

magazine

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

- 02 **ECVET in progress - the national level**
- 04 **The UK's national team: helping organisations to understand and implement ECVET**
- 06 **"Qualification designers" and "mobility" seminars: responding to the needs of the ECVET community**
- 08 **Synergy and integration - keywords for Sweden's ECVET National Contact Point**
- 10 **An analysis of ECVET in the Italian community of Leonardo da Vinci**
- 14 **NETINVET - A European network of training centres and companies**
- 16 **Reflections from an employer**
- 16 **My mobility diary - from Lisbon to Paris**
- 19 **State of play of ECVET developments in Europe
A brief summary of Cedefop's monitoring of ECVET**
- 22 **A third country perspective - how the European initiatives can inspire change**
- 25 **ECVET calendar of activities 2013**
- 28 **ECVET Team Website**



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European Credit system for
Vocational Education & Training

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Edito

ECVET in progress - the national level

Ute Haller-Block

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We are now in "Year four" after the adoption of the Recommendation by the European Parliament and the Council on 18 June 2009 which started the process of implementing ECVET in the European VET systems. Since then, many activities have been launched to transform the theoretical concept into a practical system, which is used to recognise and validate learning outcomes in vocational education and training acquired in another country or in another environment.

It was clear from the beginning that the major challenge would be the national level where the actual use of ECVET has to happen. The first years were marked by testing, experiencing, trying out possible routes to implement ECVET through the pilot projects and other cooperation projects funded by the Lifelong Lear-

ning Programme. These projects are partly finished, partly coming to their end soon, with certainly very valuable results which have been described at several occasions in previous issues of the Magazine and on the projects' website. They have been accompanied by numerous seminars and workshops, offering the opportunity for detailed analysis and discussion of the issues at stake. The thematic networking of the National Agencies on ECVET is also an invaluable contribution to disseminate best practice and to produce hands-on material for the use of ECVET.

But to reach the thousands of organisations out there in Europe, it needs a considerably higher effort in terms of communication and multiplication, not to forget the persuasion about the benefits of ECVET. As the monitoring exercise of CEDEFOP in 2011 has shown, ECVET is not straightforward to implement because it relates to fundamental aspects of VET systems (such as learning units in curricula, validation, assessment standards, recognition). The progress achieved has been visible but the number and intensity of activities led by the competent authorities in the countries varied a lot. We cannot speak at this moment of a wide-spread knowledge, let alone wide use of ECVET.



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An important instrument for multiplying the information and advice on ECVET has been launched in 2012, with the National Teams of ECVET experts. Based on the good experience of the Bologna Experts teams, the same approach has been chosen for ECVET. In a restricted call, all National Agencies of the Lifelong Learning Programme have been offered the possibility to get a funding for a number of experts in their respective country. The purpose of these Experts is to promote and further develop the adoption, the application and the use of ECVET in their countries. They should support the relevant actors involved in Vocational Education and Training on a national level to best use ECVET.

As a result, National Teams of ECVET Experts have been established in 25 countries. Nearly 200 ECVET Experts have been identified, their number by country varying between 3 and 14. The present grant, totalling 3,2 million Euro, covers 2 years until the end of 2013. National Agencies will soon get the opportunity to request a funding for the continuation of the activities in 2014 and it would be good to see all 35 National Agencies on board this time.

"Given all the challenges, a lot has been achieved in four years which constitutes an excellent basis for broad dissemination and use of ECVET"

The National Agency coordinators have met in Brussels twice in 2012 to initiate the work and to come to a common understanding of the practical use of the ECVET experts in their countries. A specific seminar is organised mid-April in Amsterdam as a peer learning activity on how to best support the experts in their mission. It will allow sharing successful practices,

tools and training material.

An active involvement of the National Experts is of high importance to implement the action lines as mentioned in the Recommendation of the European Par-

liament and of the Council on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training. They also play a crucial role in promoting the development and use of ECVET as part of a lifelong learning approach which is an element of the Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth.

Within these broader objectives the National Teams will, amongst other activities, provide counselling to VET relevant competent bodies and institutions in the following areas:

- The conditions and measures to be adopted by Member States so that ECVET will be applied,

- The technical specifications of ECVET, as defined in the annex to the Recommendation,
- The use of ECVET for geographical mobility of learners,
- All relevant aspects of the Lifelong Learning Programme linked to ECVET.

At the same time, the experts will have to be aware of the other European instruments for transparency of learning outcomes (such as EQF, EQAVET, ECTS, Europass) and be able to advise on how they are interconnected.

These activities should be accompanied by a clear commitment of the National Authorities to support the implementation of ECVET as foreseen in the Recommendation. Given all the challenges, a lot has been achieved in four years which constitutes an excellent basis for broad dissemination and use of ECVET. It is indeed time to shift up another gear, to broaden the spectrum of multipliers which have knowledge and understanding of ECVET. The upcoming ECVET forum in Prague mid of June will offer the opportunity to reach a large audience, to outgrow the pilot phase and start using ECVET in Vocational Education and Training realities. ■

THE NETWORK

Helen Metcalfe, Communications Manager, ECORYS UK Ltd

The UK's national team: helping organisations to understand and implement ECVET



Context

In the UK, there is an increasing focus on vocational education and training and work-based training to ensure those entering employment have the appropriate skills and expertise. Transnational mobility can enhance VET through opportunities to develop new skills, knowledge and competences that may not be available in the home country. Importantly, these experiences can contribute towards a learner's qualification - this is where ECVET can help.

The UK VET system is based on learning outcomes, credits and units which pro-

vide some of the necessary conditions for applying ECVET. The UK governments have decided that ECVET can be trialled and tested through transnational mobility. Whilst VET providers in the UK are aware of learning outcomes, credits and units there is a low awareness of ECVET – what it is, how it can be applied and the benefits. The UK has established National Contact Points (NCPs) in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland to support implementation.

Aims

Ecorys (the UK National Agency for the Leonardo da Vinci, Grundtvig and Transversal Study Visits programmes) is funded by the European Commission and the UK governments to manage a national team of ECVET Experts who can raise awareness and demystify ECVET. We work closely with the NCPs to create synergies between our activities. Our Experts provide VET organisations with practical help and support to unders-

tand ECVET principles and to use the Lifelong Learning Programme to test the implementation of ECVET. The team also works with stakeholders at a European and national level to increase the transparency of qualifications and skills in the UK.

Activities

The team is producing a suite of jargon free materials. This includes a dedicated website (www.ecvetexperts.org.uk), a flyer to explain ECVET in a simple way and a short guidance note which explains the key steps associated with mobility from a sending organisation's point of view. These are available on our website.

"The UK's national team has worked with the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) to raise awareness of ECVET, and explain the role of ECVET in a UK context"

Over forty delegates have attended ECVET information events in Scotland (in conjunction with Scotland's Colleges) and in Northern Ireland (in conjunction

with Northern Ireland Colleges). Events in Wales and England take place in April and May 2013.

