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"INTERPRETING OUR EUROPEAN HERITAGE"

ECVET for transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualification in European Tourism Sector

WP 8 – Dissemination and exploitation of project results

R30_INFOPACK 7_ Pilot test on the enforcement of the MoU ECVET for the new European common sectoral professional qualification "European Heritage Interpreter"

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1. Premise: aims, activities and products of the "Interpreting our European Heritage" WP6 pilot test

The aim of the workpackage 6 of the "Interpreting our European Heritage" project was to start the process to put in practice the Memorandum of Understanding- MoU ECVET- for the European qualifications in the tourism sector in order to evaluate its efficacy, correspondence to users' requirements and compliance with national/regional sectoral VET systems. Through the Memorandum of Understanding is established the European correspondence for the assessment, transfer, and accumulation processes of learning outcomes achieved in formal, informal and non formal contexts by professional figures involved in the heritage interpretation activities in tourism, particularly for the professional figures operating as **Interpretive Guide and Interpretive Host.**

The MoU has been officially signed by project partners and associated organisations during the implementation of the project.

The experimentation, starting from the MoU definition and signature (ECVET 1st step) has begun the implementation of the whole ECVET process:

- Learning Agreements ECVET: definition and signature (by professionals and trainees interested to recognition of concerned professional qualifications, by related enterprises and by concerned VET providers) of the individual Learning Agreements ECVET describing, in compliance with the MoU, the training process in formal, informal and non formal contexts, and the related ECVET credits to be obtained to gain the qualification (ECVET 2nd step);
- ECVET Credits Awarding: awarding to the involved professionals and trainees, by the concerned VET providers at the end of the official training process, of the ECVET credits related to verified learning outcomes, utilising Europass Certificate Supplement (ECVET 3rd step);
- To start the process of transfer, validation and accumulation of the awarded ECVET credits in the sectoral and territorial VET systems involved in the MoU, in compliance with national and regional rules on certification ways and procedures, formal, non-formal and informal learning validation, qualification bodies (ECVET 4th step).

These experimentation has involved 138 workers and trainees, in all participating countries (50 in Spain, 17 in Italy, 19 in Hungary, 12 in Belgium, 16 in Austria, 15 in Slovenia and 9 in Germany), whom have also signed the Learning Agreement ECVET according to the national version.

The whole ECVET pilot test on the enforcement at national/regional level of the MoU ECVET for the European qualifications in the tourism sector "Interpretive Guide" and "Interpretive Host" realised within workpackage 6 of the "Interpreting our European Heritage" project is described by this report: beyond a description of the above mentioned common models, this final release on the ECVET pilot test is articulated in several parts, each one specific for every participating country.

2. The common tools for the "Interpreting our European Heritage" WP 6 pilot test activities

Model for Learning Agreements ECVET

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) is a European instrument to support lifelong learning, the mobility of European learners and the flexibility of learning pathways to achieve qualifications.

So, the European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) has designed a common European model for Learning Agreement ECVET. This common European model has been designed to support the geographical mobility and defined by the partners as a prototype to be concretely utilised during the pilot test in each participating country for the enforcement at territorial level of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU ECVET for the European qualifications in the tourism sector (Interpretive Guide and Interpretive Host), at the aim of the definition and signature of the individual agreements among the VET workers and trainees involved in the heritage interpretation activities in the tourism sector interested to start the recognition of learning outcomes and professional qualifications established by the MoU, the concerned VET providers and, when requested by national/regional rules on VET, the public institutions having competence on putting in transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications, to describe and formalise, in compliance with the MoU and national/regional rules on transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications in force in

territories concerned by pilot test, the learning process in formal, informal and non formal contexts, and the related ECVET credits to be obtained to gain the professional qualification.

The common European Model for Learning Agreements ECVET defined and applied by "Interpreting our European Heritage" is composed by a common European part relating to the MoU, and by different territorial integrating parts relating to legislation on professional qualification applicable in these territories.

All the territorial versions defined and utilised within the pilot test are downloadable in the public open area of the project website (http://www.interpretingeuropeanheritage.com/)

The common European model for ECVET credits awarding

The common European Model for ECVET Credits Awarding has been defined by the partners as a prototype to be concretely utilised at the end of processes and procedures aimed to start the process to put in transparency and recognise the learning outcomes achieved in formal, informal and non formal contexts by VET workers and trainees operating in the tourism sector interested to gain the ECVET credits and professional qualifications established at European level by the MoU.

