



## **Railway Operation in ECVET**

Progress Report

Public Part

## Project information

Project acronym:	RAILVET
Project title:	Railway Operation in ECVET
Project number:	511005-LLP-1-2010-1-TR-LEONARDO-LMP
Sub-programme or KA:	Leonardo da Vinci
Project website:	<a href="http://www.railvet.com">http://www.railvet.com</a>
Reporting period:	From 01/01/2011 To 31/12/2011
Report version:	1
Date of preparation:	29/01/2012
Beneficiary organisation:	MEB Meslekî ve Teknik Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü Ministry of National Education DG of Vocational and Technical Education
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This project has been funded with support from the European Commission.

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## Executive Summary

The achievement of the common strategy based on the Commission's recommendation "to create a European railway area by 2020" depends on the cross border "interoperability" of railway transportation which will require the integration of national rail transportation and training systems. However, various European publications released so far still indicate that rail training centres across Europe appear to be very much nationally oriented, which, as a result, encouraged the project partners to take steps to seek for a common approach in vocational education and training for railway staff in "operation" job family.

To this goal, the RAILVET project aims to develop a frame training programme in modular system for "operation" job family in railway sector, based on the results of the previous EU pilot project titled "DEPRAS", which was carried out between 2005 and 2007. The frame training programme will be released in electronic format in English and will include the core competences required for railway staff in logistics and train traffic, as well as involving the qualifications needed for inter-module, multi-module and combined transportation.

The frame modular training programme mentioned above will then be adapted to the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) up to the fourth level of European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for the recognition and transfer of the qualifications acquired through formal, non-formal and informal railway training.

Users of the project's products will be the formal and non-formal railway training institutions, centres and companies in the European Union, which totally train an estimated 11,000 train drivers and around 20,000 other rail related staff a year for the sector employing roughly 900.000 people. With regard to the ECVET adaptation of the frame training programme, ministries of education, youth and sports, ministries of transportation, vocational qualifications authorities and national agencies are among the long-term target groups.

Depending on the complexity of the issue, special attention has been paid to the selection of the project partners in order for the consortium to include competent institutions that have expertise both in developing VET curriculums and in ECVET implementations as well as having a high capacity for dissemination and exploitation activities and for international cooperation.

The so-called "external railway experts" in the application who were selected from the EU countries not included in the project's consortium but cooperated within the context of the RAILVET project to develop together the frame training programme have increased its European dimension and geographical scope. This cooperation is also expected to increase the attractiveness and acceptability of the project products by the European countries to integrate into their own training systems.

By the end of the first half of its life-time, the RAILVET project has achieved to develop the frame training programme for "operation" job family in railway sector up to the fourth level of European Qualifications Framework, with the cooperation of railway experts from Turkey, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, England, Austria, Germany, Spain and Finland. A report has also been prepared on ECVET principles and its implementation since in the second year of the project, the consortium will mainly focus on adapting the frame training programme to the ECVET system, seeking for a wider agreement on the content and structure of the training programme at European level.

In addition to the project's website (<http://www.railvet.com>) in English and Turkish and promotional materials for dissemination activities, one railway seminar, held at the beginning of the project's lifetime and one railway workshop held in December 2011 are also among the outcomes of the RAILVET project. Cooperation with external experts on the training programme will go on next year till the second workshop to be held in Prague in October.

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# 1. Project Objectives

A number of publications and Directives released in the European Union, such as European Commission's White Papers (1996,2001,2006), "Railway Training 2020" report (2007), The Atkin's study (2002) Rail Liberalisation report (2007) and SERVRAIL (2006), have all pointed to:

- the worrying decline European railway sector has been experiencing since 1970s,
- to the low rate of mobility among railway staff and the national character of rail training centres,
- to the "skills gap" caused by the introduction of new European legislation, technological developments and the demographic situation, which European railways need to bridge in order to stay in business,
- the urgent need to take steps to revitalise the European railway transport sector, making it a viable and attractive alternative to other modes of transport,
- to the recommendation of the Commission for the kick-start of a European network of training centres,
- the replacement of a significant number of railway staff in the coming years creating a need to recruit a considerable number of rail staff,
- the fact that as standardisation and harmonisation of rail systems increase, the demand for competences for cross-border operations also increases.

Taking all these facts into account and the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment (and on its implementation in EU as of 2012) of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), the RAILVET project aims to develop a frame modular training programme for the job family "operation" in railway sector and to adapt it to the ECVET system, up to the fourth level of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF).

