

## COMPARATIVE REPORT: ECVET SITUATION AND ITS IMPLEMENTATION IN THE PRODUCTIVE SECTORS



**ECVET-Trainer: Proposals for the gradual application of the ECVET model in the four key productive sectors of the EU. TOI PROJECT. 2012-1-ES1-LEO05-48017**

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## PRESENTATION

The ECVET-Trainer is a project of Transference of Innovation (Lifelong Learning Programme: Leonardo da Vinci, OAPEE), for the period 2012-2014, promoted by the Spanish trade union Federation of Education Workers (FETE-UGT), together with the following organizations: Instituto de Formación y Estudios Sociales IFES (Spain), Maison De La Promotion Sociale, MPS-Aquitaine (France); Centro Europeo Di Ricerca Economica E Sociale, CERES (Italy); Euproma GmbH & Co KG (Germany), Noema-CMI Oy (Finland); and TelePedagogic Knowledge Centre, STPKC (Sweden).

The ECVET-Trainer proposes incorporating the results of the Food-fit project (File:147627-LLP-1-2008-1-ES-KA1-EQF-2008-4524) in order to facilitate the understanding of the ECVET model by VET trainers and centres in the four key productive sectors of the EU (agriculture, industry, construction and services, see NACE codes below), taking into account the EQF levels 1 to 4 and the needs of improving the transparency of qualifications and mobility of workers in the labour market, through transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes achieved by workers in formal, non-formal and informal contexts.

The European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), establishes a common methodological framework to facilitate the transfer of learning credits from one qualification system to another, and promotes transnational mobility and access to lifelong learning for learners and workers. The contribution of VET teachers and trainers (hereafter VET trainers) to the European policies of Lifelong learning is widely known, as well as their acknowledgement as key stakeholders for the goals of the ET2020 and for the implementation of the ECVET model and other European instruments, based on a learning outcomes approach.

The international comparative report shows the results about the exchange of experiences and best practices obtained in national reports, and collects the results of the qualitative analysis through a SWOT method regarding the implementation of ECVET in the European countries. This Comparative report is geared to VET stakeholders. The main purpose is to provide a set of criteria for the implementation of the ECVET model in the productive sectors of the participant countries.

The comparative report presented below collects all the results obtained in the national reports of the project partners<sup>1</sup>. The contents in this document are the following:

- Chapter 1 presents the situation of ECVET from a national perspective: the development of ECVET in the participant countries according to national and international documentary sources.
- Chapter 2 offers a detailed analysis of the national ECVET characteristics, focussing in the advantages and constraints for the development of this model in the national VET systems. It is important the statement of VET in the key productive sectors of the participant countries.
- Chapter 3 contains a detailed description about the selected national experiences and good examples related to the implementation of ECVET in the productive sectors.
- Chapter 4 collects the results of the qualitative analysis developed in each national report and presents the current situation about the contribution of VET teachers and trainers.
- Chapter 5 presents an exploration of the ECVET application for below EQF4, based on SWOT method: strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities and threats are showed in this section of the report.
- Chapter 6 presents the general conclusion of this research, regarding the most important items for the implementation of ECVET in the productive sectors.

## 1. ECVET FROM A NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

According to the EU Recommendation (2009)<sup>2</sup>, from 2012 on ECVET should be gradually applied to VET qualifications in the Member States of the European Union, for a subsequent review and adaption of the ECVET-Recommendation by 2014. Up to now, several different situations and experiences have been developed in the European countries, which have been linked to different approaches among national vocational and education systems as well as different policy sensibilities towards the implementation of the ECVET system.

### Development of ECVET in Europe

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<sup>1</sup> National reports are available in the web site of the ECVET-Trainer Project: <http://ecvet-trainer.euproject.org/>

<sup>2</sup> European Commission (2009): Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 (2009/C 155/02) on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

In the document “The development of ECVET in Europe” (2011)<sup>3</sup>, Cedefop identified several strategies for the implementation of ECVET, which were followed by countries in order to create the necessary conditions for the gradual application of ECVET to VET qualifications at all levels of EQF.

### Strategies for implementing ECVET

Country	Broad range initiative	Impact analysis	Updating regulation	Adapting qualifications system	ECVET European projects	Informing stakeholders
Finland	X	X	X	X	X	X
France					X	X
Germany	X	X		X	X	
Italy			X		X	
Spain				X	X	

**Source: Cedefop, 2011. The development of ECVET in Europe.**

The table above shows that all the participant countries in the ECVET-Trainer project have been involved in some ECVET European projects. It is remarkable that Finland and Germany have developed a national strategy for testing the principles of ECVET regarding their own VET systems through the on-going projects FINNECVET and DECVET. In both cases, competent authorities have tested the legal regulations and the impact in the current organisation of the national system.

Besides, some experiences took place in Italy related with the updating regulation. About the adapting of qualifications systems, Cedefop pointed out two references in Spain, about partial qualifications, and in Germany about devices of validation. Finally, in France and Finland, some strategies for spreading information to stakeholders at national and sectorial levels were developed.

### Statement of the participant countries

Finland. According to the Recommendation, full-scale implementation in Member States begins by degrees in 2012. According to the Education and Research 2011–2016 development plan confirmed by the Finnish Government, the ECVET system will be implemented in vocational, further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications in Finland no later than 2014. ECVET does not cause changes to qualifications, titles or vocational skills requirements, targets of assessment or evaluation criteria of qualifications or units. Study weeks will be removed and replaced with

<sup>3</sup> Cedefop (2011). *The development of ECVET in Europe: 2011*. Luxembourg: Publications Office. Cedefop working paper; No 14. [http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6114\\_en.pdf](http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/EN/Files/6114_en.pdf).

credit points (ECVET points). This has an impact on the education provider's curricula and the planning of instruction. Credit points will also be introduced to competence-based qualifications where study weeks have not been used.

Based on the experiences from FINECVET, it was noted that the implementation of ECVET requires an open approach towards the procedures used in other countries.

In terms of Finnish education providers, this entails a change in values and attitudes towards more learner- and working life-oriented methods. The focus is no longer on individual teachers or subjects, but learning outcomes should, to a greater extent, provide the starting point when organising and planning instruction.

France has not taken a formal decision regarding the ECVET yet. The official coordinator of the device has not been named yet, but the Ministry of Education decided to become institutionally involved and lead the project ECVET MENECEVET whose principal purpose is to test and develop ECVET for mobility, but also to analyze the conditions of implementation of ECVET (EQF level 4), the expected impacts of the learning outcomes for the professional qualifications, the guidelines mobility using ECVET, and improving the quality of the assessment.

In summary, the situation for France is as follows: in a reflection phase; In testing phase mainly on three areas: Metallurgy, Automobile Industry, and Sports; the implementation of ECVET is under the leadership of the Ministry of Education who is also a member of the CNCEP; not a credit system yet; learning units and courses required for evaluation in the workplace; and finally an observation: the French system is compatible with the ECVET.

Germany. The implementation of ECVET has been carried out so far on the basis of trials and testing, mainly through Leonardo da Vinci projects and studies, in accordance with the national legislation and practice. In addition, the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF) has implemented the DECVET initiative, which intends to pilot and test the ECVET approach in the framework of the German dual system. DECVET is no direct implementation of ECVET in the national VET system. It is an initiative that includes ten pilot projects, which aim to improve permeability and recognition of learning outcomes at four interfaces around the dual system: Preparatory VET – VET in dual system; VET in dual system – full time vocational school; Within the dual system (between different professions); VET in dual system – further vocational training.

Spain. The starting point to implement ECVET in Spain is favourable and all the principles in the 2009 Recommendation are complied with (except for the definition of the credit points), because VET is connected with production sectors and is organised into accumulable learning units. National and regional institutions have not taken the step forward yet that is required to implement ECVET. From the stand point of the National System for Qualifications and Vocational Educational and Training (Organic Law 5/2002), all the VET accreditations that arise from these qualifications –both from the labour and educational administrations– are based on

learning outcomes and levels equivalent to those of ECVET. The EQF has not been used because the NQF (MECU) has not yet been approved.

