structural changes in industries.

Although the original target group of the pre-VET-system is disadvantaged young people,[2] more and more school leavers enter the pre-VET system because the supply of training places does not match demand. Consequently, the pre-VET system now attracts an increasing number of students. As such the original purpose of the pre-VET system is challenged as it caters for a growing number of different learner types.

An OECD report (2010) states that the pre-vocational system features 'fragmentation and an absence of transparency'.[3] It has also been found that too few programme participants achieve a successful transition into the regular VET system.[4]

Currently, the learning outcomes achieved in the pre-vocational year are not assessed nor formally validated. There is no certificate for partial completion of training and no recognition of pre-vocational 'certificates'. This is based on the assumption that pre-vocational training does not intend to substitute the first year of training. It is rather a preparation year intended to help students develop the maturity necessary to succeed in regular training in the dual system.

Hence, young people undertaking pre-vocational training must start from the beginning if they enter dual training after one year. As a result, they stay longer than necessary in the education system and enter the labour market later than possible. Students cannot acquire relevant certificates for the labour market either.

Thus, the challenge is to better link pre-vocational training with vocational training and facilitate transparency and mobility at the interface between both systems. Consequently, EASYMetal aims at developing procedures to recognise learning outcomes between preparation for vocational training and dual vocational training; assuming that ECVET can help to improve permeability between "closed" subsystems without amendments at a systemic level. ECVET-procedures can also help improve quality in pre-vocational learning.

For that purpose, EASYMetal developed 'units of learning outcomes'. These units are developed on the basis of the current German organisational resources for training in se-

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1 Hoeckel, Kathrin and Robert Schwartz: Learning for Jobs: OECD reviews of Vocational Education and Training – Germany. OECD, September 2010. Available online: http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/9/6/45668296.pdf

2 "Vocational training preparation shall be targeted towards learning impaired or socially disadvantaged persons whose level of development is such that they cannot yet be expected to successfully complete initial training in a recognized training occupation." (Vocational training Act, section 68 (1)

3 OECD 2010, p. 5

4 Ibid.

lected metal trades, by translating all the elements of the training into complete operations, describing them in terms of EQF descriptors, and bundling them into units of learning outcomes. The result is that learning achievements on both sides of the interface become comparable and can be related to one another. Comparability and transparency will be further improved by the use of unit scoring methods, some of which are still to be developed.

Description of vocational qualifications in terms of (units of) learning outcomes

EASYMetal is not starting its work from scratch but is building on substantial work carried out in the context of the DECVET initiative[5], in which the lead partners (Institute for Vocational Training, Labour Market and Social Policy, IN-BAS GmbH and Educational Institute of the Employers' Federation of Hesse e.V.BWHW) also worked on the interface between vocational training preparation and the dual VET system.

Four units of learning outcomes have been built, relating to seven qualifications of the metal sector trained in the "dual system":

- Construction mechanic;
- Industrial mechanic;
- Machine and plant operator;
- Metal worker;
- Milling machine operator;
- Tools mechanic;
- Plant mechanic.

The identified learning outcomes were derived from seven training regulations applied at company level and from seven curricula applied at vocational schools (dual system). The starting point was to look at the first year of training of these seven qualifications of metal industry and to identify similar learning outcomes. Thus, the content of the units cover the first year of these seven qualifications. The units derive from the dual system, because the learning outcomes achieved in the pre-vocational training have to be equivalent to the learning outcomes of a trainee. Since the pre-vocational system strives to teach young adults skills similar to the training in the dual system, the units can be applied in the transition system.

EASYMetal partnership meeting September 2011

In a second step of defining the units, complete work tasks were designed. Each unit describes complete work tasks, representing a working process beginning with the subtask of 'Information and Planning' to 'Execution of Work', and ending with 'Control and Evaluation'. Concrete learning outcomes were allocated to all of these sub-tasks in the working process, e.g. 'Information and Planning: Gathers work sequences from tecÚical drawings and puts them in a reasonable order for later completion.'[6]

To describe these different learning outcomes of the working situation the team used the EQF descriptors "Knowledge", "Skills" and "Competences" and identified active verbs to describe each learning outcome.

Finally, for each learning outcome test criteria are allocated to (a), support the learning venues to organize the learning process, and (b), to make the results of the learning process more comprehensible and transparent for companies.

Assessment, validation and recognition in the national context

EASYMetal proposes that VET-providers active in the pre-vocational system should use the units to define and assess the aims and results of the learning process. An assessment at the end of the learning process based on the test criteria described for every learning outcome should be maintained.

