



NEW VET

NETWORK FOSTERING THE EUROPEAN WORK-BASED
LEARNING SYSTEM FOR VET PROVIDERS

NEW VET Lessons Learnt Compilation

WP3 - TRANSNATIONAL CAPACITY BUILDING FOR VET PROVIDERS

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Introduction

The project “NEW VET – Network fostering the European Work-based learning system for VET providers” is co-funded by the European Union Erasmus+ KA3 Support for Policy Reform programme.

NEW VET supports the establishment of a European cooperation scheme for a pilot group of VET Providers coming from Italy, France, Germany, Slovenia and Greece seeking a more efficient development and effective implementation of Work Based Learning systems at national levels.

is about to provide VET providers partners with

- **five transnational capacity building hotspots** (each partner country)
- **to share their best experiences** and
- **to promote the mutual learning among VET organisations**
- **NEW VET Lessons Learnt about WBL**

These NEW VET Lessons Learnt Compilation summarising the main lessons learnt by project partners during the Capacity Building programme and aiming to further transfer those lessons to respective WBL national frameworks in order to maximise cooperation opportunities among VET providers .

Partners and representatives of their VET providers network organized five transnational training hotspots to exchange their best practices and to promote mutual learning among VET organisations. In effect, the capacity building at VET providers’ level is primarily intended to lay the ground for further cooperation activities supporting partners in working together with both at national and European level.

Due to the covid-19 pandemic the 2nd,3rd,4th and 5th training hotspots were organised as online training.

1. IAL Marche (IT)	Rome, Italy	(21 – 24/01/2020),
2. Greta du Velay (France)	Online	3rd Dec., 11th Dec. and 15th Dec. 2020
3. IHKPG (Germany)	Online	28th Jan, 4th Feb and 9th Feb 2021
4. ŠCNG (Slovenia)	Online	22nd April 2021
5. ReadLab (Greece)	Online	06th July 2021

For this project lessons learnt are insights distilled from the trainings hotspots. Apart from exchanging experiences, both best practices and challenges of VET, participants also appreciated the cooperative, fruitful atmosphere during the training. Hence lessons learnt are also understood as benefits for participating organizations in terms of socializing at international level and contributing to their internationalization. Those lessons learnt will be actively taken into account in maximised cooperation opportunities among VET providers and other stakeholders.

Based on the state of the art and on the national VET framework of each participating organisation, five main topics were addressed through the capacity building activities:

- 1) **IAL Marche (Italy):** How to approach and further benefit from **EU funding instruments for VET systems** – both at national and European level
- 2) **Greta du Velay (France):** How to apply the **EU quality criteria and tools** (i.e. Framework for quality and effective Apprenticeship, ECVET) to the national WBL experiences for VET students
- 3) **IHKPG (Germany):** How to better **implement a high quality and multi-actors WBL system** at national/regional level?
- 4) **ŠCNG (Slovenia):** How to modernise VET **by supporting the transitions to a green and digital economy - Innovation in VET for Green and Digital Europe**
- 5) **ReadLab (Greece):** **A new Micro credential era in VET?** Skills, Qualifications Framework and EU Approaches

In the following sections each training hotspot will be introduced shortly together with a summary of participants the main lesson learnt.

1st NEW VET Training Hotspot – short review and lessons learnt

1.1 Short review about the 1st NEW VET Training Hotspot

“The 1st NEW VET transnational capacity building training was held between 21 and 24 January 2020 in the IAL NAZIONALE Headquarters in Rome. The NEW VET partners had the opportunity to follow the 1st transnational training through which they shared best practices and experiences in the field of vocational and education training and work-based learning in their countries. Further to that, the training was deployed to promote and expand mutual learning among project’s VET providers and to learn further how to adopt effective approaches and how to benefit from EU funding tools for VET systems – both at national and European levels.

The first day of the training hosted Ms. Hrelja from T33 and Mr. Chelli from FASI.BIS who opened the discussion on the European Union’s Policies for the next programming period 2021-2027. Both presenters elaborated and discussed with NEW VET partners around the most recent development in the EU policies regarding the EU budgetary priorities, especially concerning ESF and Horizon 2020.



Image 1 1st Training Hotspot, Rome, January 2020

The second day of the hotspot training brought in the focus of the Italian experience from the Erasmus+ program as well as the outcomes Italy has achieved in the field of vocational education and training over the past five years. To this end, Mr. Arenare presented useful insights regarding strategic partnerships, while Ms. Borlone presented mobility projects in the field of education. The discussion continued with Ms. Fonzo who opened a discussion with the title ‘EQAVET: From EU framework to the Italian Implementation’. The second day of the hotspot training concluded with NEW VET partners’ presentations on best practices in the field of vocational education and training and work-based learning. All partners brought some of the best practices from their countries and exchanged among each other ideas on how these practices could also relate to the NEW VET project objectives.

The third and last day of the training was dedicated to the workshop on EU project proposal writing. The interactive workshop was facilitated by Ms. Puel who is an expert facilitator and explained to the NEW VET partners how to approach real needs and achieve tangible results in project proposals. The workshop received positive feedback from all NEW VET partners, and it involved teamwork and collaboration.” (Cited from D9_1 1st evaluation report by Kristie Christodoulaki)

Related documents:

Reinforcing EU Social Funds to help recover from the crisis (May 2020):

https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/reinforcingeu_socialfunds_en_28may.pdf (retrieved on 14/07/2020)

Horizon Europe: developing EU innovation and research

<https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/horizon-europe/>(retrieved on 14/07/2020)

Infonote Erasmus 2021-2027 (February 2019):

http://lllplatform.eu/lll/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Infonote_new-Erasmus-proposal-2018.pdf (retrieved on 14/07/2020)

EU long-term budget 2021-2027: Commission Proposal May 2020:

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/eu-budget/eu-long-term-budget/2021-2027_en (retrieved on 14/07/2020)

1.2 Lessons learnt from the 1st NEW VET Training Hotspot

Applying an online survey among participants the 1st project evaluation report already revealed that the training objectives were mainly met (only two said they were partly met). Seven out of ten considered the topics as very relevant or relevant to them. Question number two of the question catalogue (as described in the introduction) follows this first impression and asks in what sense the training input was relevant to participants.

A) EU-funding policies and programmes, past and future after 2021- **Days 1 / 2**

New facts for participants

Update on the new EU programme and funding period 2021 – 2027 leading to increased knowledge:

- Identify new themes and topics that participating organization can contribute to in the near future; for example, detailed presentation of Horizon 2020.

Understand central goals of EU funding programmes:

- Promoting innovations;
- Spreading word and exploit project results to improve VET systems across Europe.

Understand operational aspects of EU funding programmes -> simpler and less bureaucratic handling:

- For example, simplified costs options for projects, that means calculation of the costs of an operation on the basis of other costs (flat rate financing), or of outputs and results (standard scale of unit costs, lump sums);
- Opportunity to include non-European organizations in partnership projects.

Opportunity to compare own situation of VET with the situation in other countries:

- For example, clear understanding of the Italian employers, workers and labour market views and positions on work-based learning and professional training;
- 2nd example: many of them reminded one partner on the challenges Greece faces as well, for example more students prefer higher education, a bad mix-match between skills and labour market.

VET as a new field:

- Become more familiar with the topic, the opportunities VET can offer to youth as well as the challenges EU countries face and the need for policy reforms.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Authentic exchange of experiences with colleagues:

- Benefits from exchange with colleagues with different national backgrounds;
- Generate ideas and new cooperation opportunities;
- Understand VET providers' needs, how they work and how participating organizations can fit his work to it (i.e. technical organization operating with and for VET providers).

Support to work already done at participants' organizations

Content for strengthening the cooperation of the participants' VET network

General benefits of Erasmus+ programmes:

- Connecting participants and exchanging experiences between them;
- Getting to know new organization active in VET in order to strengthen their network of VET providers;
- Greater awareness for VET and updated staff at VET providers;
- Strengthening VET networks or VET providers from the same country, e.g. via small scale partnerships.

More cooperation between VET organizations:

- For example, Greek VET organizations could create more opportunities to interact with each other and learn from each other through annually meetings (i.e conferences), create a common pool of activities and exchange them among each other (i.e. an electronic platform, face-to-face).

Information transfer from EU-level to local level:

- For example, Greek VET could get informed about the EU priorities and focus and increase the relevance of their work towards these priorities.