Italy. The scenario at Italian level, with regard to the ECVET system, is formally consolidated and operational, and has been further entrenched following the above-mentioned referencing report. It should be noted, finally, that there is still missing the Italian National Coordination Point of the ECVET, ISFOL is a point of coordination for the EQF, but not for ECVET, even if it unofficially assumed this role. In this context, the main problem for an application of ECVET is that the national system of vocational training, which is managed by the regional authorities, presents us with heterogeneous reality, with regions ready to implement it, while others are not.

## 2. DETAILED ANALYSIS OF THE NATIONAL ECVET CHARACTERISTICS

The following chapter provides an overview of the national ECVET characteristics of the countries participating in the ECVET Trainer project.

In general it can be said that ECVET is at least known to the responsible stakeholders in each country (Finland, Germany, France, Spain and Italy). The situation in Finland, France and Germany is solid and especially with the introduction of national projects in Finland (FINECVET) and Germany (DECVET) to enhance the implementation of ECVET, both countries are very well prepared for a gradual implementation of ECVET.

The situation in Spain and Italy is more challenging; in Spain "ECVET is practically unknown, except to a minority of VET experts" and in Italy, "it is not possible to identify a real interface structure for the ECVET. At present, the implementation activities are delegated to individual experimental experiences (restricted to specific partnerships, areas or geographical boundaries)".

In France, however, ECVET is considered "an experiment in progress", but nevertheless the "French system is probably more ready than others to ECVET".

In the paragraph below, the individual national ECVET characteristics will be analysed in more detail emphasising on specific national distinctiveness/ challenges/ problems.

### **Finland**

Finland was involved in the ECVET technical working group appointed by the European Commission right from the start in 2002:

- The FINECVET project can be considered the first national ECVET pilot.
- Introduction of the ECVET system no later than in 2014 to all vocational qualifications at the same time.

- Finnish VET can be considered ECVET-friendly (system mostly fulfils the requirements related to the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes).
- Finnish qualifications are divided into units that are based on learning outcomes.
- Finnish qualifications offer the possibility for flexible, individual learning paths – learners can accumulate competence one unit at a time and also obtain it from another education system.
- Recognition of previous learning outcomes is statutory and not based on time, but the learning outcomes themselves.
- Nevertheless, Finnish VET also poses challenges to the implementation of ECVET One of the difficulties arises when assigning ECVET points or credit points to competence-based qualifications, because the scope of these qualifications has not been specified.

## **Spain**

- ECVET is practically unknown in Spain, except to a minority of VET experts.
- Vocational training providers hardly use it.
- It is not included in the regulations that regulate the different training programmes.
- Slow implementation expected – limited only to some sectors – because ECVET is connected to mobility which is still very uncommon in Intermediate Level Vocational Training (Grado Medio) and in Vocational Training for Employment.
- Current strategy by the stakeholders: waiting.
- There are some Lifelong Learning (European Commission) programmes that are experimenting with the principles of ECVET, such as the Leonardo da Vinci, transfer and innovation development projects.

### Main obstacles:

- ECVET is not a consolidated system yet.
- Trainers and teachers do not really know about the ECVET system or other European instruments such as EQF, EUROPASS, EQUAVET.
- The lack of a credit and credit point system in the Spanish VET may be an obstacle that hinders the development of ECVET, as there is no prior experience with these resources.
- Low mobility of students from non-higher degrees, mainly because of language barriers (esp. for older and non-qualified workers).
- Traditional lack of mobility of students/workers between different learning contexts is also seen as an obstacle.
- A distinction should be made between mobility in the work environment and in the learning environment (it must be taken into account that the ECVET does not cover labour mobility, but only mobility in learning contexts).

## **Italy**

- Integrated EQF-NQF-ECVET system for the practical application of the European strategies – first mentioning in Italy – 2012.

- Italian National Coordination of the ECVET, ISFOL, coordinates EQF, but not ECVET.
- National system of vocational training (which is managed by the regional authorities – heterogeneity) with regions ready to implement it, while others are not.
- Nevertheless a tendency to standardization is in place, as shown by the results achieved by the State-Regions Conference in July 2011.
- It is not possible to identify a real interface structure for the ECVET in Italy - at present, the implementation activities are delegated to individual experimental experiences (restricted to specific partnerships, areas or geographical boundaries).

## **France**

- ECVET in France: an experiment in progress – reflecting phase.
- Project ECVET MENECEVET whose principal purpose is to test and develop ECVET for mobility but also to analyse the conditions of implementation of ECVET EQF level 4, the expected impacts of the learning outcomes for the professional qualifications, guidelines mobility using ECVET, the possibilities of and improving the quality of the assessment - testing phase mainly on three areas: Metallurgy, Automobile Industry, Sports.
- Establishment of a secretariat for support and facilitate the European network called "ECVET TEAM" the secretariat offers various services including a website, information sessions / seminars and training, interventions demand.
- Our French system is probably more ready than others to ECVET (RNCP, carvings Units).

## **Germany**

- The implementation so far has been carried out on the basis of trials and testing, mainly through Leonardo da Vinci projects and studies.
- DECVET: is no direct implementation of ECVET in the national VET system (it is an initiative that includes ten pilot projects, which aim to improve permeability and recognition of learning outcomes at four interfaces around the dual system).
- Focus of these projects is the creation of transferable methods for identification, validation and recognition of learning outcomes within the national legislation and practice such as the vocational training act.
- The projects have addressed mainly the sectors of metal, logistics, transport, plastics processing, occupation, tourism trade, and construction.
- Implementing ECVET in Germany: retaining the "Berufsprinzip" and the aim of acquiring comprehensive vocational skills and competences.

As already mentioned at the beginning; ECVET is known to all important stakeholders in the countries participating in the ECVET Trainers project. Nevertheless there are major differences between them, when it comes to the implementation status. Germany, Finland and France are on the way to

implementation. All three countries are testing the impact of ECVET on their specific VET system in national pilot projects (FINECVET, DECVET and MENEDEVET).

As in various other educational matters, Finland's VET systems seems to be very "ECVET friendly", because it is already based on learning outcomes and it offers the flexibility to obtain competences also from other educational systems and learning contexts.

The French established a secretariat to support and facilitate the European network called "ECVET TEAM". This secretariat offers various services including a website, information sessions / seminars and training and interventions on demand. The French system seems also very much ready for ECVET, because of the "Répertoire national des certifications professionnelles" (RNCP) and their carving units. The German dual VET system focuses on the preservation of the "Berufsprinzip" during the implementation of ECVET. In the national pilot project (DECVET) aim ten pilot projects to improve the permeability and recognition of learning outcomes at four interfaces around the German dual system.

Huge challenges for the implementation of ECVET are posed by the Italian and Spanish VET system. In Spain ECVET is virtual unknown to VET professionals except to a few stakeholders. Therefore it is also not included in the regulations that regulate the different training programs and a slow implementation that probably will also be limited to only a few sectors is to be expected.

In Italy the main obstacle for ECVET knowledge is the heterogeneity of the Italian VET system. Some regions are ready for the implementation process, others are not. That's why it is not possible to identify a real interface structure for the ECVET in Italy; at present, the implementation activities are delegated to individual experimental experiences (restricted to specific partnerships, areas or geographical boundaries).

General obstacles for the implementation of ECVET are seen for example in the difficulties arising when assigning ECVET points or credit points to competence-based qualifications, because the scope of these qualifications has not been specified, yet. Another concern is that ECVET is not a consolidated system so far and that most VET trainers and teachers do not really know about it or other European instruments such as EQF, EUROPASS, EQUAVET. Low mobility of students from non-higher degrees (mainly because of language barriers, esp. for older and non-qualified workers) and a traditional lack of mobility of students/workers between different learning contexts are additional obstacles for an efficient ECVET implementation.

## 2.1. SECTORIAL VET OFFER IN THE COUNTRIES (UNDER EQF 4)

### **Finland**

**The education sector and learning in Finland.** During the last decade many major investments have been made and most Finnish schools have

access to sufficient information and communication technology. However, the degree to which technology and new innovative digital services are utilized in everyday learning still vary greatly. Even though the ICT prerequisites for efficient eLearning are present, it is seen that the Finnish education system hasn't yet been able to make the most of the possibilities from ICT, especially as an enabler of new types of learning environments and pedagogical approaches. Much has been achieved in integrating ICT as a part of learning processes, but still a lot remains to be done especially in improving the attitudes towards ICT and integrating eLearning into learning processes.