Like the common European Model for Learning Agreements ECVET (and for the same reasons), also the ECVET Credits Awarding model contains common European parts, relating to the description of the new European qualifications in the tourism sector established by the MoU, and also different territorial integrating parts for each territory engaged.

All the territorial versions defined and utilised within the pilot test are downloadable in the public open area of the project website (http://www.interpretingeuropeanheritage.com/)

3. The "Interpreting our European Heritage" WP6 pilot test in the participating countries

The pilot test in Spain

In Spain, the pilot test will be done with proffesionals from all the country with the support of the two Spanish associated partners: CENEAM and Ayuntamiento de Segovia. Also, both the Spanish Association for Heritage Interpretation and the Madrid Region's professional tourist guides have been involved in this stage of the project.

The Spanish partner has sustained:

- firstly, the Spanish partner has started a dialogue for the integration of the competences from the two professional figures established by the MoU according to the INCUAL (National Institute of Qualifications) criteria, in order to be incorporated into the Spanish National System for Professional Qualifications;

- secondly, in parallel, the mobilisation at regional level of VET providers having competence, focused and specialized on heritage interpretation in tourism in compliance with territorial rules on professional qualification, to activate and sustain the learning outcomes and qualifications recognition processes for interested Spanish workers and trainees. This procedure has been a little complicated and too much bureaucratic. The Spanish partner has finally received a support from the Centro Español de Nuevas Profesiones- CENP signatory of the MoU ECET. The CENP and Koan are studying other forms to collaborate and apply the results of the project till the recognition of INCUAL. So, it will be possible to organize a training in a no-formal context based on the qualifications designed.
- finally and especially, the concrete activation for 50 Spanish workers involved in heritage interpretation activities in the tourism sector interested to gain the ECVET credits and professional qualifications established at European level by the MoU,(in particular, starting from the signature of the Learning Agreements ECVET) in compliance with the Spanish national rules on professional qualification. In this sense, it will be necessary to wait the recognition of INCUAL of both professional qualifications to put in transparency and recognise the learning outcomes. More than 250 contacts were done in order to get the

signature of the Learning Agreement in Spain. The participants of the analysis phase corresponding to the WP2 (28 participants) also involved in the pilot test with a good answer.

The Spanish partner has found two main difficulties during the pilot test phase:

- The professionals do not understand the aim of the project and why a new qualifications are necessaries. Mainly, the tourist guides consider that they have the official title of guide and they do not need more diplomas to justify their competences and skills.
- To get the involvement of VET providers. The reason exposed is that the qualifications have not been recognized by the INCUAL and as yet they have not evidence that these qualifications are demanded by the tourism sector.

The pilot test in Italy

In Italy, the Work Package 6 of the project (pilot test on the enforcement of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU ECVET defined and signed during the WP 5), has been applied in the region Umbria - in which are sited the Italian partners of the project - also due to the exclusive competence in professional qualification matter attributed to the Regions by the Italian Constitution (art. 117), giving to each Italian Region the legislative competence for establishing the qualification, training and certification standards to be applied in the regional territory.

The main activities sustained by the Italian consortium partners within the pilot test on enforcement in Italy of the Memorandum of Understanding - MoU ECVET defined and formalised at transnational level by the LdV ToI INTERPRETING OUR EUROPEAN HERITAGE project, were:

- Firstly, the adaptation of the competence standards for the qualifications of Interpreting Guide and Interpretive Host - described and formalised by the MoU - at the aim of the formal insertion of them within the regional qualification framework of the the Umbria Region (*Repertorio dei Profili Professionali della Regione Umbria*), to allow the recognition of concerned learning outcomes, qualification and related ECVET credits, in compliance with applicable Italian national law (namely, the Legislative Decree 13 of 16 January 2013)

