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Mag

Keeping you informed about European Credit system for Vocational Education & Training



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Magine

Editorial



Madlen Serban

Director of the European Training Foundation (ETF)



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The European Training Foundation was created in 1994. One of its major priorities is to contribute, within the framework of the Union's external relation policies, to improve the development potential human capital in transitional and developing countries. For ETF, this means ensuring a job which participates in developing the individual qualifications and competences throughout a whole life-time, by improving the teaching and vocational training systems and, consequently, to assist these countries in reforming thier education and training systems as well as specific job market rules and regulations. This is how ETF becomes involved with its partners, by revealing the various tools and instruments created and implemented by the European Union countries as well as their methods and experiences, either within their own respective

national policy, or within the framework of the European cooperation process.

The work carried out in the ETF partner countries shows to what extent they have closely followed the developments in Europe within the fields of education and vocational training and how, most-often, they decide to adapt these tools to their own realities and to implement them concretely, notably when dealing with candidate countries for the European Union. There's no doubt that the potential of these European instruments designed with the cooperation of Union Member States is enormous, just like the interest they represent for both its citizens and its systems. However, these instruments rely on conceptual constructions and institutional approaches which are most-often new for the countries and call for a prior acceptance stage for the technical and operational implementation of the tools. For ETF partner countries, as for others as well, this means not just regarding these instruments from a technical standpoint and to avoid the temptation of adopting them as a sort of "copy-paste" which wouldn't take, or insufficiently take into account the depth of their own cultures, realities and problems. But the underlying philosophy and logic creates a privileged source of inspiration and acculturation of new ideas in the field of vocational training.

Although it remains less known than its predecessors such as the Cadre Européen des Certifications or the current credit system in higher education (ECTS), ECVET is no exception plays an important role as the principles of its system are attractive in many aspects from the standpoint of our partner countries which could take, or have already taken advantage of it.

First off, the definition of certificates based on learning outcomes could only contribute to back the little-known movement which we witness in these countries tending to privilege this approach when drawing-up certificates. Also, the design of certifications with accumulable units, associated with the validation of learning outcomes, would offer millions of workers notably working in informal sectors (very important in our countries) to have their competences recognized and to obtain certification units which would help them not only to initially receive the certification but also to be better positioned on the job market or to do another training. This specifically pertains to young people stopping school early with no qualifications, entering the job market before they should. It would also contribute to acknowledging migrant workers' experience involved in circular migration who return to their country after having spent time abroad to expand their knowledge and work experience.

Finally, the progressive outcome of a certification by accumulating units and credits is the core of ECVET. Introducing a unit and credit-based system based would undoubtedly strive to make it more accessible within this group of varied certification and training systems which are fairly strict and divided as described in the ETF "Torino Process" review which is carried out every 2 years in these countries. Simplifying the access terms and conditions for certification is definitely the corollary for any development policy of life-long training.

This reflection regarding certification and training systems led by ECVET is all-embracing and pertains to all our countries. It focuses just as much on the learning process as the outcome assessment. on the access to certification as the validation of learning outcomes, on geographic and professional mobility as the individual training and certification pathways. In short, the challenges and the attractiveness of the ECVET system are not due to its technical specifications but more in its ambition which the system has to modernize certification systems which directly modernize training and learning systems.

ETF hence carefully esteems ECVET developments whose application fields remain varied and in relation to the concerns and needs of our countries. This is why ETF is actively involved in both the work groups implemented by the European Commission and the different events organized around ECVET, notably those proposed within the framework of the ECVET European Network. It supports the opportunity given to representatives of its partner countries to participate in the annual forums of the ECVET European Network. These events are very important for ETF which thus reinforces its capacity to back its partner countries in their aptitude to acquire the latest European instruments. They also allow these countries to measure the challenges which represent implementing such tools which requires time, calls for a culture of consensus, and necessitates the absolute participation of all the relevant stakeholders: the sine qua non condition for the success of any vocational training reform.

"Simplifying the access terms and conditions for certification is definitely the corollary for any development policy of life-long training."

THE NETWORK

Thierry Lefeuvre, ECVET Team

ECVETmobility seminar

The ECVET Team seminars are now counting the « ECVET Mobility » seminars among them. The key question is the following: what are the tools and solutions proposed by ECVET to develop recognized geographical mobility i.e. allowing to recognize and to transfer in one's own country the learning outcomes gained abroad?

