



**‘NEW SKILLS FOR NEW JOBS’  
CHALLENGES FOR  
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING  
IN THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**Report of the conference of the European Network of Education  
Councils,**

**Lisbon , 24-26 October 2011**

**with the support of the European Commission**

**DG Education and Culture**



**Education and Culture DG**

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**[www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu)**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

EUNEC is the **European Network of Education Councils**. Its members advise the governments of their countries on education and training. EUNEC aims to discuss the findings and recommendations of all European projects in education and training, to determine standpoints and to formulate statements on these issues. EUNEC wants to disseminate these statements pro-actively towards the European Commission, relevant DGs and other actors at European level, and to promote action by EUNEC's members and participants at national level. EUNEC also has the objective that the councils should put internationalization and mobility high on the national agenda, that they should recommend and support a European policy in education and training towards all relevant stakeholders: ministry of education (and employment), sectoral and branch organizations, providers and other actors.

From 2008 on EUNEC has been **subsidized** as **European Association acting at European level in the field of education** (Jean Monnet programme). This conference is organized with the support of the grant.

## **CENTRAL THEME OF THE CONFERENCE**

*A renewed sense of urgency for vocational education and training*

### **Context**

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Vocational Education and Training are at the center of the international and national education policy. During the past year we saw the development of the flagship initiative "New skills for new jobs" in the slipstream of the Education and Training 2020 Framework and the renewed Europe 2020 Strategy. The economic and financial crisis further put the spotlights on coherent qualification policies and the development of competencies of all citizens. Policy makers are convinced of the necessity to make vocational systems more responsive to labour market needs and boost economic growth.

The modernization agenda was also given a strong impetus by the education ministers in the Bruges Declaration of 7 December 2010. This declaration made an evaluation and state of the art of the implementation of the Copenhagen Declaration (2002). They endorsed an impressive list of commitments both at European and at national level.

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In 2010 the OECD published the results of its programme “Learning for jobs”. Despite of the diversity of learning arrangements (education system, workplace training, apprenticeships, alternating on-the-job learning with school-based training) national systems face common issues and challenges: the adaptability of contents to a very fast changing work reality, the balance between the needs of students, employers and education and training provisions, the skills required by VET teachers and trainers, the most effective models for engaging employers and unions, ...

We refer also to more concrete themes related to effective systems of qualification policies such as early school leavers, career guidance, lifelong management of competences and skills.

*Central questions of the conference*

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An analysis of key documents of EU and OECD learns us that the following themes are crucial and in the heart of the agenda setting.

*Responsive education and training systems*

- There is a need for more evidence based and shared knowledge on developments on the work floor and the skills and competences required to successfully fulfill these jobs. Therefore it is necessary to develop in close cooperation with social partners forecasts of skills needs and developments in labour market. (Cf. EUNEC statements on the innovative role of education and training, seminar The Hague, 2009)<sup>1</sup>
- Secondly this knowledge should be translated and enrich the relevance of curricula and learning environments. This approach is very closely linked to the shift of paradigm towards learning outcomes (Cf. EUNEC statements on learning outcomes, conference Madrid, 2008)<sup>2</sup>

*Tailored and flexible learning pathways*

- The VET approach of organizations such as EU and OECD is based on a global approach of all VET : initial VET in compulsory education, alternation and part time working / learning systems, workplace based learning, Higher Education including short cycle Higher Education, adult learning.
- Modernization of VET balances between needs of labour market and student centered development needs (well- being, LLL, durable

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<sup>1</sup> For all EUNEC statements: [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu)

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employability and transferability of skills, *Bildung*). (Cf. EUNEC statements on *Bildung* in a LLL perspective, seminar Budapest, 2011)<sup>3</sup>

- Career guidance, informed by knowledge of labour market outcomes and tailored to the personal development of the individual (see EUNEC statements on guidance, conference Budapest, 2009)<sup>4</sup>

***Learning in different education and training settings : seeing Vocational Education and Training as a continuum from initial VET, continuous VET, LLL)***

- Challenges for the education system
- VET in Higher Education (including short cycle Higher Education)
- Workplace training, informal and non formal learning
- Impact of adult learning and LLL

***Quality assurance in VET***

EQAVET, the European Quality Assurance Reference Framework for VET

***Vulnerable groups***

- Early school leavers
- Older employees on the labour market
- Migrant children

***A better HRM-policy in vocational institutions (teachers and trainers).***

- Recruitment and statute
- Embeddedness in the workplace
- Appropriate pedagogical preparation

***Stakeholder involvement and networks with social partners***

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<sup>3</sup> For all EUNEC statements: [www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu)

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## **PROGRAMME**

**Monday 24 October 2011**

***Focus on main new challenges and policy responses***

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**09.30 – 10.15      Opening session**

Isabel Leite, Secretary of State for Basic and Secondary Education in Portugal

Ana Bettencourt, president of the CNE

Simone Barthel, EUNEC president. Introduction to the subject

**10.15 – 11.00      YDreams. New skills from the perspective of an innovative global company.**

Chaired by Mia Douterlungne, EUNEC general secretary

Conference by António Câmara, YDreams Chief Executive Officer

**11.30 – 12.30      A road map to modernization of VET by the EU.**

Chaired by Bãrtolo Paiva Campos, member of CNE

Conference by José Pessanha, European Commission, DG EAC, Unit A.1. Education and Training in Europe 2020.

The central question for the presentation is to give a synthetic overview of the different initiatives of the EU related to the modernization of VET. The speaker will clarify the relationships between the flagship initiative and ET 2020, Europe 2020 and the Bruges Declaration, the relationships between frameworks such as EQF, ECVET, EQAVET and give a preview of forthcoming initiatives and implementation strategies amongst others links with modernizing higher education / LLL / short cycle higher education.

**14.30 – 14.45      Introduction to the parallel workshops** by Roos Herpinck.

**14.45 – 16.15      Parallel workshops**

Questions :

- What do education councils consider to be the most urgent measures regarding VET?

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- If your council was to give advice on the modernization of VET in your country, what should be the basic lines of that recommendation? Why? Specify the concrete action lines you have in mind.
- Try to reach an agreement within your working group on the challenges and the pitfalls.

<b>16.15 – 16.45</b>	<b>Plenary presentation of the recommendations of the working groups</b>
<b>17.30 – 18.30</b>	<b>Bus transfer to the vocational school in Salvaterra de Magos</b>
<b>18.30 – 20.00</b>	<b>School visit</b>
<b>20.00 – 22.00</b>	<b>Dinner in the school</b>

**Tuesday 25 October 2011**

***Focus on good policy practices in different countries***

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**09.30 – 10.15**      **Welcome** by Simone Barthel, EUNEC president

**A road map to modernization of VET by OECD ‘Learning for Jobs’**

Chaired by Maria Emilia Brederode, member of CNE

Conference by Malgorzata Kuczera, policy analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education on “Learning for Jobs”, findings of the OECD Review of Vocational Education and Training.

**10.15 – 11.00**      **VET in Portugal. Historic developments and perspectives for the future.**

Chaired by Antonio Frías del Val, Spanish Education Council

Conference by Joaquim Azevedo, president of the Portuguese Catholic University in Oporto, Member of CNE

**11.30 – 12.30**      **Continuing VET: The Council Resolution on adult learning and the action plan 2012-2014**

Chaired by Simone Barthel, EUNEC president

Conference by Piotr Bartosiak, on behalf of the Polish Presidency. Mr Bartosiak is Head of unit in the Vocational and

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Continuing Education Department at the Polish Ministry of  
National Education.

**14.45 – 15.00      Introduction to the thematic working groups**

**15.00 – 16.30      Thematic working groups giving the floor to  
education councils**

For each working group one education council defends a strong and  
provocative opinion. Others react.

Workshop 1. Flexible learning pathways in VET, a way to combat early school  
leaving.

This workshop is organized by the CEF (Conseil de l'Education et de la  
Formation, Belgium).

Maryse Descamps (CEF) presents the pilot project of the CPU ('Certification  
par unités') of the French Community in Belgium.

Workshop 2. Valuing people, raising qualifications in society

This workshop is organized by the CNE (Conselho Nacional de Educaçao,  
Portugal)

Presentation by Ana Maria Canelas, CNE, and Sandra Rodrigues, PhD student  
in adult education.

Workshop 3. Towards an active qualification policy for all.

This workshop is organized by the VLOR (Flemish Education Council).

Roos Herpinck presents the Vlor work in progress on 'active qualification  
policy'.

**17.30 - 22.00      Excursion to the Pavilion of Knowledge and  
conference dinner**

**Wednesday 26 October 2011**

**09.30 – 11.00      Thematic working groups giving the floor to  
education councils. Second round.**

**11.00 - 12.00      Statement discussion**

**12.00 – 13.00      Closing reception**



## Opening Session

### WELCOME

#### *Ana Maria Bettencourt*

*Ana Maria Bettencourt is president of the Conselho Nacional de Educação, the Portuguese Education Council*

Ms Bettencourt welcomes and acknowledges the presence of the Secretary of State for Basic and Secondary Education, Professor Isabel Leite. She welcomes the presence of all the Members of the Councils that are part of EUNEC, particularly its President, Simone Barthel, and the whole team of EUNEC that worked on the preparation of this conference. She also warmly welcomes each and every expert who agreed to contribute to this conference: Dr. Jose Pessanha from the European Commission, Ms. Malgorzata Kukzera from the OECD, Prof. António Câmara from one of Portugal's innovative companies.



The memory of Teresa Ambrosio, the main driving force of the constitution of EUNEC, is remembered with particular affection. The first General Assembly was held here in Portugal, in this very room, in the year 2000. Since then until today, EUNEC developed as a platform for cooperation and discussion of educational issues in Europe, allowing the exchange of experiences and sensitivities between different countries within the network, but also the common built consensus on many themes that are on the agenda of European policy in education and training.

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In Portugal, the National Education Council is an independent body, where the various educational partners meet. In its educational mission of consultation, it has to appreciate the development and implementation of policies on education and training, producing opinions and recommendations raised in this process, either on its own initiative, either responding to requests from the Government or the Parliament.

So the Council discusses the future and builds consensus, which is a complex task of great responsibility in the uncertain world in which we live. A world that has radically changed and where each citizen has to be prepared for a life where there are constantly new challenges at the world of work, technology, ecology, citizenship.

In Europe we live in difficult times. The commitment to a development model based on knowledge requires a great effort in the field of developing the necessary skills for the economy, and for society as well. That's why this conference of EUNEC is of great value.

*The work of CNE*

Since last year, the CNE publishes an annual report on the state of education that, in addition to benchmarks on the performance of the system in its different forms, addresses a specific topic in depth and makes policy recommendations. In 2010 the school courses were studied. This study has demonstrated that it would be important to deepen in 2011 the issue of qualification of the Portuguese. This makes this conference even more relevant for the Portuguese Council.

Two brief notes on the report adopted in September by the plenary of the CNE are added.

From 2000 to 2010 Portugal was one of the countries in the EU that most progressed in upper secondary completion, having particularly accelerated in the last years of the decade.

With regard to higher education Portugal reaches European averages: one in three 20 year olds is in Higher Education.

The diversification of vocational training and adult education contributed to the progress that we could verify.

The case studies on Vocational Education and Training included in the *State of Education 2011*, prepared by the CNE, report cases of good practice. Many others could have been chosen, which would also show the importance of a tight connection of VET with enterprises and the production sector, as well as relevant ways of addressing labour world challenges. Innovation was not only

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in the relationships with the outside world, but also at the level of learning and pedagogical organization.

And yet, the good results obtained are still below the required. Higher recovery rates have to be ensured, that enable Portuguese education to overcome the delay. Portugal wants to reach the European targets as committed for 2020, which will only be possible thanks to extraordinary measures aimed at attracting low-educated, to whom the country owes a debt.

In its recommendations, the CNE advocates the need to evaluate and improve routes and strategies, as well as to continue to improve education and qualification.

Hence the theme of this conference and the contents to be discussed are of utmost importance in the national Portuguese context.

The difficulties require increased efforts of policy, of systems and practices, but also the involvement of institutions, social actors and of business. The business contribution can be decisive, whether the appreciation of better skills in new admissions, or by increased specialization that will make the sector more productive, or, even, for the professional development of its employees, allowing them to tailor their skills to the needs of the labour market.

The current crisis that the country is confronted with will aggravate the conditions of life in our society and undermine employment opportunities. But hopefully, in this difficult context, the educational offerings may generate changes that will reduce inequalities and exclusion, enhance the skills and employability of people in the knowledge society.

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***Isabel Leite***

*Professor Isabel Leite is Secretary of State for Basic and Secondary Education in Portugal*



Last year, the average percentage of the population in countries of the OECD who did not go beyond the compulsory educational cycle was 29%. In Portugal, that percentage was an astonishing 73%. These numbers for the Portuguese case have not varied greatly: back in 1998, the population Portugal with no more than the compulsory level represented 82%. In twelve years, an improvement of 11% was achieved – but in the last six years the levels have swayed little, from 74% in 2005 to 72% in 2006, to 73% in 2007, back into 72% in 2008 and again to 73% in 2009 and 2010.

What these percentages mean is that the majority of the Portuguese active population still enters the labour market largely unprepared, despite the measures taken by former governments to foster educational valuing. In fact, the programs developed over the last decade or two by the Ministry of Education to implement and improve Lifelong Learning and Professional Proficiency, some of which have been in force for over ten years, have yet to bear their fruits.

Today, in Portugal, a 15-year old can pursue vocational education starting from the level of the first cycle. An 18-year old can choose from a number of vocational or professional courses, which assure him or her equivalence to the regular (scientific-humanistic) schooling of the pre-university level. Young people of 15-16 or 17 can choose from what we call CEF (Educational and Vocational Courses) corresponding to a completion of schooling up to the 3<sup>th</sup> cycle (the 9<sup>th</sup> year of schooling); and what is usually referred to as CP (Professional Courses), which amounts to completing the secondary level. Adults, on the other hand, have three paths to choose from, as alternatives to the regular (scientific-humanistic) schooling: EFA (Adult Education and Vocational Courses), FMC (Modular Vocational Courses), and CET (Technological Education, corresponding to the first university levels, in

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which pre-18 year olds can enroll, if they have completed the pre-university).