Content to be used for making VET more popular

Start a self-reflection process on regional/country level:

- For example, why Greek pupils prefer to go to a university rather than to a VET organization? - Possible reasons: high prestige in the society, opportunities to move further with education (MA, PhD) better remuneration when employed, more educated professors, more opportunities while a student – i.e. Erasmus, Erasmus placement, conferences, summer schools, etc.)?

Starting point of which things to change, for example as joint efforts in VET provider network:

- Give VET students an added value, an incentive; why should they go to a VET school instead to a university;
- Inform young people about the options/opportunities between VET and higher education from school-age;
- Include families because i.e. Greek society is a family-based society and it is the parent/s that creates perspectives to their children on what to become when they grow up. Thus, families should be very actively included in the process e.g. with more sessions relevant with professional options or even, handbooks, flyers and other written material, which is easy and short for parents to read, parent sessions in school.

Responsibility of VET providers to make their curricula and activities more attractive to youth:

- Teachers and trainers could be offered seminars and workshops on how to make their work more relevant with youth.
- Teachers and trainers should be encouraged to participate in exchange programs and bring the new ideas and knowledge back to their students (e.g. via Erasmus+ include mobilities for VET teachers and trainers).
- VET could help to integrate young people into the training system, e.g. NEETs (not in education, employment or training).

Stronger link and cooperation between VET providers and Higher Education Institutions (HEIs):

- For example, they could offer lectures to VET students and teachers, provide certificates, VET could add and complete the practical aspect that universities i.e. in Greece so much lack.

Encouragement of private sector as it determines the demand:

- For example, cooperation with VET organizations: companies could offer trainings to teachers and internships to students. They could also inform the VET providers and HEIs about the needs and the skills of their staff in short-term and long-term as well.

B) EQAVET - Quality assurance in VET - Day 2

New facts for participants

Awareness raising for quality assurance processes in general:

- Quality assurance is helpful as transversal topic when understood as goals and standards.

Role and relevance of EQAVET for VET systems in different EU countries:

- For example, for one participant EQAVET was new and not targeted to French system as they already have to stick to existing quality insurance systems. EQAVET is considered to be targeting a macro-level and countries in which VET has only been developed recently.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Different perspectives on relevance of EQAVET for daily work from agreement to disagreement:

- Disagreement: Interesting for general knowledge but one participating organization said, they already have a quality assurance system (and even several), which makes EQAVET not useful. Apparently in the daily work there seems to be no possible application.
- Middle: One partner knows the National contact point for EQAVET but considers him not to promote a bottom-up approach.
- Agreement: EQAVET was very relevant for one participants' work. He/she found really helpful the indicators set by the European Commission and plans to customize them and adjust to their projects.

Content for strengthening the cooperation of the participants' VET network

EQAVET quality assurance system is considered to be crucial to raise the quality of VET system and consequently make it a first choice.

The exchange on quality assurance experiences among VET providers at different levels could be enhanced.

Content to be used for making VET more popular

Again, different perspectives appear on the potential of EQAVET to make VET more attractive:

- For example, EQAVET quality assurance system is crucial to catch the need of the stakeholders and consequently to make VET more attractive (among them). Moreover, it can be used to improve educational processes for students, teachers and trainers in terms of setting standards for those.
- For example, EQAVET cannot be used to make VET more popular. Students, teachers etc. are more familiar with the existing quality schemes at national level. They are not and they should not be concerned by this kind of system.

C) Project planning and project management - **Day 3**

New facts for participants

Aspects of training methodology:

- To get a roadmap to build something possible and good way to structure a project.

Facilitate exchange among participants:

- Self-reflect on several points of view and increased the knowledge about needs and problems of staff/ teachers/ learners in the different EU countries.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

It seems that participants enjoyed the methods such as brainstorming, exchanging with others.

Support to participants:

- For generating new own ideas for application on different sectors such as Erasmus + Mobility (KA1) and Strategic Partnerships (KA2);
- For needs analysis and how to reach to it through brainstorming.

Concrete ideas for re-use of this method:

- In several situations: i.e. for elaborating a project, EU or not, when supporting other organizations or individuals in making projects. The method is wider than the EU context;
- As new staff member very soon one participant will start to plan and design some of the projects without any assistance.

Content for strengthening the cooperation of the participants' VET network

Participants stressed the cooperative approach of project planning and management and its value of bringing new aspects into the exchange with students, teachers, trainers etc. They also appreciated the opportunity of getting information of other participants and thus creating new collaborations for future projects.

This method could be used when implementing projects in cooperation at local or regional level.

Participants exchanged about different challenges and particularities as VET providers and for VET in general. Through these narratives VET providers could discuss among each other and find out solutions on how to overcome the challenges.

Content to be used for making VET more popular

Exchange about activities and events that could be implemented to make VET more attractive.

Attractive funding opportunities in WBL/VET
(European level: ERASMUS+; Horizon 2020 etc.)

What did participants learn from other partners and how they benefit from this knowledge?

Participants benefited in the following ways:

- Active networking between VET Experts from EU countries;
- Capacity building for WBL and new project partnerships;
- Meeting passionate people who really want to contribute to this field (of VET);
- Realizing that some countries are more advanced and experienced with Vocational Education and Training, others less;
- Exchanging on best practices but also challenges of other participating organizations at European level;
- Learning from strong experience in Vocational Education and Training of others participating organizations and countries that can help to deepen and expand their collaboration. Learning about their context and the way they work.

1.3 Summary and recommendations for the 1st Training Hotspot

By comparing the VET situation in ones own country with other VET systems, partners gained another perspective on their national development of VET, including challenges and different political system that facilitate VET. VET networks at national level and across borders turned out to be a proven way to strengthen VET in the sense of a bottom-up approach. Among others, European programmes provide a good opportunity to share best practices among actors involved in VET and should therefore be reinforced, both among NEW VET partners and inside the partners' networks. The training hotspot also revealed starting points to push for a change, for example as joint efforts in VET provider network, such as better informing young people on the potential of a VET pathway, including families, apply EQAVET principles or equip teachers/trainers with more competences to deliver VET of high quality. Participants benefitted from the last training day on project planning and management in terms of getting a roadmap at hand to plan and structure projects. Participants stressed the cooperative approach of project planning and management and its value of bringing new aspects into the exchange with students, teachers, trainers etc.

For a VET teacher/trainer coaching, the following topics can be pointed out as being the most relevant according to the lessons learnt:

- 1) Potential of EU programmes and how they can concretely support the teachers daily work`
- 2) Getting to know the Erasmus+ programmes and its' value, in particular mobility experiences to exchange and improve
- 3) Comparison of different VET systems to so that teachers/trainers can better classify and assess their own (SWOT) -> initialize a self-reflection process
- 4) How to make own VET programmes (curricula and activities) more attractive to the youth
- 5) How to foster cooperation with other educational sectors, such as Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) and the private sector, ie. companies
- 6) Understand quality assurance (EQAVET) as transversal topic in the sense of goals and standards and how to customize them for the own work

- 7) Learn more about transnational mobility opportunities in their region

2nd NEW VET Training Hotspot – short review and lessons learnt

2.1 Short review about the 2nd NEW VET Training Hotspot

As the circumstances did not allow another implementation, the 2nd training hotspot was organized in an online format on 3rd Dec., 11th Dec. and 15th Dec. 2020. The partner Greta du Velay arranged an interesting combination of input sessions and workshops while including Moodle as online working platform.

Day one was dedicated to ECVET, the European system for a mutual recognition of learning outcomes in VET. As an introduction Ms Banse, the French ECVET expert, introduced the concept of ECVET. Afterwards another French and a German organisation presented their practical experiences of applying ECVET to mobilities. Finally, all partner had the chance to check and exchange on their conditions for implementing ECVET.

Day two brought some interesting opportunities to all participants to learn more about EQF and the Europass platform. All partners were required to reflect and present their national qualification frameworks in relation to the EQF. Different experts from Slovenia, Germany and France introduced EQF, the challenges for ECVET in times of crisis and how they applied the different EU tools in work-based learning. After lunch partners received an overview about the updates of the Europass platform and functions. Afterwards they were also invited to create a Europass profile including some Europass documents (CV etc.) for themselves in order to get familiar with the platform.

The third training day followed a quite practical approach. First of all, partners presented the results of their online assignments on the implementation state of the EU Framework for quality and effective apprenticeship and on their individual Europass CVs. In the morning the training host also prepared a workshop session where partners could test their competences in formulating concrete units of learning outcomes. The afternoon was dedicated to measuring each partners' conditions for implementing ECVET as well as each partners' internationalisation strategy.