## France

**Crop and animal production, manufacture of food products.** CAP to the Master via the BTS or DUT, there is a wide range of training courses. Short courses, long courses, most often validated by the Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries.

Diplomas EQF4 and below:

- BAC Pro Professional Bachelor level IV is a degree designed to train workers, highly skilled employees and operations managers. The training is organized in modules, some (including general education) that are common to all specialties of this BAC. There are 16 weeks of compulsory training.
- BAC Techno Admission to this tray is open to several audiences: Candidates who have completed a general and technological second class or to holders of a CAPA or BEPA students two years after the third grade. The eight weeks of training courses including five individual companies and three in the form of both group exchanges.
- BEPA (patent agricultural vocational aptitude) unlike the CAPA, it has a dual purpose: the entry into the workforce or further education in the vocational and technological means.
- In other words, it leaves the door open to professional BAC, to the patent agricultural technician or technological Bac. Admission is after third grade, a CAP or a CAPA. The training lasts two years and is based on a modular system.
- CAPA (Certificate of Professional Agricultural aptitude). Possible choice after a third technology, CAPA is a degree that allows you to enter working life as a skilled worker of agricultural enterprises and farm. The traditional CAPA unlike the CAPA renovated the traditional CAPA prepares three years after the fifth. The teaching is very practical and includes general as well as technological and vocational education materials. Another difference is that the exam is only at the end of training.
- The CAPA by credit units: Specifically, the CAPA content's is distributed in different credit units (UC), independent of each other. They can be obtained separately and in any order and are valid for

five years. For people in apprenticeship, training, that CAPA is obtained by alternating two years. The student spends 22 weeks in training centres and 72 weeks in the company of master trainers.

**Construction of buildings.** The Construction (building and construction) is a vital sector of the French economy. It employs about 1.2 million people in 347,000 companies in France. The construction sector brings together some thirty major trades, divided into three main types of functions: business functions, the functions of education, making functions on the site. The EQF level 4 concerns the construction trades (shutterer, plumber, electrician, foreman, etc.) Are often available from the CAP and go to Bac pro.

For these three sectors, most training EQF level 4 are in a vocational school or Apprenticeship centres.

**Residential care activities.** Paramedical professions are highly regulated. To exercise this right, it is essential to get the diploma explicitly prepared. Most of qualifications paramedics are issued by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of National Education, which precisely defines the content. Paramedical is accessible to all levels of training. Thus, no school diploma is required to engage in the preparation of qualification for ambulance. On the contrary, we must do three years of study after high school to get a degree of psychomotor state. Since 2010, the declination of the European LMD system (bachelor -master- doctorate) has to initiate the revision of the initial training of allied health professionals in France and their gradual integration into university courses. Thus, at the end of their training, nursing graduates obtain the degree of recognition of the license.

Overall care activities to people trades EQF4 level and below.

## Germany

**Training needs in the four productive sectors.** In the following paragraph, the focus/ content of the VET trainings in the four sectors of the projects are outlined. It's a short overview of the main curricula and of the practical organization of the VET training.

### Germany: VET Training contents

Crop & Animal Production:	Manufacture of Food	Construction of Buildings:	Residential Care Service
Product Marketing	Environmental Protection	Environmental Protection	Custodial actions
Business Studies	Labour law and collective bargaining law	Labour law and collective bargaining law	Consulting and supervision of relatives
Service	Health and Safety	Health and Safety	First Aid
Food Production	Regulations	Regulations	Organisation & documentation
Environmental Protection	Quality Assurance	Quality Assurance	Psychology, Physiology, Biology, Chemistry, Physics
Profession specific knowledge/ know-how	Business Studies	Business Studies	
	Industrial hygiene	Profession specific knowledge/ know-how	
	Sales		

Storage of food  
Profession specific  
knowledge/ know-how

Hygienics  
Disease care  
Rehabilitation  
Pharmacy  
Emergency medical aid

**Crop & Animal Production: Practical organization of the VET trainings.** Agriculturalists and Wine Grower have to do a so-called VET school basic year ("Berufsschulgrundjahr") which is full time schooling for the first year of the VET training. For the other two years they sign an article of traineeship with the VET-company and are trained both in the company and in VET school.

In general: trainees are trained according to the German "principle of duality" meaning that they have two learning places, the VET school and the VET-company. After two years of training they have an **intermediate examination** and after three years, they have to do a **final examination** (usually consisting of a written, oral and practical part) executed by the federal ministry of agriculture or subordinated, appointed authorities or agricultural chambers to complete the training with an accepted profession (holistic approach).

**Manufacture of Food. Practical organization of the VET trainings:** Trainees are trained according to the German "principle of duality" meaning that they have two learning places, the VET school and the VET-company. After two years of training they have an **intermediate examination** and after three years, they have to do a **final examination** (usually consisting of a written, oral and practical part) executed by the Chamber of Crafts or the Chamber of Commerce to complete the training with an accepted profession (holistic approach).

**Construction of Buildings:** Trainees are trained according to the German "principle of duality" meaning that they have two learning places, the VET school and the VET-company. After two years of training they have an **intermediate examination** and after three years, they have to do a **final examination** (usually consisting of a written, oral and practical part) executed by the Chamber of Crafts or the Chamber of Commerce to complete the training with an accepted profession (holistic approach).

**Residential Care Service: Practical organization of the VET trainings.** Trainees are trained according to the German "principle of duality" meaning that they have two learning places, the VET school and the VET-company. Given that the training durations vary from one to three years in this sector and that the VET training is not supervised by a federal authority, examinations are not executed by a Chamber of Commerce or the like, but by an examination board from the VET school that was appointed by the responsible authority. Usually there are no intermediate examinations, only

the **final** ones and these usually consist of a written, oral and practical part to complete a VET training for an accepted profession (holistic approach).

## **Italy**

VET offers, available within each of the four key productive sectors:

With regard to the four key sectors, on which the ECVET TRAINER project intends to focus (NACE A1 crop and animal production, NACE A1 manufacture of food products, F41 NACE construction of buildings, NACE Q87 residential care activities), the national document is the State-Regions Agreement of 27 July 2011 establishing a repertoire of educational and vocational training. In this document it is possible to draw the following professional figures:

- Farm operator which includes three specific addresses, including stock farming, tree crops and herbaceous horticultural, forestry and environmental protection;
- Food processing operator;
- Construction worker;

Which are linked directly to the first three fields? However, with respect to residential care activities is necessary to refer to the SOCIAL HEALTH OPERATOR, which was established through an agreement between the Minister of Health, the Minister for Social Solidarity and the Regions and the Autonomous Provinces of Trento and Bolzano.<sup>4</sup>

The figures relating to the document of July 2011 already have a systematic framework of knowledge, skills and competencies, essential to put in place the ECVET system, while the social welfare and social health figures referring to previous regulatory agreements still have an old setting.

The Repertory of educational and vocational training definitively identifies a minimum standard of training consisting of a coherent set of specific technical and professional skills, declined in relation to the work processes and associated activities that characterize the professional content of the figure itself. It has to be specified, however, that these figures are always described as "broadband" according to a perspective capable of representing valid educational standards and can be spent in many working environments. This because the system requires that national figures could be further declined in specific regional profiles representing the territorial peculiarities of the labor market. It should be noted, of course, that the technical and professional skills and basic skills that characterize the

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<sup>4</sup> State-Regions Agreement of 22 February 2001

regional profile should be considered in addition to those adopted as a national standard. The professional reference are characterized by being trainable through education-training-work paths and to be innovative in relation to the skills that have since they are intended to operate on developed and technologically advanced work processes.

In line with the EQF, competence is described in the Repertory in terms of responsibility and autonomy: it expresses the type of situation for which it provides a certain mastery, which mobilizes the resources and the expected product. In parallel, the competence is evaluated in terms of skills and knowledge, defined according to the directions of the EQF, the first as the ability to apply knowledge to complete tasks and solve problems and the second as a set of facts, principles, theories and practice related to a field of work.

Within a national framework, the figure is accompanied by a brief description of the professional profile, then identified in the work processes and their respective competences. And so each competency is cleaved in order to make it operational, in a series of skills and knowledge.