In either case, the main goal of the array of opportunities offered to students and young professionals are:

- to guarantee a good preparation for the labour market
- to improve the probabilities of their vocational as well as professional success
- to foster the development of professional and vocational skills
- to certify capacities, experiences and vocations.

These courses are directed for that part of the population with no higher education, which is either about to enter the labour market or already employed but wish to improve their qualification and do better at the present job, or even change jobs and search for greater professional fulfillment.

But an analysis of the percentages presented earlier leaves us wondering why, even with all these educational and vocational offers, the population with higher levels of education, i.e., better prepared for the labour market, does not increase. The answer may not lie in the numbers – in quantities – but rather in the quality of these offers.

This government is engaged in assuring the quality of all levels of education. This means going through all efforts – at a time of serious contingencies – to optimize resources, making sure they are applied where they are most needed, and that students and professionals can take the best advantage. The obvious and desired consequence is stronger motivation of students and professionals and a better labour market, capable of facing the technological, social, and economical challenges of the present and the future.

The commitment to these goals implies an investment in the accurate analysis of the systems which are in force now, both in the regular schooling and in vocational and professional alternative paths. At this moment, inter-ministerial teams are engaged in assembling data, assessing and evaluating the different course offers in the Portuguese schooling system.

This government is gathering forces to make sure the scientific-humanistic and the vocational-professional quality of the schooling paths are equivalent. Having a vocational and professional schooling where students are required to reach as demanding goals as those pursued in the regular schooling courses is one of the ways to ensure mobility among vocations, professions, and skill proficiencies.

It is essential to assess and foster an accurate, and demanding, system of certification and validation of skills, which allows for the best valuing of professional experiences and capacities, not just in young people but also in

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professionals who might not have thought of specializing or having their best qualities recognized.

On the way to achieve this, the aim is to instill positive collateral consequences in the profiles of the teachers in the scientific-humanistic schooling, as well as reach an also positive reinforcement of class authority and discipline.

It is essential to give young students as well as adults real motivation, and the possibility to thrive, to make their major skills known and recognized, validated within one system capable of channeling them towards a personal betterment.

Only by achieving this Portugal can level up with the best educational statistics, numbers that will mirror true national capacity for overcoming individual as well as collective hardships.

***Simone Barthel***

*Simone Barthel is president of EUNEC*

A very important part of the youth doesn't have the ambition to become university students. But there are no pupils that have the ambition to fail at school and to become unemployed.

School systems have the duty to offer them the skills, abilities and competences to be able to build a future, even if they are not interested by their teachers' lessons. We must find a diversity of pathways to embed them in the broad society including the possibility to find a job or to create it themselves.



In its latest statements about 'Bildung', EUNEC stated:

*EUNEC is convinced that attention for the personal development of youngsters and their capability to live in society is part of the mission of education and training; we would like to see policy makers confirm this.*

EUNEC is particularly concerned about the role of education and training in the personal development of learners and in the reduction of social inequality.

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Education is arriving at an important crossroad all over Europe. The real implementation of education and lifelong learning has to be integrated in educational concepts, and thus the different phases of learning, working, going back to learning etc. have to be recognized.

As a consequence we have to open up, starting during the first years in education, to the desirability of work, to entrepreneurship, without leaving behind in any way the attention for personnel development, education for values, the insertion of all in culture, and the insertion of all cultures in school.

Education has always refused to be utilitarian, to be at the service of enterprises. However, young people who go to school have the right to an education that prepares them to enter in society, and thus also in the world of work.

It is an offense to hold on to an education system that is excluding thousands of young Europeans, that have no chance at all to find a job, to participate in the economy of our knowledge society. It is simply not allowed to do this in the name of the cultural pureness of the educational project.

Therefore, EUNEC has put at the agenda this reflection on the evolution of the societal demand towards education and schools and the necessary innovation of the education system. EUNEC reflected in depth during its last conference in 2011. Education councils will be able, in their own country and in their own way, to motivate their colleagues and all stakeholders in Education, to put this subject on the agenda and to have the courage to overcome the tabous.

This conference will allow to highlight the different aspects of the theme of 'New skills for new jobs'. This theme concerns without any doubt technical and vocational education and training, but should be on the agenda from early childhood on, in the sense of 'new skills for new values in an evolving society'.

The EU invites us on this road : "New skills for new jobs" is an European flagship initiative. **José Pessanha** will explain this route as proposed by the Commission: "A road map to modernization of VET by the EU". Pierre Mairesse, the Director of the LLL Department the Commission has assured that he will carefully read the conclusions of this conference.

**Antonio Câmara**, CEO of YDreams, will talk about new skills from the perspective of an innovative global company.

EUNEC has always wanted to work from objective data; the network also had a conference in Lisbon on evidence based policy. Therefore, a policy analyst from the OECD will present a critical research linked to the subject of the conference: 'Learning for Jobs'. Miss **Malgorzata Kuczera** will present it in a nutshell.

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EUNEC has also the habit to learn to know better the education systems of the countries hosting our conferences and seminars. **Joaquim Azevedo** will therefore present a historical overview of technical education here in Portugal.

**Piotr Bartosiak**, representing the Polish presidency of the European Union, will present the work of the Presidency in the field of the education of adults.

A lot of time will be devoted to workshops and common reflection. It's during these precious moments that EUNEC builds its input to the European debate. Finally some statements should close the work; they will lead to reflections within the councils, and at European level.



## Educational challenges

*António Câmara, YDreams Chief Executive Officer*

*António Câmara is Chief Executive Officer of YDreams*

***"You can't do today's job with yesterday's methods and expect to be in business tomorrow."***

*(Unknown author)*

*YDreams is a global company that is redefining the concept of interactivity, with a focus on the exciting field of Augmented Reality technologies.*

*António Câmara is a Professor at Universidade Nova de Lisboa and has been a Visiting Professor at both Cornell University (1988-89) and MIT (1998-99). He was a Senior Consultant to the Expo98 project and Senior Advisor to the National Geographical Information System. He has been CEO and Chairman of the Board since the company was founded.*



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António Câmara is introduced by Mia Douterlungne, EUNEC general secretary.

M Camara introduces YDreams as a typical knowledge based company. It started 11 years ago, now there are 6 companies all over the world.

The flagship project was developed for the Santander Bank in Madrid. At first, YDreams was not even invited. Major companies all over the world presented their proposals, but due to a lack of creativity, the bank management decided to invite 'those crazy guys from Portugal'. YDreams had 48 hours to develop a proposal. And they created a video implementation, a robot system that basically hosts people and takes them where they want to go. When the robots are not in action, they go to the energy places to restore their energy; when they are idol, they play music and they dance. Today, YDreams is planning to create this kind of robots for home for about 100 euro.

Another example of YDreams products are the large massive games. A video shows the example 20.000 persons playing the same game, sponsored by Orange, at central place in Lyon. Now, YDreams is working with Bon Jovi, the rock stars, developing another game. Basically, the games are very simple; image processing is used to capture the movement of the hands.

So this is basically what YDreams does: interactivity, in many ways. Its work is research based. The company works together with major universities in Portugal, in the rest of Europe, and in the US. During the conference, Mr Camara presents some key concepts for education, based on what he learned over 30 years as a professor and 11 years in business as CEO of YDreams.



YDreams has a clear link with the world of education. The company is located at the university campus. People from YDreams lecture to university audiences all over the world. The company takes trainees, also from the vocational and technical sector. They do research projects with schools. YDreams participates in the boards of schools and tries to help in the curriculum.

One of the key projects of YDreams is kind of a secret project. YDreams worked with Jose Mourinho, the actual trainer of Real Madrid, when he was in Chelsea. They developed a decision support system in real time for the games. They captured the whole game to two tablets (IPad did not exist at the time) informing the two system coaches on every possible aspect of the game. Basically they informed another system coach that then informed Jose Mourinho of what he should do; Mourinho himself could not see images in real time because of the laws of the English Premier League. Technologically

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spoken, the work was trivial. In the end, every player receives a notebook two days before the next game, providing them with all the possible information about the other team, about his direct opponent and about how to react.

This project is a good example of what education should try to realize: education should prepare to win. In fact, a lot of people have the will to win, but only few have the will to prepare to win. Mourinho does, and this makes the difference.

The key problem in education is that **the world needs explorers**, people that brake barriers, not only in economy and in science, but also in civic life.

"The challenge is to educate a new generation of 'explorers' for the civic life, science and economy. The success of a country depends on their existence. " (Lester Thurow, 'Fortune Favors the Bold', 2003).

Our education is quite opposite to this; or at least, few places in education train explorers, and those places are responsible for the leading companies in the world. In the US, there is MIT (the Massachusetts Institute of Technology) and Stanford; in Europe there is Cambridge.

Although it is difficult to define what is an 'explorer', we find a good description in the human resources manual of Apple: 'explorers' have

- passion,
- energy,
- the ability to handle stress and ambiguity,
- self-confidence,
- the ability to work in groups and
- the ability to deliver (Guy Kawasaki, The Macintosh Way, 1990)

These are the qualities schools have to train people to, whether those schools are vocational or not. Perhaps the two most important qualities are passion and self-confidence. Passion has to be a central element in education. Passion organizes our daily life, thus passion has to be fostered and developed in education. Now we see the opposite: sometimes crazy curricula tend to kill passion. A teacher can trigger passion trying to discover the specific interests of each pupil.

Self-confidence is essential in our competitive world. It is important for the individual to believe he can be the best, he can win, and to be prepared to do all the possible to achieve this, the way Mourinho does.

Education prepares pupils for exams, education trains everyone to be the same. This is an absolute disaster. Pupils should be trained to be different, to be explorers. A company will not select people on the base of their grade, but on the base of his/her qualities: passion, self-confidence. There is a

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misconception between what schools think they must produce and what the world, and more specifically the world of business, wants.

Mr Camara believes that teachers are very important in education. It is important that the teacher does not marginalize the kid that is different, that is an explorer. Teachers can be trained, the way sport coaches are trained. In the case of Mr Camara, who was a very good tennis player, his tennis coach, the coach of the Spanish national team, was the best teacher he ever had.

Another key word is **quality**.

*If you want to build a factory, or fix a motorcycle, or set a nation right without getting stuck, then classical, structured dualistic subject-object knowledge, although necessary, isn't enough. You have to have some feeling for the quality of the work. You have to have a sense of what's good. That is what carries you forward. (R. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance, 1984)*

In other words: in order to achieve quality, the work has to be part of you, there should be no detachment between you and the work you do.

A good example of this striving for quality is the project of the Cornell University: every month, a top chef is cooking for all students. It might seem strange, or exaggerated, but it is tremendously important in order to provide quality standards.

**Communication** is another important concern of education. People, especially in Southern Europe, are not capable to express in short, clear sentences. For a Portuguese kid, it will be difficult to express the way Michael Dell did when he was 18 years old:

*"We sell computers direct. By building only to order, outsourcing most manufacturing and selling over the Web, we have the lowest cost and highest return on invested capital in the industry"*

Now, out of his room, he sells thousands of millions of computers.

What we often witness in education, is that kids are trained to absorb more and more information, and don't know how to communicate. In fact, we have to be able to read and write very quickly.

*"I took a course in speed reading. For the final exam, I had to read War and Peace from Tolstoi in 20 minutes. It deals with Russia" (Woody Allen)*

In these difficult times, more and more, education has to **train for ambiguity and for uncertainty**. The case of YDreams is a good illustration: the contracts are uncertain, the revenues of the staff are

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uncertain. It is important to know how to deal with this. It might be difficult to integrate this in a curriculum – most of our curricula are very convergent - but schools have the duty to prepare for uncertainty.

Especially in Vocational Education and Training, it is important to **learn how to make tools and objects**. Neil Gershenfeld, MIT professor, in 1998, started a class at MIT called "How To Make (almost) Anything," where the students have access to high-level tools on which the university spends millions of dollars. He expected his course to be a lab for the top engineering students to master the machines. Instead, he is finding that non technical students are showing up and bringing varied backgrounds to bear on exploiting the possibilities and capabilities of the newest technology available. This very interesting experience led to a network of fablabs all over the world. A fablab, or fabrication laboratory, is a low-cost lab that lets people build things they need using digital and analog tools. It's a simple idea with powerful results. Some of the latest instruments are astonishing: 3D printers allowing to print cheese, to print cement..

There is a tremendous historical parallel between the transition from mainframes to PCs and now from machine tools to personal fabrication.

**Entrepreneurship** is the key element to be stimulated. Mr Camara really thinks one can be educated to be an entrepreneur. But a change of mentalities is needed. Now, some parents think that wanting to make money is bad; selling is obscene. Take the example of a small American kid selling lemonade. This kid is an entrepreneur. In some European countries, one would call the police, because the kid is disturbing peace; or one would call the hygiene department.. So there are no lemonade selling kids, and very few entrepreneurs. Instead of doing this, these kind of activities should be stimulated by education.

Pupils, especially those coming from disadvantaged backgrounds, need role models: someone coming from a poor home that has become successful, thanks to his/her sense of initiative.

Two key concepts are linked to entrepreneurship. On the one hand, the technical excellence; on the other hand, the will to market and to sell globally. Michael Schrage wrote (Much Ado about Invention, Technology review, May 2004)

*"The technical excellence of an invention matters far less than the economic willingness of the customer or client to explore it. A customer's readiness to innovate is what makes invention possible"*

Too often, we, in Europe, stop at the phase of invention. Innovation happens when we sell invention.

# The Agenda for New Skills and Jobs and the modernization of European Vocational Education and Training

*José Pessanha*

*José Pessanha, European Commission, DG Education and Culture, Unit A.1 – Education and Training in Europe 2020; country analysis.*

José Pessanha is introduced by Professor Bartolo Campos, member of CNE.



Referring to the presentation on YDreams, José Pessanha states that, in a way, he too is working for an innovative company: in a sense, the European Union is an innovative organization coming with innovative proposals in terms of policy making.



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The presentation is divided in three parts:

1. Links with Europe 2020 and ET 2020
2. Links with the agenda for new skills and jobs
3. The agenda for VET

### *1. Europe 2020 and ET 2020*

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Europe 2020, the overall strategy, alters the policy context in which ET 2020, Education and Training 2020, operate. ET 2020 was adopted during the May Council, which was before the adoption of Europe 2020, in 2010.

