

EU Lifelong Learning Programme 2007- 2013 (2012/C 232/04)
Subprogramme Leonardo da Vinci. Call for proposal 2013 EAC/S07/12
Action "Transfer of Innovation"
Project number: 2013-1-ES1-LEO05-66707

“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”

R39_ Set of Policy Recommendations (table of suggestions) for
project results transfer to sectoral and territorial decision makers.

September 2015

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1. Premise

The set of “**policy recommendations**” proposed by this document is addressed to the appropriate sectoral and territorial **decision-makers** at local, regional, national and European level, since having institutional competence or sectoral relevance on Vocational Education and Training – VET, and on heritage interpretation activities in tourism: in other words, **public institutions competent in VET and tourism**, as to **tourism and heritage management and planning social partners and professional organisations**.

In fact, these decision-makers are **key actors** in the **process of endorsement and implementation** at **sectoral and territorial level** of the **results** coming from the European Leonardo da Vinci project “Interpreting our European Heritage: An ECVET process to put in transparency and recognise across Europe the learning outcomes and the qualifications of the professional figures in the tourism sector involved in the heritage interpretation activities”, focused on **transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications** of people operating in **tourism sector**, applying the European tools and frameworks *European Qualification Framework - EQF*, *European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training - ECVET*, and *Europass*.

The **main result** produced during the project life-cycle (October 2013 - September 2015), is the definition and formalisation at European level of the **Memorandum of Understanding – MoU ECVET** for the European qualifications relating to the specific sectoral professional figures of the *Interpretive Guide and Interpretive Host*, described in terms of learning outcomes (unit/s, parts of unit/s, associated ECVET credit), and establishing the **European correspondence** for the assessment, transfer, and accumulation processes **of learning outcomes** achieved in formal, informal and non formal contexts.

In effect, at the aim of MoU ECVET enforcement at territorial and sectoral level, which is essential to give to interested professionals and trainees the effective possibility to obtain putting in transparency and recognition of acquired learning outcomes described by the MoU, it’s needed that in each Country it proceeds the **process of MoU adhesion by competent and interested key actors**, started within the project with the adhesion of project partners and associated

organisations: representative and VET organisations, and also SMEs, of tourism sector at national, regional and local level (in Italy, *Aris Formazione e Ricerca Società Cooperativa*; in Austria, *BEST Institut für berufsbezogene Weiterbildung und Personaltraining GmbH*; in Hungary, *Tradenet Global*), also SMEs or entities of the tourism sector or local development at national, regional and local level (in Spain, *Koan Consulting S*; in Italy, *Consorzio Itaca*; in Slovenia, *NEC Notranjski ekološki center, Cerknica*), public institutions competent in tourism or environment at regional and national level (in particular, *Ayuntamiento de Segovia* and CENEAM in Spain and the Italian *Regione Umbria*) and also organisations specialised in European networking within entrepreneurship and sustainable tourism (the Belgian *Diesis Coop srl-fs*).

The **involvement in the MoU ECVET of new competent and/or interested key actors is strongly needed** because the will of them has a direct influence on the possibility and on the extension of envisaged ECVET process: e.g., the participation of public institutions competent in VET will determine the territorial extension of MoU provisions application, while the participation of sectoral social partners and VET providers is fundamental to ensure to interested professionals and trainees concrete opportunities of application of MoU provisions in terms of recognition and certification of achieved related learning outcomes and ECVET credits, in compliance with national and regional rules on certification ways and procedures, formal, non-formal and informal learning validation, qualification bodies.

2. Policy recommendations

1. The European Union is supporting, by specific common principles and tools (in particular, European Qualification Framework - EQF, European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training - ECVET, *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* - ECTS and Europass), the transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications: the application of these principles and tools, by public institutions competent in VET and by sectoral social partners of employees and of employers in the specific European territorial and sectoral contexts, is very important for workers and trainees, since the concrete

possibility of transparency and recognition of achieved learning outcomes is a requisite to allow an effective perspective of mobility beyond the borders of national (and also regional, in the EU countries – like Italy - in which the legislative competence on qualification and certification matter is attributed to the Regions) VET systems, the barriers to mobility within a specific VET system and in particular across the economic activity sectors, the obstacles outside the educational system and in particular those related to the recognition of learning outcomes acquired in informal and non formal contexts.

2. Since the experimental application and implementation of the European common principles and tools for transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications it's supported by the EU through specific financing instruments within the European programmes (in particular, the Leonardo da Vinci initiatives within the Lifelong Learning Programme and, up 2014, within the Erasmus+ for All programme), it's very important that the public institutions competent in VET and the sectoral social partners learn from the results of the realised experimentations, and also try to take part to these programmes.

3. Considering that the EU programmes supporting the experimental application and implementation of the European common principles and tools for transparency and recognition of learning outcomes and qualifications, are conceived to sustain multilateral interventions integrating various kind of competent and interested public and private organisations in different EU countries, the participation to these programmes requires a networking approach, able to gather the relevant key actors: public institutions competent in VET, social partners of concerned sector, and also VET providers (and, if the programme allows interventions at academic level, public institutions competent in HE - Higher Education and HE providers too); furthermore, if the intervention concerns a specific relevant issue (as heritage interpretation in this project) this networking approach needs to be enlarged also to public institutions competent on the specific issue. Besides, considering “Interpreting our European Heritage” and the VET in the tourism sector, this networking approach could in perspective valorise the coordination bodies gathering at national/European level relevant key actors typologies: for example, for public Italian

institutions competent in VET and tourism, the coordination bodies Conferenza delle Regioni (Conference of Regions) and Conferenza Stato-Regioni (State-Regions Conference).

4. From the point of view of the tourism sector, the heritage interpretation permits to reach new levels of innovation and specialization in the tourism products and services, as to in the management of monuments, sites and attractions. This affects directly the tourism guidelines, as to the attention to the visitors in any kind of interpretive and informative spaces like: tourism offices, eco- museums, museums, monuments, heritage trails, archaeological and natural sites, visitor centres, and local resources centres.
5. The professional profiles of the “Interpretive host” and the “Interpretive guide” can be part in the future in a broader understanding of the professional profile of the “heritage interpreter” at European level, setting up a market differentiation based in the quality of performance. This evolution can provide more competitiveness to a large number of professions related to the heritage interpretation, the heritage conservation and management and the tourism.

The new trends in the demand of tourism and leisure activities include heritage interpretation and animation as a way to improve and qualify the tourism experience in any kind of spaces: natural, rural or cultural.

6. The liberalization of the tourist services in Europe makes this argumentation of the quality of performance and competitiveness of the tourism and heritage related tourism professions, even more essential than in previous decades. In most of the countries included in the project, they exist scarce opportunities for professionals of being trained in heritage interpretation applied to tourism, so the implementation of future trainings as a consequence of this project is highly recommended.

This context can also serve as a rich and fruitful point to encounter between the heritage sector and the tourism sector, which still have enormous challenges to generate synergies in the next decades.

7. Some very specialized fields like food tourism and nature/ wilderness tourism benefit much more directly and visibly from the incorporation of heritage interpretation in the visibility and production schemes. Within the tourism context, the heritage interpretation can be applied to all segments and to all profiles of the demand. It is also quite essential to incorporate elements of accessibility to the heritage interpretation plans and services, as to elements of IT that are an essential tool in the enhancement and management of the tourism experience.

The competences defined also include, for the purpose of the competitiveness of the professionals, other key tools for the professional figures involved in the project, namely the marketing and communication tools, essential for the free-lance professionals that are a sensible part of the professional groups involved.