



**European Civil Society Platform  
for Lifelong Learning**



**European Economic and Social Committee**

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

**11 JANUARY 2007, BRUSSELS**

## **MINUTES REPORT**

***« Opportunity of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) for the mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes acquired from formal, non formal and informal contexts for citizens »***

### GENERAL SYNTHESIS

EUCIS-LLL has organised, with the support of the European Economic and Social Committee, a public hearing on ECVET on 11 January in Brussels. It gathered more than fifty participants representing national associations, European organisations and networks, social partners and representatives of European and national institutions.

ECVET is one of the concrete initiatives which were decided in the framework of the Copenhagen process for promoting enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training. This common tool, directly relevant to individual citizens, is to be developed within the European qualification framework (EQF). It should facilitate the mobility and the recognition of learning outcomes acquired from formal but also from non formal and informal learning. All the different sectors represented in EUCIS-LLL platform are thus concerned by this issue.

This audition enabled the participants to evaluate the opportunity and feasibility of such a disposal at European level. If all agreed on the positive effects of ECVET in terms of mobility and transparency for European citizens, some questions remained on the compatibility with other European frameworks, on the risk of creating a “bureaucratic monster”, on the system’s non obligatory nature (thus needing great pedagogic efforts) or on the weight given to non formal and informal learning outcomes. Indeed, the implementation of ECVET represents an opportunity for the recognition of non formal and informal apprenticeships, that remain insufficiently recognised in Member states, for the associative and union sectors.

In response to these questions, the speakers outlined that ECVET – contrarily to ECTS<sup>1</sup> – is not a credit system but a practical disposal, a method, that allows to describe the qualifications (based on the results of formal, non formal and informal apprenticeships), organised into units (reflect acquired knowledge, skills and wider competences) and on the allocation of credit points to the qualifications and units depending on their relative weight (the most difficult to define).

Michel FEUTRIE, vice-president de EUCIS-LLL and president of EUCEN, outlined the necessity to get involved in this process and to participate to the Commission's consultation. He reminds the 6 essential points of ECVET : it is a prototype, the implementation process will be long, it is based on the results of apprenticeships, the qualifications evolve according to the labour market, the notion of unit is very important and it can represent an opportunity for the recognition of non formal and informal apprenticeships.

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## SYNTHESIS OF THE INTERVENTIONS

**Mrs Nicole PRUD'HOMME**, member of European Economic and Social Committee, outlined that such a European framework is necessary to remove barriers to mobility and to ensure a greater transparency of qualifications in Europe.

Within the Committee, a working group is in charge of preparing the response to the European Commission's consultation on ECVET. A main issue raised is the non obligatory nature of this tool that will thus need a great pedagogical effort to go past the scepticism linked to its concrete implementation. This group is notably interested in the opportunity of creating a legal obligation for Member States to implement national frameworks of qualifications.

**Mrs Marta Maria FERREIRA LOURENCO**, Head of unit of DG EAC on adult education, outlined the importance of such contributions. Since 2000, the European Commission is in a phase of proposal of technical disposals to facilitate and solve the problems of recognition and mobility in Europe in the field of education and training. The open consultation on ECVET will enable to collect all the critics and suggestions, to debate and to mutually convince ourselves.

She reminded, that, contrarily to ECTS<sup>1</sup>, ECVET is a micro-economic disposal, closer to the persons concerned. Integrated to EQF, it has an integrative and universal character, it will only function if it is useful for all the actors. The process will be a long term one.

For the moment, the harmonisation of education and training systems is out of the question, it is about offering concrete solutions to solve the problems in terms of mobility and transparency.

**M. Michel ARIBAUD** of DG EAC in charge of ECVET, outlines that this tool is one of the elements of the EQF, it is based on the same logic and principles. ECVET and EQF are based on learning outcomes, are centred on qualifications, emphasis on Lifelong Learning, are focused on mobility (professional and geographical) and are transparency oriented.

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<sup>1</sup> The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System is a student-centred system based on the student workload required to achieve the objectives of a programme, objectives preferably specified in terms of the learning outcomes and competences to be acquired.

ECVET aims to create a European device which will facilitate the transfer, validation and recognition of learning outcomes acquired by individuals moving from one learning context to another or from one qualification system to another, in particular during a mobility period, and who wish to obtain a qualification.

**M. Jens BJORNAVOLD**, service manger at the CEDEFOP, on recognition of learning outcomes / EQF, reminded that the focus on the results of apprenticeships represents an important change compared to other systems such as ECTS<sup>1</sup> based on the student workload.

This tool is part of the EQF that has as reference point the 8 key competences. He specified that this disposal should facilitate the comparison and the translation of qualifications and not their harmonisation, it should work on a voluntary basis and on mutual thrust, its success depending on the quality of the qualifications.

Jens Bjornavold reminded that EQF gained a large consensus amongst Member States, the Commission's proposal on EQF should thus be adopted by the Council and the Parliament very soon. It is now time to begin the operating phase.

**Mr. Richard MANIAK**, from the French Ministry of Education, presented the study realised on ECVET implementation in the frame of the European project *ECVET Connexion*. This study is focused on the barriers linked to the implementation of ECVET and on the impact it would have on the conceptions and principles of training systems in the countries. To achieve a successful implementation of ECVET, four assumptions seem necessary : a good definition of knowledge, skills and wider competences; the flexibility of the systems (management and organisation of the systems and of individual routes); the autonomy of training centres (flexibility and reactivity) and the permeability of training centres.

If all the training systems aim to develop the knowledge, to support individual's employability and adaptability, the importance given to each of these objectives varies. Four types of systems have thus been identified : a) those focused on knowledge (mainly training centres), b) those focused on employability (mainly the companies), c) those focused on adaptability to the labour market (equilibrium between training centres and companies), and d) those focused on a portfolio of competences with an individual approach (the most flexible). According to the four assumptions above, ECVET will be more easily implemented in systems c) and d) which already have technical specifications contrarily to a) and b). An important work to raise awareness on the system seems necessary.

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## RESOURCES

European Commission consultation document :  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/work\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/work_en.pdf)

ECVET presentation:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/slides\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/ecvt/slides_en.pdf)

ECVET technical specifications:  
[http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/ecvt2005an\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/education/policies/2010/doc/ecvt2005an_en.pdf)