Europe 2020 and ET 2020 are not only compatible, they support each other. ET 2020 is still the base for cooperation, working with the open method of coordination including common objectives, peer learning activities and exchanges of experiences and good practices. Some of the objectives of ET 2020 have been included in the main policy agenda, described in Europe 2020. ET 2020 is thus at the heart of policy.

Both strategies have a shared interest in lifelong learning and investment in education and training.

#### *Implementing Europe 2020*

Europe 2020 is based on three inter-linked priorities:

- Smart growth: developing an economy based on knowledge and innovation
- Sustainable growth: promoting a more efficient, greener and more competitive economy
- Inclusive growth: fostering a high-employment economy delivering social and territorial cohesion

Education and training play a central role within Europe 2020. Their importance is exemplified in the choice of

- **Headline targets**: The share of early school leavers should be under 10% and at least 40% of the younger generation should have a tertiary degree or equivalent.
- **Flagship initiatives**: ET 2020 contributes to the flagship initiatives 'Youth on the move' and 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'. A flagship initiative is in fact a coordinated approach in a specific policy domain. It thus includes some policy lines that may be already implemented; coordination is increased.

This is an overview of all seven flagship initiatives, linked to the main priorities:

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Smart Growth	Sustainable Growth	Inclusive Growth
Innovation <i>« Innovation Union »</i>	Climate, energy and mobility <i>« Resource efficient Europe »</i>	Employment and skills <i>« Agenda for new skills and jobs »</i>
Education and employment <i>« Youth on the move »</i>	Competitiveness <i>« An industrial policy for the globalisation era »</i>	Fighting poverty <i>« European platform against poverty »</i>
Digital society <i>« A digital agenda for Europe »</i>		

In implementing Europe 2020, the first European Semester plays a crucial role. These are the successive phases of this semester:

- January 2011: the first Annual Growth Survey
- March 2011: general orientations by the European Council
- Spring 2011: the Member States submitted National Reform Programmes
- June 2011: the Commission presented its assessment and guidance to the Member States, including draft Country-Specific Recommendations
- June 2011: Political debate in the European Council
- July 2011: Adoption of the Country-Specific Recommendations by the Council

In the Country-Specific Recommendations the reform needs are highlighted. For three countries (Portugal, Greece and Northern Ireland) there are no Country-Specific Recommendations; in the cases of these three countries, facing major problems, the memoranda of understanding with the deliverable, function as recommendations. For the other countries, Country-Specific Recommendations have been addressed to 16 Member States.

They refer to :

- lifelong learning, VET, and skills on the labour market (AT, BG, CY, CZ, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, LU, MT, PL, SI, SK, UK);
- early school leaving (AT, DK, ES, MT, UK);
- tertiary education (BG, CZ, MT, PL, SK);
- pre-school education (BG, DE, EE) and
- school education (BG).

The next steps are the monitoring and assessment by the Commission of



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- the policy responses Member States are giving to the Country-Specific Recommendations
- the progress made in implementing the National Reform Programmes. An important part of those National Reform Programmes are the national targets, related to the European targets.

In March 2012 the Annual Growth Survey will launch the next European Semester.

### *Implementing ET 2020*

Before the end of 2011, the Commission will present a package consisting of the following three documents (the so called 'autumn package'):

- A Communication proposing the draft 2012 Joint Report
- A Staff Working Document setting out a cross-country assessment of the progress achieved in key thematic areas since the last Joint Report
- A Staff Working Document setting out the situation country by country

#### *The draft Joint Report*

The draft Joint Report takes stock of the implementation of ET 2020 during the first cycle (2009-2011) in the following key thematic areas, building on the Staff Working Document.

- Education budgets
- Transversal lifelong learning policies
- Early school leaving
- Tertiary attainment
- Learning mobility
- New skills and jobs

It sets out a set of priority areas for the second cycle (2012-2014) that are in line with the Europe 2020 objectives. It outlines steps for implementing Europe 2020 and ET 2020 in a coordinated way that creates synergies between both processes.

In the field of *education budgets*, the draft Joint Report finds that those budgets are affected by the crisis. However, available data do not yet allow to draw detailed conclusions. During the European semester, the Commission stressed that expenditure for education is good for growth and should be given priority when consolidating budgets. Further developments warrant close monitoring.

In the field of *lifelong learning*, the draft Joint Report finds that the lifelong learning concept is an integral part of ET policies in most countries. However, progress towards lifelong learning strategies is slow and there is little systematic cross-sector cooperation. The focus of lifelong learning strategies

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is rather on up-skilling of the workforce than on sustainable competences for the whole population.

In the field of *early school leaving*, the draft Joint Report identifies the challenge that in 2010, 14.1 % of all 18-24 years old left education and training prematurely. Recent data suggest that on current trends the Europe 2020 Headline Target (less than 10% early school leavers by 2020) will not be reached. Key elements for reform are

- Increased focus on prevention
- Address early school leaving in the context of initial vocational education and training
- Better early childhood education and care
- Better involvement of stakeholders: parents, local communities, non-education actors
- Better policy design through stronger empirical basis and data

In the field of *tertiary education attainment*, the challenge is that further efforts are needed to achieve the Headline Target of 40% of tertiary education attainment. Key elements for reform are

- Diversifying the student population to under-represented groups
- Improving completion rates, for instance through better guidance and counseling, better financial support or better support for those who have dropped out

## ***2. Flagship 'An agenda for new skills and jobs'***

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A flagship is not an entity in itself. It presents existing initiatives in a coherent way. The flagship initiative 'New Skills for New Jobs' is linked to practically every domain of education and training: VET, Higher Education, Secondary Education, Primary Education, Early Childhood Education and Care.

The objectives of this flagship initiative are

- Better functioning of EU labour markets and flexicurity
- Right skills for right jobs
- Improving the quality of work and working conditions
- Creating jobs

Current and future challenges

- Education and training are still the best insurance against unemployment.
- Skills are crucial for innovation.
- Jobs are becoming more knowledge- and skills-intensive. By 2020, 35 % of all jobs will require high-level qualifications

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- Over 80 millions of adults are hampered by low levels of basic skills.
- There is a skills shortage in some specific sectors:
  - ICT
  - Sciences
  - Mathematics
  - Engineering
  - Health

In order to ensure the right skills for the right jobs, there is a need for labour market intelligence and skills governance. The right mix of skills will have to be provided; people's skills and job opportunities will have to be matched. Enhancing the geographical mobility within the EU and reaping the potential of migration is necessary.

### *The EU Skills Panorama*

Related to this flagship initiative, the European Commission put in motion the initiative of the EU Skills Panorama. The EU Skills Panorama gives factual information on

- Skills needs and supply
- Skills mismatches
- Jobs and occupation trends
- Students and adults employability

It is a single access point to national and international research finding, offering syntheses and thematic analyses. It targets different groups, from intermediary actors to citizens. This EU network is key for national anticipation institutions. It will be made available in the beginning of 2012.

### *EU Sector Councils*

The EU Sector Councils are a network of existing national sectoral organizations. They analyze the situation of skills offers and demands. It is an important initiative, as it draws the attention on the need of commitment of the Member States, in casu the national sectors.

This is the state of play, taking into account two phases: the first phase of assessment, and the second phase of creation. Phase 1 will probably start in 2011 for the following sectors: culture, education, construction, fishery, chemicals, shipbuilding, gas, nurses, electricity and furniture. For the steel sector, this is July 2011; for the automotive sector December 2011; for textile, clothing and leather, end 2011; finally, for commerce, 2012.

### *Improve the levels of basic skills and education*

In order to realize this objective, there will be a proposal on early school leaving, as well as a new impetus for lifelong learning. A High Level group is

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active on literacy; working groups are active in the field of mathematics, science and technology.

***Modernization of education and training systems***

There is a new Communication on Higher Education. And new initiatives are taken in the field of

- Languages
- Digital literacy and fluency
- Creativity and entrepreneurial skills

***To match skills and jobs***

Different tools are operational in order to match skills and jobs.

- The European Skills passport
- The ESCO (European Skills, Competences and Occupations Classification) is trying to develop a common language to bridge the gap between education and labour markets.
- The University-Business Forum, the VET-Business Forum and the Knowledge Alliances strive for a more ambitious cooperation between education and business.

Finally, programmes such as Leonardo da Vinci, Marie Curie and Erasmus have the objective to enhance employability and mobility.

***3. Context of the new VET agenda***

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***Joint challenges***

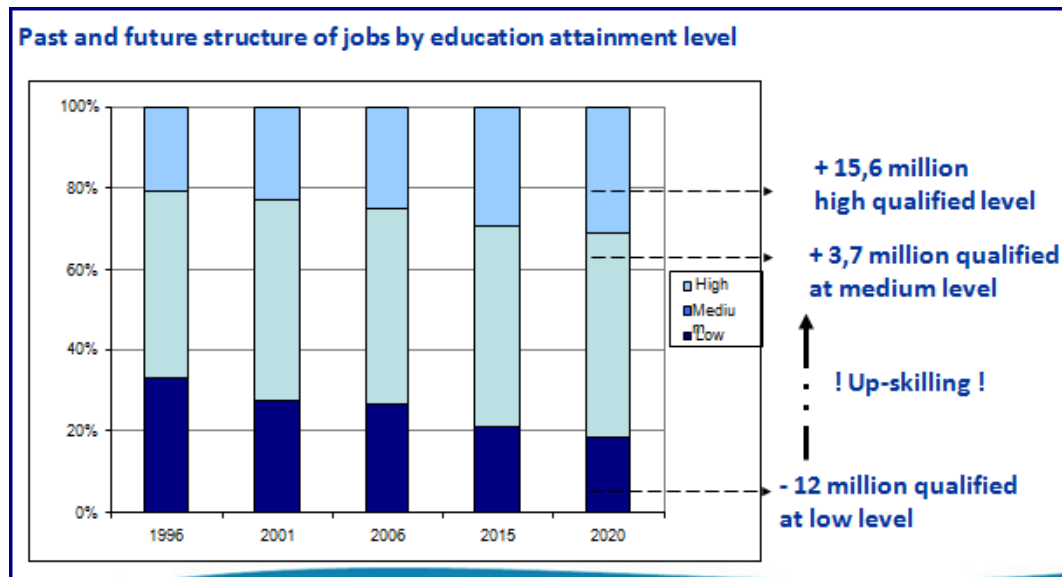
With regard to the following joint challenges, initial and continuing VET have an important role to play in terms of updating and upgrading skills:

- The ageing population
- The low-carbon economy
- The technological changes
- The fact that 80 million people have no or low qualifications

The objective of VET is dual: to enhance employability and growth and to foster social cohesion.

The following graph illustrates the need for higher levels of skills:

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VET cooperation will play a specific role in the following Europe 2020 flagship initiatives:

- An agenda for new skills and jobs
- Youth on the move

The Bruges Communiqué will give a new impetus for VET in Europe for the next decade; it is setting a global version of VET, eleven strategic objectives and 22 short term deliverables.



### *A global vision for VET in 2020*

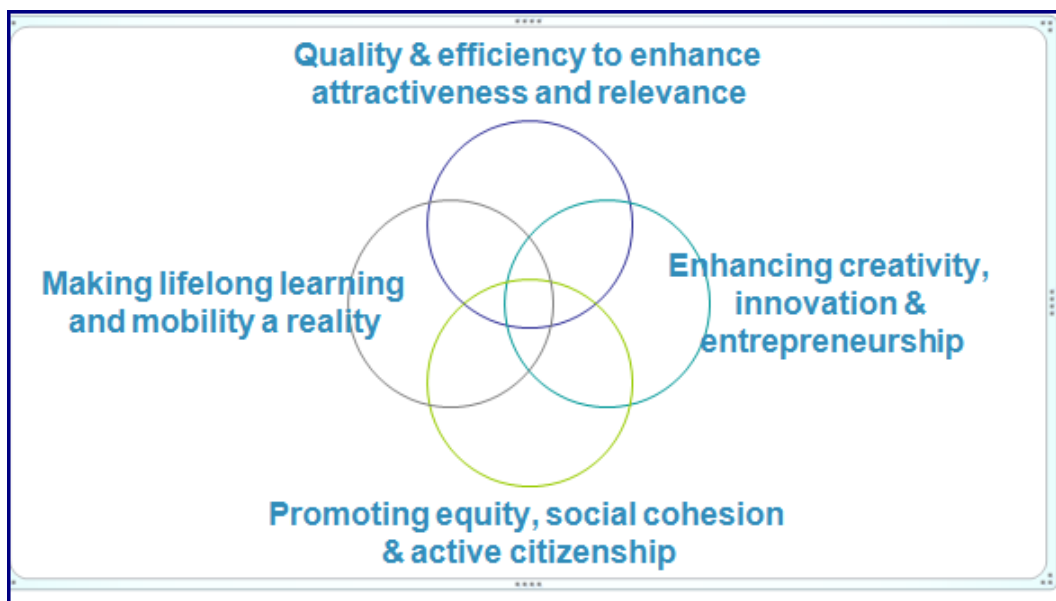
- Attractive and inclusive VET
- High quality initial VET. Quality standards are very important here. There is a need for high qualified VET teachers.
- Easily accessible and career-oriented continuing VET. VET has to be even more open and innovative than general education. Bridges are made with the world of business.

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- Flexible systems of VET based on a learning outcomes approach which cater for validation of non-formal and informal learning. VET should not be a dead end, but should open up perspectives for students to make the transition to the world of work, to higher education, or to a combination of both.
- European education and training area with transparent qualifications systems. We are moving from a diploma based approach to a learning outcomes based approach. The European Union has played a pioneer role in making innovative proposals for transparency tools and for the recognition and validation of informal and non formal learning.
- Substantially increased opportunities for transnational mobility in VET. In the proposal for the new generation of mobility programmes, a considerable increase of the available amount for mobility is foreseen, including for VET mobility.
- Easily accessible and high quality lifelong information, guidance and counseling services. If possibilities for many different pathways are opened, many times parents and students have difficulties in finding their way, in understanding what is available. Explaining is important, especially because those in trouble are those who need alternative pathways. It is not possible to implement a lifelong learning strategy successfully without guidance services with high level quality standards.