A survey of the 2012 Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects in initial VET and People in the Labour Market sought to identify how learners' achievements are being recognised. Over 110 projects responded and the results are available on our website. Following the survey, over 30 Leonardo da Vinci mobility promoters attended workshops in Birmingham and London. These focused on understanding ECVET and the steps they can take to incorporate ECVET principles in their work.

In the UK, Awarding Bodies ensure the quality of the assessment procedure and verify the results before qualifications are issued. The UK's national team has worked with the Federation of Awarding Bodies (FAB) to raise awareness of ECVET, and explain the role of ECVET in a UK context. Two of our Experts organised a workshop at a FAB event where Awarding Bodies heard about European VET initiatives and how they relate to each other. We continue to work with Awarding Bodies as they have an important role in the VET landscape in the UK.

We also offer a request service for ongoing support to UK-based organisations. Anyone who is interested in ECVET can request a visit from one of our Experts. As a result, our Experts make presentations at transnational partner meetings, run workshops for VET providers and offer one-to-one support to organisations.

Outcomes to date

The first year of the project has achieved a lot, including:

- identifying twelve projects which are used as examples on our website and at events;
- responding to 43 requests for Expert support;
- distributing our guidance note to over 1,700 stakeholders;
- distributing our flyer to over 2,000 stakeholders via mailshots and events;
- establishing a database of over 800 stakeholder contacts who receive our quarterly e-newsletters;
- presenting information on ECVET to over 300 delegates at a range of Lifelong Learning Programme events;
- attending more than 30 events to raise awareness of ECVET;
- briefing the NCPs and the UK governments' representatives at the three-monthly meetings of the UK Coordination Group for European VET initiatives.

Our Experts' support activities have a significant impact on organisations. One organisation said: *'My meeting with an ECVET Expert was very worthwhile. She was able to explain ECVET and how we can use it - in an easy to understand manner. I feel confident I can now go away and explain in my 2013 application how ECVET can be applied within our project.'* (South West Durham Training, an experienced Leonardo da Vinci mobility organisation). ■



Thierry Lefeuvre, ECVET Team

“Qualification designers” and “mobility” seminars: responding to the needs of the ECVET community



This programme ended, but its contents helped building seminars with more operational objectives, which never ceased to evolve throughout the accumulation of experience within what we can now call the ECVET community.

In its service offer, ECVET Team has proposed standard seminars since 2010. Among them, “the ECVET essentials” allowed, in 2011 and 2012, the diffusion of the key concepts and talking points of a scheme yet unknown.

The new seminars – designed for groups of 30 people – are based on a ‘peer learning’ model which allows participants to receive training, gather information and exchange experiences and ideas. Each seminar provides technical support which helps organisations in the ECVET network to develop their expertise. Over the past two years, the ECVET team has organised events for representatives from 21 countries including seminars in:

- Rome and Paris for ‘ECVET qualification designers’;
- Lisbon, Bonn, Milan and Nice for ‘ECVET for mobility’.

National representation at the seminars

Number of times a country was represented at a seminar

France	6
Estonia	5

Finland, Hungary, Italy and the United Kingdom	4
Belgium, Croatia and Spain	3
Austria, Czech Republic, Germany, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovakia and Sweden	2
Cyprus, Greece, Lithuania, Poland and Turkey	1

The ‘ECVET for qualification designers’ seminars focus on the needs of specialists responsible for the design or the content of vocational qualifications or diplomas. Each lasts two days, starting at 9.30 on day one and finishing at 16.00 on day two. The seminars help each participant to:

- become more familiar with ECVET’s technical specifications;
- develop their understanding of the added value of ECVET;
- understand the impact of ECVET on the design of qualifications;
- understand how they can support their organization to develop an implementation strategy.

As the seminars are designed for specialists with a basic understanding of ECVET most of the time is spent on the unit and learning outcome approach to

qualifications, the use of ECVET points, and questions relating to the transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes when learners spend time abroad or in other settings.

The 'ECVET for mobility' seminars are for those involved in mobility projects who wish to make ECVET part of their work. Participants included representatives from schools and VET centres, sector or professional branches and institutions which focus on promoting and supporting mobility schemes. These seminars have been very popular with participants and the schedule has been designed to allow for travel. Each seminar starts at 14.00 on day one and after a full day from 09.00 to 17.00, finishes on day three at 12.30. The seminars help each participant to:

- identify the main steps that are involved in developing a mobility project in line with ECVET;

- identify the key agents and their functions in an ECVET context;
- develop their understanding of the added value of ECVET for a mobility project.

Participants usually have substantial experience of mobility – many are working in a VET centre or vocational school or are responsible for mobility in their organisation. Despite participants' understanding of mobility, few are aware of the ECVET specifications and processes. Each seminar includes a presentation on the basic information contained in the ECVET Recommendation before examining all aspects of an ECVET recognised mobility project. Key documents such as the 'learning agreement' and the 'memorandum of understanding' are discussed and analysed by using case studies and building on the experience and expertise of the participants.



At the end of each seminar, participants receive a copy of all the materials. These can also be downloaded from the www.ecvet-team.eu website.

In 2013 there will be three seminars:

- 3-5 April in Warsaw: "ECVET for mobility"
- 24-25 September in Budapest: "ECVET for qualification designers"
- end of November: "ECVET for mobility", [place and date to be decided]

In the design of the 2013 seminars, advice and suggestions formulated by the previous participants have been taken into account. An even more important place is left for exchanges and collective production. Case studies are reviewed and build on the experiences of participants. Therefore the concerns of the persons present at the seminars are used as red thread for the content delivered by the trainers and for the planned works. The facilitation processes that are used allow everyone to find the desired solutions in one's specific context while developing a broad vision of vocational qualification and training systems in a context of gradual implementation of ECVET.

Beyond the contributions described above, these seminars stand as real networking opportunities for actors of various backgrounds. Feel free to connect to the www.ecvet-team.eu website to check the programmes, and do not hesitate to register to one of these programmes or relay the information to persons that could benefit from them. ●

Cristina Pontis, Undervisningsråd/Director of Education - Skolverket/The Swedish National Agency for Education - Gymnasieenheten/Unit for Upper Secondary School

Synergy and integration - keywords for Sweden's ECVET National Contact Point

In 2012 the National Agency for Education (Skolverket) was appointed as Sweden's National Contact Point (NCP) for ECVET.

The agency is the central administrative authority for children, young people and adults in the public school system which includes initial VET in upper secondary schools and the adult education sector. The National Agency is responsible for developing diplomas and subject syllabi, and producing guidance and support for VET providers.

Sweden's strategy has been to assign the coordination of the European instruments to different national agencies depending on their main area of competence. This means that:

- the Swedish Schools Inspectorate is responsible for the EQAVET National Reference Point;

- the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education is responsible for coordinating a national framework for prior learning and validation, as well as serving as the national coordination point for the EQF;
- the Swedish Council for Higher Education hosts Europass and Euroguidance and acts as the national agency for implementing the Lifelong Learning Programme.