and regional regulations on professional qualification, and particularly, in Umbria Region, the Umbrian DGR 51/2010 *Direttiva sul sistema regionale degli standard professionali, formativi, di certificazione e di attestazione* (Directive on the professional, training, certification and statement standards regional system) and its later modifications and integrations. At the aim of the adaptation/insertion of the competence standards for the qualifications of Interpreting Guide and Interpretive Host within the Umbrian regional qualification framework (and, in this way, also within the Italian NQF), the Italian consortium partners have implemented the dialogue process with the competent Umbrian regional offices, also producing and presenting specific documentation to the competent Education, University and Research Service of the Umbria Region, in particular a technical proposal for the official insertion of the new professional standards within the Umbrian RQF *Repertorio dei Profili Professionali della Regione Umbria*. The proposal articulates and integrates, following the regional rules on professional standards, all the learning outcomes defined by the MoU. Furthermore, the same partners have started with the competent regional service also the dialogue process aimed to the definition of a coherent training standard (*Standard di Percorso Formativo*) to be inserted in the official Umbrian training standards repertory (*Repertorio degli Standard di Percorso Formativo*).

- Secondly and especially, the concrete activation, for 17 Umbrian people on the labour market interested to the recognition of the professional qualification Interpreting Guide and Interpretive Host, of the processes and formal procedures, starting from the signature of the Learning Agreements ECVET, aimed to put in transparency and recognise the already acquired learning outcomes and to attribute training credits for expressly designed flexible VET programmes to get the qualification, in compliance with the MoU contents and enforceable rules on professional qualification. More in particular, is to be stressed that these 17 Learning Agreements signed in the Italian Umbria region are focused on the agreement of the signing VET provider and individual about an intervention program – by means of a professional Credit Tutor in application of the Umbrian DGR 1429/2007, “Credits Directive” – aimed to put in transparency and to recognise the already acquired learning outcomes, and to attribute, in coherence with the above mentioned MoU ECVET and with territorial enforceable rules on professional qualification, the related training credits and ECVET credits for the professional qualification concerned by the MoU ECVET:

at the end of this individual intervention program for putting in transparency and recognising the already acquired learning outcomes, the Credit Tutor will produce an analytical description of the verified learning outcomes, in qualitative and quantitative terms (units and units parts, and associated ECVET credits), also at the aim of the definition of the individual learning programme to get the qualification, in coherence with the above mentioned MoU ECVET and with the provisions of *Regione Umbria* "Credits Directive". At the concrete aim of formal starting of the individual intervention program, the Learning Agreements ECVET signed in the Italian Umbria region includes also the "*Richiesta di riconoscimento dei crediti formativi*" (Training credits recognition request), as foreseen by the Umbrian "Credits Directive".

The pilot test in Hungary

The characteristics of the processes of putting in transparency/recognition of learning outcomes, even if based on the same Memorandum of Understanding - MoU, are different in each participant country, in compliance with national and/or regional laws in VET matter.

Thus, the partners have worked on the common model for the ECVET Learning Agreement and ECVET Credits Awarding also considering the necessity of their adaptation to each territorial context (and rules), defining it with a "common part", strictly relating to the MoU and valid for every application territory, and with a territorial part adapted to each specific national and/or regional legislation context, with significant differences.

Tradenet Global was working on the Hungarian templates of Learning Agreement and ECVET Credits Awarding documents in cooperation with ECVET experts. Firstly, we collected the Hungarian laws in for recognition and validation of learning outcomes.

The Hungarian law of adult education in force provides for measurement and recognition of prior knowledge / learning as follows: (*2013. évi LXXVII. törvény a felnőttképzésről, 2011. évi CLXXXVII. törvény a szakképzésről*):

> 2. § "8. measurement of prior knowledge / learning: measurement if the applicant is able to achieve the requirements of a modul according to the his / her studies officially not certified or his / her practical experiences. If the requirements are achieved suitably by the

applicant he / she has to be absolved from participation at the relevant modul of the qualification."

11. § (1) g) "the measurement of prior knowledge / learning is mandatory in the case of funded training (1. § (2) article a) és c) points), in the case of training defined in 1. § (2) article b) and d) points has to be realized according to the requirements of grant agreement related to the training, in other cases has to be provided compliance with applicant's request."

1. § (2) "For the purposes of this law adult education means the education activities outside of school system – defined in (1) article a) and b) point - for natural persons provided by entities defined in (1) article c) point (except for (5)–(6) articles):

a) professional training to achieve VET qualification (OKJ) recognized by Hungarian National VET Catalog,

b) other funded professional training (not included in a) point),

c) general language training and other funded language training,

d) other funded training (not included a)–c) points)."