EASYMetal has developed an assessment method based on specific instruments and examples. The assessment process needs to be valid and accepted by all actors in

5 More about the DECVET initiative: http://www.decvet.net/en/The_BMBF_pilot_initiative/Organigram/site__197/

6 An example of a unit of learning outcomes as descried by the EASY Metal project can be downloaded from the ECVET Pilot projects website: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Admin/Documents/110922_Unit1_%20manual_engl.pdf

the field. Therefore, it is important to make sure that the assessment is implemented on the basis of common quality standards (duration of assessment, ratio assessors/learners, criteria for the choice of a work sample etc.) in all learning venues of the pre-vocational system.

The results of the assessment need to be documented in a transparent manner. The intention is to provide every young adult with a certificate (transcript of records) documenting learning outcomes – preferably issued by the respective competent institution. To include the relevant political actors and stakeholders in the process, EASYMetal has set up an advisory committee involving competent institutions, social partners and governmental representatives. In regular meetings, progress made and challenges faced will be discussed.

The in-company training part (work-based learning) in the dual system is based on a private contract between the trainee and the company. It has been stated earlier that within the dual system, accumulation of a partial qualification is not usual. Neither does the dual system work with units or modules. Nevertheless, EASYMetal has identified a number of gateways to facilitate the recognition of learning outcomes achieved. For instance, companies can reduce the duration of the training period of an individual trainee based on the transcript of records obtained. To achieve this, quality assured ECVET processes have to be implemented in a way that guarantees mutual trust between all institutions and training providers involved.

Transparency in the international context

In workshops with international partners from Denmark, Austria and Turkey, the German lead partners discuss the outcomes of their work on a regular basis. The aim of this process is to improve units and other procedures in such a way that they are comprehensible on a transnational basis.

Thus, besides the aim of facilitating recognition of previously achieved learning outcomes in the dual system by using units of learning outcomes as 'vehicles', EASYMetal also intends to make the level and content of qualifications in the dual system transnationally comprehensible and transparent by describing them via units of learning outcomes.

PROJECT DATA:

Duration: 2011 – 2014

Leader: Institute for Vocational Training, Labour Market and Social Policy, INBAS GmbH (DE)

Partners: Educational Institute of the Employers' Federation of Hesse e.V., BWHW), Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB), Chamber of Crafts Rhine-Main (HWK) (DE), The Danish Centre for the Development of Vocational Education and Training, Part of the Metropolitan University College (Metropol), DK; Eduser Consultancy Services Co. (EDUSER), TR; Lechner, Reiter & Riesenfelder Social Research OEG (L&R Social Research), AT

Improving Mobility and Career Paths for Personal Care and Social Workers:
The I CARE project

The I CARE project sees ECVET as a suitable instrument to develop a recognition model in the field of personal care and establish mutual trust among the partner countries involved (Italy, Romania, Germany, and Poland). Therefore, the I CARE project develops a set of objectives which mainly focus on the adaptation of an already existing regional system of vocational qualifications in the field of personal care in coherence with the ECVET framework.

Rationale of the project

The I CARE project addresses the mobility of personal care and social workers across Europe. Many migrants working in these fields do not hold specific qualifications; but have gained competences in their home country – in institutions or other formal settings, or by non-formal or informal ways of learning.

Many qualifications in this field (doctors, nurses, midwives, certified social workers etc.) belong to the so-called 'regulated professions' for which a specific recognition framework already exists[1]. However, for competences not included in this regulatory framework, a lack of common methodologies and frameworks for evaluation, transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes exist and a new approach is needed. Related flexible training solutions are also rare.

The main impact envisaged at a system level concerns the transparency of the qualification system underlying personal care and social work services, as well as the improvement of co-operation among partner countries. I CARE aims at providing a valid credit and evaluation system for recognising worker's professional expertise – including learning experiences in informal and non-formal contexts between the partners.

The project targets worker's immigration, not worker's (temporary) mobility. So at an individual level for instance a Polish care operator living in Italy whose certificate is not valid in the Italian qualification framework, can benefit from a new system for recognising learning outcomes. This will allow him to gain the qualification of care operator in the Lombardy Region by attending only a selected number of relevant training modules instead of having to complete a whole training programme.

