

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

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Committee on Culture and Education

2008/0070(COD)

7.10.2008

OPINION

of the Committee on Culture and Education

for the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs

on the proposal for a recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)
(COM(2008)0180 – C6-0162/2008 – 2008/0070(COD))

Rapporteur (*): Dumitru Oprea

(*) Associated committees – Rule 47 of the Rules of Procedure

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SHORT JUSTIFICATION

A. Short summary

The recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council proposes a European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET), in order to facilitate transparency, transfer and accumulation of learning outcomes between various learning contexts and countries.

The diversity, even fragmentation of education, VET and qualifications systems in Europe as well as lack of cooperation between the various actors on the market (providers, authorities etc.) are a serious challenge for the mobility of the Europeans in the lifelong learning process. In higher education, mobility was boosted by the creation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System, therefore the idea of establishing a similar system for the professional education and training is expected to have the same impact.

In this context, the recommendation establishes ECVET as a methodological framework that can be used to describe qualifications in terms of units of learning outcomes with associated points, with a view to transferring and accumulating learning outcomes. ECVET does not aim for or require harmonisation of qualifications and VET systems; it aims instead for better comparability and compatibility and it can be applied on any EQF reference level. The recommendation will be applied on a voluntary basis by the Member States starting from 2012.

The ECVET System is based on three key concepts:

- Establishing a framework in order to describe qualifications as units of learning outcomes, with a view to their accumulation and transferability;
- Establishing a system through which VET learning outcomes receive a number of credits that can be validated, accumulated and transferred from one learning context to the other and from one country to another;
- Promoting the networks and partnerships between institutions, authorities and other VET stakeholders in order to develop a climate of mutual trust and formalizing partnerships with Memoranda of Understanding (agreements between them).

The recommendation encourages Member States to use ECVET from 2012, in particular by adopting measures for its gradual application to vocational education and training qualifications, in accordance with national legislation and practice, for the purpose of transfer, recognition and accumulation of individuals' learning outcomes achieved in formal, non-formal and informal contexts.

B. Draftsman's comments

The draftsman would like to draw attention to the fact that a successful implementation of ECVET must be based, first and foremost, on the common commitment to respect the quality assurances principles. In addition to that, an important role is also played by the encouragement of stakeholders to build up ECVET partnerships and networks, in order to

assure not only a framework for testing ECVET, but also to become examples of good practice and to develop a climate of mutual trust in recognizing and transferring credits from one institution to the other.

A great advantage of the ECVET system is that it can be built up and improved upon a similar experience that was greatly successful in Europe – the ECTS (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System), used in higher education. Therefore, ECVET must also take into account the extremely diversified market of VET; this is also the reason why it focuses on learning outcomes rather than time spent to accumulate knowledge, skills and competences. Vocational education and training are an essential piece in the lifelong learning process, together with higher education. Having regard to the fact that these two elements usually complete each other, the draftsman would like to underline the need for compatibility, comparability and complementarity between ECVET and ECTS.

AMENDMENTS

The Committee on Culture and Education calls on the Committee on Employment and Social Affairs, as the committee responsible, to incorporate the following amendments in its report:

Amendment 1

Proposal for a recommendation

Recital 2 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(2a) Vocational education and training schemes, one of the main means of lifelong learning, are directly linked to general and higher education, and to the employment and social policies of each Member State. Through their cross-sectoral impact, they promote not only the competitiveness of the European economy and help to meet the needs of the labour market but also social cohesion, equality and the participation and involvement of citizens;

Amendment 2

Proposal for a recommendation

Recital 3

Text proposed by the Commission

(3) Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training ("the Copenhagen process"), and the Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme adopted in 2004, stress the importance of a credit transfer system for vocational education and training.

Amendment

(3) Council Resolution of 19 December 2002 on the promotion of enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training ("the Copenhagen process"), and the Joint Report of the Council and the Commission on the implementation of the Education and Training 2010 work programme adopted in 2004, stress the importance of a credit transfer system for vocational education and training, ***while the 2008 joint report of the Council and the Commission (document 5723/08) stresses the need to step up efforts to improve the quality and attractiveness of vocational education and training.***

Amendment 3

**Proposal for a recommendation
Recital 5**

Text proposed by the Commission

(5) The purpose of this Recommendation is to create the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter "ECVET") intended to facilitate transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification. This will improve the transparency and portability of citizens' learning outcomes across ***and within*** Member States in a borderless lifelong learning area.

Amendment

(5) The purpose of this Recommendation is to create the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter "ECVET") intended to facilitate transfer, recognition and accumulation of learning outcomes of individuals who are aiming to achieve a qualification. This will improve the transparency, ***trans-national mobility*** and portability of citizens' learning outcomes across Member States in a borderless lifelong learning area ***and also improve the mobility and portability of qualifications at national level between various sectors of the economy and within the labour market.***

Amendment 4

Proposal for a recommendation Recital 9

Text proposed by the Commission

(9) This Recommendation should facilitate the compatibility **and** comparability between credit systems used in VET and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is used in the higher education sector, and thus should contribute to greater permeability between levels of education and training, in accordance with national legislation and practice.