The advantage of this approach is the opportunity to integrate the European instruments with ongoing national developments in general education and VET. The involvement of several agencies supports dissemination of the European instruments among educational experts and policy makers. The Swedish National Agency for Education's mandate includes responsibility for organising cooperation and the

exchange of experience and information between all the agencies – and this ensures that synergies are realised. The agencies meet regularly to discuss important principles and to identify and plan common information activities.

During its first year of operation Sweden's NCP has focused on two areas: analysing the ECVET readiness of government regulated VET qualifications, and increasing the visibility and understanding of ECVET among stakeholders.

These activities have been undertaken in close cooperation with the national team of ECVET experts under the leadership of the Swedish Council for Higher Education. Recent studies have included an analysis of the changes that are needed to the

"In 2012, Sweden's NCP has focused on: analysing the ECVET readiness of regulated VET qualifications and increasing the visibility and understanding of ECVET among stakeholders"

national regulations to better accommodate the ECVET principles, and the development of a model for converting national credit points to ECVET points.



These studies were presented to the government by the Swedish National Agency for Education and the Swedish National Agency for Higher Vocational Education in September 2012.

Information activities focus on the needs of VET providers in upper secondary schools, adult education and higher vocational education. Many of the activities are undertaken in partnership with agencies responsible for implementing other European instruments. In 2012 a joint EQF-ECVET-EQAVET-Europass conference was organised for more than 200 VET providers. A leaflet and

a short Power Point presentation introduced the four European instruments – these are now used in trade and education fairs and disseminated at VET conferences.

Support for ECVET is undertaken by the ECVET team of experts. Their work includes the development of a website, workshops for VET providers engaged in mobility projects as well as peer-learning activities for practitioners with experience of ECVET.

During 2013 the work of the NCP will concentrate on increasing the visibility of

ECVET. Our challenge is to move from a theoretical model to the reality of the daily life of VET providers and learners. To support our work we produced 'Sara's Path' (<http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/news/20574.aspx>) which shows how European cooperation, the mobility instruments and policy developments can be seen from the perspective of an individual learner. ■

Ms Roberta Grisoni and Ms Michela Volpi, ISFOL – LLP - Leonardo da Vinci National Agency, Italy

An analysis of ECVET in the Italian community of Leonardo da Vinci



Introduction

Recognising learning outcomes which are achieved during time spent abroad has always been important in the design and implementation of mobility projects. The gradual shift towards learning outcomes, alongside the economic crisis means there is a greater need for transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications. To achieve these changes requires a new paradigm in European education and training systems. Any experience of transnational mobility, irrespective of the quality of the content, risks being undervalued if it is not properly recognised and certified.

Over the years, the need to provide greater transparency and visibility for learning outcomes has been one of the driving forces in Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects. The programme has always been a laboratory for innovation

including the creation and testing of tools and practices relating to competences and qualifications. The European transparency tools (EQF, EQARF, Europass etc.) have therefore always found an immediate - though not always easy - response in the Leonardo community.

As well as using Europass which has become common practice with promoters of mobility, the Leonardo community has tested other approaches to recognition and validation. These approaches have mainly focused on the transparency of learning and work experiences undertaken abroad rather than on the assessment of learning outcomes (with the aim of subsequent recognition). The introduction of ECVET has given new impetus to the testing of initiatives and there has been a shift in focus from a statement of learning experience towards learning outcomes.

In addition to facilitating lifelong learning, the main objective for the implementation of ECVET is to support mo-

bility of citizens in Europe. Using ECVET for geographical mobility ensures learning abroad is more easily recognised and this enables individuals to exploit what they learned in different education and training institutions or in different situations. In other words, thanks to ECVET, it should become easier to fully integrate mobility into learners' programmes and to make what they have learnt abroad visible. ECVET's success depends on the development of system of mutual trust between competent institutions.

Knowledge of ECVET

A recent analysis by the Leonardo da Vinci Italian National Agency, in cooperation with the National Team of EC-

"The introduction of ECVET has given new impetus to the testing of initiatives and there has been a shift in focus from a statement of learning experience towards learning outcomes."

VET Experts has revealed a growing interest in ECVET together with an increased knowledge of the tool. This analysis looked at the beneficiaries of Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects approved in Italy in 2011 and 2012

(about 220 projects). Organisations involved in mobility projects were asked

about their knowledge, practical experience, perceived added value and possible obstacles of ECVET. Their answers provided a useful analysis of the current position as well as raising awareness of ECVET. The analysis confirms the increasing need for more information and, in some other cases, the willingness of project promoters to use ECVET within mobility projects.

Replies were received from 83 of the project promoters from 2011 (response rate of 74.6 per cent) and 93 from 2012 (response rate of 81.6 per cent). This high rate of return of fully-completed questionnaires can be seen as an indicator of the level of interest in ECVET.

The project promoters showed a five per cent increase in awareness compared to the previous year (see Table 1). This confirms the effectiveness of the awareness raising activities organized by several competent bodies including the Commission European and National Agencies in recent years.

Table 1 - Do you know about ECVET?*

	2011	2012
YES	73,5 %	78,5 %
NO	26,5 %	21,5 %

In relation to the project promoters' level of knowledge, more than 34 per cent of respondents had a good or very good knowledge of ECVET in 2012. Those with a basic or low level of knowledge fell from 75.4 per cent to 65.8 per cent (see Table 2) in 2012.

Table 2 - What is your level of knowledge of ECVET?*

	2011	2012
Very good	3.3 %	5.5 %
Good	21.3 %	28.8 %
Basic	57.4 %	50.7 %
Low	18 %	15.1 %

The improvements in the promoters' level of knowledge are confirmed by statements on the implementation of different elements of ECVET. In 2012, 21.9 per cent of those who claimed to know about ECVET also claimed to have direct experience of some elements of the tool - in 2011 only 13.1 per cent of the respondents had this kind of experience (see Table 3).

Table 3 - Have you had any practical experience of ECVET?*

	2011	2012
YES	13.1 %	21.9 %
NO	86.9 %	78.1 %

The interest of organisations involved in mobility projects to take part in ECVET information and training events has remained quite high in 2012. However this interest is slightly lower than in the previous year (93.5 per cent in 2012 compared to 95.2 per cent in 2011). This data could be read in a positive way as it can be directly related to a qualitative and quantitative increase in promoters' knowledge of ECVET. Furthermore, the work of the ECVET Network and the National Teams of Experts has increased the availability of information, tools and best practice.

Reflections from the project promoters' experiences

The completed questionnaires led to many questions about the implementation of ECVET: what is the practical experience on ECVET; what is the added value of using ECVET in transnational mobility; what are the possible obstacles related to the implementation of ECVET; and which aspects of ECVET need more information and support.