Creating a synergy among the related institutions, organisations and companies, this project is expected to achieve the harmonisation of the minimum core competences required for the railway staff for the realisation of the common training approach, which is inevitable for the "interoperability" of railway transportation.

The frame training programme:

- contains the core competences on which an agreement has been reached by the railway experts cooperated within the context of the project so that it could be flexible enough to applied in a European country out of the project consortium,
- is in modular system,
- is for railway staff, namely signallers, switchmen, train chiefs, conductors, ticket sellers, and logistics workers,
- involves the qualifications required for inter-module, multi-module and combined transportation with a specific focus on sea transportation,
- will be released in electronic format in English and Turkish languages.

## 2. Project Approach

To assure quality in project implementation, a “Joint Executive Board (JEB)” has been set up at the very beginning of the project, to which each partner in the project has provided a representative. Acting as a “board of decision-making” during and even after the project’s lifetime for dissemination and exploitation activities, this board:

- prepares and signs a “conclusion report” at the end of each partner meeting, seminar and workshop,
- takes an active role to sustain communicative, technical and financial coordination of the project activities,
- makes the final decisions in cases of discrepancies,
- checks the completion of the works by each partner stated in the previous conclusion report(s) and clarifies the tasks to be completed till the next partner meeting,
- decides on the requests for amendments to be made in project structure and implementation,
- confirms the reports to be sent to the Commission.

While the main function of the JEB is so designed as to be internal evaluation, the applicant institution is planning to have also an external evaluation for the overall implementation of the project by a specialised, competent institution in the second half of the year.

For the efficient management of each workpackage and timely completion of the tasks, one of the project partners has been assigned as the workpackage leader, taking into account the nature of the work and outcomes of the workpackage and the specialisations of the partner institution.

The questionnaires and surveys carried out during the DEPRAST project have been analysed to clarify the structure of the frame training programme and the key persons from Turkish State Railways and General Directorate of Technical Education for Boys have been made responsible for compiling the comments and evaluations of the railway experts on the training programme. They worked with the workpackage leaders in close cooperation to make revisions in the project product.

When talking about a “common approach” in vocational education and training on railway transportation and contributing to the goal of achieving a European railway area by 2020, the vital importance of dissemination and exploitation inevitably arises, and therefore RAILVET regards them as an integral part of the whole process that should be carried out meticulously not only during but also even after the project’s lifetime.

The project consortium has been so designed as to ensure the widespread dissemination and exploitation of the project products. Each partner institution has a good capacity to disseminate the results since most already have strong relations and cooperation with the target groups. In addition to the project’s own website, RAILVET has so far been promoted in the partner institution’ own websites and periodicals, congresses, national and international newspapers, web portals and TV channels.

Two railway workshops, one focusing on the frame training programme, the other on its ECVET adaptation, is planned during the project’s lifetime to ensure the active participation of the related EU institutions outside the project consortium in the development of the training programme for wider EU consensus on its content and structure.

Also two railway seminars, one at the beginning the other at the end of the project, have also been planned to which the representatives of related public ministries, institutions, companies, schools, municipalities and social partners will be invited.

Promotional materials, such as posters, brochures, bills, flags have also been produced for dissemination activities of the RAILVET project.

### 3. Project Outcomes & Results

Major outcomes and products of the RAILVET project achieved during the first year of implementation can be outlined as follows:

**a) Website:**

The project’s website (<http://www.railvet.com>) has been established and released in February 2011 in English and Turkish languages to promote the project and its activities, results and products. It has public and restricted parts serving as a common platform for communication and relations within (and also outside) the consortium. It is planned to be kept active up to the year 2016.

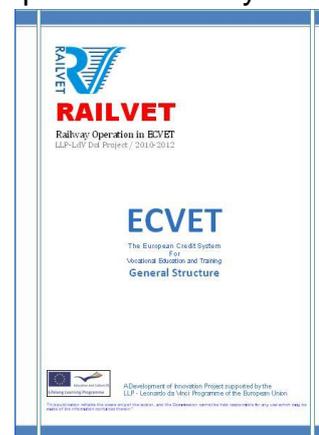
**b) Railway Seminar:**

The first railway seminar within the context of the RAILVET project was held in Ankara / TURKEY on 16-18 February 2011 with the participation of nearly 150 representatives of the:

- Turkish Ministry of National Education
- Turkish Ministry of Transportation
- Embassies of the Partner Countries
- Vocational Qualifications Authority – MYK
- Turkish National Agency - NA
- Project Partner Institutions
- Railway Vocational Schools
- Related Stakeholders (municipalities, unions)

**c) General Structure of ECVET:**

A report titled “General Structure of ECVET” has been jointly developed under the leadership of project partner FVETS, as an initial guide for ECVET adaptation of the frame training programme for “operation” railway job family. The report will be enlarged with comments on the structure and content of the training programme in the second year of the project’s lifetime.