The paths of Vocational Education and Training identified in the Repertory refer to minimum educational standards related to basic skills and common technical and professional skills and specifications, considered as learning outcomes. More specifically, the offer of FP provides for the acquisition of the following skills:

- basic skills of linguistic, mathematical, scientific, technological, historical, social and economic;
- technical and professional skills areas (safety, quality, health, environment);
- specific occupational skills related to the professional content of the national figure of reference<sup>5</sup>.

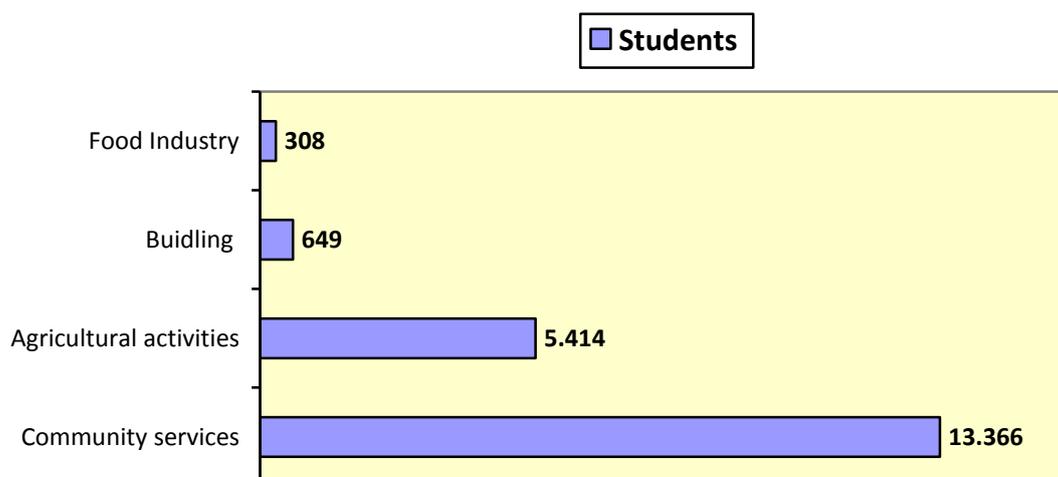
## **Spain**

There are 42.949 students enrolled in the sectors that are a reference for the project, which accounts for 14.83% of a total of 289,568 students. The largest amount of enrolled students belongs to the professional branch of sociocultural and community services, with 13,366 students, (4.62% of the total), followed by agriculture, with 5,414 students, (1.87%), and lastly, building and civil works, with 649 students (0.22%) and food industries with 308 (0.11%).

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<sup>5</sup> First Referencing Report of Italian European Framework of Qualifications to EQF, June 2012.

### Students enrolled in Intermediate Level Vocational Training (Grado Medio) in 2012



**Source: Prepared by IFES with data from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport 2013**

Some of the most in-demand education pathways (qualifications and certificates of professional standards) in the sectors of agriculture, food industry, building and civil works, and sociocultural and community services are the following:

Sector	VET Titles (Ministry of Education)	VET:Certificate of Professionalism (Ministry of Labour)
<b>Agriculture</b>	Agricultural Technician 2.000 hours	Organic farming. 480 hours
<b>Food industry</b>	Preparation of Food Products Technician. 2.000 hours	Butchery and production of meat products. 510 hours
<b>Building and Civil Works</b>	Construction Technician. 2.,000 hours	Masonry units. 490 hours
<b>Sociocultural and Community Services</b>	Care for Dependent Persons Technician. 2.000 hours	Social and health care for people at home. 450 hours

**Source: Prepared by IFES with data from the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sport and the Public State Employment Service (SEPE), 2013**

### 3. SELECTED NATIONAL EXPERIENCES AND GOOD EXAMPLES

The following chapter provides both an overview of the cases / good examples contributed within the respective national reports, as well as some reflections on how the good examples and their presentation structures potentially could be utilized in connection with the ECVET-trainer project's subsequent development of training-the-trainer online learning modules. There is totally fifteen 'good examples' presented in the five national reports, and these include:

#### **Finland**

The national report from Finland included four case studies / reports on good examples, each elaborated in detail in a recently published document from Finland on "FINECVET as a pioneer" following web-link; [http://www.oph.fi/download/143718\\_Finecvet\\_as\\_a\\_pioneer.pdf](http://www.oph.fi/download/143718_Finecvet_as_a_pioneer.pdf)

The four good practice / case studies included:

- FI Example 1 – Case/Good practice of ECVET mobility process (p 18-29)
- FI Example 2 - Case study in Tourism industry – Rosa Rider (p 30-35)
- FI Example 3 - Case study in Property maintenance service – Vantaa (p 37-40)
- FI Example 4 - Case study in Restaurant/waitress services – Keuda (p 41-42)

The first of the Finnish 'good examples' may well be suited as base materials for the training modules to be developed in the subsequent phases of the ECVET-Trainer project.

#### **France**

Three sectors were selected for experiment: metallurgy, automotive and sports:

- FR Example 1. Experimentation in the Sport The study (duration 2 years) has two objectives: - Compare professional situations and existing certifications in three sub-sectors (water sports - equestrian activities - golf). - Compare certifications and their position in relation to the EQF and national frameworks
- FR Example 2. The National Association France-for Automobile Training (ANFA) ANFA, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry of Paris (CCIP) and the French Ministry of National Education have combined their resources and expertise to build a support team, working in a collegial manner, for the benefit European ECVET network.
- FR Example 3. The project MENECEVET. The Ministry of Education is committed with French CIEP in an experimental project financed by

the ECVET European Commission under the 2010 call for proposals of the Leonardo da Vinci program (sub-program of the European education and training throughout life). Objectives: The reflections focus on the vocational baccalaureate, referenced to level 4 EQF, and more specifically on certain specialties from different sectors: hospitality-customer relationship services, secretarial and accounting, care and human services, electronics, building structural work.

The third of the French 'good examples' may well be suited as base materials for the subsequent project development of ECVET training for teachers.

## **Germany**

The German national report included two 'good examples'. The first of the two examples were published in an article called "From 'trying ECVET' to 'putting ECVET into practice': the CREDCHEM example", in the 10th edition of the ECVET magazine, August 2012, as a practical example of testing the implementation of ECVET, while the second example was initially published in Part II of the ECVET User's Guide as "Using ECVET for Geographical Mobility (2012)".

DE Example 1: From "trying ECVET" to "putting ECVET into practice": CREDCHEM.

CREDCHEM is a transnational project promoted by the Bundesinstitut für Berufsbildung, (Federal Institute for Vocational Education), in Germany, and integrated by two more German organizations and 4 organizations from Italy, Czech Republic, Bulgaria and Slovakia, respectively. This project aimed to foster mobility in the chemical sector, assuming that, given the commonalities in work processes and tasks, operators and laboratory professionals in the chemicals sector have comparable knowledge and skills, regardless of the country in which they followed their training. Consequently, this profession provides a good opportunity to test the ECVET principles.

In order to use the ECVET to facilitate mobility of learners and to support the quality of the mobility experience, the following approach was followed:

A shared methodology for identifying and describing learning outcomes that are part of the qualifications in all the partner countries; and

The use of 'mobility units' or units for mobility.

This 'good example' illustrates the added value of using such 'mobility units' for learners' learning abroad, expressed in the example as contributing to:

The quality of the mobility is enhanced: the agreement on and transparency of learning outcomes that a learner is to achieve abroad make it clear what the host institution is expected to 'deliver' for the learner(s).

The common work on identifying learning outcomes and analyzing qualifications in terms of groups of learning outcomes leads to development of mutual trust among competent authorities in the sector.

DE Example 2: The mobility of Yvonne, who is preparing a qualification in the metal industry sector (Mechatronikerin) in Germany in the Dual VET System<sup>12</sup>

This second good example were using a presentation structure of before-during-after set of activities/events, such as:

Before mobility

- Set up a partnership
- Identify the unit of learning outcomes
- Discuss Level and Assessment of LOs
- Clarify how LO will be validated and recognized
- Sign a MoU

During mobility

- Take part in learning activities preparing for the identified LOs
- Assess what LO the learner has achieved

After mobility

- Provide evidence about the assessment
- Validate learners' credit
- Recognise learner's credit
- Evaluate and review

The Before-During-After presentation structure introduced as part of this 'good example' may potentially also be used as a standardised structure for the information presentations in the training modules to be subsequently developed for the teacher training programme/modules by the ECVET-Training project.