Some of the respondents to the survey had benefited from participating in the Leonardo da Vinci Transfer of Innovation and/or ECVET pilot projects. They were able to apply the results and outcomes from such projects to mobility ones. In other initiatives the testing of ECVET began with the mobility project funded by the Leonardo da Vinci programme. There are some interesting experiences emerging e.g. the CNOS-FAP organisation will test elements of ECVET in a Leonardo da Vinci mobility project for VET professionals. Such project is building on the previous experience of a transcontinental partnership which used some elements of ECVET (e.g. memorandum of understanding, description of units of learning outcomes) to develop a training programme including a mobility experience abroad for three to four months for European and Australian students.

As well as developing new approaches to transcontinental mobility, some projects have established synergies with other European initiatives e.g. some or-

* Source: ISFOL - Leonardo de Vinci Italian National Agency

organisations have used funding from the Intelligent Energy Europe Programme to outline the establishment of roadmaps for the national qualification systems and/or certification of professional competences for those working in the field of energy efficiency in the building sector, in line with the European Qualifications Framework and ECVET.

Added value of ECVET within transnational mobility

Those project promoters who responded to the survey identified the precious contribution that ECVET can make to those entering the labour market. In terms of added value, the respondents also identified ECVET as offering opportunities for those in work to retrain and develop their career. In other

words, ECVET enhances the use of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts and supports flexibility in the VET system by promoting transition between education and the labour market, and makes the concept of lifelong learning a reality. It was

interesting to note how the Leonardo da Vinci community recognised added value in relation to the recognition of

mobility as well as the contribution and support ECVET makes to lifelong learning within a mobility experience.

The survey respondents also commented on the possibility of using ECVET not only to state the mobility experience but also to improve aspects related to the assessment of learning outcomes (e.g. how project participants can use similar procedures and assessment criteria) achieved during a mobility experience abroad. This relevant issue is strictly connected to the gradual shift towards learning outcomes approach supported by the European tools on transparency.

An additional added value perceived is the contribution of ECVET to increase access to professional qualifications be-

"ECVET enhances the use of learning outcomes achieved in non-formal and informal contexts and supports flexibility in the VET system by promoting transition between education and the labour market, and makes the concept of lifelong learning a reality."

cause quality assurance is improved through the process of validation, recognition and the accumulation of learning outcomes. The perception of a 'legal status' associated with this type of mobility was also noticeable from some respondents' replies. ECVET is seen as

offering opportunities to recognise learning outcomes and qualifications on the basis of voluntary agreements between

VET public authorities and other key stakeholders such as social partners and VET providers. Depending on the number of partners involved, their area of competence and sectoral interest, there is a real opportunity for individuals' learning outcomes to be recognised as part of a transnational mobility project as well as in different sectors and learning contexts.

ECVET is also seen as a way to encourage the learner. When learners have a greater awareness of the competences that could be acquired or have been acquired during a period of mobility, their motivation and self-confidence improves. The final benefits associated with ECVET mobility relate to organisations involved in such experiences – training providers comment that it helps them to define the level of skills that can be expected from their classes and employers comment that it helps them to define the roles and tasks in their companies.

Challenges to overcome

In addition to the benefits of using ECVET, the survey identified some critical issues and possible obstacles related to the full implementation of the system. Firstly, organizations promoting mobility project highlighted that practitioners, teachers and trainers are still inadequately prepared, particularly in relation to the recognition of learning outcomes and the design of a unit of learning outcomes. These are nevertheless widely perceived to be important elements

of ECVET that support the quality and sustainability of the mobility experience. This critical issue also emphasises the extent to which some qualification and VET systems use an approach which is still based on learning content rather than on learning outcomes.

In the labour market, there is a lack of knowledge on ECVET and this can contribute to difficulties for learners who complete a mobility project in a company. Many of those businesses that are actively involved in mobility projects often fail to see the added value of recognising learning outcomes achieved during the placement. Even in the most dynamic business environments, it is not easy to understand how the support offered by companies to the training of young people could be an opportunity to improve the overall quality of the mobility experience.

The application of ECVET on a voluntary basis is still seen as a limitation. However the survey respondents noted that this has allowed the development of projects which would not have happened in a strict 'top-down' environment. The 'bottom-up' approach is therefore ensuring a valuable contribution to the evolution of EU policies.

The complexity of the preparatory activities (asking for time commitment and significant resources) and the short duration of the mobility experience (which does not always allow the development of the desired learning outcomes) are still perceived as critical issues for VET operators to solve during their testing of ECVET in transnational mobility. Legal constraints also make it complex and difficult to validate and recognise learning outcomes – and this restricts the application of ECVET to formal learning contexts.

The future

To summarise the findings from the survey there is still a need for more information on ECVET, best practice and guidelines for effective implementation of ECVET within mobility experiences outside the formal education and training environment. Nevertheless, there has been a progressive evolution in terms of project promoters' knowledge and application of this European tool. This can be confirmed by the emerging interest in the creation of a Community of Practice for organisations that have implemented ECVET and wish to encourage others to further test the tool based on their success.

"The complexity of the preparatory activities and the short duration of the mobility experience are still perceived as critical issues."

The greater awareness and knowledge of ECVET, in the context of transnational mobility, has been undoubtedly supported by guidance and information from the National Teams of ECVET Experts and the updating of the documentation for the Leonardo da Vinci mobility applications under the Call for Proposals 2013. The development of European templates for the memorandum of understanding and the learning agreement, and the revised application form for Leonardo da Vinci mobility projects will encourage the introduction of ECVET elements in the design and implementation of mobility experiences. Due to these changes and the large number of Italian applications for Leonardo da Vinci mobility in 2013 (around 450) it would be interesting to re-investigate the awareness and use of ECVET in the future. ■

NETINVET - A European network of training centres and companies



Cristina Dimas, CEOA,
Coordinator Innovation and Business Unit

This is a story about implementing the ECVET 'spirit'. It sets out to tell each stakeholder's side of the same story. But because it's a story it makes sense to start at the beginning!

In 2011, the NETINVET Association was established with the objective of promoting European mobility for VET learners. When it first started the Association focused on training programs in the field of international trade in order to offer young people an opportunity to be mobile. However the network always intended to expand into other qualifications in the trade and services sector and in 2012 qualifications in transport and logistics qualifications were added.

The idea of creating a network arose from a European Leonardo da Vinci/ECVET Network project in 2008-2011 (RECOMFOR - Réseau pour la formation et l'enseignement professionnels dans le secteur du commerce). Within this project, it was decided that the sustainability and mutual trust required to promote 'recognised' learning needed a formal structure that could organise activities and support the involved parts.

