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*State of the Art*  
*Synthesis of the experts interviews in France*

*April 2007*

## INTRODUCTION

In France, the recognition of Acquired Competences comes within the frame of a national process which was fostered by the **National Interprofessional Agreement**.

### From the point of view of the Social partners

This agreement was signed by the 5 organisations of employees and the 3 employers Associations

Principles of the professional life-long learning in France

- To allow employees to benefit from a system which helps them in completing, developing their competences, renewing their qualification
- To provide them with tools to make them acquire and recognize their competences within the frame of
  - \* Actions in the training plan of the firm
  - \* Contracts or time of "professionalisation"
  - \* "Individual Right to learning" (20 hours of training per year per employee)
  - \* Competences statement
  - \* Validation of Acquired Experience (similar to NVQ)
  - \* Individual Training Leave
  - \* Learning and Training Passport

### From the point of view of the State

- Since the law of the "social modernisation" in 2002
  - Possibility to validate ones professional attainment after 3 years of professional life
  - Focus on the competences rather than on previous diploma or certifications
  - Complement to the "bilan de competences" created in 1991 allowing to identify the formal and informal professional competences and to help building a professional project
- Adoption of the National Interprofessional Agreement in May 2004
  - Implementation of the previous mentioned initiatives
  - Adaptation of this Law through more than 250 branch agreements and decrees (seniors – 45 years)
  - Law of "Social Cohesion" in 2005

### From the point of view of the Firms

- Existence of initiatives to evaluate and validate competences in firms
- Experimental tools linked to a specific firm, a professional branch in certain context (local, regional or national level)
- "Club of competences" in Franche-Comté composed of more than 100 firms :
  - « Management by the competences ». The employee is placed in the centre of this so called participative management which implies to carry out a regular and permanent updating of knowledge and know-hows. This process leads to a strong investment under the frame of the life-long learning.
  - Deep involvement of the social partners at regional level which choose this simultaneous and interactive construction of the « social dialogue by the competences » and the « competences by the social dialogue ». Is it a revolution ? Probably not but obviously it is an innovative and unique strategy in the region ! And probably in France !

## THE SOCIAL PARTNERS IN FRANCE

There exists a complete involvement of the social partners in France either in the initial and continuing Learning.

They are the basis of all the agreements carried out in France

They are composed of 8 organisations = 5 of employees (CFDT, CFE CGC, CGT, FO, CFTC) + 3 of employers (MEDEF, CGPME, UPA) and they are involved at national and regional level

As an example at regional level, they created together an official document which was recognised by the regional representative of the Ministry of Work so as to force any firm willing to get some advice within the frame of Human Resources consulting or coaching.

Their main activities are among which :

- Promotion and information among firms (employers and employees)
- Participation in the political development of the VET system
- Financing and management of the VET system
  - Legal obligation of the firms
  - Involvement in the Joint Approved Organisation for the Collection of the Training Funds (FUP)
- Participation in other organisations (FONGECIF for the financing of initiatives such as “Bilans de compétences”, VAE, ...)

## THE EUROPASS SITUATION

- **Mostly dedicated to Europass Mobility**
  - Meetings in various cities in France
  - People in charge of the Europass system in the National Leonardo Agency can not really inform us about the Europass CV !!
  - Regional representatives (Education – Employment – Agriculture)
  - No statistics on the 4 other types of initiatives
- **Use of the European frame** for presentation of the Europass
- Implementation of a **French Website** [www.europass-france.org](http://www.europass-france.org) Officially launched in January 2005
  - Average number of visits in January 2006 : 7452
  - Between February 2005 and January 2006, 352 100 CV were created and around 3299090 documents were downloaded (frames, examples, instructions...)

## THE INTERVIEWS

In France, the process of the Interviews was carried out quite late in comparison with all the other partners of the Europass+ project as far as many tasks had to be fulfilled in the same period (organisation of a transnational meeting, creation of a pre-test,...) as well as the launching of the partnership in France with a new representative for the CFE-CGC and as usual the difficulty to “translate” all the objectives and project for getting informed the representative of the CFDT which has many difficulties of understanding the English language.

This incidence has a great importance in France as many people do not speak any foreign languages even in the field of Vocational Training and Education.