Related documents:

Recommendation of the European Parliament and the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET):

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ffc5e02b-2f78-4b8c-bfca-d6554a5b7e4c/language-en> (retrieved 22/02/2021)

Council Recommendation of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning:

<https://op.europa.eu/en/publication-detail/-/publication/ceed970-518f-11e7-a5ca-01aa75ed71a1>, (retrieved 22/02/2021)

Necessary conditions for ECVET implementation (CEDEFOP 2012):

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4113>, (retrieved 22/02/2021)

Defining, writing and applying learning outcomes - A European handbook (CEDEFOP 2017):

<https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/publications-and-resources/publications/4156>, (retrieved 22/02/2021)

Article: Identify Units of Learning Outcomes: <https://www.ecvet-toolkit.eu/ecvet-toolkit/identify-units-learning-outcomes>, (retrieved 22/02/2021)

2.2 Lessons learnt from the 2nd NEW VET Training Hotspot

The second NEW VET training hotspot was special in terms of its new way of delivering information. Despite the online training format, more than three quarter of the participants considered the content to be relevant to them. Also, the participation and interaction were perceived as being encouraging by eleven out of twelve participants (being completely satisfied or satisfied). With regards to content the training was evaluated quite positively, some weaknesses were mentioned regarding the organisation (which was affected by the pandemic mode of organisations operating). Participants valued the “strong participation from all the organizations” and the opportunity of getting to know the “current situation of EQF, ECVET and WBL in different countries” (cited from the training hotspot evaluation). The following section will deepen lessons learnt and allow a capitalization for the subsequent project activities.

A) Check-in to ECVET system (Becoming familiar with the objectives of ECVET; How to implement ECVET; Share practical experiences from a German and French VET organisation) - **Day 1**

New facts for participants

For some participants ECVET was new, so they acquired new knowledge on the ECVET systems and how it structures VET (and mobilities).

Benefits of credit systems:

- Help individuals to progress in learning by facilitating flexible learning pathways and transfer across different levels and types of education and training and across national borders;
- Enable learners to accumulate and transfer different learning outcomes acquired in different learning contexts, including online, non-formal and informal learning;
- Facilitate the design, delivery and assessment of full qualifications or components of qualifications;
- Quality aspects: ECVET supports quality assurance of the regular activities within the company, the apprentice brings new ideas and different perspectives on the company activities, and last but not least, the questions of apprentices support companies/trainers’ self-reflection triggering a virtuous circle.

It was interesting, particularly to a Greek partner, to see what makes ECVET successful in some member states and why it is so difficult for to other to adopt it.

Case study (CorEdu) allowed a better understanding, how ECVET can be implemented in practice in different yet complementary activities that have to be undertaken by the sending organization, the receiving organization and the certification body throughout mobilities using the different stages before, during and after mobility.

Necessary conditions to implement ECVET:

- External conditions (National Qualification System);
- Internal conditions required by actors applying it: sense of ownership among all them and the need for a quality-based approach.

Challenges of ECVET and its implementation:

- Could demand a lot of energy and time;
- Follows a multi-perspective approach to be able to consider appropriately the individual need of the apprentices.

Representative of French ECVET National Team and reflecting on capitalization opportunities for ECVET into local WBL systems.

Where to find support at national level.

EQF levels and allocation of own courses to this framework.

Assessment procedure.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Matter of how to bring ECVET into the organizations:

- As part of partners' mission, ie. raising awareness for the topic;
- Reinforce and recap the learning outcomes concept and its application in the VET paths planning, implementation and assessment;
- Call to action: spread ECVET principles across the organisation and its application in the internships abroad to enhance its quality with benefits both students and enterprises.

Update of own organization on newest EU tools and systems to promote quality of mobilities.

Reminder, that working with ECVET has a human dimension in terms of working with young people and support their talent improvement.

Partners dealing with Erasmus exchanges face similar issues, also in terms of challenges and opportunities that ECVET implementation entails.

Content to be used for transferring the ECVET system and other relevant EU tools

Ways to spread word about ECVET system and tools:

- Trainings specifically for teachers, trainers, in-company trainers;
- Producing material related to ECVET and circle it among target groups in order to build a knowledge community able to guide students and apprentices to enhance their skills;
- Marketing as tools that are easier to adjust. It is something that doesn't require a radical change or any disruption of status quo in VET providers (good point for marketing ECVET).

ECVET is composed of several parts, so the transfer the whole system is difficult. Some parts are easier to transfer, for example ECVET points or Memorandum of understanding on recognition and evaluation of parties involved.

Local tool for translation between different national qualification frameworks.

The content was very practical and provided a lot of suggestions on how to design and implement transnational mobility activities using ECVET and other relevant EU tools.

Content to be used for better adapting the existing national WBL to EU standards

The new competences acquired by VET operators mentioned above could contribute to improve the regional/national WBL frameworks.

Contribution to the achievement of EU quality and efficiency standards.

The adaption of the WBL frameworks primarily depends on each member state. WBL has been developed very differently in each member state. Education is a policy that falls under the remit of national governments and thus it depends on the political will, the business environment and opportunities of the country (-> refers also to internal and external conditions for ECVET above).

For their transfer to the local level and existing national WBL frameworks, the implication of the relevant stakeholders and their willingness to adapt and use these tools is very important.

B) ECVET and Europass (Knowing about and understanding the qualification framework of partners; Sharing experience about implementation of EU tools in work-based learning; Becoming familiar with the new Europass platform) – **Day 2**

New facts for participants

Council recommendation (22/05/2017) on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning

- Pushed the Member states to develop national qualifications frameworks based on learning outcomes related to the EQF through a 'referencing' process;
- EQF as common reference framework of eight levels of qualifications, expressed as learning outcomes with increasing levels of proficiency. They serve as a translation device between different qualifications systems and their levels;
- The EQF levels and learning outcome descriptors contribute to better transparency and comparability of qualifications of different national systems.

Europass mobility, information delivered by an expert:

- Evolution and the new, updated version of Europass portal and its potential: allows to find a job and to edit different version adding experiences all lifelong;
- Improved competences in filling it.

ECVET, European qualifications framework and the presentations of different national qualification frameworks.

Learning assessment in mobility can include both (a) professional knowledge, skills and abilities acquired and (b) cultural aspects.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

EQAVET and ECVET are important instruments that could influence the quality of VET in all its stages. For example, taking them in consideration during the designing as well as the implementation of training path. They allow to enhance the quality and to improve the involvement of the different actors in the implementation of WBL paths.

By getting this knowledge and applying them in the daily work, the Italian partners could contribute to enhance the VET Italian system performance. The training helped one Italian representative to surf the Italian Atlante of qualifications.

Most partners knew the Europass but improved their knowledge on the different services it offers.

Contribution to improved training of young students on how to draft Europass CV (by taking home also strategic information). New Europass platform to be used as a lesson (CV, cover letter) for students.

Good idea: digital templates for Memorandum of Understanding, Learning Agreements and Personal Transcripts that are user friendly and fit for use.

Consistency of how learning outcomes are described, and that this description should be in line with the ESCO terminology.

Content to be used for transferring the ECVET system and other relevant EU tools

Ways of applying EU tools at work level:

- Enhance the quality of own VET services;
- Impact on students in terms of showing them a clear goal to achieve and learning outcomes to reach. It allows students to plan how to use the skills acquired to build a career or find a job. This is useful for the students' motivation and their inspiration.

Reputation of Europass

- Most common format for CV, not only for international internships and WBL experiences but also for any working application with any EU Agency/Institution;
- Partner will disseminate new Europass platform to mobility students.

Sharing the topics of this training hotspot with potential stakeholders through the NEW VET network.

Content to be used for better adapting the existing national WBL to EU standards

ECVET system, EQAVET and the other relevant EU tools could contribute to make major changes in Italian QA arrangements for VET, including self-assessment requirements for providers.

EU good practice in QA could guide to make changes that reflect EQAVET principles.

EU quality standards require familiarity and use of Europass format.

C) Framework for quality and effective apprenticeships, mobilities and internationalisation strategy (Identifying units of learning outcomes/ preparing assessment; Measuring our distance to ECVET; Elaboration of internationalisation strategy) – **Day 3**

New facts for participants

Compare the stage of the application of the EU recommendation on effective apprenticeship between partner countries.

Exchange of practices on WBL framework.