The NETINVET association was formally created under French law but it is European in all its activities (e.g. its mission, activities and membership). The Association includes training centres

and companies (in relation to their training role during work placements) and other relevant stakeholders like VET competent authorities (e.g. ministries, national agencies and professional/trade organisations). So far the Association includes 54 training centres and over 160 companies from 11 countries - Belgium, the Czech Republic, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, the Netherlands, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

Members of the network support learners' mobility as a way of enriching their learning and contributing to the development of European citizens. However the focus is on international mobility that can be recognised and can contribute to the learner's qualification in his/her

"NETINVET members are committed to applying and testing the ECVET Recommendation principles while fully respecting each organisation's and each national VET and qualification system way of working."

own country. NETINVET members are committed to applying and testing the ECVET Recommendation principles while fully respecting each organisation's and each national VET and qualification system way of working.

CECOA – Centro de Formação Profissional para o Comércio e Afins was established in 1986 and is one of the network's founder members. CECOA is



a Portuguese vocational training centre for the trade and services sectors. Involvement in the Association helps CECOIA to offer more opportunities to their learners and to enhance the quality of its training.

In this story we focus on those learners completing an EQF Level 5 qualifica-

tion in the field of international trade. In partnership with NETINVET members in Belgium, France, Spain, the Netherlands and Slovenia, CECOIA has sent 18 learners abroad to complete a recognised period of mobility. CECOIA has also received 5 learners from France and the Netherlands who stay for three to four months and complete classroom training and work placements.

As the process for the recognition of learning outcomes requires mutual trust to be built and nourished, CECOIA has welcomed five teachers on fact-finding visits. This has helped trainers get to know each other better; find out more about the learners' qualifications; observe the teaching and learning processes; understand the quality assurance mechanisms that are used; learn more about the assessment methods

and standards used and most importantly of all meet those who are involved in training (e.g. the learners, teachers, other pedagogical staff from each centre and company trainers etc.).

However to make mutual recognition work, a great deal of work has to take place behind the scenes. In this story we look at a learner who went to France to complete some of her training. For this to be a success, the learning outcomes achieved in France need to be included in her learning pathway, CECOIA needs to recognise these learning outcomes, and success must be transferred and included in the learner's qualification.

This is only feasible because in the framework of the NETINVET network, supported in the ECVET Technical Specifications (and in the European project before it), both Portugal and France – apart from the other countries members of the network – have done a work of characterisation and comparison of their own qualifications in the sectors involved and are fully committed in the creation, development and maintenance of a framework that can support and enhance quality assurance, transparency and mutual trust between the countries involved.

There is more information on NETINVET at www.netinvet.eu/ and on CECOIA at www.cecoa.pt/ ■

Reflections from an employer

Rute Bernardo from Portugal spent five weeks at for our company in Paris in 2011. As part of her training program in international trade, Rute worked at L'Indochineur Paris Hanoi, which designs and sells jewelry, tableware and decorations made from horn and stone. The company works closely with craftsmen in Vietnam and exports its products all over the world.

Portuguese and Spanish speaking customers have always made an important contribution to our turnover and Rute helped us to meet the demands of this group of customers. She took orders, prepared the products, organised their shipping and followed up on payments. During her stay at L'Indochineur Rute helped us to secure new business with Brazilian customers and she completed a study on Brazilian prospects.

Rute translated our sales documentation into Portuguese and prepared materials for an e-mail to advertise some very important exhibitions ('Maison et Objet Paris' and 'Première Classe Paris') that took place in January 2012 immediately after her departure. As an international company we were happy to add the Portuguese flag to our collection which represent the 15 nationalities - from China to Congo - who have worked at L'Indochineur.

We have good memories of Rute's time with us as she got on well with our team.



Pierre Coutris
Owner - L'Indochineur

My mobility diary - from Lisbon to Paris



Rute Bernardo
Former trainee at CECOA

When I was asked to report on my experience on the International Trade course in Paris in 2011 my reaction was 'Of Course! What an honour!' How could I describe such a life changing event in a few paragraphs? Summing up has never been one of my strengths, but it was one of many skills I started to develop during the course.

Back in may 2010...

I had worked for nine years in a tableware division of a ceramics manufacturing company. I had started as a salesperson and had become an assistant manager in one of Lisbon's most prestigious stores. It was a pleasant occupation but I knew something was missing: new challenges, more knowledge and wider horizons. I had already attended university while working and I knew how hard it was to manage academic study alongside a full time job. This time I needed a different solution.

CECOA

That is when I found out about CECOA, the Training Center for Commerce and Services. A new course was about to begin, an innovative approach which would train international trade technicians outside an academic environment. I applied right away, and few days later I was invited for an interview. I remember being asked so many questions: "Are you sure this is what you want? How will you keep up with a job and seven hours of classes every day? Will your employer support you? How can I be sure you won't drop out?" I was willing to do anything: work fewer hours, even leave my job! I had only one certainty - I was more than determined to do my best. Two weeks later I got the call. My application had been accepted and classes were due to start in one month.

I attended courses for more than one year: foreign languages, economics, tax systems and many other subjects. Eventually I had to reduce my working hours but I was sure it was worth it. I really felt I was finally on the right track and learning from such experienced people. I was at the right place, at the right time to develop the skills and competences that I needed for a brighter future.

Summertime and good news

In July 2011 we heard that we could complete our training in another European city. We had been accepted for a Leonardo da Vinci programme which had very clear objectives such as improving professional and language skills, integrating cultural differences in a work context, developing better awareness of the requirements of the European labour market - to name a few. All of this was impossible to refuse. The preliminary date for the placement was November and we would be supported by CECOIA and the host company. But first some decisions had to be made as my employer didn't approve my request for unpaid leave. I handed in my resignation without a second thought as this was a one-off opportunity for me to learn new personal and professional skills.

Paris

In November I flew to Paris where I stayed for six weeks. The language issue was my main concern as I had not spoken French since leaving secondary school.



I rented a small studio in the 12^{ème} arrondissement and went out for my first tour of the neighborhood and my first shopping trip in a foreign language - I soon realised all I had to do was to use short clear sentences. And I never forgot to say 'please' and 'thank you'. Et voilà! People actually understood me (understanding them was more difficult, but eventually I succeeded).

I spent the first week learning French at the Lycée des Métiers Santos Dumont with other students from the International Trade course. This gave me the chance to get to know a little about the French education system. Most of my colleagues were under 20 and I was two months away from 30. I guess for them

it was surprising to see someone of my age going back to school - but I enjoyed it very much. I was looking forward to starting my on-the-job training. But first I needed a weekend of sightseeing, wine tasting and meeting Portuguese friends in Paris. Then it happened: a week after my arrival, I presented myself at L'Indochineur, the company where I would work for five weeks as an international trade technician.

L'indochineur: the paris-hànôï experience

L'Indochineur is a family owned company that creates, produces and distributes hand-made accessories (fashion, jewelry and tableware) inspired by Ja-

panese style. The products are mainly made of mother-of-pearl, horn, wood and bone. L'Indochineur has a permanent office in Hanoi where the products are developed under strict fair trade and sustainable development rules.