*The four strategic objectives for 2011-2020*



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*Strategic objective I:* Improving the quality and efficiency of VET and enhancing its attractiveness and relevance

- (1) Making initial VET an attractive learning option
- (2) Fostering the excellence, quality and relevance of both I-VET and C-VET: quality insurance in line with EQAVET, quality of teachers, trainers and other VET professionals, labour market relevance of I-VET and C-VET

*Strategic objective II:* Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality

- (3) Enabling flexible access to training and qualifications
  - In C-Vet to contribute to 15% adult participation in lifelong learning by 2020
  - In both I-VET and C-VET to facilitate transitions and pathways and to develop higher VET
- (4) Developing a strategic approach to internationalization of I-VET and C-Vet and promoting learning mobility
  - Strategies for cross-border cooperation in VET
  - Use of European transparency tools (EQF, ECVET, Europass)
  - Promotion of foreign languages

*Strategic objective III:* Enhancing creativity, innovation and entrepreneurship

- (5) Fostering innovation, creativity and entrepreneurship as well as the use of ICT (both in I-VET and C-VET)
  - Forming of knowledge partnerships between VET providers and enterprises, HE institutions, design centres and cultural sector
  - Use of ICT to maximise access to training and promote active learning
  - Support to entrepreneurship initiatives
  - Support to start-ups for VET graduates and mobility of young entrepreneurs

*Strategic objective IV:* Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship

- (6) Realising inclusive I-Vet and C-VET
  - Key competences alongside with vocational competences
  - Reduction of early school leaving through more work-based learning
  - Access to VET for groups at risk
  - Promotion of active citizenship through partnerships with civil society
- (7) Greater involvement of VET stakeholders and greater visibility for the achievements of European cooperation in VET
- (8) Coordinated governance of European and national instruments in the areas of transparency, recognition, quality assurance and mobility

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- (9) Intensifying cooperation between VET policy and other relevant policy areas
- (10) Improving the quality and comparability of data for EU policymaking in VET
- (11) Making good use of EU support

***Education and the labour market***

At times, the European Commission is criticized: education and training looks too much the needs of the labour market. This is absolutely not correct. The Commission has always tried to promote transversal competences, such as learning to learn, civic competences, social inclusion. The aim of education is to educate people not only for the labour market, but for society as a whole.

However, in times of crisis, an important basis for social inclusion is to have a job, so it is clear that one of the main focuses of education and training has to remain to prepare people for the labour market.



# **“Learning for Jobs”, findings of the OECD Review of Vocational Education and Training**



*Malgorzata Kuczera*

*Malgorzata Kuczera is policy analyst in the OECD Directorate for Education*

Ms Kuczera is introduced by Maria Emilia Brederode Santos, member of CNE.



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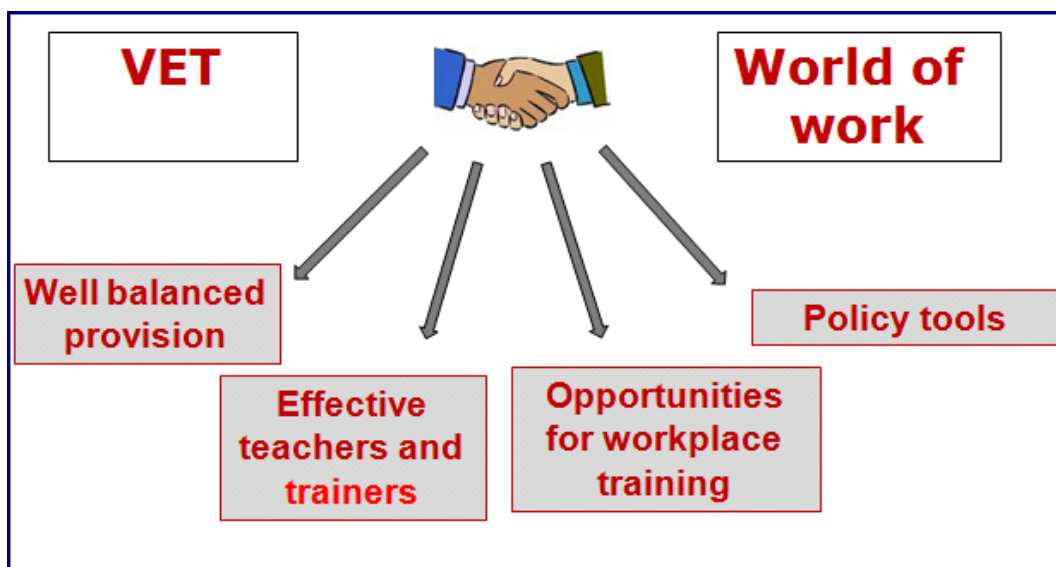
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The review 'Learning for jobs' covered 16 countries. The aim of the review was to enhance the responsiveness of VET systems to the labour market needs, with a focus on upper secondary level. The review is now over, but, as VET is very high on the political agenda, last year OECD started another review, this time with the focus on post secondary level.

The findings of the OECD policy review of Vocational Education and Training resulted in recommendations on how to connect better VET to the world of work.

There are mainly four recommendations:

- Well balanced provision
- Effective teachers and trainers
- Opportunities for workplace training
- Policy tools: measures that are needed to support the implementation of the other recommendations



***Recommendation 1: Well balanced provision***

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It is important to get the right number of trained persons, and to get the right mix of skills for each job.

This recommendation is about which programmes should be provided in a specific country. For instance: is there need for electricians, or rather for hairdressers? Once this decision is made, it is important to decide how many people should be trained.

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This recommendation is also about the content of VET: what should the future electrician, for instance, learn? Maths, literature, occupation specific skills..In other words, it is important to find the right balance between general skills and occupation specific skills.

How to find an answer to this rather difficult question? The OECD recommendation is quite simple: Well balanced provision means that the provision of VET has to take into account

- The choices of the students
- The needs of the employers
- That school capacity should not be a constraint to provide VET.

*The choices of the students*

It is important that students make meaningful choices. Sometimes employers complain that it is difficult to attract students for specific sectors. But maybe this has more to do with the fact that the jobs are not attractive, not well paid, lacking future progression.

To make meaningful choices, it is important to have good career guidance. The review shows that this is often lacking. Generally, the person responsible for guidance and information on labour market is a regular teacher or a psychologist, lacking profound knowledge of the labour market. They are not prepared at all to provide labour market information to students.

*The needs of the employers*

Getting the employers involved is one of the main objectives of VET.

*Limit supply constraints*

In our systems, VET is provided mostly in schools. This means that, in fact, everything is provided by school: the general skills as well as the job specific skills. In such a system, the provision is not adjusted to the needs of the employers and to the choices of the students. Adjustment is slow, because equipment and machinery are expensive, and schools cannot afford to change it every year.

Job specific skills should rather be provided at the workplace. In this case, adjustment is not depending on equipment or teachers that are available in schools. There is evidence that employers provide training only if they assume that it is beneficial to them. It can be of good use for the employer as a way of recruitment. It gives him the opportunity to observe the productivity of the student, and a much better view on his potential than a short job interview can ever do. Moreover, students also contribute to the productivity of the company; there might be an investment in time in the

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beginning, in terms of necessary supervision, but after some time the student can do the job a paid worker does.

In Switzerland, for instance, if a student wants to follow a VET programme, he first has to find an employer that wants to give him apprenticeship training. If not, the students cannot start the programme.

***Recommendation 2: Effective teachers and trainers***

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Students receive VET from different teachers. In schools, you have VET teachers, teaching vocational subjects. On the other hand, in companies, there are trainers supervising students work at the workplace.

Teachers in schools and trainers in the company clearly face different challenges. In VET institutions, teachers have to update regularly their vocational skills. For VET teachers, most of the time a master degree is required; only in some countries, such as Norway, relevant workplace experience is required for VET teachers.

In firms, on the other hand, trainers have to improve their pedagogical skills. They know about new technologies, about the machines, but the pedagogical preparation is lacking.

How can those skills, of teachers and of trainers, be updated? Relevant workplace experience should be required. Flexible ways of entry into the teaching profession have to be encouraged. If a full time four years university programme is required, there are no chances that a full time working well paid worker wants to go into education; it should be possible to get the degree through a part time programme, during summer school etc. Interchanges between VET institutions and firms have to be promoted. Trainers could go to school to learn how to deal with young people; teachers should go to the firms in order to get to know the world of work.

***Recommendation 3: Opportunities for workplace training***

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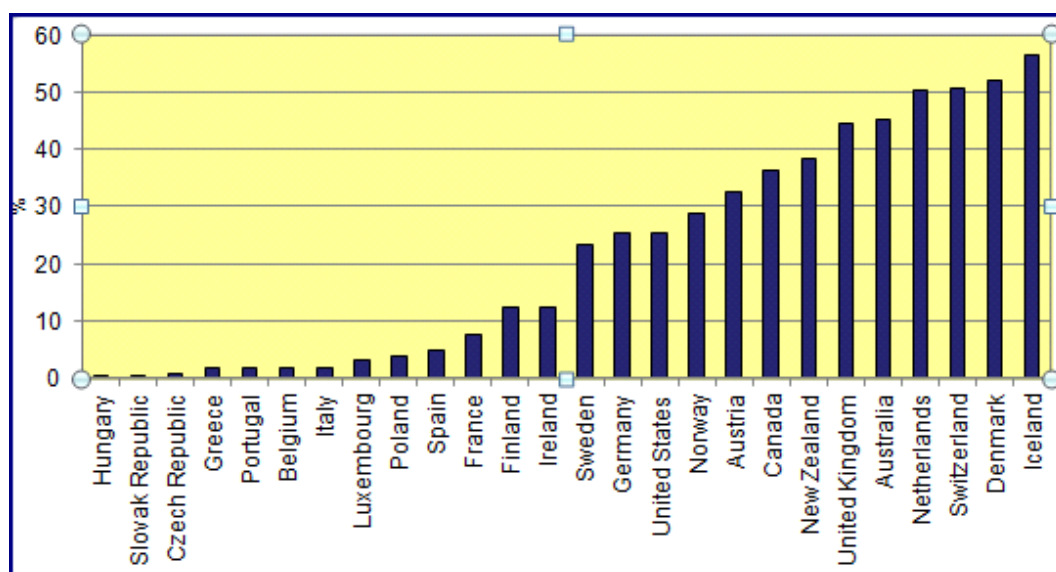
Good quality workplace training provides a strong learning environment for a wide range of job specific skills. Moreover, it is difficult to teach some soft skills at school, especially the skills that are related to behavior, to security, to attitude at work. School however remains the right place to provide more general skills, as well as the theoretical part of the professional skills. Not everything is possible at the workplace.

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Workplace training has to be of good quality and balanced by other provisions. Incentives for employers have to be provided: workplace training has to be beneficial for employers, for instance because it can lead to recruitment.

There are different ways of gaining work experience. Workplace training is not the only way. These are the percentages of students (aged 15-19) who work part- or full-time, including apprentices:



This graph shows that many young people gain work experience outside school, especially in those countries that have a more flexible labour market, such as the US, Canada, New Zealand. It makes the transition from school to work more easy.

#### ***Recommendation 4: Policy tools***

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It is important that social partners are involved in VET, and that VET qualifications are recognized on the labour market, and that assessment is standardized. This is easy in the countries having a tradition of employers and employees involvement and engagement in the policy design, such as in Norway and Sweden. In countries such as Korea this does not work.

There is the need for the creation of an institutional framework for social partners engagement. Transparent national assessment frameworks have to be established to underpin quality in training provision.

# VET in Portugal

## Historic developments and perspectives for the future

*Joaquim Azevedo*

*Joaquim Azevedo is president of the Portuguese Catholic University in Oporto, Member of CNE.*

Joaquim Azevedo is introduced by Antonio Frías del Val, Spanish Education Council.



Mr Azevedo presents a timeline with milestones in the history of VET in Portugal:

- 1977 End of ancient technological education
- 1989 Creation of Vocational Education and Training and of technical programmes in secondary education

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- 2004 Beginning of the expansion of VET: a big effort to produce a national system of qualifications including a national catalogue with all details including the system of financing.
- 2006 VET explosion in secondary schools
- 2007 National qualifications system
- 2009 Twelve years of compulsory schooling (age 18)

*The success of the 'Ensino Profissional'*

What type of repercussions did the development of VET since about 2000 have? Why was it successful?

VET mainly has been successful because it conciliates two different aspects of development: the professional qualifications on the one hand, and the social and personal development on the other hand.

The Portuguese option has been to train 'broadband' in rather small schools that enable personal relationships.

Thanks to, inter alia, modular progression and learning cycles, the focus is on the success of learning. Young people are more responsible for their course; each student is involved. Subject knowledge (philosophy, psychology, geography,...) is integrated as a preparation for life.

There are cooperation networks between local partners and social actors; local and community initiatives are highly valued. Local initiatives are set up with the perspective that each school can try to meet the needs of the students within the local context.

Thanks to the constructivist and humanistic approach of VET and to the knowledge equivalence between VET and general education, VET is strongly revalued in society. Whether a student takes a general course and goes to grammar school leading to higher education, or he chooses the pathway of VET leading to a profession, at the end they have the same value, they learned equally important things.

*Trends for the next years*

The following trends can be identified for the next years:

- Strong adjustments in society, in economy and in the labour market
- More professional activities in the tertiary sector
- Insecurity in the labour market
- High levels of unemployment and of underemployment
- Media and information growing power
- Continued ageing of the population
- Increased attention to social sustainability
- The relevance of knowledge and (social) innovation



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### ***Challenges for VET***

Qualifying professionally youngsters for 16-18 years old can include different aspects:

- To prepare for an occupation
- To prepare for a profession
- To prepare for a labour market
- To prepare for a career
- To promote a good socio-professional integration
- To promote personal development.

Young people need to become more critical persons, showing more solidarity and creativity; they need to become more collaborative, more resilient and more 'green'. The big challenges of VET are to educate, to guide and to innovate.

How to achieve this? Education has to create quality pathways for all young people, beyond the established frames. We need to promote a solid socio cultural formation, and ensure the acquisition of life skills as well as of accurate professional qualifications. Although it might seem difficult, even impossible, it is necessary to try to conciliate a broader training and a professional training.