Amendment

(9) This Recommendation should facilitate the compatibility, comparability **and complementarity** between credit systems used in VET and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), which is used in the higher education sector, and thus should contribute to greater permeability between levels of education and training, in accordance with national legislation and practice.

Amendment 5

Proposal for a recommendation Recital 12 a (new)

Text proposed by the Commission

Amendment

(12a) This Recommendation should facilitate the involvement of the competent local and regional authorities in the exercise of linking up national/regional qualifications frameworks to ECVET.

Amendment 6

Proposal for a recommendation Recommendation 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. promote the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter "ECVET") as set out in Annex 1 and 2 in order to facilitate trans-national mobility in vocational education and training and borderless lifelong learning;

Amendment

1. promote the European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (hereinafter "ECVET") as set out in Annex 1 and 2 in order to facilitate trans-national, mobility **and recognition of learning outcomes** in vocational education and training and borderless lifelong learning;

Amendment 7

Proposal for a recommendation Recommendation 4

Text proposed by the Commission

4. ensure that stakeholders **and** individuals in the area of vocational education and training have access to information and guidance for using ECVET. Furthermore, ensure that the application of ECVET to qualifications is properly publicised by the competent authorities and that associated "Europass" documents issued by the competent authorities contain explicit relevant information;

Amendment

4. ensure that stakeholders, **including** individuals, in the area of vocational education and training have access to information and guidance for using ECVET. Furthermore, ensure that the application of ECVET to qualifications is properly publicized by the competent authorities and that associated "Europass" documents issued by the competent authorities contain explicit relevant information;

Amendment 8

Proposal for a recommendation Intention 2

Text proposed by the Commission

2. develop a users' guide **and** tools **in collaboration with national and European experts and users, develop** expertise for reinforcing the compatibility between ECVET and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System used in the Higher Education sector, and provide regular information on the developments of ECVET;

Amendment

2. develop a users' guide, tools **and** expertise for reinforcing the compatibility **and complementarity** between ECVET and the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System used in the Higher Education sector, **in collaboration with VET and higher education experts and users at European and national level** and provide regular information on the developments of ECVET;

Amendment 9

Proposal for a recommendation Annex 2 – point 1 – paragraph 1

Text proposed by the Commission

1. A unit is a component of a qualification, consisting of a part of the knowledge, skills

Amendment

1. A unit is a component of a qualification, consisting of a part of the knowledge, skills

and competence required for a given qualification. A qualification comprises in principle several units and is made up of the whole set of units. Thus, a learner can achieve a qualification by accumulating the required units, achieved in different countries and different contexts (formal, non-formal and informal).

and competence required for a given qualification. ***Each unit has a number of associated ECVET credit points.*** A qualification comprises in principle several units and is made up of the whole set of units. Thus, a learner can achieve a qualification by accumulating the required units, achieved in different countries and different contexts (formal, non-formal and informal).

Amendment 10

Proposal for a recommendation Annex 2 – point 3 – paragraph 2

Text proposed by the Commission

The Learning Agreement should establish that, if the learner has achieved the expected learning outcomes and these have been positively assessed by the ‘hosting’ institution, the ‘home’ institution ***can*** validate and recognise them as part of the requirements for a qualification, according to the rules and procedures established by the competent institution.

Amendment

The Learning Agreement should establish that, if the learner has achieved the expected learning outcomes and these have been positively assessed by the ‘hosting’ institution, the ‘home’ institution ***should*** validate and recognise them as part of the requirements for a qualification, according to the rules and procedures established by the competent institution.

PROCEDURE

Title	European Credit system for Vocational Education and Training (ECVET)	
References	COM(2008)0180 – C6-0162/2008 – 2008/0070(COD)	
Committee responsible	EMPL	
Opinion by Date announced in plenary	CULT 24.4.2008	
Associated committee(s) - date announced in plenary	19.6.2008	
Drafts(wo)man Date appointed	Dumitru Oprea 22.5.2008	
Discussed in committee	24.6.2008	10.9.2008
Date adopted	7.10.2008	
Result of final vote	+: 13 -: 1 0: 0	
Members present for the final vote	Ivo Belet, Marielle De Sarnez, Marie-Hélène Descamps, Věra Flasarová, Milan Gaľa, Lissy Gröner, Ruth Hieronymi, Mikel Irujo Amezaga, Manolis Mavrommatis, Ljudmila Novak, Dumitru Oprea, Doris Pack, Thomas Wise	
Substitute(s) present for the final vote	Rolf Berend	