The company's founder and owner, Mr. Coutris, welcomed me and explained my tasks. As I would only stay for a few weeks I was given full autonomy but I was also given a long list of things to do. Focus and good organisation were essential to achieve my objectives which were to:

- complete a first analysis of the Brazilian market;
- follow up potential sales to Brazilian and Spanish clients;
- monitor payments and credit recovery processes;
- prepare written communications in Portuguese which could be used at the 'Maison et Objet' 2011 exhibition;
- receive, prepare and organise the shipping of orders on a daily basis.

Once again, the language barrier was evident and it was not easy to overcome. Even with short simple sentences, I found it impossible to express myself clearly as I am used to doing in Portuguese. I had to use non-verbal language to refer to almost everything - the

stapler, the sugar pot, the hole punch. However the training was very rewarding and satisfactory and I was able to fully achieve most of my tasks. Having already worked for some years I was able to see this experience as a proper job with all the responsibilities of work.

By the end of the fifth week, I had demonstrated all the expected learning outcomes: adjusting to a foreign environment; working in a specific field (international trade) and in a different culture; overcoming the language barriers; contributing to the achievement of the company's goals; and developing greater awareness of the special features of the business.

Packing up and going home

Once I was back in Lisbon, I had two weeks to prepare a final report before the course finished and I received my diploma. For CECOIA, my assessment in France wasn't questioned because the same criteria had been used for every trainee's work placement. My time abroad was recognised in the same way as it would have been if I had completed the work placement in Lisbon. By the end of January 2012 it was all over - I was an International Trade Specialist Technician (European Qualification Framework Level 5) with a final grade of 18 (the maximum mark is 20). It had all been worth it: the lack of sleep, the

long hours completing my assignments and my new status of 'in between jobs'. Now it was time to breathe out, remember not to panic and find a new professional project where my competences could be used.

I did not consider the idea of accepting something not related to my new field of expertise. I decided I would try for at least four months even though I knew it would not be easy. Then, in April, the phone rang...

On a trial basis

I received a call from a national distribution company in the fast moving consumer goods area. They were looking for a customer service professional. The ability to speak English and French helped my application but most of all it was my willingness to keep learning. I proposed an on-the-job assessment for a day or so - to evaluate how I would handle the new role. My suggestion was quickly accepted as the company had the same idea. After a two day trial I was hired on a six month contract - so far this has been renewed twice. Little by little I am earning my employer's trust, putting my international trade knowledge at their disposal and making plans to complete more vocational training on other aspects of my job. And this time I have the company's support. ■



State of play of ECVET developments in Europe

A brief summary of Cedefop's monitoring of ECVET

The Bruges Communiqué invites the European Commission and Cedefop to provide technical support and guidance on the implementation of ECVET.

It also invites Member States to use and promote the European transparency instruments in a systematic way. Cedefop supports the EU processes by offering policy advice and expertise in relation to governance, and by producing annual reports based on information from the monitoring of ECVET developments at a national level.



Cedefop's latest monitoring report¹ is from June 2011 to September 2012²- it is the third in a series that began in 2010. The report's analysis is based on the necessary conditions for ECVET which were developed by Cedefop, the ECVET Users' Group and the European Commission³. The report will contribute to the 2014 evaluation of ECVET and the review of the Bruges Communiqué's strategic objectives and short term deliverables.

Cedefop's analysis shows Europe's lack of readiness for a full-scale implementation but it also shows that countries have made progress in creating the

necessary conditions which are needed to accommodate the ECVET principles. The development of ECVET differs between countries and between VET sub-systems in the same country. Most countries are still testing/assessing ECVET's technical components against their own sub-systems and ongoing reforms. A number of countries have made a formal commitment to use ECVET and are moving towards implementation - either by adapting their credit systems to ECVET or by developing credit systems in line with ECVET. For different reasons some countries have kept ECVET on hold e.g. they have other priorities, a lack of financial resources,

(1) <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/21204.aspx>

(2) The 2012 report is based mainly on interviews with members of the ECVET Users' Group. It also uses evidence from ECVET project reports, the ECVET Magazine, the ECVET web site, the European Qualification Framework 'referencing reports' and Cedefop's publications. The interviews were conducted from July to September 2012 and the questions relate to activities between June 2011 and September 2012. The report covers the 27 Member States, the EFTA countries (Norway, Lichtenstein, Switzerland and Iceland), Croatia and Turkey - 37 different educational systems (two in Belgium and four in the UK).

(3) <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/publications/19848.aspx>

a lack of clarity of ECVET objectives etc.). Few countries have reported that they have a credit system in line with ECVET.

The different rates of developments might be explained by the complexity of VET systems. Across Europe VET is highly heterogeneous (school-based, dual, permeable, flexible, centralised / decentralised, based on a long tradition etc.) and there are different approaches

within sub-sectors in the same country (e.g. initial VET, continuing VET, apprenticeship, school-based and sectoral qualifications etc.). This can make it difficult for countries to engage in a full scale ECVET implementation.

The arrangements for managing ECVET's governance reflect this complexity - and stakeholders are heavily involved in ECVET developments. Ministries of Education play a role in ECVET's governance in all countries, either as National

Contact Points (NCPs) or through their relationship with government agencies, expert bodies or other institutions. In more than 60% of the education systems a national agency is involved in ECVET governance. In addition to the Ministry of Education, 37 per cent of the education systems analysed report that other ministries are also involved - in some cases the main responsibility is held by other ministries.



Source: based on Cedefop's interviews with the ECVET Users Group

"VET providers are crucial to ECVET developments. In many projects there has been a 'bottom-up' approach as VET providers and organisations involved in mobility have developed ECVET to meet their needs."

VET providers are crucial to ECVET developments. In many projects there has been a 'bottom-up' approach as VET providers and organisations involved in mobility have developed ECVET to meet their needs (Curth et al., 2012). In Cedefop's survey VET providers are involved in ECVET developments in approximately 66 per cent of Member States. Social partners were also involved in the governance arrangements for ECVET in 66 per cent of the systems in the survey. One noticeable area of progress in the last year has been the designation of National Contact Points for ECVET. In 2012, out of the 35 countries in the survey, 26 had officially designated a NCP for ECVET - an increase from 15 in 2011. In addition 2012 saw the appointment of 'national teams of ECVET experts' and these 187 national experts are now organising ECVET activities. In line with the ECVET Recommendation that invites countries to adapt their legislation to better implement ECVET, more than half of the educational systems in the survey have linked (or are discussing how to link) ECVET to their VET legislation.

There is widespread agreement on the importance of the principles underlying ECVET such as the unitisation (or modularisation) of education systems, the description of qualifications in terms of learning outcomes, and the importance of simplifying the recognition and transfer of learning outcomes as part of a mobility programme. Nevertheless, decisions on implementation depend on a clear and explicit statement of the added value of ECVET. Approximately 70 per cent of the survey's respondents mentioned ECVET's support for cross-border mobility as the main added value. And 48 per cent of respondents saw ECVET as a tool which could better align qualifications with the learning outcomes approach. ECVET as a tool for improving recognition and validation processes and permeability within different educational sectors was mentioned by 38 per cent of respondents. However it is worth noting that several respondents (20 per cent) mentioned their difficulties in finding a clear added value for ECVET and expressed concern about ECVET's administrative burden and the associated workload.