## **Italy**

The Italian national report includes three 'good examples' in the form of summary descriptions of three EU project with Italian coordination or participation. These are:

IT Example 1: The MOTO Project

The M.O.T.O. project – "Model Of Transferability of learning Outcome units", which ended in 2011, formed the part of the first generation of pilot projects, and had the aim to verify the application of the ECVET technical specifications for training in mobility in the European context. "The M.O.T.O. partnership was intended to test a model and a methodology for the recognition of credits in vocational training in the light of the ECVET Recommendation aiming at urging member countries to establish procedures for the recognition of credits earned in training courses developed in different countries". The project was promoted by the Italian

Ministry of Education and was coordinated by Isfol. The project involved Austria, Finland and Iceland. The partnership was also supported by the Veneto Region and the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education as associated partners. The primary aims of the project were to identify a common framework for testing ECVET and to facilitate the assessment, validation, recognition, accumulation and transfer of units of learning outcomes achieved in different contexts, as well as the evaluation of different ECVET practices in the partner countries, but also to develop partnerships and networks between authorities and institutions responsible for vocational training.

#### IT Example 2: The COLOR Project

The COLOR project – “Competency and Learning Outcomes Recognition for Migrants” was launched in March 2011 and ended in April of 2013. The project has been granted funding under the Call for proposals 2010, and is part of the second generation of ECVET testing.

COLOR has tested the experimental application of ECVET in the healthcare sector and in the construction industry with a dual purpose:

- 1) the creation of a stable network of national and regional authorities, education and training providers and industry experts,
- 2) experience the ECVET for the evaluation and mutual recognition of learning outcomes with a view to facilitating the conditions of life and work of the "migrants".

The partnership involved Isfol (LLP national agency and coordinator of the project), the regions of Campania, Lazio, Piedmont, Tuscany, Basilicata and Calabria and Formedil as associated partners. The partnership has also enlisted the support of the competent authorities of Malta, Romania and Scotland with an advisory role to ensure the inter-readability of practice developed.

The initial idea of the project is to use the ECVET principles for the enhancement of skills and the recognition of learning outcomes of low skilled workers, especially migrants, which, in the context of an unstable labor market, need to qualify and upgrade their skills more easily. The COLOR projects aimed at:

- adapting qualification in terms of LOs based on transferable shared methods;
- developing units of ECVET-oriented LOs;
- developing testing activities to assess the sustainability of the system of units;
- establishing a sustainable network of competent authorities for qualifications and stakeholders.

Based on these priorities the work was therefore focused on a detailed analysis of the language and the ECVET mechanisms, and subsequently on the development of units of learning outcomes. This work was carried out under two groups of sectorial technicians.

### IT Example 3: ICARE Project

The "I CARE project" dealt with improving mobility and career paths for personal care and social workers. The project was initiated in 2011 through a partnership between organizations from four European countries (Italy, Romania, Germany and Poland) it is also one of the projects funded by the European Commission within the EU Commission call for pilot initiatives aimed at experience the ECVET.

### **Spain**

#### ES Example 1 - ANGIE 2.0 Project.

The ANGIE project builds on an argument that the world is more and more interrelated and students must get familiar with other cultures and international components in order to get prepared for an international labour market, as studying and working abroad provides an international view of formal learning for VET students. In order to carry out formal and mobility-oriented formal learning, ECVET (European Credit System in Vocational Education and Training) units need to be developed and the learning outcomes from those should be validated. On the other hand, there is non-formal and informal education that should also be validated. This validation is not easy and it is unexplored in certain countries. The purpose of ANGIE project was to contribute positively to such ambitions. The ANGIE project is further elaborated upon within the following web site: <http://www.europeaespana.es/proyectos/Angie.html>

#### ES Example 2 -Construction Sector. CERTENT Project.

Implementation of ECVET and ECTS for the certification of learning outcomes and qualifications of construction business people in the construction sector have been piloted in the CERTENT project, with its implementation period being 2012-2014. The CERTENT project has explored the context of ECVET implementation among others in a SWOT format.

The outcomes from this project initiative are still under development, but they are recognized already at this mid-project stages as a potential contributor to the good examples of ECVET practices.

#### 4. ROLE OF VET TEACHERS AND TRAINERS AS ACTORS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF ECVET

As the contribution of VET teachers and trainers to the European policies of Lifelong learning is widely known, as well as their acknowledgement as key stakeholders for the goals of the ET2020 and for the implementation of the ECVET model, it is important to focus on the specific role of VET practitioners in the participant countries as actors of this shifting process. The main obstacle for an effective contribution of trainers to the implementation of ECVET seems to be, from a general point of view, their lack of knowledge of the European instruments and the not full comprehension of the importance of a shift to learning outcomes approach in all the programmes of the lifelong learning policies. In this chapter we will consider the specific role of VET practitioners as actors for the development of the ECVET model in the participant countries.

##### **Finland**

The Finnish main ECVET actors are the Ministry of Education and Culture, the Finnish National Board of Education, the Education providers (VET), the Qualification providers and the Qualification committees. The Ministry of Education and Culture is responsible for decree on degrees and for assigning ECVET points for qualifications. The Finnish National Board of education is responsible for the qualification requirements and for assigning ECVET points for units. The education providers award the qualification certificate, assign ECVET points for part of a unit, assess, validate and recognize the competencies. Qualification providers validate competencies and assign ECVET points for parts of a unit. Conclusively the qualification committees are responsible for the recognition of competencies and for awarding a qualification certificate.

The most important learning outcomes in the professional performance of VET providers are:

- to be able to programme training actions, adapted to the characteristics of the training process, to the profile of trainees and to the socio-labour situation.
- to be able to select, develop, adapt and use materials, media and educational resources for the development of training contents in the courses.
- to be able to develop and tutoring training actions, using techniques, strategies and teaching resources.
- to be able to evaluate the teaching-learning process in the development of the course.
- to be able to provide socio-labour information and guidance and to promote the quality of vocational training.

As regards the rules established by the Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 on the establishment of

ECVET system, in order to implement this model in the vocational training system, the VET practitioners should:

- be able to identify official VET qualifications (titles, modules) in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies.
- be able to recognize units of learning outcomes and credits in VET programmes
- be able to describe a method to allocate ECVET points within the VET programme.
- be able to take part in the process of definition of a memorandum of understanding together with competent authorities and VET centers in different countries.
- be able to take part in the process of signing of learning agreements among VET centers and individuals, under a memorandum of understanding.
- be able to evaluate the skills of the students, acquired in other context (formal, non-formal and informal) before starting the training process.
- be able to guide students through different learning contexts in order to get credits regarding an official qualification.
- be able to identify qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competencies in VET programmes.

## **France**

The French National Association for Automobile Training, the Chamber of Commerce in Paris and the French Ministry of National Education have gathered their means and skills together in a partnership to form a support team, working together for the benefit of the ECVET European network. The main services implemented by the support team for ECVET European network members are:

- Record-keeping of new ECVET network members.
- Website set-up and management.
- Design and organisation of annual forum, workshops, seminars uniquely for network members and representatives of Member States to the ECVET users `group.
- Communication on ECVET.
- Carry out research in order to facilitate the implementation of ECVET.

## **Germany**

The VET training in Germany demands the duality from practical in-company VET training and theoretical education in VET schools. The Residential Care Service sector is an exception. Here the VET training is working according to the dual principal as well, but the VET trainers of the practical part of the VET training are rather "on-site" mentors than VET trainers for the trainees. The vast majority of the VET training is conducted by VET teachers with an academic background. The reason for this difference is that the theoretical knowledge has to become action orientated in that way that the professional practice is based on scientific findings. In reverse, the professional action has to be proven by scientific findings.

The following roles of VET practitioners can be defined:

**Guidance.** VET practitioners should be able to give advice and guidance through the course of the VET training. And therefore enhance and promote the quality of the VET training. Regarding the implementation of ECVET in Germany, that means that the educational personnel should be familiar with the concept of "learning outcomes", and accordingly be able to evaluate skills of the trainees acquired in other contexts before the VET training starts, and be able to guide them through different learning contexts in order to get credits for an official qualification.