### ***Guidance***

Students have to be supported in those tough choices, in a complex environment. Especially in this period of economic downturn, youth needs guidance in a youth unemployment forest. The problem is that our databases are often not suitable for the actual situation: the available support instruments often provide information on a labour market that does not exist anymore.

### ***Relationship VET – Labour Market***

Four routes are proposed for the relationship between VET and the Labour Market. Mr Azevedo refers for this point to the previous presentation of Malgorzata Kuczera of OECD.

- Promote local partnerships to qualification
- Attract teachers/trainers coming from the labour market
- Facilitate apprenticeships achievement
- Develop a culture valuing VET in secondary schools

### ***The future of VET***

Stakeholders have to be more involved into the political incentive for VET. VET is not only an issue of schools, but of all society.



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Companies have to be prepared to receive the young for practical training.

In the field of career guidance, new tools have to be created to support guidance for young people.

Young people with learning difficulties should not be sent to VET; this would risk to devalue VET as a whole. In the same concern, it is not good to see VET mainly as a good solution to reduce the number of early school leavers; this approach does not give to VET the value it deserves. VET should not be the only path for potential early school leavers.

The group of social actors has to be involved so that youngsters can gain professional experience even if they are temporally unemployed.

In this time of crisis we must rebuild socially the role of education. It is needed to believe in young people, in each one of them. No one is not gifted! We have to find the way to involve everyone, because everyone has the right to learn. This is feasible!

One needs to connect consistently VET at secondary level with VET at post secondary level.

The major challenge now is how to assure that all young people, in general as well as in VET, can develop the key skills they need for the labour market of the future, and the ability to face the difficult reality, even the unemployment context. We are now facing the risk of preparing young people for an economy that is no longer existing. In order to avoid this, it is necessary to involve, at local and national level, all social actors in society.

## **“VET on the move”**

### **Modernising VET in Poland in response to the labour market needs and LLL challenges**

*Mr Piotr Bartosiak is head of unit for European initiatives in the vocational and continuing education department of the Ministry of National Education in Poland. He represents the Polish Presidency of the European Union. He was invited to highlight the added value of Lifelong Learning in coherent VET policies and to introduce the Polish VET system.*

Mr Bartosiak is introduced by Simone Barthel, president of EUNEC.



#### ***Changes in the VET system***

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The VET system in Poland is being changed in order to make it more effective, more efficient and more responsive to the labour market needs. The implementation of the changes will begin in September 2012.

These aims of modernization will be achieved by

- Correlating the VET system with the labour market, including
  - Implementing a mechanism inducing schools to adjust educational offer to the needs of local and regional labour market and employers' expectations.
  - Increased flexibility of the vocational education structure and the system of exams confirming vocational qualifications.

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- Making VET more accessible and effective, validating externally learning outcomes, opening initial VET to continuing VET through the introduction of vocational courses for adults.

High quality of VET provisions is a prerequisite for its attractiveness.

***Improving the quality and efficiency of VET and  
enhancing its attractiveness***

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The priorities of Poland are closely linked to the priorities of the Bruges Communiqué.

- Modifying the classification of occupations accessible in vocational and continuing education
- Implementation of a curriculum framework for vocational education (new core curriculum for VET)
- Modernization of the examination system
- Introducing a new model of VET based on flexible learning pathways
- Establishing quality assurance framework for VET providers coherent with the EQAVET Recommendation
- Creating opportunities for enhanced cooperation between VET institutions and enterprises
- Promoting vocational education

***The classification of occupations***

The new classification will define the occupations accessible in the VET system, in eight areas of education:

- Administration and services
- Building and Construction
- Electrics-electronics
- Mechanics and mining – steelworks
- Agriculture, forestry and environment protection
- Tourism, hospitality and gastronomy
- Medical and social
- Arts

The classification will also define types of basic vocational schools and upper secondary VET schools which are allowed to prepare for a specific profession, as well as the set of qualifications for each profession.

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***The new outcome-oriented core curriculum for VET***

The Minister of National Education will publish the new core curriculum for all occupations in VET in one regulation.

The new core curriculum involves:

- occupations defined by the relevant qualifications
- educational goals and expected results defined in the form of learning outcomes
- key competences to be integrated into VET curricula
- conditions and requirements for organizing effective teaching and learning processes:
  - minimum number of hours devoted for vocational education and training,
  - teaching lab equipment
- the information on existing possibilities to gain new qualifications from the same vocational education area
- the register of qualifications accessible in the education system

***The exam confirming vocational qualifications***

The exam will be conducted separately for each qualification on the basis of standards defined in the core curriculum for VET.

Who can take the exam?

- Students learning in VET schools, during their study after each qualification
- Individuals who completed vocational courses
- Adults in the system of extramural exams

Passing the exam is a confirmation that a person possessed knowledge and skills for this particular qualification. A vocational course preparing for an exam must be built on the core curriculum for VET and enable preparing for taking an exam for one single qualification in the given occupation.

The diploma confirming qualifications for an occupation will be issued to personas who passed the required exams for all qualifications defined for a given occupation and have a required level of general education.

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*Introducing a new model of VET based on flexible learning pathways  
– Adjusting VET to the students' needs and abilities*

The following measures will be introduced:

- Relating vocational education and general education, with the special focus on key competences
- The possibility to acquire qualifications gradually while studying at school
- The replacement of vocational schools for adults by the system of vocational courses leading to qualifications
- Involving VET schools in CVET, with the possibility to organize vocational courses for adults. This is important in relation to the recent Bruges Communiqué objectives.
- The possibility for graduates from Vet schools to upgraded their level of general knowledge in general secondary schools for adults while participating in vocational courses at the same time.

The new model of VET is based on flexible learning pathways.

For VET schools:

- 3-year basic vocational schools
- 4-year technical secondary schools
- Post-secondary vocational schools

For general schools for adults:

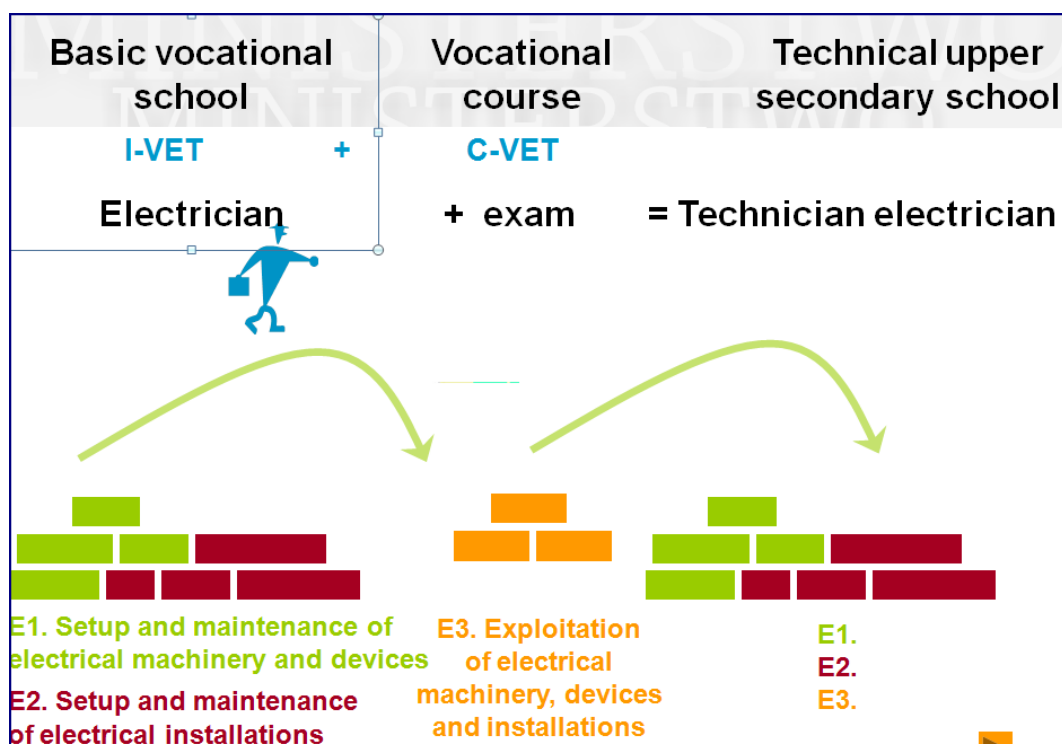
- Primary school for adults (the 6<sup>th</sup> class)
- 3-year lower secondary school
- 3-year general uppers-secondary school

It will be possible for adults to combine general education with gaining vocational qualifications in the out-of-school system.

The graph below illustrates an example of this new structure, in the case of a technician electrician.

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### *Quality assurance standards for VET*

The following actions are linked closely to EQAVET, the European Quality Assurance in Vocational Education and Training.

#### → **EDUCATIONAL OFFER AND CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK**

Educational offer and VET curricula are based on core curriculum for vocational education and enable the assessment of learning outcomes.

#### → **VOCATIONAL GUIDANCE**

VET schools support students in helping them assess their career choice, deciding about further education path or requalifying and prepare students for functioning in the labour market.

#### → **MATERIAL RESOURCES AT SCHOOLS AND EDUCATION CENTRES**

Schools and centres provide proper technical equipment, teaching materials and infrastructure for delivering vocational education, obeying health and safety provisions.

#### → **TEACHING STAFF**

Qualified and competent VET teachers and trainers are a prerequisite for high quality Vocational Education and Training.

→ **ORGANIZATION OF TEACHING/ LEARNING PROCESS**

Education process is arranged in such a way so that it allowed preparing students for work, confirming vocational qualifications and further learning.

→ **SEN STUDENTS (STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS)**

Schools identify students' special educational needs and respond to them.

→ **COOPERATION OF SCHOOLS/ CENTRES AND EMPLOYERS**

Employers are actively involved in defining, implementing and assessing learning outcomes in VET.

→ **VALIDATION OF LEARNING OUTCOMES**

Schools/ centres assess students' degree of achievement of the expected learning outcomes and prepare them for the exam confirming qualifications for a given occupation.

→ **INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION**

Schools/ centres cooperate with partners from abroad in order to raise the quality and attractiveness of the education process and to better prepare students for taking advantage of national and European labour market opportunities.

→ **SCHOOL/ CENTRE MANAGEMENT**

Management must ensure effective operation of a school/ centre.

***Establishing the basis for a real-life cooperation of VET schools and employers***

It is important that schools are enabled to respond quickly to the changing labour market needs and to adjust the educational offer to the employers' expectations.

They can take benefit of Calls for proposals and projects financed by the European Social Fund:

- Organising traineeships for teachers and trainers in enterprises  
Pilot training programmes in enterprises for vocational education teachers and instructors of practical training are developed and implemented.
- Preventing shortages of VET teachers  
Post-diploma studies are organized preparing for the profession of VET teachers.

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***Promoting vocational education***

VET is promoted as one of the main goals of the project „Vocational school – the school of a positive choice“ (2010-2012):

- Organising a national competition for the best vocational school in the given area of VET (awarding leaders ‘Vocational Oscars’)
- Nationwide promotional media campaigns directed to students from lower secondary schools and their parents will be launched at the beginning of 2012 – in order to increase public awareness of the possibilities which VET offers.

***Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality***

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This objective – cf. the Bruges Communiqué - will be realized through the following actions:

- Enabling flexible access to training and qualifications by linking IVET to CVET (opening vocational schools for adults)
- Widening access to training by creating new *centres for vocational and continuing education*, with varied educational offer for both youth and adults, which may be formed of different types of schools and training centres
- Defining procedures for the recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning – introducing extramural exams for VET qualifications
- Promoting opportunities for language learning in VET – ensuring the provision of vocationally oriented language learning in all VET curricula
- Preparation for the implementation of ECVET in Poland – defining units of learning outcomes for each qualification in the new VET core curriculum
- Promoting lifelong learning – nationwide promotional campaigns will be launched at the beginning of 2012, together with the VET promotion.

Lifelong learning and mobility will also be implemented through projects co-financed by the European Social Funds supporting the reforms. Here are three examples:

- Promoting modularized pathways

The system supporting schools and other institutions implementing modularized curricula for VET (2009-2012)



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- Developing e-learning

Implementation and dissemination of the model of distance education in lifelong learning (2009-2014)

- Enhancing guidance services

Developing a model of guidance and counselling and a web-based educational and vocational information system (2009-2012)

# Draft Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning

*Mr Piotr Bartosiak is head of unit for European initiatives in the vocational and continuing education department of the Ministry of National Education in Poland. He represents the Polish Presidency of the European Union. He was invited to highlight the added value of Lifelong Learning in coherent VET policies and to introduce the Polish VET system.*



Mr Bartosiak sums up the **priorities of the Polish Presidency** in the field of education and training:

- Education for mobility, in the area of VET: the 'VET on the move' programme, aiming at mobility in VET
  - Fostering international mobility by learning languages in VET and adult learning
  - Developing cooperation between VET, higher education and adult learning
- The modernization of higher education

Permeability is seen as a common goal of the Copenhagen and the Bologna processes, and as a prerequisite for an effective lifelong learning policy.

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Bridges have to be built with the National Qualifications Framework levels, with ECVET and ECTS. Validation will be a tool to enhance lifelong learning. Guidance and counseling will support flexible career paths.

The importance of inter-institutional cooperation for ensuring permeability between different sub-systems of education and training is stressed in the following text of the methodological guide of the Be-TWIN project<sup>5</sup>:

*"The implementation of lifelong learning sparks a number of consequences for the educational systems at national level as well as for European policies.*

*At national level, it means that the different levels and sectors of education and training systems must work in close cooperation, taking also into account the non-formal domains. This results in a significant change in perception and thinking, which requires going beyond existing differences, that is to say, building bridges and flexible learning pathways between different parts of existing systems."*

Adult learning is the main topic of the Polish Presidency in the field of education and training because of the demographic challenges in Europe, the demand for extending the working age, the growing number of older people and, finally, also because of the calendar of work of the EU Council and of the European Commission.