The 2012 report confirmed the trends seen in the last report - i.e. countries increasingly see ECVET as:

- a tool for reform which can align qualifications to learning outcomes;
- a means to engage stakeholders further in the development and design of VET;
- a way to support mobility, both internationally and within countries (permeability).

These trends are supported by the results from pilot projects which show that learning outcomes are crucial to ECVET, and that ECVET contributes to a better understanding of the role of learning outcomes in qualifications. This perception may account for some of the difficulties in identifying the added value for ECVET as the use of learning outcomes in qualifications is driven by the developments of NQFs and their links to the EQF. In this context ECVET might be seen as complementary with limited added value.

It is clear that ECVET needs to be aligned with the other European principles and instruments. Especially relevant for ECVET is the relationship with ECTS, since two different types of credit arrangements can cause confusion to learners who are the ultimate users and beneficiaries. ECVET also requires a well-defined system to validate and recognise learning outcomes to fully realise its potential.

The necessary conditions are useful and helpful for guiding ECVET implementation. However, some fine tuning might be advisable. The different nature of each of the conditions, the way in which they relate to each other and the variety of approaches that can be used to fulfil the conditions makes it complicated to monitor and assess progress. ECVET might be able to function without some of these conditions in place, but others, especially technical requirements such as the definition of learning outcomes, are fundamental if ECVET is to be implemented fully. ■

Teuta Danuza, Director National Qualifications Authority Student Centre Prishtine

A third country perspective- how the European initiatives can inspire change



Kosovo is Europe's newest country and has its youngest population. Following the recent war Kosovo faces major economic, social and educational challenges.

Kosovo's government is strongly committed to the EU agenda and is making every effort to develop and reform the country. It aims to help Kosovo become an inclusive society, to promote economic growth and to prepare the country for EU integration. Given these aims, linking education provision to the needs of the labour market in order to create a flexible and skilled labour force is a priority for the government. Since 2011 the

government has implemented a sector-wide annual review of the national education system and this has informed the Kosovo Education Strategic Plan for 2011-2016. A key element of the Plan is the National Qualifications Framework (NQF).

The NQF should improve access to work and further learning by ensuring that qualifications are more relevant and that they meet the needs of learners, the economy employers. The framework includes descriptors of knowledge, skills and competences at eight levels which align with the European Qualifications Framework. The framework was developed with EU technical assistance and was formally established in November 2011.

A new law on qualifications specified who is responsible for implementing and managing the NQF. The legislation includes nine objectives for the NQF, including that it should:

- provide a basis for cooperation with the EQF;
- promote transparency of qualifications;
- ensure the relevance of qualifications to employment and learning;

- stimulate lifelong learning;
- increase access to certification;
- provide learning pathways;
- establish a system for the accumulation and transfer of credit;
- increase the quality and relevance of education and training by stimulating the development of qualifications based on internationally comparable standards of knowledge, skills and competences and be supported by rigorous quality assurance procedures;
- improve employability and learning opportunities for individuals by providing a basis for recognition and certification.

The framework is now being implemented and it has proven to be a stimulus for developing new occupational standards and qualifications. Kosovo's National Qualification Authority (NQA) has encouraged this process and has introduced quality assurance systems that were previously absent in the VET sector. For VET providers, the NQA has established a quality assurance framework, procedures and methodology for internal self-assessment and external monitoring which is cross-referenced to the European Quality Assurance in VET Framework (EQAVET). It has also intro-



duced processes and criteria for developing, validating and reviewing VET qualifications so they can be placed in the NQF. VET providers must meet a set of agreed criteria before they can offer any qualification approved for the NQF.

Good progress has been made. Qualifications have been validated and placed in the NQF, mainly these are level 3 and 4 qualifications.

Several VET providers have been accredited to deliver, assess and issue these NQF qualifications.

The NQF is influencing the curricula and leading to other changes in the national education and training system. Traditio-

"The NQF is influencing the curricula and leading to other changes in the national education and training system."

nally curricula were subject-based and included a clear distinction between theoretical and practical knowledge. Modular curricula were less common and mainly developed with the support of various donors from 2002. However, the most recent curriculum reform by the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST) introduced a

modular approach throughout the system. In VET, occupational standards have become the starting point for our outcomes-based curricula and qualifications. VET qualifications can only be placed in the NQF if they are based on occupational standards.

One of the objectives of the NQF is to facilitate the accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes between different learning contexts or systems - this includes learning in the formal and informal education and training sectors. The NQA has developed a VET credit system based on the ECVET Recommendation. This supports learners' geographical and occupational mobility

by enabling them to accumulate and combine learning outcomes from different settings and use them in different educational pathways.

The NQA's credit system uses learning outcomes, categorises qualifications by measuring the volume of learning, and identifies organisations that have a role and responsibility in allocating credit. It also identifies the support that is needed to implement the credit accumulation and transfer system in VET providers. The NQA regulates the credit system by accrediting providers and sets criteria to determine which organisations can submit qualifications for inclusion in the NQF. These criteria include strict procedures for allocating credit, which ensures that VET providers have the necessary capacity and expertise. Our NQF also provides the basis for co-operation and mutual recognition with other countries.

The NQA has also developed a policy paper and guidelines on the recognition of prior learning (RPL) and is working on the legislation which will enable its implementation. To develop this policy, the NQA consulted potential beneficiaries and key stakeholders. The consultation included a review of current practice and the benefits and challenges faced by VET providers. RPL is vital in a country with a significant number of returning migrants who have useful skills which remain un-certificated. The country also

has a significant number of people who, for because of the country's recent history, did not have the opportunity to pursue their education fully, but who have useful skills which are not formally recognised.

Kosovo's development of a credit system inspired by ECVET is one element in our adoption of EU norms. Our reforms are helping to ensure there is compatibility with the:

- European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (EQF) and the Framework for Qualifications in the European Higher Education Area (FQHEHA);
- EQF level descriptors and Dublin Descriptors for higher education;
- Quality Principles for higher education and VET attached to the EQF and the relevant criteria for referencing NQFs to the EQF;
- European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS);
- European Quality Assurance in VET (EQAVET) and the 'Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area' developed by the European Network for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (ENQA);
- EUROPASS set of tools for the transparency of diplomas, certificates and competences.

Kosovo has observer status in EQAVET's community of practice which supports the implementation of the EU Recommendation on Quality Assurance in VET. NQA staffs are also involved in the Regional Cooperation Council in the Balkans and in wider international events and conferences. The NQA monitors international developments in relation to qualifications frameworks and ensures that Kosovo's NQF is based on best practice.

