

+ **APL**: More flexible VET systems based on the assessment of prior learning

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Author: Bulgarian Development Agency

Roundtable Summary Report

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1. Introduction

The following report has been prepared in the framework of WP6 “Exploitation and valorization of results” of the project +APL. The report aims to present a summary of the conclusions reached at the roundtable discussions held in the period between March and September 2014 in Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria with the aim to promote and find the most appropriate and effective solutions for ensuring sustainability of the +APL project outcomes and more specifically:

1. Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) methodology and tools as an innovative methodology for validation of prior learning; and
2. ECVET curriculum for APL professional developed within the +APL project;

2. Summary of the conclusions reached at the national roundtable discussions

2.1. Useful aspects of RVCC methodology and ECVET Curricula for APL professional in regard to the national context

During the roundtables organized in Poland, Germany, Italy, Spain and Bulgaria the partners discussed the main outputs of the +APL project with national and European VET experts and stakeholders. They focused their attention on the RVCC methodology, as an APL methodology successfully implemented in Portugal, and the ECVET curricula for APL professional developed within the project. The roundtable participants outlined main useful aspects of the products related to each specific national context.

In Poland and Bulgaria, where the process of implementation of national APL systems is in process, the RVCC methodology is regarded as a useful instrument that could support the national actions aimed to increase the level of professional qualification. It is stated as a support measure for those who have not completed their education and training in the frames of the formal and non-formal educational and training systems. The ECVET curriculum for APL professional is considered a useful basis and contribution to the development of national APL Curricula.



In Spain, Italy and Germany where APL systems have already been implemented the useful aspects of RVCC methodology and tools were recognized by the roundtable participants in regard to different elements specific to the national context. In Spain the RVCC methodology has high potential for transferability regarding the APL training contents. In Italy, the ECVET curriculum developed for APL professional fits with the validation process expected to be adopted (but not yet operative) in the Regional System of Competences of Tuscany. In Germany, the Portuguese RVCC system was appreciated regarding the comprehensiveness of the entire process including 5 phases: Guidance; Identification of competences; Documentation of competences; Assessment; Certification, which when completed will lead to a full certification of competences.

2.2. Aspects related to the adaptation in the national context and recommendations by the participants

During the roundtable discussions the participants considered and highlighted the main aspects related with the adaption and transfer of the APL products to each specific national context. They had the opportunity to review the materials in order to understand the RVCC process and to get acquainted with ECVET curriculum for APL professional.

In Poland, Germany and Bulgaria the adaption and implementation of the APL products was considered as challenging due to the existing legislation and standards and relevantly slow process of legal adaptation. In Bulgaria, where the implementation process of a validation of prior learning system is still under way, it was highlighted the importance of defining a competent body that will be responsible for the RVCC process.

Another issue raised at the roundtable discussions in Italy, Germany and Bulgaria was related to the funding needed in order to implement and ensure the operation of the national systems for validation of prior learning. In Germany, the participants mentioned the lack of funding possibilities for the RVCC, due to the fact that the process of validation of non-formal and informal competences is still in progress. The legislative procedures are planned to be finalised by 2018 which will enable to validate non-formal and informal competences and provide the candidates with a part or full qualification.



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In Italy, the participants emphasized the need of additional resources for the implementation of the RVCC system necessary to ensure the trail/experimentation in the validation process. Verification of the knowledge, skills and competences through practical demonstrations was considered as a very important aspect of the validation procedure.

On the basis of the main conclusions reached during the national discussions, the participants provided recommendations aimed to facilitate the process of adaption and implementation of the APL materials in each national context.

In Poland, it was recommended to prepare a resolution and send it in the form of a petition to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy. In Bulgaria, the VET experts, who participated in the roundtable, agreed that the National Agency for Vocational Education and Training should be the responsible authority for the administration of the RVCC and for this reason a meeting should be organized in order to present the APL products.