We are all familiar with the term geographic mobility as part of one's studies. Training institutes didn't wait for the publication of The Recommendation to set up learning exchanges, even if vocational training accounts for a more limited number of exchanges as compared to classic general education which has a history of linguistic and cultural exchanges.

The particularity of ECVET mobility is to refer to vocational units to organise mobility. In other words, vocational training is targeted and will be developed outside of the sending institution.

For mobility seminars, the expected participants usually have experience of mobility projects as head of training institute or as teacher. They may also belong to organisations in charge of assisting or regulating mobility issues: regional or ministerial services, Leonardo da Vinci agency...

The first seminar of this kind took place in Lisbon from October 21st to 23rd, 2011. The first theme discussed focused on the steps required to build and implement recognised mobility: what objectives? Which partners? What conditions for realisation?



	Day 1	
Lisbon 21-23 october 2011 ECVET for mobility - Program	14.00	Welcome & Introduction
	14.30	Presentation of expected outcomes, working methods, resources
	15.00	Work Session 1: Geographical Learning Mobility on VET contexts in Europe
	15.15	Differents levels and complexity of mobility, examples of mobility
	16.15	Presentation of ECVET Recommendation
	Day 2	
	9.00	Work Session 2: ECVET technical specifications in the context of mobility
	9.30	Learning outcomes, Units, learning pathways
	10.30	Using ECVET for Mobility - Key concerns Before mobility : Partnerships, Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreement
	13.30	Using ECVET for Mobility - Key concerns During mo- bility : Learning activities - Assessment
	15.15	Using ECVET for Mobility - Key concerns After mobility: Validation, recognition and accumulation
	Day 3	
	9.15	Work Session 3: Running ECVET mobility
	9.30	Interests and added value of a recognized mobility
	10.30	ECVET challenges

From exploratory stage to the structured exchange around precise pedagogical objectives, all actors must be fully committed. But the ultimate step for recognized mobility requires much more. Even beyond a mutual solid and sustainable trust between partners, based on common experiences and full transparency of training pathways, the institutional framework must allow the recognition of outcomes and their transfer.

In this perspective everyone was reminded of the key elements in the Recommendation, and its technical specifications in relation with the implementation of mobility were specified.

Afterwards, the drawing-up of partnerships, cornerstone and MoU, document of reference for recognised mobility, were addressed in the form of case studies. The variety of organisations represented by the participants allowed each person to measure their own personal margin of manoeuvre and to reflect on different decision-making levels.

On this matter each country is different and has legal framework which most often still prevents the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes. The definition, the identification and the mobilisation of competent authorities, i.e. those who will authorize the recognition and the transfer of outcomes, were subject to a lively exchange.

This type of seminar also gives the opportunity to participants to exchange on the projects they lead and on transferable practices or pitfalls to avoid.

Interview with

Angels Font Burés,

Unit of International Programmes for VET, Ministry of Education, Government of Catalonia.

Ecvet Team: What did you appreciate and learn during this seminar?
Angels Font Burés:
Concerning the core message of he seminar, as well as the concepts related to mobility and the ECVET recommendation, the presentation was clear, well structured and lively at the same time.

The use of actual tools designed and experimented in real projects was very useful and positive; it would have been good, though, to have the results and assessment of the mobility projects carried out using these tools.

ET: And what about animation?

AFB: The rhythm and typology of the activities created a good working atmosphere; the working sessions were neither heavy nor too long.

duled for March 7th to 9th, 2012 in Bonn and September 19th to 21st in Milan. They will focus on quality criteria and monitoring. Feel free to enrol on the site www.ecvet-team.eu

The next mobility seminars are sche-

The diversity of the represented countries and the different levels of experience in mobility cared for the creation of heterogeneous and complementary working groups; the debate was richer thanks to this.

The study cases were useful for the simulation and hypothesis formulation in order to start the work in groups. It would have been useful to have a few more of these, with different sorts of typologies and partnerships in order to go deeper into RECOGNIZED mobility.

ET: What do you like to advice for improving ?

AFB: Maybe it would be good to insist on how to tackle the problem of recognition in some countries or sectors. Also, more examples on how the recognition has been solved (or not) in other contexts would be welcome.

Elena Camiletti, ECVET team

ECVET national contact/ coordination/reference points

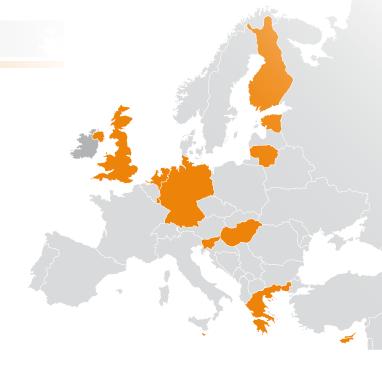
Some countries established National Coordination Points or National Contact Points or Reference Points in order to provide information and guidance, via a website, email and telephone to actors involved in the implementation of ECVET.

They offer expertise to help stakeholders to understand how ECVET can work with existing vocational qualifications or how the ECVET process can be considered when designing new qualifications.

Finally, the National Contacts or Communication Points provide information to learners in vocational education and training (VET) on how ECVET can help to validate units of learning and facilitate mobility. Contact/coordination/reference points' main task were identified, and may differ from one country to another.

ACTIVITIES IN DETAIL*				
	Provide information (internet, conferences, printed material)			
INFORMATION	Support the development of a "common language" and terminology (glossary)			
	Prepare relevant information for different target groups			
	Provide guidance for the use and implementation of ECVET			
COMMUNICATION	Facilitate dialogue between politics, science and practice			
	Promote cooperation of stakeholders and VET-providers (initiating partnership and LdV-ITP-Projects)			
	Respond to feedback from practice			
	Organise cooperation of stakeholders (Ministries, social partners, professional associations, VET-schools and universities)			
COOPERATION	Cooperate with related initiatives at a national level (DECVET, ANKOM, Jobstarter-Connect, Europass,)			
	Cooperate at a European level (ECVET Team, EU-KOM, European NCPs)			
	Support Ministries of Education and Research			
	Develop tools to support the implementation of ECVET (VET-profile)			
DEVELOPMENT	Provide examples of good practice (ECVET database of units of learning outcomes)			
	Develop tools and methods of transfer			
	Ensure the use of quality assurance mechanism			
*according to information given by these accordination nainte				

*according to information given by these coordination points



NATIONAL CONTACT/COORDINATION/REFERENCE POINTS

COUNTRY/REGION	ORGANIZATION
Cyprus	Ministry of Education
Estonia	Estonian National Examinations and Qualification Centre
Finland	Finnish National Board of Education
Germany	National Agency for Lifelong Learning (NA in BIBB)
Greece	National Organization for the Certification of Qualifications (EOPP)
Hungary	National Institute of Vocational and Adult Education
Lithuania	Qualifications and Vocational Education and Training development centre
Luxembourg	Ministry for National Education and Vocational Training / Service de la Formation Professionnelle / delegate to the ECVET Users Group
Malta	Malta qualifications Authority
Netherlands	National Agency Leonardo agency
Slovenia	National Institute for Vocational Education and Training of Slovenia
UK- England	Ecctis Limited
UK- Northern Ireland	Council for the Curriculum Examinations and Assessment
UK- Scotland	SCQF Partnership
UK- Wales	Credit & Qualifications Framework for Wales

Sources : Cedefop monitoring (state of play September 2011)

Carlo Frising, Conseiller de direction, CSL

Conference about the ECVET system in Luxembourg (October 2011)

In cooperation with the Ministry of Education, the Chambre des salariés (CSL) took the initiative to organize a conference on October 12th 2011 about the ECVET system.

In presence of the Luxembourgish Minister of Education and major key decision makers from governmental and social partners' institutions, Mister Erik Hess from the European Commission gave an explicit overview of the ECVET framework and answered the different questions concerning its advantages and its implementation at the national level.

At this stage ECVET, as it is the case in different European countries, is not yet very popular in Luxembourg. This event offered the opportunity for the approximately 100 participants to discuss in a detailed manner the challenges and opportunities ECVET is offering. Especially the impact and the consequences on the national education system and on the labor market were of high interest to the audience.

The main political statement of the President of the CSL, Mr. Jean-Claude Reding, concerned the different European educational tools EQF, ECVET

and EQAVET. They are closely linked and their inter-linkages had to be harmonized with respect to the EU Agenda 2020 priorities. Mrs. Mady Delvaux-Stehres, Minister of Education, assured her support to the ECVET system and its future implementation in Luxembourg.

After the conference, the CSL, one of the major CVET providers in Luxembourg, signed an ECVET Memorandum of Understanding with the Conservatoire National des Arts et Métiers (CNAM), its french training partner organization.



Credit: Chambre des salariés du Luxembourg

ECVET Workshop in Berlin (October 2011)

The Berlin (October 2011), just one of the many activities organised by the ECVET team, gave ECVET users group members the opportunity to obtain answers to the very technical issue of learning outcomes.

This article will briefly summarise the key questions answered by VET experts and comments made by some of the participants. It is based on Anne Marie Charraud and Andre Huigens presentations

At first, the learning outcomes approach could be considered as a model for changing education.

ECVET offers a concrete and practical method for the implementation of learning outcomes as well as the development of quality assurance.

Key questions discussed during the workshop:

- How can learning outcomes be defined and integrated into curricula?
- What will the future standards be when writing curricula?
- What does the implementation of LO in qualifications entail?
- How can future experimentations be set up in European countries?

Embracing the learning outcome (LO) design: a revolution!
Anne Marie Charraud,
VET expert

During the LO design, the main objective is to describe what the learners will have achieved at the end of the learning process. This does not only mean talking about educational content but about a learner-centred approach. This implies that LO designers have to make a switch from an input approach to an output approach. Within Members States this is not only a challenge but a revolution both within society and culturally.

LO terminology means a new approach by practitioners in the educational field from policy level to grass root level.

Learning Outcomes are generally presented using three dimensions: Knowledge, Skills and Competences (or K, S, C). Until the nineties, only the knowledge dimension was considered both in curricula and qualification standards when defining qualification contents, training programs and assessments.

As a starting point when considering VET system, we should carefully examine the way our national system is built, and look at the terminologies we currently use. The key is to determine what we put in a LO; what values are important

within our vision of the education system, the meaning and use of qualifications for the labour market or society,...

In order to begin implementing ECVET, we need to compare our qualification processes. This is a challenge not only at a transnational level but also at a national level as vocational qualifications are often awarded by a variety of stakeholders.

A concrete step is when curricula are written in terms of LO. For this to be done correctly and efficiently we should ensure that training providers and their staff get the appropriate information in order for them to write the outputs of their course in LO.

Designing LO for any training schemes should lead to a community of thinking across Europe respecting all national approaches. This community already exists due to common problems we all have to tackle: in Higher Education our education systems have been built over decades if not longer and this provides a traditional approach which can be shared at a European level. However this is not the case for VET which is very recent and implemented very differently throughout Europe.

The 2010 CEDEFOP study "Relationship between LO and curriculum policies and developments in VET" covering 9 countries highlights historical heritage, different approaches in LO designing and shows practical examples that might be useful for LO practitioners.

This study stresses the importance of knowing how others think - which is much more important than knowing that they think differently - so that we can all work together with transparency to initiate up-coming necessary changes.

Conversation between Anne-Marie Charraud and Andre Huigens, VET experts on:

- designing learning outcomes by VET providers and Universities
- designing education systems where everybody can learn

A.H "The Education and Labour market have had to work together from the beginning. University commitment is also needed even within the VET sector because Life Long Learning requires the commitment of all EQF education levels (1 to 8), in order to ensure learning pathways."

Am.C: "You say that Universities focus first on Knowledge whereas the labour market focuses their needs first on Skills, and Competences. Is this the reason why in VET, Knowledge does not appear first?"

A.H: Universities are aware that skills and competences are needed but they criticise the fact that VET is not developing Knowledge enough.

A.H "What would be the next steps which would have to be done in order to ensure that future education is better connected with today's needs and effective in a current context?"

Am.C: "We have to invest in adult learning and Life Long Learning. We already have experience in initial training but adult learning is the current challenge in Europe. As policy makers and social partners share the responsibility

of legal qualifications the question is how can we design education systems where everybody can learn? It is not easy and this is our major problem with LO."

Interview with Nela Plugarescu, National centre for Technical and Vocational Education and Training Development, Roumania

It is interesting to see how other countries are implementing or will implement ECVET, in order to improve their system – from a mobility perspective in Europe of course, but also inside Romania, as at the present time we do not have a system of recognition between CVET and IVET.

We could share our experience which might be interesting for countries around us, but not only them. We have 20 years of experience in de-

> veloping standards based on competences and a holistic LO-based approach for defining qualifications and curricula. We are also implementing a quality assurance system for IVET.

"This study stresses
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necessary changes."

The first issue is about designing collective references. These references have to be built not only by the education and university field but also with the labour market. The following step is assessment.

Education also relates to the training of those delivering education as teachers need support in both course and assessment design.

I liked the Dutch presentation very much, particularly concerning the difficulties in correlating education with the rapidly changing economy. I do not know if we are always aware of the fact that we teach for something that we are uncertain of as we do not know what the future holds! The discussion we had about the need of changing the teachers and trainers perspectives towards pupils was very interesting. I know from my experience that in many

cases pupils do not understand what they are being prepared for and have difficulty finding own path.

Interview with Aira Rajamäki, Consellor of Education, M.Ed., Vocational Education and Training, Finnish National Board of Education.

For many years Finland has been very active in ECVET at a European level. The Finnish National Board of Education is a member of the ECVET steering group and many other groups which are promoting ECVET implementation.

LO orientation was implemented in all vocational qualifications when we renewed them between 2008 and 2010. LO orientation was implemented in the qualification structures, units, vocational requirements, assessment targets and assessment criteria of units and in skills demonstrations or competence tests. LO and student orientation are seen both in teaching and training.

At present we are developing and validating a learning outcome approach in the renewing of further education and specialist qualifications.

There will be legislation changes (NQF, ECVET points) by the end of the year. The ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for the ECVET points in qualifications. Once this is done, the FNBE will allocate ECVET points to the units within qualifications.

" Changing the way
of thinking from
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We have planned to start implementing the ECVET point system in August 2013.

However this will depend on the schedule for the legislation.

This is of course a big challenge for teachers and trainers. This is why we have started planning training for all stakeholders (teachers, trainers, students, student unions, labour market representatives, employers, employees...).

The FNBE, our national ECVET experts and FINECVET project coordinators will be in charge of training the stakeholders. Changing the way of thinking from content, time and input to orientation of learning outcomes and output is demanding for teachers but it will happen. We are sure of that.

Interview with Recep Altin, Deputy Director, Ministry of National Education, Project Coordination Centre, Turkey

In 2004, we started a VET reform process in Turkey. We abandoned our classic VET system to establish a new one according to the European Union's standards. We changed our curricula to implement modular based curricula – we now have 7000 modules at level 2 and level 4 for students and adults. We also adapted our national qualification levels to the EQF with 8 levels. We have also trained the teachers and social partners for this new VET system.

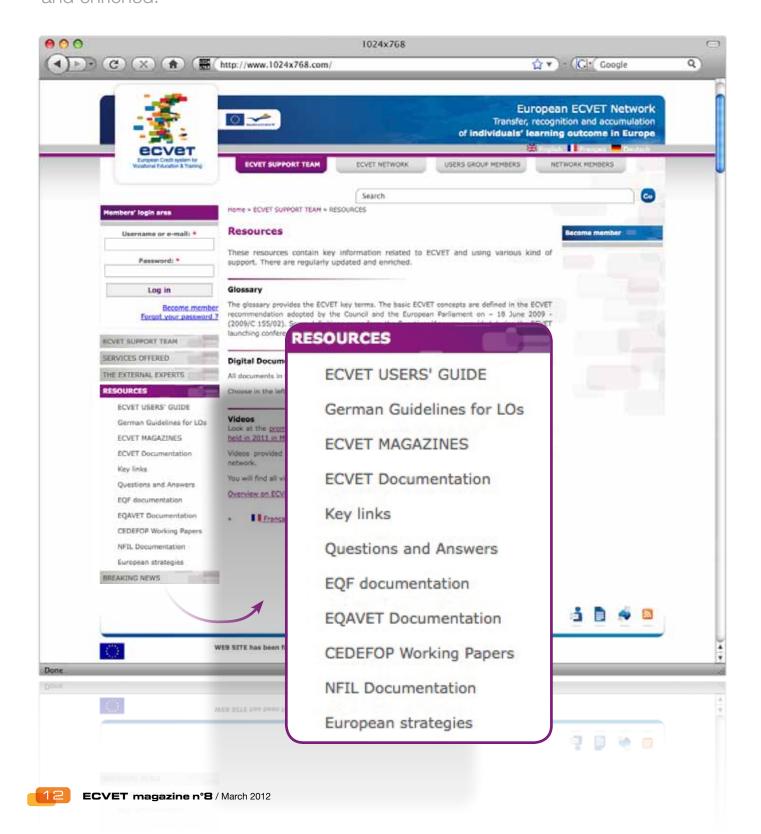
ECVET is quite new for us as we only started focusing on it two years ago.

We currently have a pilot project on ECVET application under the Life Long Projects funded by EU IPA. It covers six provinces in Turkey and twenty-four schools, focused on one field of education which is Information Technology. If the project is successful we will disseminate it to other fields of education and to the rest of Turkey.

I learnt many things during the ECVET workshops. Before coming, I thought we should start ECVET as soon as possible, but now I think we should take our time and do it step by step; piloting in some provinces, assessing the results and then moving a step further. This is the challenge for the next few years. I believe that in parallel to the developments of the Turkish economic system, our VET system will also develop along with the EU and the modern world.

ECVET resources

ECVET Team website offers resources. Resources contain key information related to ECVET and using various kind of support. There are regularly updated and enriched.



Network activities

European ECVET network agenda for 2012

	January	
	9	ECVET Working Group
	23-24	CEDEFOP workshop on permeability (Brussels)
	February	
	16-17	Customized ECVET Network Seminar for Romania
	22-23	Final Conference ECVET Pilot Projects/call 2008 (Brussels)
	29	ECVET Working Group
	postponed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar for Switzerland
	March	
	1	ECVET Steering Committee
	7-8-9	ECVET Network Seminar for mobility (Bonn)
	15	Final conference FINECVET
	20-21	ECVET Workshop 5 for Users' Group members: having quality in ECVET (Dublin)
	To be confirmed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar for Poland
	April	
	3	ECVET Working Group
	To be confirmed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar (France-qualification bodies)
	To be confirmed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar for Nordic countries
N	May	
9	3	ECVET Users' Group meeting
N	22	Customized ECVET Network Seminar (France-economic world)
	31	ECVET 3 rd Annual Forum "towards community of practice "
	June	
	1	ECVET 3rd Annual Forum "towards community of practice"
	12	ECVET Working Group
	18-19	Joint seminar ECVET/EQF/EQAVET
	September	
	19-20-21	ECVET Network Seminar for mobility (Milano)
	26	ECVET Steering Committee
	27	ECVET Working Group
	To be confirmed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar (Brussels-European representative of companies)
	October	
	18-19	ECVET Workshop 6 for Users' Group members (Rome)
	To be confirmed	Customized ECVET Network Seminar (Greece)
	November	
	To be fixed	Seminar ECTS-ECVET
	29	ECVET Users' Group meeting
	December	
	To be fixed	Workshop dedicated to ECVET community of practice

THEORY

in into

PRACTICE





Taking the next step: Building the ECVET community of practice

Brussels

31 May 01 June 2012

The 3rd annual ECVET forum is the major 2012 event dedicated to the development of ECVET in Europe.

The 2012 forum focuses

on how to transform the current ECVET initiatives, projects and networking activities into a reliable, resourceful and sustainable cooperation towards 2014; letting the ECVET community of practice take shape.

The implementation of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is progressing across Europe; Member States are setting up the necessary conditions for ECVET implementation. Good practices, solutions, proposals and debates emerging from examples of projects, strategies in progress throughout Europe and of networks in development will help participants to set up their own approaches and policies.

The forum is open to any interested member of the European ECVET network. If you already belong to the ECVET Network this will be a great opportunity for discussion, reflection and cooperation. If you are not yet a member, this is also an opportunity for a first involvement in the ECVET Network. To be part of it, just apply on the ECVET Team Website: www.ecvet-team.eu

The 2012 ECVET forum is co-organised by the European Commission, Cedefop and ECVET team.







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Become member of the European ECVET network!



The Website of the European ECVET network is available since October. When browsing the site you will be able to register for becoming member, for attending seminars or workshop (if you are member of the users group). The website also provides information on European policy developments, ECVET implementation in the Member States, ECVET developments.



www.ecvet-team.eu