This is reflected in the reference levels of the EU 2020 Strategy and of ET 2020:

- **15% of adults participating in lifelong learning**
- **40% of 30-34 years old with tertiary education**
- **Less than 10% of early school leavers**

Regarding the benchmark of adult participation in lifelong learning, the news is not good. According to the agreed benchmarks in ET 2010, the EU average level of participation in lifelong learning of the working age population should at least reach 12.5 % in 2010 and 15% in 2020.

However, the trend is that on a EU level, adult participation has fallen from 9.8 % in 2005 to 9.1 % in 2010. The best EU performers are Denmark, Sweden and Finland.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://betwin.stratford.ac.uk>

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	2005	2009	2010
<b>EU 27</b>	<b>9.8</b>	<b>9.3</b>	<b>9.1</b>
Denmark	27.4	31.6	32.8
Finland	22.5	22.1	23.0
Sweden	17.4	22.2	24.5
UK	27.6	20.1	19.4

The action plan on Adult Learning '**It is always a good time to learn**' identified five priority actions:

- Analyze the effects of reforms in all sectors of education and training in Member States on adult learning;
- Improve the quality of provision in the adult learning sector;
- Increase the possibilities for adults to go 'one step up', to achieve a qualification at least one level higher than before;
- Speed up the process of assessment of skills and social competences and have them validated and recognized in terms of learning outcomes;
- Improve the monitoring of the adult learning sector.

The (draft) Council Resolution on a renewed European agenda for adult learning has been presented at the several sessions of the Education Committee in Brussels, Belgium. It has been discussed in detail at these occasions. It has also been presented at the 9<sup>th</sup> plenary meeting of the ELGPN, the European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network, on 13-14 September 2011 in Warsaw, Poland. On 26-27 September, the draft Resolution has been presented at the meeting of the Directors General for VET in Krakow, Poland. Finally, it is presented now, during this EUNEC conference on 'New Skills for New Jobs' in Lisbon, Portugal.

One of the challenges of the text, is the fact that adult learning is within the scope of different Ministries, such as education, industry, social affairs. This means that the work has to be well coordinated, and that different stakeholder groups have to be involved.

The document is supposed to be complementary to Europe 2020, to ET 2020, to the Bologna Process, and to the Copenhagen Process and the Bruges Communiqué. It is structured the same way as the Bruges Communiqué, presenting a long term vision up to 2020 as well as a set of first cycle priorities for the period 2012-2014.

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***A longer term vision***

- enhance the possibilities for adults to access high quality learning opportunities at any time in their lives;
- develop a new approach to adult education and training which focuses on learning outcomes and learner responsibility and autonomy;
- foster greater awareness among adults that learning is a lifelong endeavor which they should pursue at regular intervals during their lives, and particularly during periods of unemployment or career transition;
- ensure the comprehensive provision of high quality formal and non-formal education and training for adults aimed at acquiring key competences or leading to qualifications at all levels of the EQF;
- ensure flexible arrangements adapted to different training needs of adults, including in-company training and work-based learning;
- encourage higher education institutions to embrace less traditional groups of learners /demographic challenges/;
- promote the role of social partners and civil society in articulating training needs and developing learning opportunities for adults;
- promote a balanced allocation of education and training resources throughout the life cycle, on the basis of shared responsibilities and strong public commitment, particularly to second chance opportunities and the development of basic skills;
- ensure flexible arrangements adapted to different training needs of adults, including in-company training and work-based learning;
- encourage higher education institutions to embrace less traditional groups of learners /demographic challenges/;
- promote the role of social partners and civil society in articulating training needs and developing learning opportunities for adults;
- promote a balanced allocation of education and training resources throughout the life cycle, on the basis of shared responsibilities and strong public commitment, particularly to second chance opportunities and the development of basic skills;

***Priority areas for 2012-2014***

***Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality***

In order to increase the participation in LLL:

- Focus on disadvantaged groups, early school leavers, low skilled and illiterate adults, young people not in education, employment or training, second-chance opportunities leading to a recognized EQF level qualification
- Promote workplace-based learning
- Promote flexible learning pathways for adults, also in higher education
- Validate non-formal and informal learning outcomes

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***Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training***

- Develop quality assurance systems for adult learning
- Improve the quality of academic staff
- Develop financing as a shared responsibility
- Adjust to the labour market needs; introduce new skills increasing capacity to adapt to the new requirements
- Intensify cooperation and partnership between all stakeholders relevant for adult learning

***Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship through adult learning***

- Improve adult literacy and numeracy skills
- Develop digital literacy
- Provide opportunities for adults to develop the basic skills and forms of literacy needed for participating actively in modern society such as *economic and financial literacy, civic, cultural, political and environmental awareness, learning for healthy living, consumer and media awareness*
- Enhance learning opportunities for older adults and promote active ageing
- Address the learning needs of people with disabilities and in specific situations of exclusion from learning

***Enhancing the creativity and innovation of adults and their learning environments***

In order to develop new pedagogies and creative learning environments in adult learning and to promote adult learning as a means of enhancing the creativity and innovative capacity of citizens through activities focused on:

- Promoting the acquisition of transversal key competences
- Enhancing the role of cultural organizations (such as museums, libraries etc.), civil society, sporting organizations and other bodies as creative and innovative settings for non-formal and informal adult learning
- Making better use of ICT widening access and improving the quality of provision, for instance through the creation of e-learning tools and platforms

***Improving the knowledge base on adult learning and monitoring the adult learning sector***

- Participate actively in and implement key messages from major international surveys and studies such as PIAAC

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- Collect sufficient baseline data on, for instance, participation, providers, financing, the outcomes and wider benefits of learning for adults and society and extend the data coverage beyond 64
- Strengthen monitoring and impact assessment of the development and performance of the adult learning sector at European, national, regional and local level
- Intensify research and in-depth analysis of issues relating to adult learning, include new fields and encourage more inter-disciplinary and prospective analysis
- Report on the implementation of the agenda as part of the "ET 2020" joint progress report in 2014.

## Parallel workshops

### Workshop 1

#### Valuing learning outcomes instead of punishing failures: an ambitious policy for VET in 2012

*This workshop is organized by the CEF (Conseil de l'Education et de la Formation, Belgium).*



*Maryse Descamps (CEF) presents the pilot project of the CPU ('Certification par unités') of the French Community in Belgium.*

The Certification Per Units in French Community of Belgium takes its place in the 2020 European strategy.

#### *Presentation*

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The reason why this project was set up is the fact that redoubling, school retardation and early school leaving are much too excessive in our educational system, especially in vocational education.

- In the 11th year, normally for 17-years old, only 20% of the pupils are on time
- The rate of grade retention is 20 to 25 % in the 11th year.

VET is organized on a traditional and selective basis. Each course is 50 minutes long, there are exams at fixed periods (at Christmas and in June). And teachers are forced to evaluate every year and to punish failure.



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The European Recommendation of 18 June 2009 offered a opportunity. The aims of this recommendation are

- To facilitate the transfer, recognition and capitalisation of learning outcomes
- To increase the readability of outcomes for the citizens (scholars and enterprises) within a system, between stakeholders and between European countries
- To promote lifelong learning without borders
- To increase the quality and the attractiveness of VET

The tools are

- ECVET, the European Credits for Vocational Education and Training
- ECTS, the credit system for Higher Education
- EQF, the European Qualification Framework
- EQAVET, the Quality Assurance system for Vocational Education and Training

The context was in favour of the creation of CPU: an ambitious policy of promotion of VET is ongoing. The SFMQ (Service of Jobs and Qualifications) is working with a similar pattern of cutting up by unit. In the short term, all the job descriptions will be presented in terms of learning outcomes. The SFMQ will be the sole reference for all partners in VET. A policy of equipment of vocational schools is growing and provides them with high quality facilities: in every school but also in Centres of Excellence (such as 'Centres de compétence', 'Centres de référence', 'Centres de technologie avancée').

#### The objectives and the target group of the CPU

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- To propose another approach of VET: valuing learning outcomes instead of punishing failures. This approach makes redoubling useless.
- To propose students a more concrete, more motivating curriculum in which it is easier to understand mid term and long term objectives, in which they can be more active, in which they can master their own route.
- To propose an education structure more demanding in aims and more flexible in its organization.
- To propose a structure compatible with the objectives of lifelong learning and the implementation of EQF and ECVET.

Three groups of trades have been involved:

- Automobile
- Restaurants
- Beauticians

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The target group was the last two years of compulsory education (18 years old). The project was supported by the administration, the inspection, schools, and developed in close partnership with the SFMQ and the professional sectors, as well as with adult education and training operators. All system resources were mobilized: teachers' training, teachers' guidance, students' guidance..

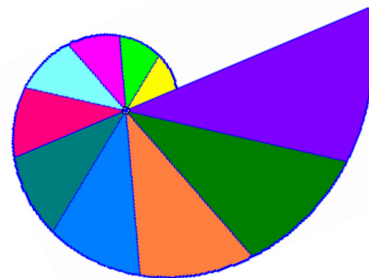
#### Learning outcomes, the cornerstone of the system

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All units are described in terms of learning outcomes. Learning outcomes are defined as what a learner knows, understands and is able to do at the end of a learning process. Learning outcomes are defined in terms of knowledge, skills and competences.

The learning outcomes 'units' are part of a qualification which consists of a coherent set of knowledge, skills and competences that can be assessed and certified.

Units are meant to give sense to learning for the student and the teacher and to give sense on the labour market. Units favour a progressive and varied learning, following a spiral model. The units have to be followed in a pre-determined order.



Units don't presume any particular methodology. The concrete organization (choice of subjects, length of courses and activities, practical organization, programmes,..) is the decision of the school.

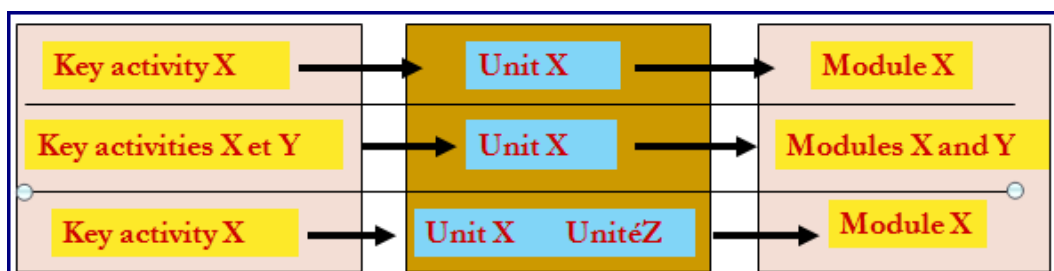
Besides learning outcomes, units will include

- Prerequisites
- An indication of the length of time
- Indications about facilities needed
- Assessment standards

In the scheme below 'key activities' are one or more integrated professional activities, essential to fulfill the assignments of the worker in his function. 'Units' are learning outcomes that define a part of a qualification. 'Modules' are a coherent set of learning activities according to the liberty of the school.

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#### A new approach to assessment

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Assessment processes will match assessment standards. Assessments will not take place at traditional periods (Christmas and June), but at the end of each unit. Each unit will be successful: there will be no redoubling, neither for the year, neither for the unit. This implies that there will be enough structural means of catching up, and that it will be necessary to advise Early if reorientation is needed.

Every student will receive a portfolio containing the qualification certificate including:

- The list of the units (with a description of each unit in a clear and accessible language for students, parents and employers)
- Free space for assesement of foreign languages, mobility certificates and other certificates such as participation in training activities.

#### Conducting the experimentation

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A special team is hired to conduct the project. A permanent working group is piloting the project. Thematic working groups are organized, with experts from schools, administration, inspection, SFMQ and professional sectors. There is a special working group for the dual system. An international scientific committee will support the project, starting in January 2011.

#### The challenges for tomorrow

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- Information and orientation for young people of the second degree (15-17 years), before CPU
- Part of the training should be organized in companies
- Articulation of general training in vocational training
- Every school builds a plan of implementation of the CPU to specify his particular organization in means of catching up for students with problems.

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*Discussion in the workshop*

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*How does the learner choose his way through the units, and how is the order of the units determined?*

Ms Descamps explains that, in fact, there is no choice: the order of the units is determined by natural progression. In most of the cases, there is only one possible order. In some specific cases, for instance for beauticians, the order of two units can be interchanged. The aim of CPU is not to develop flexible learning pathways, but to certify step by step, with the same pathway for all pupils.

*How come that the success rate is so high?*

Each unit has to be finished in about three months. That is quite a lot of time for acquiring the learning outcomes. So there is time for remediation, and that explains the high success rate. For pupils going faster, it is possible to develop other activities: helping other pupils, extra work in the fields where they have problems.

Two assessments are planned for each unit. So pupils have the possibility to catch up before the second assessment in case they failed the first one. The second assessment is open for all those who want to increase their results, even if they succeeded the first round. The assessment is done by a jury composed by teachers and trainers and experts from the companies. There are standards for evaluation with common criteria. There is thus a mix of internal and external evaluation.

*Is there also access for pupils with a very low level? What about access conditions?*

Each pupil has achieved the second cycle. Half of them come from general education, the other half from a vocational second cycle, in the same specialisation or not. CPU aims to facilitate the success of the last cycle through increasing the motivation, and through assessing step by step. This will not resolve all drop out problems. This requires earlier actions, starting in pre-primary school.

In the French Community a problem persists: a pupil has access to the second vocational cycle without having finished successfully the first one, once he has the age of 16. This is symptomatic for a problem existing in many countries: pupils are going in VET because they failed; VET is not a positive choice.

Another problem is that the level of the pupils is very different from school to school. In order to counter this problem, external evaluations are developed, at the end of primary school and at the end of the first cycle of secondary

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school. However, the question is raised whether an education system should rather invest in more evaluation and assessment, or rather in training.

*What about the links with general education?*

At this moment, nothing changed as far as the general part of the training is concerned. However, the possibility of working with units is studied.

### ***Conclusions***

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The system has a lot of benefits. It helps to enhance the motivation of students, and can help them to be successful. As there is a clear set of steps, of achievable goals, students can be proud of what they realized. This way, CPU can be a means of fighting early school leaving. The transparency of the system is better, for the students and for the employers, as the content of the units is based on the input of the sectors. The system gives a lot of freedom to the school, solutions are not top down.