About Learning Outcomes:

- Can be written in many different ways as tested during practical exercise;
- Concept will not always add value as expected;
- Definition of learning outcomes can directly influence the character and quality of the learning process as experienced by the individual learner;
- The rapid expansion of learning-outcomes-based qualifications frameworks in Europe talks about their importance on review and renewal of national qualifications.

About ESCO (European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations):

- Dictionary, describing, identifying and classifying professional occupations and skills relevant for the EU labour market and education and training;
- Different online platforms draw back to ESCO for services like matching jobseekers to jobs on the basis of their skills, suggesting trainings to people who want to reskill or upskill etc.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Useful for the planning department inside the organization: they could broaden their knowledge and take inspiration in a European dimension, to plan IVET and CVET paths.

Useful for planning mobilities: seeking high quality means to deeply know both the professional profile and the EU destination country.

Practical approach during Training Hotspot: Applying the ESCO terminology for VET mobilities.

Content to be used for transferring the ECVET system and other relevant EU tools

Design of WBL paths involving the companies in the process.

Spread learning outcomes culture as a brick to build a professional profile and the process to validate them. This kind of process follow the EU recommendations for a fruitful lifelong learning process.

Involvement of stakeholders through each partners' network.

Content to be used for better adapting the existing national WBL to EU standards

Concept of the “units of learning outcomes” should be transferred to local WBL framework to deliver quality and effective apprenticeships. However, VET teachers and VET tutors need to be trained on this topic before they can properly implement it.

What did participants learn from other partners and how they benefit from this knowledge?

Participants benefited in the following ways:

Improved knowledge about ...

- The National Qualification Framework of NEW VET Partners.
- the level of development of ECVET principles application on WBL activities by partner countries.

Assessment of learning outcomes.

Shared practical experience in the field of ECVET. Different approaches of applying learning outcomes (formulating, preparing a VET mobility, challenges).

Partner Lycée C. et A. Dupuy- Greta du Velay: reasoning and the structure/ templates they use for assessing learning outcomes (assessment grid).

Partner IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH: comprehend the benefits and constraints of the templates used for transnational mobility and their usage.

Show and compare ideas about organizations' internationalization strategies.

Presentations on NQF by each partner allowed a deeper knowledge on how each member states translates the EQF in their NQF.

2.3 Summary and recommendations for the 2nd Training Hotspot

By experiencing some case studies during the 2nd training hotspot, participants renewed their knowledge or acquired new facts about the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET). It holds several benefits as for example making the learners' progress transparent and therefore comparable across different national levels and types of education. Dealing with ECVET allowed both, a recap of this concept and its components and a call to action, that means giving it a greater priority in the daily work with learners, for example when planning WBL or transnational mobilities. On the other hand, the training revealed limits of ECVET and work-based learning for the daily work as they depend on the political will, the business environment, and opportunities of each country. With regards to the new Europass platform participants recapped its reputation and integration in lessons for students. Participants also pointed out the need for a culture linked to European approaches such as ECVET, the EU recommendations on WBL and ESCO, being necessary for a fruitful lifelong learning process.

For a VET teacher/trainer coaching, the following topics can be pointed out as being the most relevant according to the lessons learnt:

Core topic: Quality of VET and of work-based learning: European tools that ease transparency, comparability and therefore the transition between educational systems and allow a modularization of VET

- 1) ECVET and its benefits, necessary conditions, challenges and practical application, including the learning outcome approach.

The Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training ('ECVET') set the objective to improve the recognition, accumulation and transfer of learning outcomes, supporting mobility and lifelong learning as well as the establishment of a EU credit system in vocational education and training. During the ten years of its implementation, ECVET has widely contributed to the development of a better-quality mobility experience through the use and documentation of units of learning outcomes. The concept of ECVET points however was generally not applied and ECVET did not lead to the development of a European credit system in vocational education and training. Therefore, this Council Recommendation should include the key principles of ECVET (e.g. units of learning outcomes) related to flexibility. The ECVET tools (e.g. learning agreement and memorandum of understanding) supporting mobility of vocational learners, are to be further developed in the framework of other EU instruments such as those supported under the Erasmus+ programme. For vocational qualifications at post-secondary and tertiary level, the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System already in use may be applied. (source: COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience {SWD(2020) 123 final})

Important note: Ways to spread word about ECVET system and tools is via trainings specifically for teachers, trainers, in-company trainers; producing material related to ECVET and circle it among target groups in order to build a knowledge community able to guide students and apprentices to enhance their skills and emphasizing its easy adjustment (something that doesn't require a radical change or any disruption of status quo in VET providers).

- 2) EQF: its transfer into NQF and value for high quality WBL
- 3) Europass platform and its benefits for WBL and mobilities
- 4) Quality assurance with EQAVET

3rd NEW VET Training Hotspot – short review and lessons learnt

3.1 Short review about the 2nd NEW VET Training Hotspot

As the 3rd Training Hotspot was also affected by COVID19, the partnership hosted this event as online seminar. It was held on three days: 28th January, 4th February and 9th February 2021 and hosted by IHK-Projektgesellschaft mbH. As Moodle already proved to be a good training support, it was applied again for the 3rd training event.

The first training day was dedicated to making participants understand the different actors in work-based learning (WBL), their names and relations in different EU countries. People were invited to know more about possible cooperation paths, ie. as researched in Spain and Austria and become aware of necessary changes to ease the cooperation efforts in your country.

The second day covered good practices on effective WBL systems and learning outcomes. Participants should understand and experience the cooperation of VET schools and training companies. Moreover, the idea was to facilitate a better understanding of opportunities that collaborative training can offer and check their feasibility for the own national systems.

Finally, the last training day was practice oriented. Participants were invited to explore possible pilot activities on WBL cooperation to be implemented throughout the NEW VET project. The expected learning outcomes were defined as experiencing the cooperation of VET schools and training companies, specifically impact of COVID19, and capitalizing partners' ideas on cooperation activities with other VET providers and companies for own pilot activities.

Related documents:

Results of the project activities of “Deep in WBL”, that focused on comparing the different approaches of the partner countries and exchanging good practices 2021.: <http://www.deepindualvet.eu/>

Advice on joined vocational training (VET) by “Verbundberatung Berlin”: <http://www.verbundberatung-berlin.de/slides/2017-03-13-Projektinformation-Handout-eng-v0.1.pdf?m=1550488506&>

Results of the project activities “WBL Accelerator”: <https://www.wblaccelerator.eu/en/planning-wbl/>

Fully-featured free web application to build an electronic portfolio: <https://mahara.org/>

Compilation of possible cooperation activities collected by all partners: <https://bit.ly/3tSBFhM>

3.2 Lessons learnt from the 3rd NEW VET Training Hotspot

A) Check-in to the work-based learning (WBL) system (different actors in WBL, possible cooperation paths as researched in Spain and Austria; necessary changes to ease the cooperation efforts in your country) – **Day 1**

New facts for participants

Advanced level of WBL in Austria.

Awareness of the WBL system's organisation in France, Slovenia and Greece.

Development of WBL collaboration among different actors of Austria and Spain as examples of EU policies effect.

How WBL methodologies are crucial for young peoples' employment as well as for the enterprises.

Being reminded that WBL systems are complex in every country.

Improvement of own presentation skills trying to synthesize in one page the national WBL actors.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

New facts about the VET/WBL systems that exist in some EU member states, and when comparing them with own system, it was possible to identify the big discrepancies that exist (ie. for Greece).

Useful update on the different national situation and even more on the specific organisation of the WBL systems for a mobility provider.

Impulses to promote the collaboration between VET organisations and enterprises through all possible channels.

Awareness of very different systems and methods has been raised.

Difficulties to transfer this content in daily working activities.

Content to be used for setting up fruitful local cooperation frameworks among VET for the implementation of WBL systems

Hard work is necessary to change the minds of both parents and students.

The presentations by project partners on the connection and relations between the WBL stakeholders and how they work (or do not work) together could be very useful for the other countries' cases (for example Greece) which is still lagging in such synergies.

Spreading the WBL culture inside and outside the organisation, involving social parties, schools and enterprises to work together in order to increase the number of WBL experiences made.

Once frameworks are established, the good functioning of cooperation between VET and companies depend on personal skills: how much is the trainer/teacher valued by the company, what expertise can s/he bring to the company. Usually VET teachers/trainers are highly qualified experts in their field and their skills are needed by companies, so the quality of cooperation depends more on personal factors and on their personal involvement.