The first task that was engaged by the MEDEF Franche-Comté was the translation of the Interview guidelines in French so as to send it by post.

Then a selection was made and the questionnaire was sent to 26 persons representing experts involved in

- training policies such as State representatives
- the promotion of the European tools such as Europass (Leonardo da Vinci agency, regional authorities
- the implementation of French tools regulated by the French Law like Center for Bilans de compétences.

The main difficulty laid in the fact that no structures answered to the questionnaires as we did not received any answers by post. We, then decided to collect answers by telephone to get at minimum 5 significant comments from “experts” in France.

## PRESENTATION OF THE ANSWERING STRUCTURES

Five persons answered to our questionnaire and they were representatives of the main target experts that we wanted to receive that is to say :

- **Monique DIVANAC'H** (CoCoA) which a consulting company and which was deeply involved in the carrying out of professional paths for young people with difficulty of insertion in favour of the social partners with the implementation of more than 600 portefeuilles de compétences at regional level with the training of mentorship for its implementation in any kind of firm especially small ones in all fields of activities
- **Jean-Paul TARBY** (Rectorat – DARIC) which is the regional representative of the Ministry of Education and is in charge of the International department for the promotion of the mobility activities. It is the coordination of all initiatives from colleges, universities especially European mobility projects
- **Jean-Pierre VACHER** (who is the President of the National Federation of Centers of Bilans de Compétences) which is one of the most “popular” tool in France directly connected to the identification, the valorisation and recognition of competences for any employee or job-seeker. This tool is often a first step within a process such as Validation of Acquired Experience,...
- **Marie-Pierre CHALIMBAUD** (person in charge of the Europass Department within the French Leonardo Agency) and who was really helpful while building our mobility project but rather helpless regards to the time dedicated to our State of Affairs as well as her experience with Europass in France
- **Mrs. FLANDRE** (Regional CIBC) so as to get her experience and get her involved in our project

## ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

*Which kind of competence pass initiatives do you have in your country (initiatives as well from ministries, institutes or even companies?)*

Many tools were identified among which the following elements :

The **Bilan de compétences** is an Initiative created in **1991** and carried out at national level, promoted and managed by the social partners.



It allows any employee to **state his competences, abilities and motivations so as to define a professional project** or a training project.

It is carried out by an **external** consultant, following precise steps and usually lasts 24 hours.

It can be decided by the **employer** or implemented thanks to the initiative of the **employee**, within the frame of a specific leave.

It leads to the redaction of a **synthesis document** enabling to define or confirm a professional project or a training project.

It concerns any person willing to :

- **Analyze** his personal and professional competences, abilities, motivation
- **Manage** ones personal resources
- **Organize** ones professional priorities
- **Use** ones assets as a negotiation instrument for a job, a training, or professional choices

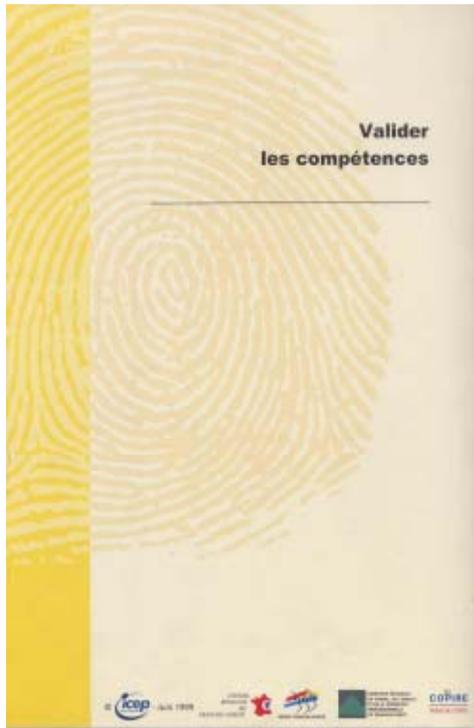
For the firm, it aims at :

- Better **organizing** the provisional management of jobs and competences
- **Fostering** the management of careers and professional mobility

### 3 STEPS.

- **A preliminary step :**
  - Confirm the commitment of the person ;
  - Define and analyze the needs ;
  - Inform of the conditions, the process, the methods and techniques.
- **A investigation step :**
  - Analyze motivation and personal and professional interests ;
  - Identify competences and abilities both personal and professional ones or evaluate knowledge ;
  - Determine the evolution possibilities
- **A conclusion step through personalized interviews :**
  - Get to know about the results of the investigation phase
  - Inventory the factors able to promote or not the success or not of a professional project ;
  - Plan the various steps for the carrying out of this project

**The Portefeuille de compétences** which was created in **1998** by the Joint Commission of Social partners in Franche-Comté aiming at recognising the first experience from low qualified persons on a job position.