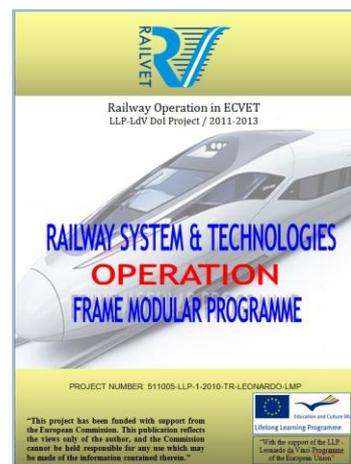


**d) Railway Workshop:**

The first railway workshop within the context of the RAILVET project was held on 12-14 December 2011 in Istanbul / TURKEY with the participation of the representatives of the partner institutions and the external railway experts, cooperated within the context of the Project. The content and structure of the training programme were discussed face-to-face by the railway experts.

**e) Frame Training Programme:**

The project partners have achieved to develop a frame training programme in modular system in English and Turkish languages in electronic format for “operation” job family in railway sector up to the fourth level of European Qualifications Framework, with the cooperation of railway experts from Turkey, France, Italy, Czech Republic, Slovakia, England, Austria, Germany, Spain and Finland.



## 4. Partnerships

The products the RAILVET proposes to produce require the project partners to have expertise and experience;

- a) in working at multinational projects,
- b) in developing training modules and curriculum for VET,
- c) in ECVET system and its applications.

Having existing relations with national and international institutions dealing with railway training is also an added value for the project. Therefore, the project consortium has been established taking the above-mentioned requirements into consideration.

**MEB Meslekî ve Teknik Eğitim Genel Müdürlüğü – MTEGM** (The General Directorate of Vocational and Technical Education), the applicant institution, is directly run by the Turkish Ministry of National Education, and is responsible for carrying out all the managerial and educational duties and services at secondary level vocational and technical schools and at other same level nonformal training institutions in Turkey.

It has the responsibility of overall implementation of the project with respect to the administrative and financial issues. It also coordinates and contributes expertise to the development of the railway training programme and its ECVET adaptation. It will integrate the end products into its existing railway training systems at vocational and technical schools under its management.

**Turkish State Railways (TCDD)** is the greatest public authority whose main function is to operate, expand and renovate the railways, ports, harbours and docks under its management with the help of its 18 expertise units, 7 consultation and inspection units, 7 regional directorates and 5 factories.

TCDD will lead, as well as direct contribution of expertise, the works leading to the development of the railway training programme, using its experience in both operating and providing training in railway sector. It will also integrate the end products into its existing railway training systems in the training centres under its management.

**HAK-IS Trade Union Confederation (HAK-IS)** is today one of the greatest unions in Turkey, with its 9-affiliated trade unions, It has representations in various national bodies including Vocational Qualifications Authority and has a close relation as a social partner with public institutions and has participated in various projects so far contributing to the development of VET curriculums particularly in railway sector.

Being the only trade union organisation represented the Turkish Vocational Qualifications Authority, HAK-IS will contribute to the ECVET adaptation of the frame training programme and take active role in dissemination activities.

**International Union of Railways (UIC)** was founded in 1922 with the aim of creating uniform conditions for the establishment and operation of railways. It is the worldwide organisation for cooperation among railway companies, with nearly 200 members from all five continents, including rail transport operators and infrastructure managers, most of the railway companies and companies conducting activities complementary to those of the railways (public transport, caterers, etc).

Being a worldwide railway union, UIC main roles can be outlined in two headings:

- a) contributing to the harmonisation of the core competences in railway “operation” job family, striving to involve as many external railway experts as possible into the project activities,
- b) contributing to the dissemination and exploitation of the project products and results using its existing networks.

**National Institution of Technical and Vocational Education (NUOV)**, directly run by the Ministry of Education, Youth, and Sports, aims at providing support for the development of technical education in the Czech Republic. Together with institutions from public administration and the social partners, NUOV has been involved in the development of the Czech National Qualification Framework (NQF).

NUOV will provide assistance and feedback to the partners responsible for developing the railway operation curriculum. It will coordinate using the project outcomes as an example of good practice for all schools providing technical education and also as a possibility of approach to the implementation of ECVET in the Czech Republic.

**The Italian Shipping Academy (AIMM)** is a non profit organisation which was created to supply the needs expressed by ship-owners and other stakeholders in the shipping sector to fill the grave shortage of highly qualified maritime professionals on board of merchant ships.