It has already been stated that in the professional field considered by the I CARE project, non-formal and informal education plays an essential role. A personal care worker or a social worker often has competences acquired in a non-formal context. For instance, women, working with a family for many years looking after children and helping to manage daily activities, own many competences included in the 'babysitter' profile, even if they have no formal recognition for this profession. The aim of the project is to prepare a framework that creates options for recognition.

1 DIRECTIVE 2005/36/EC OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL of 7 September 2005 on the recognition of professional qualifications. URL: http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2005:255:0022:0142:en:PDF

At a **higher level**, the overall intention of the project is to apply the ECVET framework in order to contribute to labour market integration of migrants working in the personal care and social work sector.

Methodological Approach

During the first steps project partners undertook an evaluation of the seven professional competences of workers in the partner countries. A variety of educational contexts (formal/non-formal/informal) in highly diverse training and evaluation frameworks and methodologies were considered.

The ECVET parameters are not yet applied an any of the participating countries, although in Germany, Romania and Italy a couple of profiles were found to be described in knowledge, skills and abilities. It turned out that the number of similar/equivalent profiles varies from country to country. For example, in Germany 6 out of the 7 Italian profiles exist, in Romania only 3, while in Poland they are 5. Consequently, the experimentation for mutual recognition carried out in the subsequent project stages will be based on five qualifications only:

- Family assistant;
- Dental assistant;
- Socio-assistance assistant;
- Care operator;
- Baby sitter.

In these qualifications, a high number of professional care and social workers are moving across Europe with very heterogeneous qualifications and similar professional experiences. The qualifications of 'housekeeper' and 'cleaner' that were initially included were abandoned, since there were hardly any comparable profiles to be found.

In parallel, I CARE undertook an 'Analysis of Existing Methodological Approaches for the Application of ECVET at the National, Regional, and Sectoral Level'.[2] Two caveats and seven suggestions have been drawn from the analysis of 28 projects and relevant official EU documents.[3]

The first caveat to highlight is that there is a possible lack of understanding of the ECVET framework where it is regarded as an output-oriented qualifications model based on learning outcomes. It is stated that an ECVET project can only work if it adopts the same model. The second caveat to highlight is the need to pay special attention to two steps of the project. Importantly, this includes the development of the competence matrix and the development of an assessment method. If these two elements are well elaborated, the I CARE project can start a full-scale testing phase.

The analysis also shows that elements of the previous projects can be well implemented into the I CARE matrix. For instance, there was a suggestion to elaborate the competence matrix based on the VQTS II model[4], integrating the improvements made by CREDCHEM,[5] and to integrate the VQTS II template of a Learning Agreement with the template developed by M.O.T.O.[6]

The I CARE model

Based on the assumptions discussed above, the I CARE partners have identified a methodological approach for establishing a common reference framework linked to ECVET.

- A **matrix of competences** is currently being developed. The matrix uses accurate descriptions and complete sentences enriched by examples; it describes learning outcomes distinguishing knowledge, skills and competences. It will avoid uncoupling work tasks and global competences with cross-dispositions . For example 'showing passion' or 'being creative', are actually important in vocational professions, but when they are uncoupled from the work descriptions the matrix results can be quite redundant. The essential cross-disposition should be included in the learning outcome's description itself. Recognition and assessment of learning outcomes are based on the matrix.

The I CARE matrix elaborates different levels of learning outcomewhenever they help in describing a professional profile. The levels will be particularly important for learning outcomes shared by different profiles in different degrees. For instance, the learning outcome is shared both by a socio-assistance assistant and a care operator, however the care operator's skills are considered to be much more complex than the ones required by the socio assistance assistant. Therefore learning outcomes will be divided into different levels: the lower one will be related to the socio-assistance assistant's profile and the higher one will be related to the care operator's profile.

2 http://www.icareproject.eu/resources/deliverable-2.2-final-version.pdf

3 11 ECVET Pilot Projects, 10 DECVET Projects, 7 other projects implementing ECVET approaches, together with the official EU documents and studies on ECVET

4 Information on the VQTS model can be found here: http://www.vocationalqualification.net/vqts/

5 Information about the CREDCHEM project can be found here: http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Projects/ProjectDetail.aspx?id=15

6 Example of a LA developed by M.O.T.O http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/Documents/MOTO%20LA%20completed.pdf