Promoted and created in favor of a project dedicated to the insertion of **young people under 26 years** old and less than the end of General compulsory studies

The aim was to state the experience of those young people mostly hired in dual systems to help the relation between training organization / firm and the young people

More than 600 "portefeuilles de compétences" were accomplished **on various types of jobs and with the parallel for the Training of tutors and the Training of young people**

It is composed of a **MENTOR or TUTOR Guide** with the chapters explaining how to :

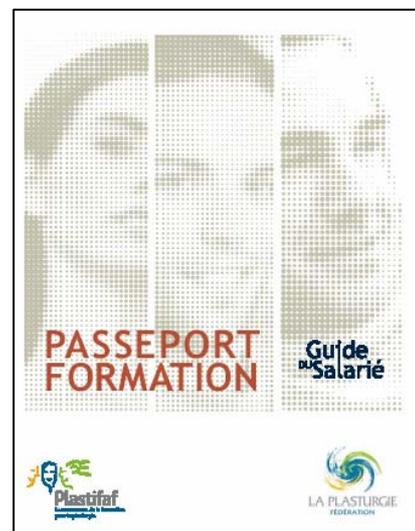
- Welcome and Integrate the young people
- Analyze the job to transfer competences
- Follow the young people and his progression
- Manage relations with the training organization
- Validate the competences

and a **YOUNG GUIDE** composed of the chapters dealing with My current contract, My project, My job, My Training organization, My Validation of competences and Appendices

**The Training Passport or Competences** which is promoted by the social partners while the Reform of the Vocational Training System in France

Example : from the UNIFA (Industries of the Wood and Furniture) with 4 main parts (Initial Training, Professional experience, Vocational Training, Abilities and Competences)

or from the Plastic Industries  
[https://www.plastifaf.com/docs/autres/passeport\\_formation.pdf](https://www.plastifaf.com/docs/autres/passeport_formation.pdf)



According to the CIBC, initiatives are numerous and diversified. The various laws which regulated the creation and the development of the CIBC express the need for the implementation of a **“portefeuille de compétences”** as a tool for the personal and social recognition as well as a help in the professional orientation or guidance.



This led the Federation of the CIBC to focus and launch a deep research desk, in partnership with the CNAM (National Centre for Arts and Jobs) and INETOP (National Institute of Studies on Work and Professional Guidance) which led to a methodology and well structured supports and tools for professionals in guidance and also for beneficiaries.

*(« Le portefeuille de compétences : le portefeuille des acquis de formation et d'expériences ». Ed E.A.P., 2000).*

The representative of the DARIC, that is to say the Education representative of the Europass initiative in France located in the Franche-Comté region focused on the following tools :

- Portfolio Europass
- ELOS Student Portfolio
- Portfolio Transeurope Centre (TEC)
- Portfolio européen pour travailleurs et animateurs
- Passeport citoyen européen (initiative locale)
- Portfolio des langues



As far as the National French Leonardo da Vinci agency is concerned, the answers were the following and stressing the fact there are numerous initiatives carried out throughout Europe in the frame of competences such as :

- From professional branches (plastic industries)
- From enterprises (McDonalds)
- From Public Authorities (Town of Lille)
- Competence Passports realised within Leonardo da Vinci projects ("Jvenes Mobiles", "PECS", "Valeurtech", "VAEB")
- + porfolio youth leaders-youth workers from Youth agencies
- various portfolios from specific networks Eifel (Telcert)
- the excellent project called EUCEN (Refine / ValidPass), etc



### Are these initiatives for job apprentices ?

#### *For the Competences Consulting firm (CoCoA)*

>>>> Yes in the case this « passport » whatever the frame has already been implemented in a professional branch. Some apprentices are still using the « portefeuille de compétences » which was launched by the Social partners in Franche-Comté