Some questions remain. Possibly, the system might be considered as less challenging for excellent students. Starting this system only in the third cycle seems rather late: why not start earlier, in the second cycle?

## **Workshop 2**

### **Valuing people, raising qualifications in society**

*This workshop is organized by the CNE (Conselho Nacional de Educação, Portugal)*

*Presentation by Ana Maria Canelas, CNE, and  
Sandra Rodrigues, PhD student in adult education.*



#### **Presentation**

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Ms Canelas and Ms Rodrigues present the RVCC process: the national system for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) for adults. The goal of the RVCC initiative is to identify and certify knowledge and competences that adults have acquired during their professional careers and social life.

In 2001, a national system for the Recognition, Validation and Certification of Competences (RVCC) was created for adults in Portugal. The main assumption of this system was that a large number of people acquire high level competences in their work but do not have any official qualifications. The main source of their learning is therefore not formal school education, but a multitude of informal contexts and experiences. The idea was that this experiential learning could be certified.

The main instrument of the RVCC process is a national framework of key competences divided into four areas: language and communication, essential mathematics, citizenship and employability, and information and communication technologies.

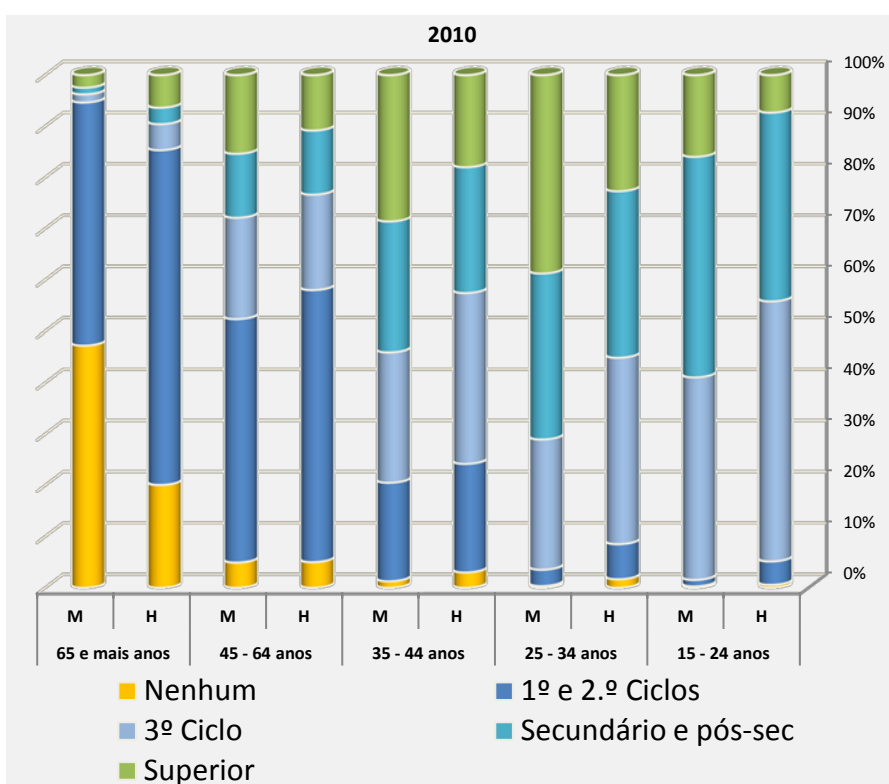
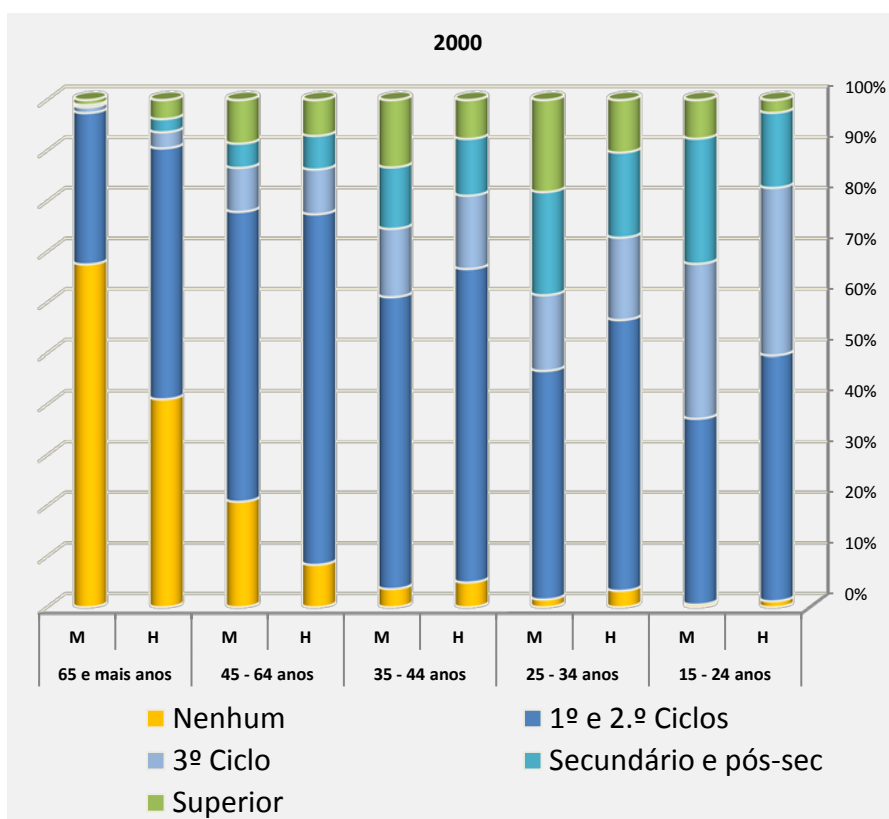
#### **Education levels of the active population**

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Before explaining the process of RVCC, Ms Canelas and Ms Rodrigues give an overview of the education levels of the active population in percentages, in 2000 and in 2010 in Portugal, split up by age and by education level (none, first and second cycle, third cycle, secondary and post-secondary, higher education).

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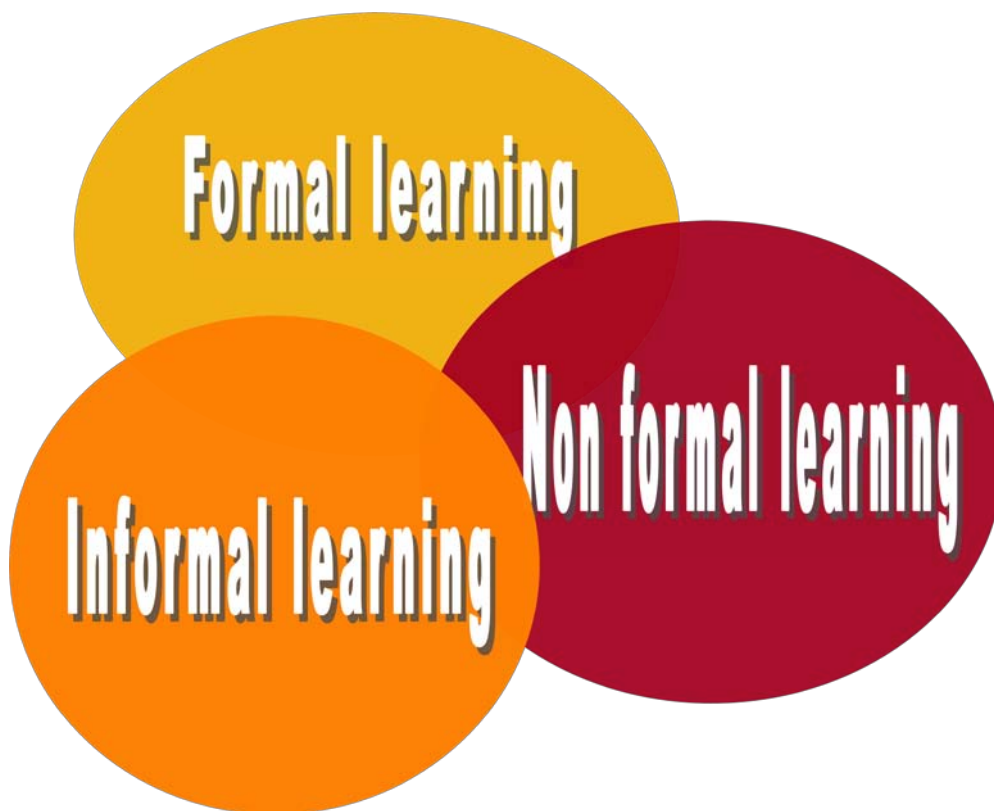
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### How and when do people learn?

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People learn outside the formal systems. These knowledge we acquire has theoretical and practical components. No one should be forced to learn what he already knows. And everybody has the right to see formally recognized what he learned. We can assess with accuracy everything we learn.

People learn by crossing different types of knowledge that complement each other and give sense to what we learn in the present, with what we have learned in the past and what is necessary to learn in the future.



People learn in different settings: we distinguish formal learning, non formal learning, and informal learning.

### Key competences

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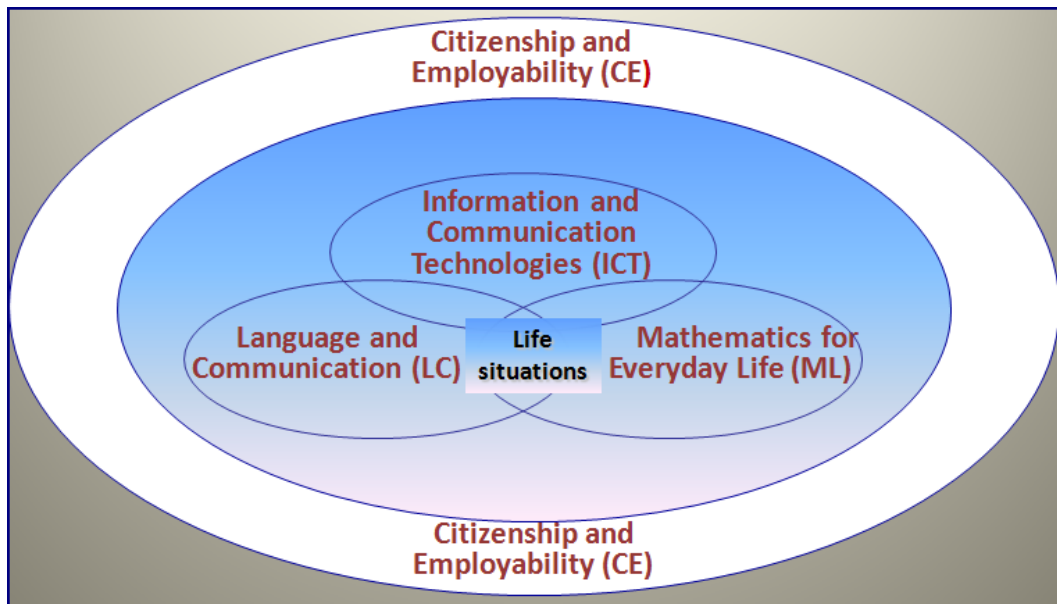
A key competence is 'an articulated, transferable and multifunctional set of knowledge, capabilities and attitudes indispensable to personal fulfillment and development, to social inclusion and to professional performance' (according to the European Commission, 2004, and the Council of the European Union, 2006).



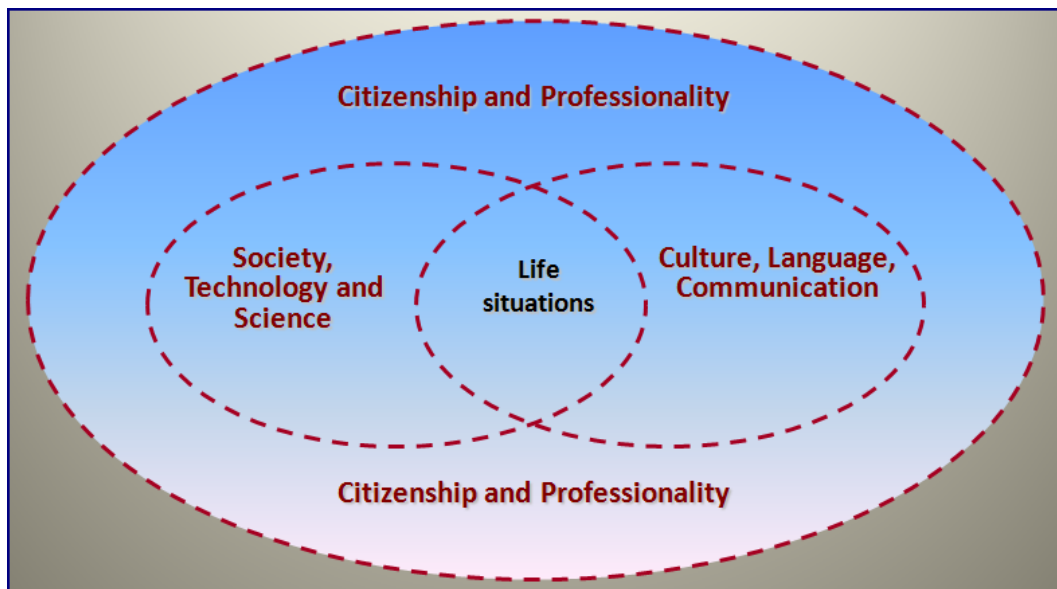
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In 2000, the Key Competences Framework has been developed for basic education, up to the 9<sup>th</sup> grade.



In 2006, the Key Competences Framework has been developed for upper secondary education.



In both frameworks, we see that the key competences areas cross at one certain point, which are the life situations. Life skills are in the middle of it all.