Kosovo is actively using the key EU instruments to support reform of its education and training system, which demonstrates the relevance and value of the European instruments and Kosovo's serious intent to reform its system. ■



ECVET calendar of activities 2013

2013	April			
	3-4-5	Regular seminar	ECVET for mobility	Warsaw
	15-16	Peer learning activity (PLA)	Supporting the ECVET National Experts in their mission	Amsterdam
	22-23	Peer learning activity (PLA)	Removing barriers to progression: the role of credit	Paris
		Publication	LLP call National Teams of ECVET Experts	
	May			
	13-14	ECVET Users' Group meeting	Workshop focused on ECVET Users' group activities	Brussels
	22-23	Customized seminar		Pristina
	28-29	Customized seminar		Prague
	June			
13-14	Annual Forum	"Stay connected to implement ECVET"	Prague	
18	ECVET working group			
September				
24-25	Regular seminar	ECVET for qualification designers	Budapest	
October				
10-11 (tbc)	Partner in 3 rd joint seminar of the European tools			
24-25	Joint event (NeTECVET, COM, EACEA, ICF GHK)	Final conference of LLP National Agencies' network, National Teams of ECVET experts and ECVET pilot projects call 2012	Brussels	
30	ECVET Steering Committee			
November				
5-6	Peer learning activity (PLA)	Joint activity with EQF and/or EQAVET and/or HE focused on LO	Barcelona	
13-14-15	Regular seminar	ECVET for Mobility	(tbc)	
N.N.	Customized seminar	Supporting the ECVET National Experts in their mission	(tbc)	
December				
3-4	Workshop /Peer learning activity (PLA) and ECVET Users' Group	Workshop focused on ECVET Users' group activities	Brussels	



Annual ECVET forum

Stay connected to implement ECVET

Prague

13 & 14
JUNE
2013

**Dorint Hotel
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The 2013 ECVET Forum will be on June 13th and 14th in Prague.

350 VET policy-makers, VET providers, practitioners, social partners and representatives from sector organisations and regions will meet to build stronger relationships and improve their knowledge of developments in ECVET and the other European instruments in education.

During the Forum the ECVET Team will launch the ECVET Communities of Practice portal which will help ECVET members stay connected and support collaboration. We hope ECVET members will take responsibility for the Portal and engage in regular dialogue. The new ECVET web site will also be presented at the Forum.

ECVET is working. Increasingly Member States have established the necessary conditions for ECVET implementation. At a European level ECVET development is linked to core issues such as the building of a *European Area of Skills and Qualifications*, and at the national level it is linked to the evolution of VET systems and the revision of qualifications and educational standards. ECVET has

been successfully tested through many pilot projects and is used in a large number of mobility schemes.

At a European level ECVET has produced many resources to assist and support policy makers, project leaders, competent authorities and VET designers in Member States. These resources include templates, practical guides and information on effective communication. Networking opportunities such as the Peer Learning Activities, conferences and seminars have helped National Coordination Points, national teams of ECVET experts and projects networks to share their experiences and find out more about ECVET's implementation.

ECVET is closely connected with the other European instruments and principles - together these enhance lifelong learning and mobility in Europe. EQF/NQFs, EQAVET, ECTS, Europass and the validation of non-formal and informal learning are all part of this process. The learning outcomes approach plays a crucial role in facilitating this interaction.

Stay connected to implement ECVET!

The 2013 ECVET forum is co-organised by the European Commission and Cedefop with the support of ECVET team.

The forum is open to any interested member of the European ECVET network and interested parties.

For registration: <http://www.ecvet-team.eu>

The documentation of the previous ECVET annual forums is available at <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/en/content/annual-forums>



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PROGRAMME DRAFT

Day 1 | 13 June 2013

08:00 - 09:00	Registration
09:00 - 09:40	<p>Welcome & Introduction</p> <p>- Mrs Alison Crabb (European Commission, DG EAC, Vocational training and adult education)</p> <p>Coffee table: ECVET is working!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mrs Alison Crabb - CEDEFOP expert - Representative of the Czech Republic (tbc) - Company representative - A VET student and her/his teacher - A national ECVET expert
09:40 - 09:55	Questions (for discussion with the European Commission after lunch)
09:55 - 10:15	Coffee break
SESSION 1- IMPLEMENTING ECVET: STAY CONNECTED TO WHAT IS GOING ON	
10:15 - 12:15	<p>Parallel workshops (round 1)</p> <p>Focus 1 - the use of ECVET</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 1: fostering geographical mobility - Workshop 2: fostering lifelong learning - Workshop 3: ECVET implementation – the current state of play / CEDEFOP (translated into French and German) <p>Focus 2 - ECVET and stakeholders</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 4: the role of VET qualification designers in ECVET implementation - Workshop 5: the role of VET providers in ECVET implementation - Workshop 6: the role of companies in ECVET implementation - Workshop 7: the role of VET teachers and trainers in ECVET implementation - Workshop 8: the role of regions in ECVET implementation <p>Focus 3 - ECVET in the European VET context</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Workshop 9: Learning outcomes as a common language
12:15 - 13:45	Lunch
13:45 - 14:15	Question and answer session with the European Commission
14:15 - 15:00	<p>Plenary discussion: towards a European Area of Skills and Qualifications</p> <p>- EQF, EQAVET, ECVET, ECTS, Europass</p>
15:00 - 15:30	Coffee break
15:30 - 17:30	Parallel workshops (round 2: a repeat of round 1, Workshop 4 translated into French and German)
19:30 - 22:30	Networking and dinner

Day 2 | 14 June 2013

SESSION 2 - ECVET COMMUNITIES OF PRACTICE - STAY CONNECTED TO EACH OTHER	
09:30 - 10:00	<p>Plenary</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Presentation of the new ECVET Team website - Presentation of the "prototype" web platform for the Communities of Practice (CoP)
10:00 - 10:30	Coffee break
10:30 - 12:00	<p>Parallel workshops</p> <p>Workshops 1 to 7: the CoP is yours-creating the content of the web platform!</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What could a CoP do for my mobility programme? - How could a CoP help me to implement the ECVET Recommendation? - How could a CoP help me to create a bridge between ECVET and ECTS? - I have trouble understanding ECVET's technical specifications. - What role could the CoP play in helping my understanding? <p>Workshops 8 to 9: two months of CoP testing by the ECVET experts</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reviewing the first two months' use of the web platform" - How to make it better from an expert angle?
12:10 - 12:20	ECVET Team news
12:20 - 12:50	Observers' feedback from the workshops
12:50 - 13:00	Conclusion from the European Commission
13:00	Lunch and departure

ECVET Team Website



We invite you to visit our website – <http://www.ecvet-team.eu/> - a more user friendly site, with new headings as the **most popular download**, **ECVET essentials**, **ECVET Magazine** and the **calendar** where you can find all the events connected to the ECVET community.

Register as a network member and be involved and updated in this community. All the documents you need regarding ECVET easily you find it here.