#### *For the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency (EUROPASS)*

>>>> Juvenes Mobiles, portfolio Jeunesse and Valeurtech are tools which are accessible for young people doing an apprenticeship. The other previous tools may also ... To be verified

#### *For the Centre of Bilans de Compétences*

>>>> These « Portfolio » approaches in favour of apprentices are rather specific and there are not so many financing for Competence tools for Apprentices. For example, within the initiative which was carried out in 2004 by our previous Town Minister Borloo and by the firm Schneider Electric France, it was created a portefeuille de compétences on some experimental places (Chalon-sur Saône, Grenoble and Rouen) in partnership with local firms.

If this portefeuille de compétences keeps its fundamental characteristics in favour of a social recognition, it also allows the **visibility** and necessary **coherence** to the creation and follow-up of insertions paths, especially for those who deeply use it.

In the same sense, some public authorities such as regional councils wanted the implementation of such strategies in order to give **common references to all structures** working in the field of Guidance and Information. These initiatives which are rather experimental especially when talking about apprentices are all the more interesting if they associate with firms or professional branches

### Do these initiatives collect information about informal learning ?

#### *For the Competences Consulting firm (CoCoA)*

>>>> Yes as far as Training passports and Competences Passports aimed at it. For professional branches which implemented Training Passports, it is also a stake for the recognition of competences and experiences which are developed alongside a professional path.

#### *For the National Leonardo da Vinci Agency (EUROPASS)*

>>>> As Far as the integration of Informal and Non formal Learning is concerned, this aspect is essentially (only) in European projects.

#### *For the Centre of Bilans de Compétences*

>>>> From the beginning of the CIBC in 1986, a particular attention focused on the Informal learning. For example, the CIBC was previously called « Centers of personal and Professional Bilans de Compétences ». Indeed, the first Bilans (previous to 1991) have shown the importance of the acquisition of competences not only in the Training and Professional Fields and spheres but also **extra-professional**, social and personal experiences. That is why it is also in charge of the Validation of Acquired Experience.

Plus, the « portefeuille de compétences » allows to take into account competences (or parts) which are not so often recognized par academic processes and which rather raise from personal and behavior competences which can influence on the adaptation and performance on a job position.

Are there guidelines for the "informal learning sections" ?

**CoCoA**

Not any to my knowledge, except from the portefeuille de compétences in which the methodology and tools were formalized so as to transfer them to Trainers and Mentors in the firms so as to demultiply and disseminate the process

**EUROPASS**

Some guidelines, completed examples and tools may exist but it has to be verified with European project leaders

**CIBC**

The last publications from the National CIBC (« Le portefeuille de compétences : le portefeuille des acquis de formation et d'expériences ». Ed E.A.P., 2000) proposes a methodology and specific files for the analysis, the formalization and the valorization of professional and extra-professional experiences both in the accompagnement leaflets for trainers and professionals as well as in the tools dedicated to beneficiaries in various spheres of competences (technical, behavior, social, etc.)

**Rectorat – DARIC**

Not any to my knowledge

**Regional CIBC**

Elaboration of internal tables, questionnaires which are proposed to beneficiaries

Which special support do they give for filling out competence passes ? Can you give details on specific questions and guidelines for these competence pass initiatives ?

**CoCoA**

Some « paper » documents exist in the files. The main sensible points that is to say the necessary competences were on the identification of the competences to develop or been developed (analysis of the job and activities) and its evaluation on the workplace. From this point, it is important to train mentors, apprentices accompaniers and Employment and Training advisors

**CIBC**

It exists a guide for professionals in accompagnement, guidance, and professional insertion which was created in order to define the pedagogical modalities allowing the beneficiaries to have an appropriation of the whole methodology. There are advice and technical examples.

**Rectorat – DARIC**

Punctual presentation of the tools within the life-long training of teachers or within the frame of a meeting with experts on European projects.