- **Memorandum of Understanding:** In the previous ECVET pilot projects, the MoU was centred on the organisation of training periods abroad, specifying tasks and responsibilities for home and host institutions. In line with the I CARE goals, the MoU that will be developed here will however try to describe as precisely as possible the agreements between partner countries. It will then include the grids of common competence areas shared by partners and also the grids for the assessment of learning units.
- **Assessment of learning outcomes:** I CARE will elaborate written and practical tests in order to assess knowledge and skills for each learning outcome included in the matrix. These tests will be applied by the partner countries involved in a concrete testing phase. If the partners are content with the process and the results of the testing, they will agree to recognise the testing results of applicants on a transnational basis. For instance, a Romanian immigrant in Italy (Lombardy region) will be able to get his or her qualifications for baby sitter acquired in Romania recognised in Italy (Lombardy region).
- **Allocation of ECVET points:** I CARE will allocate 100 points to a one-year training qualification. The points will be allocated according to the importance of each learning unit in a professional profile. In line with its goal of fostering the recognition of non-formal and informal learning and allowing for the recognition of migrants' qualifications obtained in their home country, I CARE aims at assessing every single learning outcome in each profile in order to compensate the lack of uniformity between different educational/training contexts. Therefore, ECVET sub-points will be allocated to each learning outcome.

Next steps

The second and last year of the project's work will be characterised by a comprehensive testing phase with provisions laid down in a 'Temporary Memorandum of Understanding'.

The testing phase will take place during two different time periods in Italy and the partner countries. Italy will elaborate the grids for two profiles and will test its transparency in many vocational centres in the Lombardy Region. After this phase, practical and written tests will be verified in partner countries. During the partners' testing phase of profile 1 and 2, Italy will create grids for the remaining profiles. As such, when the practical and written tests for profiles 3, 4 and 5 will be elaborated, the partner countries will complete their testing phase.

In the final stage of the project, the results of the testing phase will be analysed. The results will feed into the definitive elaboration of assessment grids and common competence areas. All of these materials will be included in the 'Final Memorandum of Understanding', which will then lay down the provisions of the project partners' long-term cooperation.

PROJECT DATA:

Duration: 2011-2012

Leader: Fondazione Cefass – Centro Europeo di formazione per gli affari sociali e la la sanita pubblica (IT)

Partners: Fondazione Ikaros, Federsolidarieta confcooperative, Associazione Nationale Oltre le Frontiere CISL (IT), Fundacja Sic! Centrum Innowacji Spolecznej (PL), TILS Romania SRL (RO), Use your mind GMBH (DE), Consiliul National de Formare profesionala a adultilo (RO)

2get1care:

Supporting lifelong learning and interprofessionality in health care professions

The aim of the '2get1care' project is to test ECVET in health care professions in the German Region of North-Rhine Westphalia in the context of a European partnership. Health care professions are characterised by a high degree of divergence and specialisation. Thus, there are only limited possibilities for geographical mobility as well as for learner's mobility between professions. To overcome these obstacles, the project seeks to develop an approach for inter-professional and transnational transferability of training components. In the long term, using ECVET should not only support transfer of competences between health care professions in the view of lifelong learning but should also foster the implementation of competence based teaching and learning that is emphasised in the German concept "Handlungskompetenz" (action competence).

Lead partner of the 2get1care project is the "Berufsfortbildungswerk des DGB gGmbH (bwf)" in Germany. The pilot phase of 2get1care is organised at maxQ., a service provider within the bfw offering training and continuing education in health care professions at more than 12 locations in North Rhine-Westphalia.

Units of learning outcomes

During the first steps, the training curricula of four health care professions (occupational therapy, speech therapy, physiotherapy and geriatric care) were adapted to the ECVET principles (i.e. units of learning outcomes were designed). Furthermore, a common core curriculum for these professions as well as a further training concept for teachers for enhancing their competences in relation to learning outcomes orientation and competence based teaching and learning was developed based on ECVET principles.

Different approaches were used for developing the components of these curricula:

- In terms of the specific curricula of the four health care professions, the structures of the current curricula were used to identify units of learning outcomes.
- To identify the components of the common core curriculum, the "Empfehlenden Ausbildungsrichtlinien" (recommended training regulations) and the Berufsgesetze (legal basis for the occupations) were analysed and common as well as specific elements of the four health care professions were identified. The common learning areas were used for designing units of learning outcomes. A working group was established to develop the curriculum based on ECVET principles comprising the headmasters of the training programmes of the four health care professions and a representative from the Fachhochschule Osnabrueck (University of Applied Sciences) (responsible partner for this task in the 2get1care project).
- The common core curriculum forms only a small part of each of the four training programmes and not all parts of it can be found in all four training programmes, some are only relevant to two or three of them. The experts also identified some topics that seemed to be similar at first sight (such as anatomy) but were not included in the common core curriculum because they, for example, build on specific competences developed in the respective training programme that are not included in a similar way in the other training programmes.