In Spain, the participants suggested that the process of further adaptation of the APL products should continue though testing the materials in different contexts. In Germany, the participants recommended that they RVCC system should be aimed in order to support unemployed and/ or people at risk of being unemployed, and more specifically people who lack formal qualifications or who have training exams or professional education which are not exploitable.

2.3. Useful aspects of the RVCC methodology and tools and ECVET curricula for APL Professionals related to the long-term challenges for EU labour market

At the roundtable, organised in Poland, the participants made reference to the EC "Action Plan for Entrepreneurship 2020" which calls for a radical transformation of the European business culture in a completely new approach to entrepreneurship, which would include more than ever the contribution of entrepreneurs in the prosperity of citizens and European economy. Polish participants also focused their



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attention on the need to transform the officially not recognised knowledge as well as informal and non-formal competences into explicit knowledge and confirmed competences into qualifications.

The Bulgarian participants at the national roundtable emphasized that the RVCC methodology and tools and ECVET curricula are very important in the context of the current economic situation as well as in the pursuit of economic and social goals at European level. They consider the APL products as helpful in regard to people who are in threat of losing their jobs due to the lack of documents verifying their competences, and for unemployed people willing to return to the labour market. They also considered the APL products are also relevant to the requirement of the new European labour market which needs more and more qualified people.

Roundtable participants in Italy focused their attention on important aspects regarding the long-term challenges in the RVCC process implementation. They highlighted the need to involve regional institutions and employment centres in the process as well as experts from each sector as the validation, in their opinion, must be implemented at national level. The participants also noted that the process must be aimed at concrete results.

In Spain the participants at the national roundtable discussed whether the adaptation of the RVCC manual and tools should be according to the context of Andalusia, where the +APL project partner is located, or it should be provided to the policy makers and stakeholders of the 17 Spanish regional governments in order to raise awareness and provide the tools of RVCC system, that has already proved their efficiency.

The German participants considered +APL tools as a good opportunity for 2018 challenges, related to the final implementation of national validation system, since they can be helpful to overcome some of the disadvantages and difficulties of the current German validation procedures and instruments.



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2.4. Implementation of the +APL materials

The participants in all national roundtables received RVCC manual and tools translated in the national language in order to facilitate their dissemination, adaptation and implementation at the national context. They expressed their intention to support further dissemination and exploitation at national level of the APL materials: RVCC methodology and tools as well as ECVET curricula for APL professionals.

More specifically, in Poland the participant confirmed their intention to prepare and sent a resolution to the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy in order to support the process of implementation of a system for validation of prior learning at national level. In Bulgaria the participants confirmed that they will use all their contacts in VET sector in order to promote and popularize the different aspects of the RVCC. In Italy the roundtable participants considered the APL process as a chance for integration of their national framework and for speeding up the recognition of competences.

At the Spanish roundtable the participants expressed their interest to receive further information about APL progress because of its relevance to the specific context in Andalusia. They also expressed their willingness to disseminate the APL materials within the Official Chamber of Commerce of Granada where they work.

In Germany it was highlighted that the common interest is at the moment is to finalise the implementation of the national system for validation of prior learning. The participants proposed to initiate a series of expert roundtables in order to continue the process of cooperation.



3. Conclusions

In general, all participants from the 5 partners' countries agreed on the usefulness, necessity and importance of the RVCC methodology and tools and ECVET curricula for APL professionals. They also agreed that the +APL products are of high quality and are a very valuable base for further development and implementation in various organizations being actors at the market of certification for competences acquired in informal and non-formal way as well as for accreditation of APL professionals.

However, in the roundtable discussions participants identified some challenges and difficulties that need to be overcome for the purposes of successful adaptation and implementation of RVCC methodology and ECVET curricula, as for example the need of legislative changes and additional funding.

All participants in the roundtable meetings in Spain, Bulgaria, Poland, Germany and Italy declared their interest and willingness to be further involved in the process of implementation of the APL materials, and in dissemination of RVCC methodology and tools as well as ECVET curricula for APL professionals.