Content to be used for engaging actors having no prior experiences in benefiting from EU cooperation

Collected ideas:

- Create one-page overview showing the relations among different WBL actors at partners' national level can be easily translated and transferred to a local audience. It can help newcomer organisations in better understanding how the system works at different EU countries level;
- Stress the importance of involving enterprises;
- Despite the different cooperation shapes and levels, they should be all learner centered.
- Involve some managers or policies makers as well as school majors in mobility experiences in the partner countries;
- Engaging new actors in EU cooperation by facilitating their administrative and follow-up process.
- Provide spaces for informal exchanges with VET organisations already involved in EU cooperation to develop their awareness and to give them the will to engage in EU cooperation;
- More formal training opportunities.

B) Good practices on effective WBL systems (cooperation of VET schools and training companies; opportunities that collaborative training can offer and feasibility for own national systems) – **Day 2**

New facts for participants

For some participants context of their work is far from such models. There is such a big culture clash between companies, vet systems, teachers and trainers

Activities of German VET school were inspiring and could also be transferred in a peer group activity among heads of VET schools from other countries.

The role of an external organization to facilitate the model of joined/collaborative training between enterprises was interesting.

Training is not provided only in/by one company, but the learner needs to be at the center of work. S/he must be trained in a long-term perspective not only taking into account the short-term needs of a company that would organize the whole training.

There are several risks to avoid, in particular that the time in the company is really dedicated to training and not only to adaptation to workplace.

The organisation of training between several companies can work if it is organized under the mediation of an external independent body able to evaluate the outcomes and if an independent training center (preferably public) makes sure learners is equipped for working in different companies.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Raising the awareness of a huge diversity between some countries;

Potential of collaborative training;

Difficulties to evaluate the feasibility in a different legal framework;

Necessity to open the training duty among several actors.

Content to be used for setting up fruitful local cooperation frameworks among VET for the implementation of WBL systems

VET providers could exchange more actively good practices such as those mentioned on the training be adopted by each country, yet with practices being customized to local or regional and national level.

Small and medium-sized enterprises in all sectors of the economy benefit from the organisation offering support on collaborative training in a very concrete way and for a long time. At local level VET organisations could accompany the enterprise in this process.

Content to be used for engaging actors having no prior experiences in benefiting from EU cooperation

Ideas:

- propose virtual exchanges to local VET Schools while addressing not only teachers but also tutors and mentors and, least but not last, VET school directors

C) Explore possible pilot activities on WBL cooperation to be implemented throughout the NEW VET project (cooperation of VET schools and training companies, specifically impact of COVID19; partners' ideas on cooperation activities with other VET providers and companies for own pilot activities) – **Day 3**

New facts for participants

Best practices and success stories from the other countries;

Mahara platform – could be a great tool to build and run VET-Business partnerships;

Portfolio of cooperation activities to set up specific partnerships with other WBL actors was very useful as basis for the discussion about possible cooperation, both at local level and with transnational dimension.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

Working with peers perceived as very stimulating;

Partners facing the challenge of how to realize cooperation ideas particularly when a country's VET system doesn't invest in such practices because they are not a priority (ie. Greece);

Inspiration to start up new collaboration activities among partners or to set up new projects at national and EU level.

Content to be used for setting up fruitful local cooperation frameworks among VET for the implementation of WBL systems

Sharing and comparing ideas with participants from other partner organizations was difficult, yet full of new impulses;

It turned out to be important to involve partners’ national networks in EU experiences in order to better know WBL and its application in the other countries;

Thinking a multilevel cooperation at local or regional level and European level is not easy to think in collaboration with partners who are similar but yet different and more than all, acting in different contexts. It is important to make the fields and objectives more specific and tailor the activities to the local contexts.

Content to be used for engaging actors having no prior experiences in benefiting from EU cooperation

Engaging actors right now in Greece is difficult due to the realities shaped by the pandemic. But maybe this engagement could be a response on how to recover from the current situation.

What did participants learn from other partners and how they benefit from this knowledge?

The benefited from practical exercises because they show how difficult it is to put into practice what we already know as a theory.

The got to know concepts and ideas from other countries (especially Germany) that in our contexts are unknown (Italy and Greece).

They learned from the German and French partners about their cooperation’s roadmaps and how WBL is organized in France, Slovenia and Greece. This information will be useful whenever planning Erasmus+ mobility activities in these countries.

A lot of ideas about NA cooperation activities that could be replicated in own country as well as cooperation activities at EU level in particular mobility experiences of teachers and trainers.

Some difficulties occurred with the vocabulary used and figure out what correspond to what in each country.

WBL is sometimes understood quite general. To facilitate comparison and common future work, we should be more specific. It seems important to distinguish between WBL for initial VET, continuous VET, in which sector (because the attitude of companies varies according to the sector).

VET organizations do their best to cope with COVID conditions, using a variety of tools. It is positive because it forces trainers to enquire new facets of their fields and new ways of presenting knowledge, supporting the development of skills. But all attempts remain crutches.

Some good practices could be adopted in the individual countries, but they should be tailored on different levels.

3.3 Summary and recommendations for the 3rd Training Hotspot

The work-based learning systems (WBL) in the projects' partner countries have a different level of implementation and complexity. Hence, their comparison during the training pointed out aspects that can be pursued by every partner/country: further raising the awareness for VET and WBL; promoting the idea of WBL methodologies being crucial for young peoples' employment as well as for the training enterprises; exchanging about good practices and then tailoring those to the individual needs of sectors or target groups and finally cooperate by organizing mobility experiences. It turned out that spreading a kind of WBL culture inside and outside organizations, involving social parties, the students' ecosystem (parents, friends), schools and enterprises to work together, is crucial to increase the number of WBL experiences made.

Partner also got familiar with the role of external support, for example on collaborative training as one way to share the training responsibilities among different entities, like training enterprises or training providers. This could be conceivable for WBL, too, for example by establishing an official responsible body for WBL with counselling and (financial) supporting functions. To stress and inspire cooperation, partners elaborated a pool of possible cooperation activities for specific partnerships among WBL actors, both at national and European level.

For a VET teacher/trainer coaching, the following topics can be pointed out as being the most relevant according to the lessons learnt:

- 1) Awareness of the WBL system's organisation in other EU countries
- 2) Cooperation formats between staff at VET providers and enterprises.
- 3) How can a successful WBL culture look like? How can it be filled with life?
- 4) Learn from concrete best practices on WBL related to the specific filed of work of VET teacher/trainer, incl. also virtual exchanges.
- 5) Platforms to organize VET-Business partnerships, for example Mahara.
- 6) How to network and establish new collaborations with other VET providers, be it private training providers, other schools, enterprises etc.?

4th NEW VET Training Hotspot – short review and lessons learnt

4.1 Short review about the 4th NEW VET Training Hotspot



On 22nd April 2021 within the NEW VET project Šolski center Nova Gorica organized the 4th Training Hotspot with the topic Innovation in VET for Green and Digital Europe Design: A collaborative and engaging ecosystem where everyone can grow into a satisfied person and successful professional.

Guest speakers from Slovenia, Croatia, the Netherlands, Finland and the European Commission participated in our 4th Training Hotspot. There were different topics addressed, from The Role of the VET Providers Associations in VET Innovation and the Osnabrück Declaration, Platforms of Vocational Excellence, Public-private partnerships, Pact for Skills Initiative and Best Practices presented from different projects: PoVE Water, DIHUB, Talentjourney.

Such events are truly inspiring and extensive cooperation among different actors in creating solutions is a key feature. The participants could listen to a panel of different speakers with so many compelling topics and in the future, we hope to organize many more training hotspots.

Related documents:

- Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) bring together a wide range of local partners, such as providers of vocational education and training, employers, research centres, development agencies, and employment services (among others), to develop "skills ecosystems" that contribute to regional, economic and social development, innovation, and smart specialisation strategies. <https://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=1501>
- Vocational Excellence is fostered through Centres of Vocational Excellence Water (CoVE Water) operating at regional and/or national level embedding Vocational Education closely in the regional innovation ecosystems around Water, working with water technology businesses, chambers of industry and commerce, tertiary education, research institutions, public authorities, companies etc. <https://www.povewater.eu/centres-of-vocational-excellence/>
- Best practice: "Aiming for the Cloud. Teaching high tech in VET" Digital Innovation Hub for cloud based services : <https://dihubcloud.eu/>
- Talentjourney will establish basis to create completely new educational paradigm and environment, an open and innovative space, networking and sharing ecosystem, where everybody will be able to discover his/her potentials, develop them to knowledge excellency, professionalism and personal satisfaction. <https://talentjourney.si/about/>
- Catalyzer for public-private partnerships in vocational and professional education <https://wearekatapult.eu/>

4.2 Lessons learnt from the 4th NEW VET Training Hotspot

The topic "Innovation in VET for Green and Digital Europe" is very important in our changing world of work and European VET. Modernisation of VET systems is also warranted as the world of work and skills is changing. On-going developments such as automation and digitalisation of production and services continue to reshape the labour markets. The transitions towards a more digital and greener economy will require VET to adapt so that vocational learners acquire the skills needed for the green and digital transitions, while also reconfirming and strengthening the central role of VET in the lifelong learning continuum.