- The development of the curriculum of the further training course for teaching staff is based on existing training courses (of which some are already described in terms of learning outcomes), on interviews with teachers and headmasters of training providers as well as on the objectives defined in the 2get1care project. The most important issues were selected by experts and were then defined as units of learning outcomes and allocated to six learning fields.

The following descriptors are used for describing units in the 2get1care project (cf. example- figure 1 below):

- title of the unit;
- number of hours: based on training regulations;
- learning outcomes: knowledge, skills and competence;
- teaching content: since the units are used as components of the training programmes, including this kind of information was considered necessary.

Testing phase
One of the aims of the 2get1care project is to pilot, evaluate and revise the common core curriculum and the curriculum for the further training of teaching staff during the course of the project. The core curriculum and the teacher training course are piloted in the course of the project and adequate teaching, learning ad assessment methods will also be tested.

At the maxQ.-location "Center for health care professions (ZFG)" in Dortmund, training programmes of all four health care professions are offered. Therefore, it was decided to use this location for the pilot phase.

The pilot phase of the common core curriculum which is focussing on the first year of the training programmes started in September 2011. During the units of the common core curriculum the students of the training programmes of the four health care professions are learning and working in mixed groups. This approach is considered to foster the development of inter-professional competences.

The piloting of the curriculum of the further training course for teaching staff started in November 2011. It is also addressed to new teachers for the four training programmes. The institution offering this training programme will develop a certificate that will be issued to the participants on completion of the training programme and based on the final assessment.

Figure 1: Core Curriculum 2get1care
Excerpt from a unit of learning outcomes as part of the common core curriculum

Title	Interdisciplinary Communication and Interaction in a Team
No of hours / Learning Units	20 PT (4.9) 10, (1.10) 10 von 50; ET (1.14)25; LP(1.2)8, (1.22)10, LP (1.1) 2 von 16; AP(1.5.2) 20
Learning Outcomes	
Knowledge	The students know different forms of (interdisciplinary) professional communication techniques (team discussions, case reviews etc). They grasp the meaning of interdisciplinary actions for the patient/client. They know the range of responsibility and competence of other professional groups.
Skills	The students observe their own behaviour in interdisciplinary settings. They start planning, implementing and reflecting (interdisciplinary) team meetings.
Competences	The students critically reflect upon their own work and achievements, present them in interdisciplinary settings in a manner that matches the demands of the target group. They can defend their point of view and their aims. They take chances, possibilities and boundaries of interdisciplinary work into account and respect the competences and fields of responsibilities of other professional groups. They perceive role and coordination conflicts and critically reflect upon them.
Content	The learning unit comprises • Causes for interdisciplinary communication (e.g. case reviews, team discussions); • Professional groups of the German Social and Health Sector, their focus of training, their main aims and tasks; • Interdisciplinary work; • Techniques of dealing with conflicts in the work place; • Techniques of communication and interaction (feedback techniques, moderation techniques); • Techniques of exchanging information with members of other professional groups.

Further information

The 2get1care-project involves national and international partners:

- The national partners are supporting the lead partner in developing the results and evaluating the project.
- The international partners are involved by reviewing the project's results and the European partnership will be used to explore the possibility of making qualification components transferable across national borders and across professions.

In the long term, it is envisaged that the curricula developed in the 2get1care project will also be implemented by other training providers in this field. The members of the working groups and the partners therefore are seen as multipliers.

What's New

New CEDEFOP publication on the 'Development of national qualifications frameworks in Europe'

In October 2011, Cedefop published a new report on the development of national qualifications frameworks (NQFs) in 34 countries: the 27 members of the European Union, two EEA countries (Lichtenstein and Norway) and five EU candidate countries (Croatia, Former Yugoslavian Republic of Macedonia, Iceland, Montenegro and Turkey).

The 2011 overview shows rapid progress towards establishing and implementing NQFs and linking national qualifications to EQF levels. Twenty-eight countries have developed or are developing comprehensive NQFs. Countries have largely completed the conceptualisation/design and consultation/testing stages and are moving into early implementation. Alongside Ireland, France, Malta and the UK – countries in which the NQFs are considered as implemented – ten other countries are now at an early stage of implementation.