**Gate keeper.** VET practitioners should be able to select, develop, adapt and use materials, media and educational resources for the development of training contents of the VET training allowing VET trainees to get through all mandated stages of their vocational training. Furthermore they should be able to program training actions, adapted to the characteristics of the training process, to the profile of trainees and to the socio-labor situation. Regarding the implementation of ECVET in Germany, that means that through the allocation of credits the VET training would gain transparency and comparability not only throughout the participating European countries but also within Germany. To fulfill this role the VET practitioners need the support of the officials from the authorities and chambers.

## **Italy**

The results of the interviews carried out with some experts have shown that, in the VET context, the practitioners who play a key role are teachers, trainers, tutors, laboratory technicians, coordinators and consultants. In particular, the most important are those who are involved in the recognition of competencies and in the educational and vocational activities. Unfortunately, in Italy, teachers and trainers usually ignore the system for the capitalization of competences and so their role is not so relevant.

As regards the role of teachers, it has emerged that new procedures and collaborations are needed in the current system of education and training: teachers could understand and apply the ECVET model, but they have to cooperate with other professionals (tutors, assistants, technicians, etc.) who will help them to manage the courses. It has been discovered also that they are not able to adopt and apply the ECVET system in their work. Indeed, teachers and trainers state that the educational system has been changing and so they don't have the time to reorganize the training activities.

According to the professionals, the most important learning outcomes are the following:

- Capability to plan training activities suitable for the characteristics of the process, for the profile of students and for the socio-economic context.
- Capability to evaluate the teaching-learning process during the course.
- Capability to select, develop, adapt and use training materials, media tools and resources useful for the contents of the course.

In order to implement ECVET model in the vocational training system, the VET practitioners should:

- be able to describe the official qualifications in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.
- be able to identify the units of learning outcomes and the ECVET credit points.
- be able to evaluate the learning outcomes of students achieved in other contexts (non formal and informal contexts) before starting a training course.
- be able to define a memorandum of understanding together with the competent authorities and foreign training centres.
- be able to stipulate a training contract between the training centre and the trainee within the memorandum of understanding.

## **Spain**

Vocational training professionals work in different intervention areas, on one hand, those in the public administrations, who help with the design, implementation and generalisation of the system, for example, INCUAL (National Institute of Qualifications) and Ministries of Education and Labour specialists. And on the other hand, those who work in training centres, such as trainers, VET teachers, and the managers and experts at the centres.

As for trainers and teachers, in Spain there are different professionals connected with the Initial Vocational Training systems and the Vocational Training for Employment system. This way, in the formal learning context the teacher and the tutor for work experience in companies are identified; and in the non-formal learning context, the VET trainer profile is identified, as well as other profiles of trainers in companies, such as mentors and coaches. In all cases, these professionals can work via teletraining platform. It must be observed that this difference cannot be considered categorical because the distinction made between formal and non-formal learning can be misleading when applied to Spain, for example, in integrated centres that combine training connected with qualifications and/or certificates of professional standards, that is, with trainers (whose work is carried out in the subsystem of training for employment) who can carry out training that can be similar to formal learning. The role of qualified workers must also be taken into account in the case of work experience or training in work centres (FCT). In these cases, the fact that the work is carried out with agreements does not mean that the trainer has a qualification or certificate, despite being a formal learning process that leads to a qualification or certificate. With ECVET, the recognition of learning will always be ultimately formal.

In the context of Initial Vocational Training and Vocational Training for Employment, the capabilities of vocational training professionals that are valued most positively in connection with ECVET implementation are the following:

- Programme training adapted to the characteristics of the training process, in the students' profiles and the social/work situation.

- Provide information and work guidance and promote the quality of vocational training for employment.
- Develop scalable training with modules, and the integration of this training in a professional profile with skills to use the knowledge in a real job.
- Identify the needs of companies and the sector, and tell the students about them so their training is geared towards their requirements.
- Take into account the production sector, SMEs and their most immediate needs, and provide a fast response.

The learning outcomes that the teachers and trainers can take on in the ECVET implementation process are the following:

- Identify official qualifications (VET qualifications, modules), in terms of knowledge, skills and abilities.
- Recognise the units of learning outcomes and credits in VET programmes.
- Assess the skills that students have gained in another context (formal, non-formal or informal) before starting the training.
- Guide students through the context of different learning with the aim of gaining credits towards an official qualification.
- Identify official qualifications (qualifications and certificates of professional standards), in terms of knowledge and skills.

## 5. EXPLORATION OF ECVET APPLICATION FOR BELOW EQF4

ECVET, strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks for the system of certification and training offer:

### Strengths

#### **Finland**

FINECVET project can thus be considered the first national ECVET pilot.

- Finland is already a ECVET pioneer.
- Many good practices exist.
- Our system mostly fulfils the requirements related to the transfer, accumulation and recognition of learning outcomes. Finnish qualifications are divided into units that are based on learning outcomes.
- Clear to most decision makers.
- Well defined actors and stakeholders.
- Training of actors as professionals for the development.

#### **France**

The French system has strengths to quickly experiment ECVET certifications based on learning outcomes and competence standards on a division into units, the existence of a national qualifications framework (the National Directory of professional certifications).

To ensure a better quality, greater transparency, mutual trust, mobility of workers and learners, as well as education and training throughout life,

France has established a framework for insurance quality based on the recommendation on the CERAQ. The French situation is quite compatible with the idea of division units.

In France there is a desire to develop mobility.

The implementation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) at the higher seems to have rallied a majority of the actors and the idea of capitalization units entered manners.

### **Germany**

- Facilitating transnational mobility.
- The use of learning outcomes (as common language) is fostered.
- The transparency of qualifications is being increased.
- The comparability of qualifications is being improved.
- Projects are working on the interfaces of the different educational sectors to improve permeability (DECVET).
- ECVET has obtained priority at EU and German VET policy level.

### **Italy**

It promotes employability, encouraging vocational retraining of workers and career progression; It promotes lifelong learning, supporting the flexibility of vocational education and training systems and encouraging the return to education; It stimulates improvement of the quality of education and training, supporting modernization; It stimulates the development of training targeted to the needs of the individual; It increases the level of awareness of skills (self-esteem); It promotes awareness of different cultural and professional backgrounds, promoting mutual trust and facilitating the transition/integration between systems and training and productive contexts; It encourages the sharing of a culture of critical evaluation and comparison between institutional actors and experts; It stimulates an increase in the competitiveness of the EU, meeting the demands of the global market; It encourages geographical mobility within training and between training systems;

### **Spain**

High compatibility of ECVET with the Initial Vocational Training and with Vocational Training for Employment; and the European Commission's support for the development of this initiative.

The possibility of getting work experience in other European countries.

All training professionals are committed to the implementation and development for ECVET implementation.

The interest that the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) arouses in the organisations involved in the development of VET.

The experience with similar systems, such as the ECTS credits.

Definition of objectives, commitment to ECVET, ability to build, understand the qualifications, guarantee outcome transfer and transnational collaboration.

ECVET is a useful system for transnational recognition of vocational education and training, but because the education authorities are not promoting it enough and because the implementation is quite complex (for example, the credit point system), its development is uncertain.

## Weaknesses

### Finland

- ECVET points issue not clear.
- Mainstreaming may be an issue.
- Not shared views by all actor groups.
- Job burden not clearly defined for actor types.
- Varying acceptance in actor groups.
- In-service training of VET is 'closed area'.
- Finnish VET also poses challenges to the implementation of ECVET. One of the difficulties arises when assigning ECVET points or credit points to competence-based qualifications, because the scope of these qualifications has not been specified.

### France

The ECVET and the French system seem based on different approaches. The French system aims first obtaining the diploma.

ECVET may require reviewing the conditions of examinations for certificates of training. In France, the organization can compensate diplomas outcomes for a unit by the results for another.

The adoption of ECVET requires reform in France and this has a cost.

### Germany

Credits as common „currency“ is only reasonable if there is a common reference system where this “currency” is valued – but that’s not really existing in Europe so far – also, a certain number of credits can never represent the “capacity to act - competence”.