We learned in this 4th NEW VET Training Hotspot many about

- Centres of Vocational Excellence
- Public-private partnerships
- The Pact for Skills Initiative.

All these lessons are important topics of the COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience (07/2020). The idea behind our training hotspot was/is to adapt and transfer the EU policy to our national and local level in VET.

New facts for participants

- The EU initiative on Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) defines a bottom-up approach to excellence where institutions for vocational education and training (VET) are capable of rapidly adapting skills provision to evolving economic and social needs. It aims to foster transnational collaborative platforms, which would be difficult for isolated member states to establish in the absence of EU incentives, technical support, and mutual learning opportunities. The concept of vocational excellence that is proposed is characterised by a learner centred holistic approach in which Vocational Education and Training:
 - Centres of Vocational Excellence, operating at two levels:
 - National:** linking Centres of Vocational Excellence closely to local innovation ecosystems, and connecting them at European level
 - International:** establish major hubs through Platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence for vocational training, by bringing together centres that share a common interest in specific sectors or trades, or innovative approaches to tackle specific societal challenges



Adrijana Hodak, head of Intercompany training centre, Šolski center Nova Gorica (ŠCNG); Knowledge triangle

New facts for participants

- Public-private partnerships are in high demand. The European Commission is supporting the development of these kind of partnerships in VET through the Erasmus CoVE Initiative.
- The Pact for Skills is one of the flagship initiatives under the European Skills Agenda for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience, presented on 1 July 2020. The main objective of the Pact is to mobilise resources and incentivise all relevant stakeholders to take real action to upskill and reskill the workforce, by pooling efforts and setting up partnerships supporting green and digital transitions as well as local and regional growth strategies.

Content relevant for daily work and organization

- VET Excellence ensures high quality skills and competences that lead to quality employment and career-long opportunities, which meet the needs of an innovative, inclusive, and sustainable economy
- Input for new project formats; starting point for our internal discussion about possible COVE
- new ideas of investigating new lines of funding, new types of partnerships.
- increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training with the gradual establishment and development of European platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence
- understanding and being aware of EU initiatives and policies like Centres of Vocational Excellence Public-private partnerships and the Pact for Skills Initiative
- we are motivated to involve our colleagues and the management to plan the future training interventions linked to EU policies designed to replay to these challenges building a strong social Europe that is fair, inclusive and full of opportunity.

Content to be used for setting up fruitful local cooperation frameworks among VET

- Public private partnerships /CoVE as “skills ecosystem” for innovation regional development, and smart specialization
- CoVE as part of knowledge triangles, working closely with other education and training sectors, the scientific community, and business
- CoVE bringing together VET institutions, Universities, Companies, Chambers, Policy makers, Trade unions, municipalities
- EU Pact for Skills for concrete action to upskill and reskill people in Europe – to support a fair and resilient recovery and deliver on the ambitions of the green and digital transitions

Content to be used for engaging actors having no prior experiences in benefiting from EU cooperation

- Build innovative forms of public-private partnerships with the world of work, and is supported by the continuous professional development of teaching and training staff, innovative pedagogies, and internationalization strategies
- Public-Private Partnerships as innovative approaches in VET through transnational collaborative platforms (EU funding)
- Open source learning community – KATAPULT –(350+ public private partnerships in VET in NL)
- KATAPULT presentation, shows in particular way the activities run to reinforce the networking: peer to peer learning, tools, meetings, networking publications, site visits, networking events, study trips, student expeditions, pro-motor award.
- EU Pact for Skills, a shared engagement model for skills development in Europe. The Pact is the first of the flagship actions under the European Skills Agenda and is firmly anchored in the European Pillar of Social Rights. Individual companies, Regional or local partnerships, Industrial ecosystems or cross-sectoral partnerships can join the Pact for Skills
- understanding and being aware of EU initiatives and policies helps a lot on where to focus and what kind of project and activities to propose. In addition, by having these guest speakers in our discussion helps us to know where to find such partners for future collaboration.

What did participants learn from other partners and how they benefit from this knowledge?

- Public Private Partnerships / CoVEs can foster local / regional skills ecosystems
- Shared best practice experiences from CoVE "TalentJourney", "PoVE Water" and "DIHUE"
- Getting to know / new networking activities with experienced CoVE partner institutions for future collaboration. So, this was very useful for widening our professional network as well.
- VET provider need sustainable networks fostering the European work based learning system - public-private partnerships and CoVE can be a very good opportunity for networking in VET
- Participants were given an impression of how the latest EU recommendations VET are already being implemented in good practices
- New ideas of investigating new lines of funding, new types of partnerships.
- Increase the attractiveness of vocational education and training with the gradual establishment and development of European platforms of Centres of Vocational Excellence
- Understanding and being aware of new EU initiatives and policies like Centres of Vocational Excellence Public-private partnerships and the Pact for Skills Initiative
- EU Pact for Skills for concrete action to upskill and reskill people in Europe – to support a fair and resilient recovery and deliver on the ambitions of the green and digital transitions
- Good practices could be adopted in the individual countries, but they should be tailored on different levels.

4.3 Summary and recommendations for the 4th Training Hotspot

The 4th training hotspot addressed the challenges of introducing innovation in VET to contribute to the building of a Green and Digital Europe. We have learned from many good examples how the European Commission reacts to the global challenges of industry and society.

“With the policy framework for European cooperation in education and training and specific priorities for VET ending in 2020, there is an opportunity to define a new and more ambitious Union policy on VET that responds to the challenges described above.

The overall objective should be to modernise the EU’s VET policy to meet the large upskilling and reskilling needs driven by the common ambition to be fit for the challenges of the 21st century, in particular to support the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to building a more sustainable, fair and resilient European Union.”

Source: COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.



Guest speakers from Slovenia, Croatia, the Netherlands, Finland and the European Commission participated in our 4th Training Hotspot.

There were different topics addressed, from The Role of the VET Providers Associations in VET Innovation and the Osnabrück Declaration, Platforms of Vocational

Excellence, Public-private partnerships, Pact for Skills Initiative and Best Practices presented from different projects: PoVE Water, DIHUB, TalentJourney.

This training once demonstrated the importance of cooperation between all important actors in vocational education and training at regional, national and European level. Cooperation between stakeholders from business, government and society is the basis for successful VET. These partnerships should contribute to the involvement of business and social partners in the design and delivery of VET and to ensure a strong work-based learning element in VET.

This 4th training hotspot addressed the core topic from NEW VET “Network fostering the European Work-based learning system for VET providers”. Our project’s aim is to encourage the creation of transnational and national VET providers’ networks and partnerships to build cross-border cooperation for VET quality and attractiveness.

For a VET teacher/trainer coaching, the following topics can be pointed out as being the most relevant according to the lessons learnt:

- 7) Awareness about Privat-Public-Partnerships (CoVE) and the EU Pact for Skills Initiative
- 8) Cooperation formats between staff at VET providers and enterprises.
- 9) How can a successful VET-business partnership work?!
- 10) Learn from concrete best practices on CoVE related to the specific field of work of VET teacher/trainer, incl. also virtual exchanges.
- 11) Platforms to organize VET-Business partnerships, for example CoVE.
- 12) EU programmes/initiatives for VET-business-partnerships/networks and how to establish new collaborations with other VET providers / stakeholder

5th NEW VET Training Hotspot – short review and lessons learnt

5.1 Short review about the 5th NEW VET Training Hotspot



On the 6th of July 2021, the 5th NEW VET Hotspot Training was organized by ReadLab (Greece). Due to the Covid restrictions and with the pandemic still ongoing, the event was held online via the Zoom platform. (20 participants) The title of this Hotspot Training was **“A new Micro-credential era in VET? Skills, Qualifications Framework and EU Approaches”**.