1. § (1) "This law applies to

a) adult person participating in adult education or other services supplementing adult education,

b) person participating in adult education in addition to completion of compulsory education (not included in a) point),

c) legal entities, companies, entrepreneurs, public institutions providing adult education."

28. § (2) „The minister is hereby authorized … to determine

a) the rules to regulate the measurement and recognition of competences input, the measurement and assessment of prior knowledge / learning, the recognition

and validation of prior knowledge / learning into the qualification and to define the training modules which the measurement process concern to."[1]

At this stage, there are not any further rules in Hungary for the measurement and recognition of competences input, the measurement and assessment of prior knowledge / learning, the recognition and validation of prior knowledge / learning, the methods and documents of measurement, assessment and recognition are determined by the education provider organisation. During the pilot test the sample template forms for carrying out the process were defined.

During the realization of pilot testing 19 involved people signed the Learning Agreement in Hungary.(See annex 1)

The pilot test in Belgium

Diesis had difficulties regarding the activation of the ECVET process for the new common European qualification in tourism sector "European Heritage Interpreter" and the enforcement of the Memorandum of Understanding, MoU ECVET in Belgium.

Indeed, as the country includes and recognized 3 different languages (French, Flemish and German) as official, the information was not always easy to find, to communicate and to coordinate.

Regarding the competences, the project includes 3 main topics which are: tourism, heritage, education and each topic is managed by different authority: by the communities or by the regions.

The education is a competence given to the tree communities, which means that in the same country the reference and the realities are different and have their own ways of working. Regarding tourism, it is a competence of the regions. Heritage is divided between regions and communities depending if it is material or immaterial heritage.

[1] 2013. évi LXXVII. törvény a felnőttképzésről, 2011. évi CLXXXVII. törvény a szakképzésről

As the research of WP 2 led to the conclusion that there is almost no training and there is a lack regarding heritage interpretation, Diesis did not have the support of existing training centers dealing with heritage interpretation.

In addition, regarding the Memorandum of Understanding and the learning agreement, Diesis had difficulties to put it accessible and simple in order to make it easily understandable by the professionals (LA) and by the institutions (MoU). Indeed, on one hand, the original document drafted by the partners was perceived as very complex and to complex to be understandable by the professionals. On the other hand, the topic of qualification recognition is quite complex and the situations are very different in the 3 Belgian communities regarding the recognition of guides for instance, which makes the communication even complicated.

Diesis experimented also some issues regarding the proper language used by the project. Indeed, the technical terms such as “Memorandum of Understand”, “Learning Agreement”, “Credit Awarding Model” were very technic and specific for the professionals and did not encourage their trust but also made harder the task of Diesis to pass them the essential message.

In the same logic, the term itself of “heritage interpretation” was not understood in the same way by the actors of the sectors and even by the professionals. As heritage interpretation is a topic relatively new as a professional competence, Diesis met difficulties to pass the message also because of the central topic was not perceived in the same way by all the professionals, tourism and VET organisations.

Diesis tried to explain and present the project in order to pass a clear message but it seems this goal was sometimes not reached.

This situation led the professionals to do not understand and perceived directly the direct benefits of the recognition and did not promote it themselves.

Regarding the promotion and dissemination of the MoU and the Learning Agreement, it was realised almost all by internet which did not allow Diesis to receive direct feedback from users and to answer to their questions or droughts. This is one of the reasons why Diesis organised the Focus group on the 25th of August 2015.

Opportunities linked with the WP6 (pilot phase)

Diesis noticed that as the topic of heritage interpretation was very new, many professionals and tourism and heritage institutions and organisations were interested in the project.

As for, the professionals of heritage education agreed that the tourism sector is changing very quickly and the expectations of the customers, visitors as well. Heritage interpretation is one technic in order to adapt their language and to pass the message to the visitors.

Indeed, many professionals are already using these technics but have learned them in a non-formal context. Some of them understood and were aware of the importance to make recognize these competences.