It’s not really accepted by the involved educational stakeholders – still tremendous scepticism – because important questions are still not answered and/ or communicated.

Educational personnel won’t have to teach “learning goals” anymore in future, but will have to foster the acquirement of competences through guidance and coaching – slow change of the system and the role of the VET practitioner.

Competence-oriented examination will be a challenge - How are competences measured? What are the criteria for the level of success? – these questions are not answered by ECVET yet.

## **Italy**

Little awareness of the world of work and training of the benefits brought by the implementation of these instruments;

- Lack of structured networks and lack of mutual trust.
- Lack of a widespread culture in relation to the issues of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.
- Lack of standardized procedures for verification, validation and recognition of learning.
- Opportunities.

## **Spain**

The slow development of the ECVET system, the lack of knowledge and of training initiatives aimed at actors and institutions involved in the implementation and development process.

- A poor command of foreign languages.
- There have not been many experiences.
- The agents involved find it hard to understand.
- The professionals involved in the implementation and development are not trained for it; and, in terms of quality.
- It is a demanding mechanism and its management can prove to be complex
- The dependence on student mobility.
- The little mutual recognition of work carried out by professionals from other training subsystems.
- The work conditions of VET professionals in both subsystems.
- There is not much information available on ECVET.
- The VET students and trainers have a poor command of foreign languages. Teachers and trainers may also be overloaded with work.

## Opportunities

### **Finland**

Use the national authorities as 'barrier-breakers' and initiate actions in areas with lower resistance. 'Weld while the iron is hot', explore the present level of readiness and commitments

### **France**

- The opportunity to modularize training.
- The opportunity to make professional diplomas objects of social consensus.
- The opportunity to recognize the legitimacy of "alternative" skills training that the only way school, making degrees more accessible to adults, to modulate the effort of formal training to gain Access.

- The introduction of ECVET might need to cut some French diplomas in units, or at least sub-units, more finely. This division would require rethinking learning assessment for each sub-unit and unit created.
- ECVET requires rethinking and developing the modularisation of training courses.
- A research openness and flexibility training courses and certification.
- The division into units is a major asset value for systems of validation of knowledge.
- Mechanisms that promote ECVET proposal describes the mutual discovery of different systems, which may tend to search for harmonization of units or even full qualifications.
- A tool for learning enhancement efforts provided in formal, non-formal or informal (business experience, internships, training sessions...).
- Increase the readability of certification and diplomas.
- Encourage comparisons between systems and the identification of correspondences.
- Improve systems.
- This should lead to a better flow between certification systems, including national.
- Anchor the whole European Qualifications of a system based on achievements expressed as knowledge, skills, and abilities and not on the duration of training.
- ECVET satisfies the requirements of training throughout life and promotes mobility and transnational.

## **Germany**

ECVET should be seen as a toolbox where European educational stakeholders can use different instruments for improving i.e. mobility and transparency ("bottom up" approach).

Key aspects of ECVET such as transnational mobility and transparency of the VET trainings are more likely to find entry into the German system.

ECVET should be seen as a toolbox where educational stakeholders can use different instruments for improving certain parts of VET trainings.

Evaluation from learning results and its recognition.

Continuous implementation.

Huge chance for quality management: quite a number of trainees do not get through all mandated stages of their vocational training; maybe ECVET credits might be a stimulus for the companies to do so (because with ECVET the training would become comparable).

Possibility to increase the permeability at the interfaces of different educational sectors (school education, professional education, university education).

## **Italy**

- The ability to experiment widely the ECVET system in mobility actions.
- Transfer of good practices.
- Complete mapping of existing occupations declined in units of learning outcomes.
- Spreading of the culture of networks.
- Support for dialogue between regional systems and stakeholders.
- The development of upgrading paths between education and training providers.
- Support for the "re-examination" of sectoral qualification systems.
- The development and implementation of simple procedures and tools for the recognition and validation of competences.
- The creation of tools to support mobility.
- Promotion of youth mobility.
- Training of competent professionals.

## **Spain**

ECVET is a strategy to move forward, even though it has not been implemented yet. It is a useful tool that can favour the quality of Vocational Training and Education because it establishes a system to recognise knowledge and skills learnt in different ways. ECVET also favours the effective implementation of the Training for Employment initiative in Europe and with reference to the groups of people who are a priority for employment, such as young people and workers with a low level qualification.

ECVET is an opportunity for mobility and transparency within the same country. The conditions for a mobility process between autonomous regions should be defined.

The priority strategic activities to implement ECVET are: the use of the training centre networks and the use of resources and experiences that exist in the ECTS credit system.

The fact that vocational training professionals are not up-to-date in their teaching is considered a weakness. The accreditation of VET professionals in the ECVET system would help to improve the quality and the implementation of the system.

The suggested strategic activities are the following: to look for centres or initiatives with experience and help with their expansion; and to make the most of VET trainers and their abilities in order to tell students and companies that are collaborating about the advantages, appeal, mobility, lifelong learning with VET, and the European instruments that recognise qualifications.

The possibility of improving the transparency of qualifications and worker mobility; the simplification of administrative procedures and the reduction in training costs; and the possibility of ECVET becoming a mechanism that organises and rationalises discontinuous training processes and makes them more similar to classic training.

## Threats

### Finland

- Formality and national authorities are in commend.
- National 'ownership' of ECVET an issue.
- Rights for do training be 'outsiders' not so certain.
- Local institutions and individual actors act as alienated.
- Tradition and change resistance is a barrier.
- Many actors may like to be front-runner / manager.

### France

- An overall qualification replaced by multiple qualifications.
- The reliability of the certification.

### Germany

- Holistic approach (see "Berufsprinzip) of the German vocational training system.
- Deadlock-reasons: weak communication of the opportunities from ECVET from the authorities into the system, hardly any knowledge of ECVET from the side of VET.

### Italy

To promote the collaboration among all the competent bodies that will share some specific knowledge (a common language, common procedures, common standards, common goals, etc.).

Other relevant topics are the following:

- Promote "self-awareness" (personal perspective).
  - The procedures are much more important that the allocation of points.
  - Outflow of skills.
  - An excessive bureaucratization and an excessive cost.
  - The lack of an NQF.
  - ECVET make the model more complicated and incomprehensible
- Added value of ECVET.

### Spain

Relevant items:

- The possibility of establishing a European credit system in all the production sectors and in the different qualification levels.
- A financial constraint.
- The lack of interest of the actors involved in ECVET implementation.
- The basic differences between countries.
- Poor dissemination.
- The lack of clear and flexible criteria in the European Commission's recommendations.

- Low investment, education cuts and the financial prospects in Horizon.
- The formal qualification system (qualifications and certificates) has not caught up with the experiences and real practice of trainers.
- The need to update the regulations (qualifications, certificates, etc.), the lack of interest in ECVET implementation, and the lack of suitable funding.
- The main threat is the freeze on funding. If ECVET is not implemented satisfactorily, Spanish students will not compete on equal terms in the rest of Europe.

## Statement of the participant countries

### **Finland**

The ECVET system will be implemented in vocational, further vocational and specialist vocational qualifications in Finland no later than the year 2014. A similar system (ECTS) is already used in higher education. Implementation requires a description of the qualification system, an agreement on the identification principles of credits and placing the qualifications within the national framework and the European Qualifications Framework.

Revisions are also made in legislation, the regulations of the Finnish National Board of Education with regards to the qualification and education requirements, in addition to the regulations or recommendations concerning qualification certificates, certificate templates and Certificate and Diploma Supplements. The underlying legislation must be revised, because when using ECVET points in the Finnish qualifications there will be no connection to time as there is now, when study weeks are defined in terms of the learner's workload.

### **France**

ECVET is a chance to upgrade our system to a logical certification benchmarks for mobility, to flexible systems of recognition, to rethink the initial training system, by modulating the level of classes, systems coefficient medium, establishing patterns of progression individualized training.

The French situation is quite compatible with the idea of division units. It has already provided for such divisions in the past and it confirms some now: certificates of professional competence (CPC) securities of the Ministry of Employment, the units for the validation of qualifications for the national education and in general for almost all certifying ministries. In addition, the implementation of ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) at the higher seems to have rallied a majority of the actors and the idea of capitalization units entered manners.