This Hotspot Training brought together a pool of EU professionals, professors and experts in the sector of Vocation Education and Training and micro-credential.

After the welcoming speech from ReadLab’s Director and Co-founder, Ms Vassiliki Chatzipetrou, the event started with the presentation of Mr William O’Keeffe (Policy Officer, Vocational Education & Training DG Employment, Social Affairs and Inclusion European Commission) and with his presentation made NEW VET partners more familiar with the EU approach to micro-credentials.

Later on, Prof. Achilles Kameas (Hellenic Open University & ALL DIGITAL) discussed the opportunities in the digital competencies landscape.

The first session was closed by Ms Anastasia Pouliaou (Expert in qualifications and learning outcomes, Department for VET Systems and Institutions, Cedefop) and through her thought-provoking presentation, she elaborated on the micro-credentials for labour market education and training.

The second session opened with Mr Anatolii Garmash (Senior Human Capital Development Expert in Qualification Systems European Training Foundation) who provided a deeper and thorough understanding of micro-credentials.

Mr Andre Schlipp (Managing Director at The Accreditation, Certification and Quality Assurance Institute (ACQUIN)) made a presentation focused on micro-credentials and quality assurance.

The event concluded with the intervention of Ms Giuseppina Tucci (Secretary-General of the Lifelong Learning Platform) who offered a lifelong learning perspective both on micro-credentials context and to the general discussion of the event.

Related documents:

- CEDEFOP- [Micro-credentials for labour market education and training](#)
To address the limited evidence that exists on the general labour market value attached to micro-credentials, Cedefop has launched a new study on the role of micro-credentials in facilitating learning for employment, as part of its future of VET agenda.
- CEDEFOP - [Microcredentials: are they here to stay?](#)
edefop has launched a new study on the role of micro credentials in upskilling or reskilling in a fast-changing work environment. The coronavirus pandemic has accelerated the trend of digitalisation of labour markets and the automation of production systems. Recognising the resulting higher demand for digital and related skills, the 2020 EU skills agenda focuses on targeted policies that can facilitate the upskilling and reskilling of EU citizens.
- [A European approach to micro-credentials](#) - will help to open up learning opportunities to citizens and strengthen the role of higher education and vocational education and training institutions in lifelong learning. [Micro-credentials consultation group: recommendations](#)
- [Micro-credentials](#) were announced in the European Skills Agenda, published on 1 July 2020, as one of its 12 flagship actions to support the quality, transparency and uptake of micro-credentials across the EU.
- ETF Europe: [Micro-credentials – a new opportunity for lifelong-learning?](#)
Initial findings from CEDEFOP on Micro credentials for TVET and labour market learning

5.2 Lessons learnt from the 5th NEW VET Training Hotspot

We learned the concept of ECVET points was generally not applied and ECVET did not lead to the development of a European credit system in VET. Based on the feedback received during the stakeholder consultation and the experience gained with the ECVET implementation over the last 10 years, the present proposal incorporates and reinforces some elements of the 2009 ECVET Recommendation and abandons others that do not bring an added value or respond to a real need in the VET systems.

The 2009 ECVET Recommendation will be repealed and the ECVET provisions and principles will be taken forward mainstreamed into other EU policy instruments. In particular, The principle that qualifications are made of units of learning outcomes is integrated and reinforced in the proposal (modularisation). This is seen as a pre-requisite to increase flexibility of the VET programmes and facilitate validation as means to boost the take-up of up- and reskilling.

We learnt that **Modularisation** – breaking vocational qualifications into smaller parts of learning outcomes – is the “new” way to flexibly update the learning content and to customise it to the needs of individuals. Validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning will facilitate up- and reskilling, leading not only to full qualifications, but to **micro-credentials or partial qualifications**. (EU Council Recommendation 2020)

New facts for participants

- Modularisation in VET breaking vocational qualifications into smaller parts of learning outcomes in as micro-credentials – (?) the new ECVET without points (?)
- A micro-credential is a qualification evidencing learning outcomes acquired through a short, transparently assessed course or module. Micro-credentials may be completed on-site, online or in a blended format. The flexible nature of these qualifications allows learning opportunities to be opened up to citizens, including those in full-time employment. This makes micro-credentials a highly flexible, inclusive form of learning allowing the targeted acquisition of skills and competences.
- Validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning will facilitate up- and reskilling, leading not only to full qualifications, but to micro-credentials or partial qualifications. It also helps to bridge between different fields, which is necessary for the developing area of green and sustainable economy
- A micro-credential is a proof of the learning outcomes that a learner has acquired following a short, transparently assessed learning experience. They are awarded upon the completion of short stand-alone courses (or modules) done on-site or online (or in a blended format).”
- Micro credentials and digital credentials are highly flexible and innovative
- Recipients of European Digital Credentials for Learning can automatically verify information such as the identity of the awarding body or the quality assurance of a qualification. European Digital Credentials for Learning have authenticity across the EU and are equivalent to paper-based credentials containing the same information

Content relevant for daily work and organization

- Micro-credentials are highly flexible and can use to upskill or reskill to meet labour market needs or to develop professionally after starting work.
- Micro-credentials as units of “learning outcome” – (EC)VET without numeric credit points
- flexible nature of these qualifications allows new learning opportunities (online/blended format)

Content to be used for setting up fruitful local cooperation frameworks among VET

- Micro-credentials reflect individual outcome in formal / non / informal learning among all VET actions
- Modularization with micro-credentials support transition to new jobs with new skills requirements, address skills gap and motivate learners in VET
- Micro-credentials as innovative approach in transnational mobilities
- Potential of micro credentials outside formal VET, notably companies and labour market sectors
- Micro credentials supporting “ageneutral” systems for VET, strengthening the focus of up-skilling and re-skilling
- Micro credentials can be aggregated towards qualifications in the local cooperation frameworks
-

Content to be used for engaging actors having no prior experiences in benefiting from EU cooperation

- Micro-credentials are working successful in a EU cooperation or labour market
- MC are the result of assessment of individual’s knowledge, skills and competences in formal, informal and non-formal education
- Portability of MC on national and international level

What did participants learn from other partners and how they benefit from this knowledge?

- Micro-credentials a highly flexible, inclusive form of learning allowing the targeted acquisition of skills and competences
- Micro-credentials can be particularly useful for people want to:
 - build on their knowledge without completing a full higher education programme
 - upskill or reskill to meet labour market needs or to develop professionally after starting work. (<https://ec.europa.eu/>)
- Key characteristics of micro credentials:
 - broadly understood as statements acknowledge (based on documentation and/or assessment) that a person has acquired learning outcomes and/or competences related to a limited and specific area
 - delivered in a digital form
 - credentials may be part of or adding to formal qualifications, they may however also be independent to these.
- Value and understanding of micro-credentials not always clear
- Challenges on quality, recognition, transparency and portability of micro-credentials between and within countries, between sectors, from one job to another
- Micro-credentials are owned by the learner, can be shared, are portable and might be combined into larger credentials or qualification

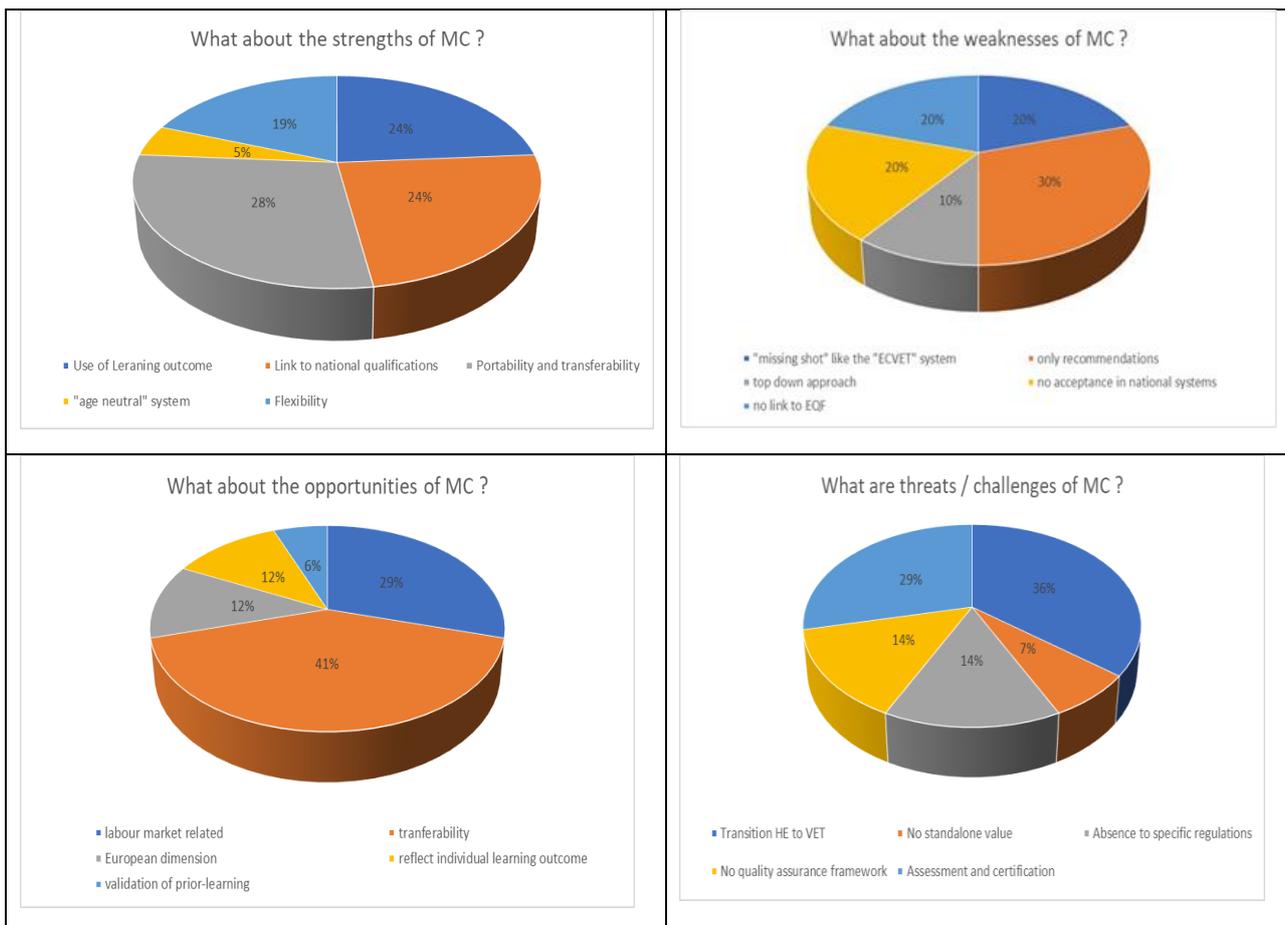
5.3 Summary and recommendations for the 5th Training Hotspot

A growing number of people need to update their knowledge, skills and competences (green and digital transitions, COVID-19 recovery) that’s really a challenge for our VET policy. Culture change is needed in education systems. We must improve the access to all types of learners to embrace a LLL approach. With a focus on:

- Flexible learning pathways,
- Learner centered approach
- Accessibility and inclusion are the core of learning

Validation of learning outcomes acquired in non-formal and informal learning will facilitate up- and reskilling, leading not only to full qualifications, but to micro-credentials or partial qualifications. It also helps to bridge between different fields, which is necessary for the developing area of green and sustainable economy.

In our survey among participants from the 5th training hotspot , we ask about the strength-weaknesses-opportunities-threats of the micro-credentials:



Our final question in the survey was “Would you be interested in working on a joint EU project on micro-credentials” - 100 % of our participants answered with “YES”. It’s a very positive feedback to the new “COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION’s on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience.” shows the relevance of the topic.

“The main challenges in recognizing Micro-Credentials are not on a technological and practical level, but the real challenge is more cultural and structural, at government (national and international, or at least European) regulator’s level. Actually, the main focus is on higher, academic education, this overlooks the potential role of MC in and for vocational education and training. It overlooks also the potential role of MC outside formal VET, notably companies and labour market sectors.” (CEDEFOP 2020)

In spring 2020, the Commission established an ad-hoc consultation group about Micro-credentials formed of experts in higher education, including practitioners, members of quality assurance agencies and guest speakers from across Europe. These outputs (3 work assignments) will feed into wider consultations covering all sectors of education and training contributing to the preparation of a Council Recommendation on micro-credentials for lifelong learning and employability by the end of 2021.

For a VET teacher/trainer coaching, the following topics can be pointed out as being the most relevant according to the lessons learnt:

1. Awareness about micro-credential as highly flexible, inclusive form of learning allowing the targeted acquisition of skills and competences
2. Micro-credential are a qualification evidencing learning outcomes acquired through a short, transparently assessed course or module
3. The flexible nature of these qualifications allow learning opportunities to be opened up to citizens, including those in full-time employment.
4. Micro credentials recognize learning outcomes achieved outside formal education
5. Micro credentials address skills gap, facilitate formalization of new skills, and support transition to new jobs with new skills requirements

Epilogue

The Hot Spot Trainings were very instructive for all participating European partners and VET providers and were all about our project mission/vision:

"Network Fostering the European Work-based Learning System for VET Providers".

New European networks were established and a lot of knowledge about the topic of WBL in Europe was discussed, exchanged, and learnt. Nevertheless, the situation at the first Hot Spot Training in Jan 2020 was completely different than at the end of the Project in 2022....

The COVID-19 pandemic has seriously disrupted standard education and training activities, including VET across Europe. Despite the fact that Member States have quickly moved towards digital learning solutions, the containment measures and ensuing crisis have put the resilience of the system to the test.

The situation in VET was further aggravated by the fact that practical training – in form of work-based learning and apprenticeships – has been suspended in most sectors. Also, on our NEWVET project, COVID-19 had a massive impact on the planned national face-to-face workshops as well as on the topic of WBL. Due to the covid-19 pandemic the 2nd,3rd,4th and 5th training hotspots were organised as online training. But virtual meetings simply cannot replace exchange and encounters on site.

At the same time, a targeted EU consultation was launched in 2017 with a view to sustainable vocational education and training against the background of new trends and challenges (digitization, automation, robotics, artificial intelligence, green and sustainable economy, climate change, globalization, new business models, new forms of work organization, demographic developments, ageing, migration). These found their official conclusion in 2020 in the form of:

“COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on vocational education and training (VET) for sustainable competitiveness, social fairness and resilience. “(2020)

This dynamic development was immediately considered in our training activities. At the second training, we discussed still the importance of ECVET and in the end of 2020 the EU repealed the Credit points.

In 2021, we aligned our training hotspots directly with this new EU policy:

- HotSpot 4: “How to modernise VET by supporting the transitions to a green and digital economy – innovation in VET for Green and Digital Europe “
- HotSpot 5: A new Micro credential era in VET?
Skills, Qualifications Framework and EU Approaches

This rapid adaptation of our training content enabled us to discuss the new "NEWVET" EU policy (Council Recommendations) very constructively with our European partners. The overall objective should be to modernise the EU's VET policy to meet the large upskilling and reskilling needs driven by the common ambition to be fit for the challenges of the 21st century, in particular to support the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic and contribute to building a more sustainable, fair and resilient European Union.

As a highlight of this new orientation in VET, we would like to name the following topics:

- Modernising the Union policy on VET by supporting the transitions to a green and digital economy in times of demographic change, as well as upward convergence of national VET systems
- Underlining the crucial role VET systems play for the young people entering the labour market
- Granting VET providers a level of autonomy to allow them to react quickly to skills challenges, offer fast reskilling programmes and work in close partnerships with employers from both public and private sectors;
- Modularising VET programmes and expanding them to higher levels of qualifications and microcredentials;

Based on these recommendations, the first innovative ideas were discussed in our partnership, which must be implemented in concrete sustainable VET projects and cooperations. In addition to the exchange and transfer of European vocational policy to a national context, a core idea of the project was the networking of European education service providers on the subject of WBL.

Through the joint examination of the European goals and the transfer to the national partner systems, differences became clear as well as many similarities. These include topics of learning outcome orientation; Quality assurance in WBL; Validation; Recognition and the transitions to a green and digital economy (Innovation in VET for Green and Digital Europe). This strengthened our idea of consolidating our partner network in the long term and expanding it with new VET partners.

The NEWVET partnerships has developed a joint internationalization strategy in VET and is willing to fulfill it with concrete action in the long term. The development of an internationalisation strategy at providers' level, fostering the mobility of leaders, staff and VET learners as well as transnational cooperation in WBL is a main challenge and great opportunity for the VET sector in Europe.