Diesis also noticed a greater interest and consideration from the public institutions as the project was financed by a European fund. For them, this aspect was already a guarantee of professionalism and seriousness but also provides a European vision and made possible the comparison with other EU countries. Presenting the project as a European project made easier the work of Diesis in order to contact new organisations.

Diesis implemented the project in a good moment in Belgium as the French and the Flemish communities were working on a new profile for guides. They showed interest to the project as they were interested of taking some parts in order to include them and to complete the already existing profile.

The VET training centers accredited by the official authorities expressed their interest but underlined the need of an official recognition before creating a training.

The pilot test in Austria

The Memorandum of Understanding and the Learning Agreement were made userfriendly to the Austrian situation as other, professionals (LA) and the institutions addressing the MoU would not have understood the document and its relevance in the Austrian system, we would not have been able to find interested parties to sign. The suggested document in English could not be simply translated as it was perceived being very complex and too complex for the Austrian market, particularly since from the first days we saw MoUs and/ or LAs, recommendations and new userfriendly details had been suggested by various bodies.

During the pilot test phase in Austria, stakeholders and interested parties were informed about the aim of the project, the involvement of interested organizations to sign the MoU ECVET (Memorandum of Understanding) and the Learning Agreement ECVET providing also ECVET Credits. Professionals and interested future learners found the ECVET related details and respective training on “heritage interpretation” of interest. However, qualification recognition is also in Austria still a rather complex task with many different stakeholders in tourism at policy level involved. For the MoU we could find interested stakeholders but for policy level, the example came too early having only been involved in trial projects on national basis themselves, the development will take up to another two years in Austria before other programmes will be considered now.

Regarding the promotion and dissemination of the MoU and the Learning Agreement additional meetings BEST Institut organised to share these helped in reaching our first targets. Later in October, during an ECVET workshop organised by national officials, the BEST team will further disseminate both.

For official accreditation, the results of the ECVET implementation will be important to be finalised first, before new qualifications can be included. However, BEST will offer in the meantime related “heritage interpretation” training to interested parties in their own premises to further support the implementation process on a wider basis, from bottom up and help such create awareness as well as a niche market.

The pilot testing activities wer important to show interested organizations that the signing of the MoU and learning agreement as well as the respective credit awarding for professionals in the tourism sector can offer an added value.

The pilot test in Slovenia

During the project implementation Slovenia put a lot of force into dissemination and project promotion. In this way, we were able to reach the target group, stakeholders and end users of project results.

On one hand; NGO sector is welcoming the project as they recognize the importance and opportunity regarding heritage interpretation development. Main identified stakeholders are coming from NGO, especially Cooperative of arts and craft; the Chamber of craft; Culture; Education Society of ceramists and potters Podravje MAJOLIKA; Atlas Express association and others. Also public body National center for Europass Slovenia (Ms Špela Pogačnik Nose) was enthusiastic about the project and the results, but the interview with a individuals that are active in Working Group to prepare a catalog of standards of professional knowledge and skills showed some more pessimism regarding creation a new professional qualification.

Person from National Commission for verifying and certifying national vocational qualifications (Ms. Ksenija Dvorščak) explained that there is a tendency to enrich the existing programs, and not to create new ones. In other words, according to some experts, the existent qualifications in the filed tourism should be enriched with some themes of heritage interpretation. Together we agreed on the fact that anyway it is important to get and strengthen knowledge through the experience. The representatives of some tourism agencies have the opinion they a new qualification Interpretive Host and Interpretive Guide are something important and necessarily nowadays. They agree that it should be organized united methodology regarding identity and heritage among the countries. So we found the chance and the way how to implement pilot testing and ensure the good project results.

Main stakeholder here will be International Institute for Knowledge Transfer (a company providing the trainings, workshops and qualifications). Together with them, we are going to provide the training and certification for heritage interpretation. In this way, we are going to use project results also in the future and make a project sustainable. Institute for Economy Maribor is supporting the idea for future development of the training program for heritage interpretation.

The pilot test in Germany

In Germany the profession of tour guides is not uniformly organised, therefore different trainings and qualifications exist in this sector. The federal association of visitor- guides in Germany (Bundesverband der Gästeführer in Deutschland e. V. - BVGD) is the biggest organization in Germany, who promotes a high training standard and a common job profile for this profession.