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## RVCC

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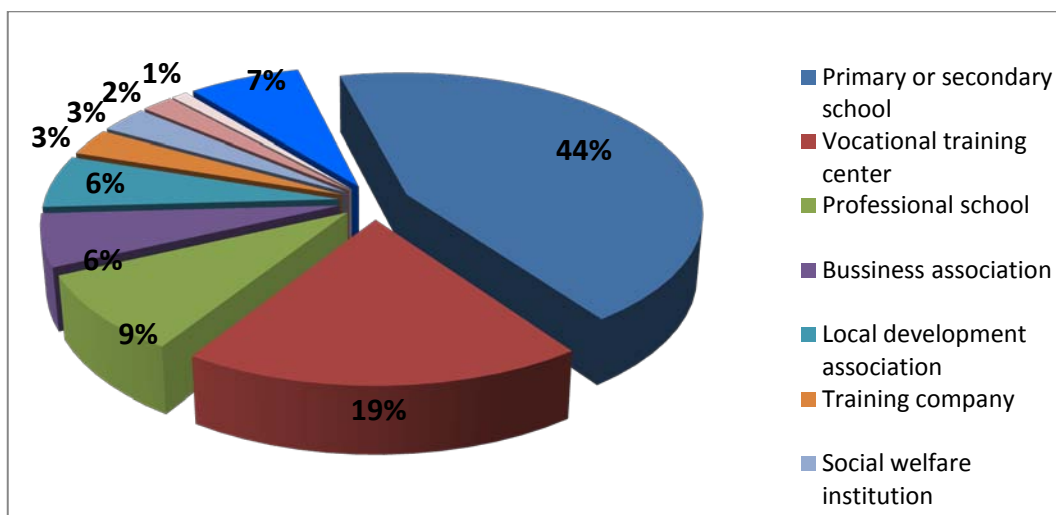
Adults who wish to have their competences certified can register in one of the RVCC centres that have gradually been established for this purpose in Portugal.

Those centres are hosted in different types of institutions:

- Primary or secondary schools
- Vocational training centers
- Professional schools
- Business associations
- Local development associations
- Training companies
- Social welfare institutions
- Municipalities
- Business companies

At the beginning, the centers were rarely hosted in schools, but now the majority is in schools. However, it remains important that the network of centers is accessible for all, and thus not only in schools, because a large percentage of the adults working towards a certification have rather negative experiences with schools.

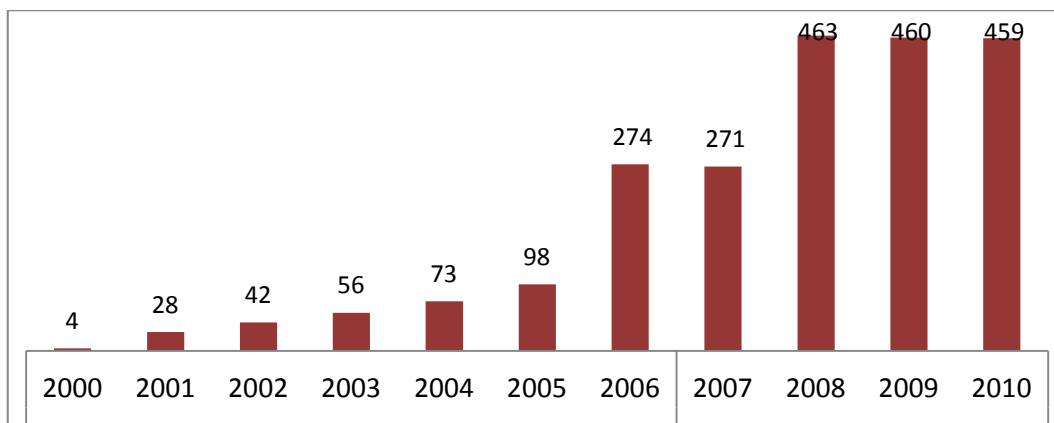
This graph shows the percentage by type of host institution in 2010:



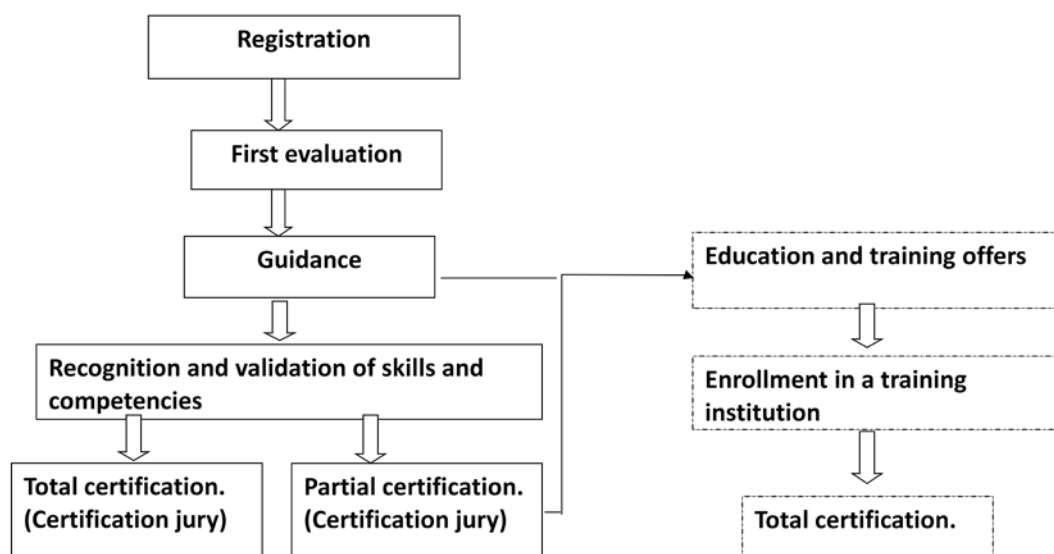
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This graph shows to which extent the number of centers has grown over the past ten years:



The flowchart of the work developed at the centers shows the different phases of the recognition, from the first step, the registration, until the final step, the total certification.



The RVCC Process allows us to recognize, validate and certify the skills and competencies that adults acquired during their life and in several contexts. It translates the personal learning processes and knowledge into a set of skills and competencies, defined in a nationwide document, the Key Competences Framework.

The RVCC Process is structured in three phases:

- Recognition of skills and competencies acquired throughout life
- Validation of these skills anchored in the Key Competences Framework

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- Certification of competencies and skills, matched to a particular level of the Key Competences Framework

The basis of the RVCC Process (stage 1) is the life history of each adult that registers, organized in an autobiographical narrative. Stage 2 is the development of the RVCC Process: personal and external matching of the life skills and competencies with the Key Competencies Framework and building a portfolio for reflective learning, that reveals and documents the personal life journey.

The Key Competencies Framework is a flexible working document, which presents a diverse set of skills and competencies. It establishes the fundamental skills and competencies that an adult must demonstrate to acquire a certain level of education. It structures the path through the RVCC Process. It is organized in a set of key competencies areas, specific to each level of education.

Different Key Competencies Areas have been identified:

- Citizenship and Professionalism (CP)  
The world of work as a fundamental dimension of an adult's life. It is a source of various dimensions of the learning process and as a motivation for the development of further learning. It appeals to the critical thinking and reflection in action, as practices of modern citizenship.
- Society, Technology, Science (STC)  
A view of three dimensions is integrated in an adult's life. It combines knowledge that is often built separately, but that is put into action in an integrated way as a response to problems that involve social, technical and operational skills.
- Culture, Language and Communication (CLC)  
An integrated view of the individual is put into perspective. The cultural context determines linguistic domains and communication skills, and these define and reinforce cultural identity.

The Reflective Portfolio of Learning is an important outcome of the process. This document is the result of a participatory process that involves the adult and the RVC team. The adult is responsible for building it. It is him and his individual learning process that are reflected in the portfolio. It should present the process and the learning outcomes: a life story. Evidence of the adult's significant experiences are gathered in the portfolio in order to demonstrate the learning journey.

An example of a case of success in the RVCC Process is the case of Joao, a 42 year old. He has been working at a multinational automotive company for 15 years, at the final assembly line (engines). Before, he has been an aircraft's engine mechanic in a large airline company. During his spare time, he sculpts

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and organizes exhibitions (wood, stone, bonsai). He also organizes sculpture and bonsai growing workshops. He lived in Germany and in France, and is a self-taught passionate for Eastern culture.

The graph below gives a better idea of the adults enrolled in recognition and validation processes in 2010. It gives the evolution of the numbers of adults registered, and of the numbers of adults certified in the centers:

Evolution of the n° of adults registered in the Centres, by level of education						
Level of education	2000 - 2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Lower secondary	153719	77 246	133 424	138 382	142 862	128 281
Upper secondary	0	0	148 588	145 126	134 686	114 641
Total	153719	77 246	282 012	283 508	277 548	242 922
Evolution of the n° of adults certified in the Centres, by level of education						
Level of education	2000-2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Lower secondary	44192	25079	54 815	59 758	73 554	62 145
Upper secondary	0	0	248	14 629	38 760	36 461
Total	44192	25079	55 063	74 387	112 314	98 606

*Discussion on the benefits and the pitfalls of the  
system*

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The RVC has had big impact the last years. The learning has been taken to the people, with important social consequences.

A good thing about the process is that it can actually change people: adults acquire more self-esteem, are more engaged in learning processes. This might have as a positive result that, in some cases, the negative spiral is interrupted: it is not because the parents are low achievers, that the next generation will be low achievers too.

It is a complex process: people have to be convinced continuously of the benefits. Linking to the Key Competences Framework is a very complex task, implying different types of experts. Most of the time, the process is struggling on the question what level of a specific key competence is good enough to start a specific job.

Does the market recognize RVC certifications? Do workers move up their career ladder when they get their learning certified? In other words, do these certifications increase employability? Although it is obvious that educational

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diplomas are still highly valued, it is clear that RVC certifications improve the possibility of applying for a job. In some cases, adults did a job informally because they did not have the appropriate diploma. Thanks to certifications, they can do the job in a more formal way and claim higher wages.

The main result of the process is not, or at least not directly, a better and better paid job. The main result is the fact that people reflect and learn, that their self-esteem increases, and that they develop soft skills (that are highly appreciated by employers..).

A big challenge consists of the fact that the process is mainly paid with European money from the ESF. There is a risk that the system vanishes once there is no more, or not enough, financing. Those involved hope that, once they had the opportunity to collect evidence and to prove the impact, it will be possible to motivate adults to pay for recognitions. This would make the whole system more sustainable.

### Workshop 3

#### An active qualification policy reduces early school leavers



*This workshop is organized by the VLOR (Flemish Education Council).*

*Roos Herpinck presents the Vlor work in progress on 'active qualification policy'.*

#### *Presentation*

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The Vlor is preparing a recommendation on an active qualification policy. During this workshop the Vlor confronts some of its basic viewpoints with the opinion of other education councils.

This recommendation is to be situated in the context of the European Communication on Early School Leaving (March 2011). The Flemish government has concluded a pact with the social partners and the NGO's on the realisation of the Europe 2020 objectives. In the field of Early School Leaving, the Flemish Community has the ambition to become one of the best pupils of the class: we have the objective to reduce the percentage of Early School Leavers to 5.2 % (according to EAK statistics). This objective has to be seen in the wider context of more encompassing objectives and benchmarks related to talent development of learners (participation in Higher Education, participation in Lifelong Learning, participation of disadvantaged groups).

**A first premise** is the question of the field of application of the policy. Do other education councils recognize the demand not only to address Early School Leaving, but to integrate this in a global qualification policy?

One starting point of the recommendation is the idea that we need a global qualification policy aiming at young people leaving compulsory education as well as adults lacking qualifications. Every citizen has to have the possibility to be the motor of his own development.

A second point is that everyone has to obtain a relevant qualification that allows him/her to integrate in a sustainable way in the labour market.

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**A second discussion point** is the question who are the Early School Leavers. The Vlor is pleading for a more clear definition of the profile of the Early School Leaver. Young people with different profiles require the development of adapted policy lines. In the Vlor recommendation we want to distinguish:

- The traditional pupil at risk: pupils that are confronted with a set of problems, learning problems as well as development problems, school retardation, social problems in their family or neighbourhood.
- Those pupils that quit school just before the finish, just before the end of compulsory education, but who have acquired a lot of competences.

As far as the adults are concerned, we distinguish people that lack 'life skills', learning skills (transition to Higher Education and Lifelong Learning) and have problems to function at the labour market, in terms of access and sustainability.

What are **the policy measures** taken by other countries?

For pupils at risk we see a reinforcement of care policy and guidance in compulsory education as an absolute priority. Next to a care policy, there is a need for alternative learning provisions and an 'community school' approach (in Dutch: 'brede school'), with prevention through parents, peer group,...

For those who leave education just before the end of compulsory education, we want to emphasize prevention. In the first place, Flanders has to invest even more in early warning of the problem of a specific pupil. Guidance can be one way to address this, but the experience shows that a repressive approach of illegal school absence and truancy is effective for a certain population.

For adults, we want to stress learning attitudes and learning motivation. To be able to be the motor of ones own development requires a certain degree of literacy, that we hope to build through basic education and second chance education. For those adults, informal ways of learning are certainly as important as the formal ways.

Which **policy approach** is most effective?

The Vlor would like to see that Early School Leaving becomes the cornerstone of every future policy measure. Whatever important educational reform the minister is planning (restructuring of Secondary Education, reinforcement of care for disadvantaged pupils in regular education, a reform of pupils' guidance, an evaluation of adult education,...), it will have an impact on Early School Leaving. However, those policy objectives never take Early School Leaving as a starting point. Those objectives remain implicate.



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That's why the Vlor is pleading for a structural approach instead of a project approach, which is the actual option. We want an encompassing Flemish action plan.

### *Discussion*

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The debate with the colleagues from other education councils lead to the following insights. They are based on the insights of innovative projects in each of their countries.

- Early School Leaving is a result of inefficiency of education systems. But at the same time it is more than an educational problem: it is a problem of societies and of the perspectives of young people within those societies.
  - Some young people don't feel comfortable in a school culture. They feel like 'losers'. They don't have the feeling that their culture is accepted (ethnicity, 'disadvantaged culture', minorities, language,...) They react to the school as to a hostile environment.
  - It is also a social problem, rather than the problem of an individual. It is one of the most important aspects of the debate on equal opportunities in education. Children don't find the support to learn in their environment. There are families where children are the only ones to get up in the morning, because of the fact that the other members of the family are unemployed, and thus live at another rhythm.
  - We are talking about an approach from education that focuses on deficits and has deficits as a result (deficit theory). Education should validate the successes and the steps ahead of a learner. Education should let children play and let them discover instead of emphasizing the failures. It is crucial to keep the motivation to learn of the children and the youngsters alive.
  - Several countries mention that minorities such as Roma are having difficulties with school culture. