

ECVET system for No borders in tourism hospitality European Training and Work

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Testing the NET Work products

Context

On 7th December 2011 the final conference to present the results of the project **ECVET N.E.T.WORK – No borders in tourism hospitality European Training and Work** was held in Assisi. The conference was also a venue at which it was possible to make public to those present and to the press the results of the testing of the application of the instruments produced. Testing involved a total of 271 persons involved in training activities of which 114 were males and 157 females, for the most part unemployed. The age group, in fact, into which the majority of the subjects in training fell was that from 14 to 18 years of age (217 persons equal to 80,0% of the total), followed by the group 26-35 years (34 students equal to 12,5% of the total) and by 17 students (equal to 6,3%/Tot.) belonging to the 19 to 25 years old group.

	NUMBERS				PERCENTAGE	
	EMPLOYED		UNEMPLOYED		EMPLOYED	
Age	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
14-18	0	0	94	123	0,0	0,0
19-25	0	1	5	11	0,0	5,56
26-35	9	5	4	16	50,0	27,78
36-45	1	1	0	0	5,56	5,56
Over 45	1	0	0	0	5,56	0,0
Subtotal	11	7	103	150	61,11	38,89
Total	18		253		100,00	
	271					

From a comparative analysis of the results of the testing, the strengths and weaknesses of the project emerged. The KSC (Knowledge, skills, competencies) system was shown to be sufficiently easy to adopt in the various situations of planning and delivering training and, especially

therefore, equipped with a flexibility which allows a sufficiently accurate picture of the needs of the labour market to be satisfied by training interventions. The tool kit was easy to use and it proved especially to be useable in various contexts and for different training purposes. Therefore ECVET has proven able to create points of contact and transition among different training pathways and especially among different National contexts. The professional figures used for the development of the project can, in fact, all be collocated in the hotel reception area, but they do not all have the same profile. This means that ECVET was able to gather and point out the common points without limiting the possibility on the part of the individual nations of expressing different professional roles to meet different needs in the various operational contexts. In general it nevertheless appears that knowledge of the European EQF, ECVET and other systems of transparency of competences and of training and educational qualifications are not yet common language and territory for all the public and private actors of the training systems and of the labour market in general. In this project N.E.T.Work and, presumably, also the other projects brought forward over time, have given added value to the transparency policies set up on a community level.

On the other hand, however, there are still barriers and difficulties to overcome in the application of the ECVET system, especially in those contexts in which the qualifications and descriptive standards are not based on learning outcomes. It will be necessary to open up a process of further study of these barriers in order to overcome them.

... & ROUND ABOUT

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On 22-23 February, CST will represent the ECVET – N.E.T.WORK project at the final ECVET pilot projects seminar in Brussels which will wind up three years of reflections and discussions on the implementation of ECVET in professional training in various labour sectors.

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Project N.E.T.WORK has been selected as Italian Good Practice as part of the NetECVET workgroup and will be presented in March 2012 in Paris in the workshop “Definition and description of units of learning outcomes”.

The workshop is part of the activities of the thematic networking group “NetECVET: Working together to understand and implement ECVET” funded by the European Commission within the Lifelong Learning Programme and coordinated by the German National Agency – BIBB, in cooperation with the National Agencies from Austria, Denmark, Finland, France, Hungary, Italy, Norway, Poland, Romania, Sweden, The Netherlands, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

A series of international workshops will be held in 2012 to facilitate exchange between ECVET projects, mobility practitioners and stakeholders and to support practitioners wishing to apply ECVET in transnational mobility. To this purpose, on the basis of workshops outcomes a toolbox will be implemented by the end of 2013.

The approach of the workshops is essentially bottom-up, focussing on mobility practice, rather than working on formal implementation in Member States. However, findings and conclusions of the workshops might prove useful for the European Commission and stakeholders in Member States as well, especially in the light of the upcoming revision of the ECVET recommendation, which is foreseen in 2014.

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In the context of the thematic monitoring activities of the LLP - Leonardo da Vinci - National Agency ISFOL, on 29th April 2011 the workshop "Putting into practice ECVET in Leonardo da Vinci: the actors, the experiences and the perspectives", which compared the practical experiences of important institutions, the direct beneficiaries and stakeholders involved in the process of implementation of the European ECVET Recommendation, was held at the Cavour Congress Centre in Rome.

The N.E.T.WORK Project has been selected among the four experiences involved at European level in managing an ECVET experimentation directly funded in 2008 as part of the LLP Programme - Call for Proposals: ECVET pilot projects "Projects to test and develop the credit system for vocational education and training (ECVET)", together with the other three projects M.O.T.O., I-CARE and COLOR.

The thematic workshop was conceived and organized in order to take stock of the experiences conducted and to discuss future prospects, from the viewpoint of the actors variously involved in the processes of design and of formal recognition of qualifications and in the design and provision of education and vocational training pathways, in the framework of which the ECVET device can be applied.

The workshop was conducted in a plenary session during which some relevant common themes were discussed in depth with the target audience, such as:

- The potential of ECVET in the Italian context
- The topic of competences in the reflection of the Regions: state of the art
- The implementation of ECVET in Leonardo da Vinci

Then participants were divided into three different groups and asked to join one of the three parallel thematic workshops:

Workshop 1 - The perspective of the competent institutions

Workshop 2 - The perspective of education and training

Workshop 3 - The perspective of the labour market.

Specifically one representative of SV&CO, in representation of CST and the Project N.E.T.WORK, joined the second workshop about the perspective of education and training, contributing in the discussion about critical issues and potentialities experienced and to be developed in future and the possible areas of work in the framework of the

Leonardo da Vinci programme.

Among the **critical issues** emerging, many were shared in the specific experience of the N.E.T.WORK Project, in particular:

- The heterogeneity of VET systems and consequently the still persisting barriers to matching with other countries;
- The difficulties of application in contexts that are not yet fully based on learning outcomes
- The difficulty getting the competent institutions involved and the lack of institutionalised networks which implies a “bilateralism of experiences” carried out at the expense of their potential implementation at a more “systemic level”
- The complexity of the processes of verification, validation and recognition of learning outcomes and the huge variety of validation systems;
- The necessary mutual trust between organizations involved that resulted in the majority of cases still to be constructed
- The high costs of the experimentations due to organisational and logistical problems, complex procedures and the strong workload in the preliminary activities
- The limits of application in LdV Mobility experiences, characterised by durations not always sufficient for the development of skills and competences, mobility experiences are often not included in institutionalised pathways and different procedures of mobility management.

Also among the **potentialities** emerging, there were many in common with the specific experience of the N.E.T.WORK Project, in particular:

- It promotes the development of training targeted to the needs of the person;
- It promotes awareness of different cultural contexts and professional backgrounds, fostering mutual trust and facilitating the transition / integration among systems and different training and productive contexts;
- It "obliges" the institutional actors and VET experts/professionals to make a comparison and to discuss the validation of learning outcomes;
- It promotes a culture of shared assessment strategies, methodologies and tools
- It supports geographical mobility, and mobility between VET systems and productive sectors;
- If implemented at a more “systemic level”, in the long term the application of the ECVET device can become less expensive;
- It contributes to the development of lifelong learning, supporting the flexibility of VET systems, fostering the return into education and vocational training pathways of weaker learners, improving the quality of education and training and supporting their modernisation.

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Students of VSGT Maribor won the fourth gold medal at the international student innovation competition in tourism.

The International association of leading European schools for tourism and gastronomy - EURHODIP combines 150 colleges and universities from 35 countries . EURHODIP Association provides assistance to such European schools in order to bring its educational programs and to develop a European dimension to future graduates of these schools for the European labour market. The association is trying to create a well-trained graduates, technicians and managers who will be the openness to diversity of cultures and knowledge of foreign languages and soon be able to include in the hospitality or tourism in the international environment. Among other things, EURHODIP established their own system to check the quality of its members. EURHODIP awarded its first accredited quality certification – Eurhoqual to the College of Catering and Tourism Maribor (VSGT Maribor).

This year conference theme was "prestigious tourism" held in Paris between the 13th and 17th of July 2011. The main message of the conference was the need for young colleagues to learn to smile and tourism services that will exceed guest expectations.

It was a lot of attention at the conference designed to compete for the best innovation in the field of tourism task. The challenge of this competition was to find the most original idea which will serve as a technical or managerial project for better promotion of the profession of catering to young people.

Two of the students of the College of Catering and Tourism Maribor (VSGT Maribor) won the gold medal. They started their idea on the principles which are typical for the generation Y. They highlighted the importance of feelings that affect any decision we make. However, sharpened senses are essential for the hospitality profession.

Info:

- http://www.vsgt-mb.si/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=77&Itemid=146
- http://www.slovenia.info/?e_casopis={97356B32-1B3A-4AFF-B0B4-5F6030CE328F}&id_newspaper={A589AAA5-DA60-40DB-8FF1-C27DD26EF042}&Ing=1

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Source:

www.turismodeportugal.pt

Tourism Schools with record demand

The registrations of new students in the Hotel and Tourism Schools of Turismo de Portugal experienced a record demand for the academic year 2011/2012.

The substantial increase in the demand for the schools of Turismo de Portugal is due to the recognition of quality and excellence of its training contents and to the fact that these vocational courses are providing a quick access to the labor market.

Turismo de Portugal currently manages a network of 16 Hotel and Tourism Schools spread throughout the country, which have undergone substantial modernization and enlargement. The educational offer of this school network covers more than 3.000 students per year, of which about 2.000 are new students, and includes training at various levels: secondary (equivalent to the 12th year), on-the-job and post-secondary technological specialization.

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Source:
<http://www.publituris.pt/>

Pestana Group Awarded with TUI Environmental Champion Award 2011

Pestana Group, the largest Portuguese hotel group, has just seen the units Pestana Miramar Hotel and Pestana Palms Aparthotel distinguished with TUI Environmental Champion Award 2011, due to their active performance in environmental protection and development of sustainable tourism based on values of social responsibility. Ranked among the 100 best hotels in the world, Pestana Miramar and Pestana Palms will now be specially promoted in the marketing campaigns of this tour operator.

Assigned by the German tour operator TUI, this award internationally recognizes the measures regarding conservation and preservation of nature taken by the Pestana Group, which has the environment issue as fundamental in the effectiveness of its tourism management.

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Source:
<http://www.azores.gov.pt/>

Natural Park of Faial receives EDEN Award in the European Day of Tourism

The Natural Park of Faial (Azores archipelago) became the first Portuguese destination to receive the award "EDEN - European Destination of Excellence".

The EDEN Award - European Commission initiative to promote sustainable development models - was given at the exhibition of the Tourism European Day (27th and 28th September). In Brussels was also signed the declaration about the European Network of Destinations of Excellence for Sustainable Tourism, on which this Park will participate.

The use of geological and biological patrimony as a tourism resource - as happens in the network of National Parks managed by the Government of the Azores - allows a sustainable land management, the combating of the seasonality effects and increases the quality and diversity of tourism offer. The EDEN distinction will help to maintain and improve the land management, oriented to the diversity conservation and the sustainable use of natural resources, creating an attractive new reference to the Azores which promotes the tourism and well-being of populations.

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Source:
<http://chaves2011.wikispaces.com/>

Chaves Meeting 2011/Health and Wellness: "Sustainable Health and Wellness Destinations"

On the 13th and 15th October will take place the Chaves Meeting 2011 - Health and Wellness: "Sustainable Health and Wellness Destinations" at the UTAD - University of Trás-os-Montes and Alto Douro Pole in Chaves.

The research centres CETRAD and CIDESD, with its partners, will celebrate the Centenary of Tourism in Portugal, organizing and supporting this conference focused on the debate and reflection on the connection, throughout the history, between tourism destinations and health and wellness. Portugal and, in particular, the North Region will be in the spotlight, as destination of excellence in terms of health tourism and wellness.

It is expected that the business community, professionals of the sector and students of courses related to these topics, feel motivated to enrich a scientific initiative with their "practical" contribution and their interest in the launch of the cluster "Health Tourism and Wellness".