Fourteen frameworks have been formally adopted (mainly through ministerial decisions, amendments to existing laws or separate law on NQFs), and vary according to national systems and traditions. A number of countries emphasise the increasingly important role of NQFs as instruments for reforming and modernising national education and training systems. Links between NQFs and validation of non-formal and informal learning are becoming stronger; an issue that is currently very high on the policy agenda.

The report is available on the CEDEFOP website: **http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/19313.aspx**

Erasmus for all: New opportunities for learning abroad for up to 5 million people across all education and training sectors

Erasmus for All is the new EU programme for education, training, youth and sport proposed by the European Commission on 23 November 2011. The proposal is currently under discussion by the Council and the European Parliament who will take the final decision.

Erasmus for All would bring together all the current EU and international schemes for education, training, youth and sport, replacing seven existing programmes with one and is due to start in 2014.

Opportunities for mobility and cooperation will be significantly strengthened under the new programme: in particular, there will be more funding available for study, training, teaching and volunteering opportunities abroad for higher education and vocational students, trainees, teachers, trainers and youth workers. There will also be more opportunities for education and training institutions or youth organisations to engage in partnerships to exchange good practice.

The programme will support three main types of actions:

- Learning opportunities for individuals, both within the EU and beyond;
- Institutional cooperation between educational institutions, youth organisations, businesses, local and regional authorities and NGOs, to encourage the development and implementation of innovative practices in education, training and youth activities, and to promote employability, creativity and entrepreneurship;

- Support for policy reform in Member States and cooperation with non-EU countries, with a focus on strengthening the evidence-base for policy making and exchange of good practices.

Erasmus for All will include support to the implementation of EU transparency tools, cross-country studies and support for specific policy agendas such as the Bologna (higher education) and Copenhagen (vocational education and training) processes.

For more information, visit: **http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus-for-all/**

ECVET Pilot projects final conference on February 22-23 in Brussels: 'We have tried ECVET: Lessons from the first generation of ECVET pilot projects'

More than 130 representatives from European Ministries, National Agencies and VET-providers will gather on 22 and 23 February in Brussels to discuss the results and outcomes of the first generation of ECVET pilot projects.

In workshops and panel discussions, the added value of ECVET in the context of geographical mobility and lifelong learning will be discussed from different points of view.

Day 1 - Taking stock of the work done by the pilot projects

On the first day, six workshops will focus on the benefits of ECVET for the main groups of organisations involved, namely training providers and competent institutions.

In the workshops, the solutions put in place by the pilot projects will be presented in brief and commented by representatives of other projects (e.g. in the context of the Leonardo da Vinci programme) who also gained experience of working with the ECVET concepts. In discussions with the workshop participants, transferable tools and approaches will be identified and critically reflected upon.

While four workshops will focus on the benefits of ECVET in the context of geographical mobility, two workshops will focus more specifically on the use of ECVET for target groups in the context of lifelong learning (e.g. adult learning and the permeability between VET and Higher Education).

Day 2 - Future needs for implementing ECVET

The second day will start with a panel discussion with teachers and representatives from VET providers involved in the testing of ECVET. Five panellists from VET-providers in Belgium (French speaking community), Finland, Germany, The Netherlands and Spain will share their experiences on how to implement ECVET mobility in practice and will provide feedback from teaching staff and learners.

The next step on the European Agenda for ECVET is to carry on with national implementation. Two contributions – one by Isabelle Le Mouillour (CEDEFOP) and second by Dr Christian Sperle (UEAPME) will provide information on the current state of play from a policy perspective and practitioner's perspective. Alison Crabb (European Commission, DG EAC) will highlight opportunities to support further actions in the context of testing and implementing ECVET by the future 'Erasmus for All' programme that is expected to replace the current mobility programmes from 2014 on (cf. preceeding news article).

To sum up the discussions of the two days, six 'grands témoins' will comment on the lessons learnt and the next steps to be taken:

- What has been achieved through testing ECVET so far?
- What are the main messages taken from this work?
- What is necessary for the future work on ECVET implementation?
- How can it be further supported?

The outcomes of the conference will be presented in detail in the next issue of the ECVET-Magazine.

In addition, the projects' outcomes can be viewed in a brochure that will be distributed at the conference. The projects' work and outcomes will also be presented in two short films.

The films and the brochure will be available on the ECVET pilot projects' website **http://www.ecvet-projects.eu/** from February 24 onwards.