**The Nautical Institute “San GIORGIO” (ITN)** is a technical secondary school for students from 14 to 19 year olds. It will also provide training next year on transportation and logistics following the new Italian organization of the secondary schools.

The main task of the Italian Shipping Academy (being upper-secondary training provider) and the Nautical Institute “San GIORGIO” (being secondary-level training provider) will help integrate into the frame training programme the qualifications needed for multi-module and inter-module transportation. ITN will also exploit the products of the project in the school.

**Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Services (FVETS)** is a non profit institution oriented to VET in accordance with the LLL principles. It encourages the educational activities aimed at the youth, teachers, employed as well as unemployed people by means of providing them with retraining courses, organization of exhibitions, competitions and fairs.

FVETS will help analysis of existing ECVET applications in EU and will help establish the general ECVET structure, the methodological framework, the guidelines, common method and tools for adaptation of railway operation modules on the main objectives of ECVET and EQF.

## 5. Plans for the Future

At the very beginning of the second year of the project, the frame training programme developed and the core competences for “operation” job family agreed by the railway experts in the consortium will be shared with the railway companies, training centres in the EU and members of the project partner International Union of Railways (UIC), both to seek for a higher level of harmonisation of competences at European level and to revitalise the synergy among the stake holders to this aim, as part of disseminating the results and outcomes of the project.

The main task of the project consortium will be the adaptation of the frame training programme to the European Credit Transfer System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET) under the leadership of the project partner Foundation for Vocational Education and Training Services (FVETS), as it has some experience in its implementation, and accomplished some pilot projects on ECVET in Slovakia.

To this end, past experiences in the European Union in ECVET implementation will be examined and other ECVET project owners could be contacted to share experiences and the best practices. The results of all these researches will be integrated into the report already produced and titled “ECVET, General Structure” for in-depth analysis of the frame training programme for ECVET adaptation. During this period, railway and ECVET experts will work hand in hand to finalise the structure of the programme and allocate credit points for the best ECVET adaptation.

The methodological framework including the guidelines, common methods and tools for adaptation of railway operation modules will be built on the main objectives of ECVET and European Qualifications Framework for the transparency and recognition of core competences, relative to the adaptation of modules on logistics and train traffic.

These works and ECVET adaptation of the frame training programme are planned to be finalised with the development of the project’s end product “Railway Operation in ECVET” during the second railway workshop to be held in Prague / Czech Republic in October 2012, to which external railway and ECVET experts will also be invited.

Following the completion of the final product, the project partners will focus on dissemination and exploitation activities and integrating the frame training programme into the existing railway training systems and applications in their own countries.

The second railway seminar within the context of the RAILVET project will be held in December 2012 in Turkey, to which the representatives of the related ministries, schools, training centres and municipalities will be invited. Education and transportation ministries, national agencies, vocational qualifications authorities will be informed by e-mails about the outcomes and results of the project.

## 6. Contribution to EU policies

Depending on its objectives and the nature of its products, the contribution of the RAILVET project to EU policies can be outlined in the following four ways:

- Complimentary to the other European initiatives like the “common licensing regime for train drivers”, the RAILVET project is expected to contribute the realisation of the Commission’s recommendation “to create a European railway area by 2020”, increasing the interoperability of European railway area by harmonising the core competences for railway staff requirements on logistics and train traffic.
- The frame training programme on railway “operation” job family will be on modular basis and flexible enough to be adaptable to the national formal and non-formal training systems in the EU to promote high performance and quality with respect to the lifelong learning strategies making VET in this field more attractive.
- ECVET adaptation of the training programme is directly related to the transparency and recognition of the competences and qualifications of the railway staff in logistics and train traffic.
- As a result, all these contributions are expected to facilitate and increase the mobility of the workers, students and trainees

More specifically, the RAILVET project aims contributions to the following objectives set by the EU:

- The specific objectives of the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP-Obj-a): “to contribute to the development of quality lifelong learning, and to promote high performance, innovation and a European dimension in systems and practices in the field”
- Specific objectives of the Leonardo da Vinci programme (LEO-SpObj-c): “to enhance the attractiveness of vocational education and training and mobility for employers and individuals and to facilitate the mobility of working trainees”
- Operational Objective of the Leonardo da Vinci programme (LeoOpObj-4): “to improve the transparency and recognition of qualifications and competences, including those acquired through non-formal and informal learning”
- Multi Lateral Projects (Priority-1): “Transparency and recognition of competences and qualifications”
- Priority RQ: “Recognition of qualifications”