### **Germany**

The ECVET situation in Germany could be better. All major stakeholders from all four sectors dealt with in this study are familiar with the ideas ECVET.

The formality of the German "dual vocational training" and the holistic approach which is the basis of the system (see "Berufsprinzip") might be the greatest threat for a successful implementation of ECVET in Germany. The advantages of ECVET are recognized by the relevant stakeholders<sup>15</sup> but it remains questionable if that is enough to finally adapt ECVET in Germany.

## **Italy**

ECVET is based on a bottom up approach and the best way to reach good results in a very short time is to promote the collaboration among all the competent bodies that will share some specific knowledge (a common language, common procedures, common standards, common goals, etc.). Without this approach, the ECVET system would be just implemented in a formal way and would not take into account the real needs of workers.

Some of the most common threats that have been identified are: too much bureaucracy and a special focus on technical elements (such as the allocation of ECVET points to each unit). Unfortunately, Italy has not been ready to implement some procedures of ECVET model yet (i.e. the first Italian referencing report to the European Qualification Framework (EQF) was issued just last year). For this reason, the risk is that Italian system will end up defining in detail all the technical frameworks and documents, making the ECVET model more complicated and unintelligible, even though it is supposed to make it easier to transfer and accumulate learning outcomes from one qualification system to another.

One of the most important benefits of the ECVET application is achieving self-awareness, as well as awareness of personal career path, personal life and empowerment. Acquiring some knowledge about the learning outcomes approach bring people to have new perspectives and, as a consequence, to define new goals.

## **Spain**

Generally speaking and to sum it up, the situation for ECVET implementation in Spain has the following characteristics.

- The main strength: To understand that ECVET will provide more mobility and transparency in VET programmes.
- Weaknesses: The lack of knowledge of ECVET and the lack of political promotion because ECVET is not a consolidated system.
- Opportunities: The European Commission supports ECVET implementation, and citizens are interested in lifelong learning.
- Threats: the financial constraint and the lack of resources to redirect changes for the implementation of the system.

## Conclusion

ECVET is a chance to upgrade European systems.

The advantages of ECVET for education pathways will be the following: better mobility between countries for students/workers; creation of networks between Specific Vocational Training professionals / VET schools and/or VET authorities; improvement of transparency of qualifications; improvement of the mobility between formal, non-formal and informal learning and the design of optimal cumulative learning pathways.

Teachers, trainers and training centers are considered the driving force for ECVET development, although the lack of knowledge of ECVET and the poor command of languages can be a drawback in the development of these functions.

ECVET will encourage more mobility of students and more transparency of qualifications in VET programmes.

The main weaknesses are that VET centers and trainers do not know about European instruments, there is not a culture of mobility, and there is a poor command of languages.

The opportunities for ECVET implementation include the fact that the European Commission promotes and supports the system, and that citizens are interested in lifelong learning.

The main threats are the financial constraint and the lack of resources to redirect changes for the implementation of the system.

The most important strategic resources for implementation in vocational training programmes will be:

- To guarantee funding of the programme for mobility processes and maintenance of vocational training centers in Europe.
- To facilitate the creation and usage of networks between VET centers in Europe.
- To define the functions and tasks of trainers and centers in ECVET implementation.
- To train and accredit VET professionals for the implementation of ECVET and other European instruments.
- To communicate the advantages of the ECVET system implementation to students, social organizations and companies in all the production sectors.

## 6. SUMMARY OF THE COMPARATIVE REPORT

According to the EU Recommendation (2009)<sup>6</sup>, from 2012 on ECVET should have been gradually applied to VET qualifications in the Member States of the European Union, for a subsequent review and adaption of the ECVET-Recommendation by 2014. Up to now, several different situations and experiences have been developed in the European countries, which have been linked to different approaches among national vocational and education systems as well as different policy sensibilities towards the implementation of the ECVET system: Broad Range initiative; Impact analysis; Updating regulation; Adapting qualifications; European projects; Informing stake-holders.

In general it can be said that ECVET is at least known to the responsible stakeholders in each country (Finland, Germany, France, Spain and Italy). The situation in Finland, France and Germany is solid and especially with the introduction of national projects in Finland (FINECVET) and Germany (DECVET) to enhance the implementation of ECVET, both countries are very well prepared for a gradual implementation of ECVET.

The situation in Spain and Italy is more challenging; in Spain "ECVET is practically unknown, except to a minority of VET experts" and in Italy, "it is not possible to identify a real interface structure for the ECVET. At present, the implementation activities are delegated to individual experimental experiences (restricted to specific partnerships, areas or geographical boundaries)".

In France, however, ECVET is considered "an experiment in progress", but nevertheless the "French system is probably more ready than others to ECVET".

As the contribution of VET teachers and trainers to the European policies of Lifelong learning is widely known, as well as their acknowledgement as key stakeholders for the goals of the ET2020 and for the implementation of ECVET model, it is important to focus on the specific role of VET practitioners in the participant countries as actors of this shifting process. The main obstacle for an effective contribution of trainers to the implementation of ECVET seems to be, from a general point of view, their lack of knowledge of the European instruments and the not full comprehension of the importance of a shift to learning outcomes approach in all the programmes of the lifelong learning policies.

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<sup>6</sup> European Commission (2009): Recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 June 2009 (2009/C 155/02) on the establishment of a European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET).

As a final conclusion of this comparative report, a SWOT analysis about the statement of ECVET implementation in the countries shows the following outlook in terms of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats:

<b>IMPLEMENTATION OF ECVET SYSTEM: SWOT ANALYSIS</b>	
<p><b>STRENGTHS</b></p> <p><b>Finland.</b> FINECVET project can thus be considered the first national ECVET pilot: clear to most decision makers.</p> <p><b>France.</b> The French system has strengths to quickly experiment ECVET certifications based on learning outcomes and competence standards on a division into units, the existence of a national qualifications framework.</p> <p><b>Germany.</b> ECVET has obtained priority at EU and German VET policy level.</p> <p><b>Spain.</b> High compatibility of ECVET with the Initial Vocational Training and with Vocational Training for Employment. Another strong point: the European Commission's support for the development of this initiative.</p> <p><b>Italy.</b> It promotes employability, encouraging vocational retraining of workers and career progression.</p>	<p><b>OPPORTUNITIES</b></p> <p><b>Finland.</b> Good examples, instructions and practices exist. Online learning activities have user acceptance.</p> <p><b>France.</b> The opportunity to modularize training and to make professional diplomas objects of social consensus. ECVET requires rethinking and developing the modularisation of training courses.</p> <p><b>Germany.</b> ECVET should be seen as a toolbox where European educational stakeholders can use different instruments for improving i.e. mobility and transparency ("bottom up" approach).</p> <p><b>Spain.</b> It is a breeding ground for teaching innovation, and it can increase the demand for teaching professionals. The improvement of VET professionals' language skills,</p> <p><b>Italy.</b> Spreading of the culture of networks. The creation of tools to support mobility and LLL.</p>
<p><b>WEAKNESSES</b></p> <p><b>Finland.</b> ECVET points issue not clear. Not shared views by all actor groups.</p> <p><b>France.</b> The ECVET and the French system seem based on different approaches. The French system aims first obtaining the diploma. The adoption of ECVET requires reform in France and this has a cost.</p> <p><b>Germany.</b> Competence-oriented examination will be a challenge - How are competences measured? What are the criteria for the level of success? – these questions are not answered by ECVET yet. Credits Points. not really existing in Europe so far.</p>	<p><b>THREATS</b></p> <p><b>Finland.</b> Tradition and change resistance is a barrier.</p> <p><b>France.</b> An overall qualification replaced by multiple qualifications. The reliability of the certification.</p> <p><b>Germany.</b> Weak communication of the opportunities from ECVET forms the authorities into the system, hardly any knowledge of ECVET from the side of VET.</p> <p><b>Spain.</b> A financial constraint. The lack of interest of the actors involved in ECVET implementation.</p> <p><b>Italy.</b> ECVET make the model more complicated and incomprehensible.</p>

**Spain.** Mobility: The VET students and trainers have a poor command of foreign languages. VET teachers and trainers may also be overloaded with work.

**Italy.** Lack of structured networks and lack of mutual trust. Lack of a widespread culture in relation to the issues of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

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