**Regional CIBC**

There exists « function files » which allow to identify according the competences which are acquired which job s close to the competences and expectations

*Are there examples which help when filling in the competence pass ?*  
*Are you aware of online-support instruments existing for competence pass initiatives ?*

**CoCoA**

from the Plastic Industries [https://www.plastifaf.com/docs/autres/passeport\\_formation.pdf](https://www.plastifaf.com/docs/autres/passeport_formation.pdf)  
No other exploration was made on other professional branches

**CIBC**

The CNAM proposed to its students the possibility to elaborate an online « portefeuille de compétences »

**Rectorat – DARIC**

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**Regional CIBC**

Job files with the explanation of tasks

*Are there links to an NVQ or even EQF in these initiatives ?*

**CoCoA**

As far as Professional branches are concerned, it comes from the recent signature of the Agreement on the VAE

**CIBC**

The links between « portfolio » and VAE systems are tight with a common objective which is to recognise personal and social acquired experience, whatever it is from Training, and professional and extra-professional activities.  
Nevertheless, the difference lays on the fact that the VAE is rather standardised and methodologies such as portfolios does not come within a pre-established frame of a procedure and of a referential which allow a institutional validation. Portfolios are rather more open.  
But it can be summarised as a “step” in a process of accompaniment to VAE

**Rectorat – DARIC**

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**Regional CIBC**

Yes

According to you, which criteria should this interactive tool hold ? How do you imagine it so as to be used by anybody ? Which advice should you give to us ?

*Monique DIVANAC'H CoCoA*

- Explain the **whole methodology and the challenge** regarding the recognition of competences with a special link with the Validation of Acquired Experience or specific certifications such as CQP
- Take **step by step a path** for the identification of activities / responsibilities in order to allow anybody to define his competences and its degree of expertise. Too often, nuts (families) which are proposed too large and not enough precise or they do not have sense for people with few or low qualification
- Plan tools and guidelines which are **easily readable** and **modifiable** with enough space for writing (even for synthesising afterwards) and a **friendly look** when printing (to be proud to show it !)
- Plan a **guideline for additional** materials (proofs of competences, letters, attestations, diploma,...) and for French people a link with the Professional Annual Interview.
- Plan **links** to go further up to a potential certification (Validation of Acquired Experience) with **advice** on these tools
- Anticipate and plan a **regular updating** of the passport
- Plan how **to promote it** so as to **integrate it** within an existing national or European frame and not like an additional tool !

*Jean-Pierre VACHER*

*Président Fédération nationale des CIBC*

- The first task would be to **simplify the guidelines and tools**. Previous approaches are rather too sophisticated regarding the « translation » of the experience in competences and it comes to an impossibility to get a social use of the tools.
- Nevertheless, even if it is more « vulgarised » or « popularised », this methodology is based on concepts (such as the one of competences) which are **not spontaneously accessible** to any public.
- The **quality of the pedagogical accompaniment** (by professionals and tools and guidelines) is with no doubt the factor which guarantees the social use of the methodology and supports and its access to a larger number of persons.
- It is a paradox to be managed as the social use of a portfolio depends on the value which is given to the path and according to the supports in front of others. This **social value** lays on the quality of analysis and formalisation of experiences and corresponding acquired competences which is more connected to the expertise.
- But, paths such as portfolios requires the **involvement of the beneficiary** and the **understanding** of the whole process. In that sense, modalities concerning the accompaniment in a VAE process are rather close to the problem.
- Another advice would be a **guided process** which is inscribed in the time (several months) and a specification of the tools (precise frame linked to the expected results)

*Jean-Paul TARBY*

*Rectorat – DARIC*

- A **mode d'emploi** (information – Valorisation of passports) dedicated to the user (like a directions for use)
- A **vademecum** dedicated to the persons in charge of the accompaniment (Training / Education)



- A document for the **presentation of the passport** dedicated to entrepreneurs who could use this tool for recruiting

*Mme FLANDRE*

*CIBC Régional*

- Doing a « portefeuille de compétences » without accompaniment is rather **risky** and it is all the more risky when it is an online tool. . . .
- For example, some tools such as « the APEC perspectives dossier » for middle management allows similar kind of interventions and it can be done alone. The main risk or inconvenient is that you don't get all profits if you are not accompanied by a competent and **exterior person**.
- An advice could be to work **in « parallel »** that is to say to first work alone while describing the competences and get them validated by a professional, plus some of the people are not able to fill the document alone as they have to use concepts and it is not so easy for everybody