The federal association has developed formal guidelines, which are supported, not only from the member organisations of the BVGD, but also from the tourism sector and numerous institutions for vocational education and training, who are basing their trainings on the former mentioned guidelines. Since 2015, 2.000 professionals out of 6.000 registered members of the BVGD obtained this certification. For being able to guarantee this high quality on a European level the EU has worked with the help of the BVGD upon a standard named EN 15565 for the education of tour guides. Since 2008 the BVGD training guidelines integrated this standard (BVGD-certification DIN EN) so after successful completion of the training the tour guides are so called "certified tour guides- meeting the European standard DIN EN 15565". In over 40 cities trainings for the BVGD certification DIN EN have been successfully delivered and those training standards get conceptually and actively supported by the Tourism Committee of the German Parliament, the Tourism Association of Saxony-Anhalt, from numerous Ministers for economic affairs in various German federal states as well as municipal tourism institutions.

As the profession of tour guides is not uniformly organised in Germany; beside the BVGD numerous independent tour guides as well as a few independent tour guide association exist.

For the scope of the project it has been evaluated that the involvement of the latter does not lead to the fulfilment of the project goals, therefore in Germany the pilot test concentrated mainly on the involvement of the big associations which have a large impact on regional, national and international level, such as the BVGD and the regional associations, which are members of the BVGD. Together they have listed over 6.000 professionals, working in the tourism sector as either tour guides, nature guides, hiking guides, city guides, etc. Furthermore the BVGD represents the interests of its members on a national and international level. Furthermore the BVGD is a member of the German national tourism board, the German Tourism Association and the German travel association. The federal association presents itself on a yearly basis on the International tourism fair called ITB at the stand of the German Tourism Association and participates regularly in their expert committees in regards to quality initiatives in tourism.

During the pilot test phase various German stakeholders were informed about the aim of the project: the involvement of interested organizations to sign the MoU ECVET (Memorandum of Understanding) and the Learning Agreement ECVET deriving in the ECVET Credits Awarding. The following organisations and individuals have been contacted: President of the BVGD, President of

the commission for education and training, the public tourism associations of all German federal states, independent regional associations, which are not members of the BVGD namely Berlin Guides and heritage tour guides, independent regional associations, which are members of the BVGD namely federation of the Berlin city guides, independent tour guides cologne, tour guides Heidelberg, association for tour guides Odenwald, association for tour guides Freiburg, association for tour guides Erzgebirge, association for tour guides Neuburg- Schrobenhausen, association for tour guides Gilde- Celle, association for tour guides Eltville, association for tour guides Kaiserslautern, association for tour guides Fichtelgebirge, association for tour guides Chemnitz, association for tour guides Osnabrück, association for tour guides Hamburg and over 45 individual tour guides. As the feedback of tour guides was very limited as a consequence the circle of professionals was enlarged to the wider scope of professionals working in the tourism sector so that it was ensured that some persons could be gathered to participate in the pilot test.

It has been outlined to those organizations that the signing of the MoU and learning agreement as well as the respective credit awarding for professionals in the tourism sector does offer an added value for the professionals itself, but also in a bigger scope for the transparency of qualifications on an European level (following the aims of the Copenhagen declaration).

The former president of the BVGD, Mrs. Sigrid Pokorny, has worked in her position as president of the organisation on the development of the European training standards for tour guides (as mentioned above), which derived in the BVDG certification DIN EN. Mrs. Pokorny has expressed great interest in the project aims and has helped to bring the project aims to the attention of the current president of the BVGD. It would be desirable if the BDVG would sign the MoU, get their members to sign the learning agreements and would in the future process the ECVET credit awarding (utilising the Europass Certificate Supplement). As the BVDG gets supported by the Tourism Committee of the German Parliament, the Tourism Association of Saxony-Anhalt, from numerous Ministers for economic affairs in various German federal states as well as municipal tourism institutions the transfer in the sectoral and territorial VET systems would be guaranteed.

Beside this and beyond the project scope it has brought to the attention of the stakeholders that the German umbrella organisation of training organisations (Dachverband der Weiterbildungsorganisationen e.V.- DVWO) does offer the assessment and evaluation of credit points according to the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System) for

professionals. This offers a great added value for all persons if they aim for an University diploma, as some former achievements might be recognized by Universities.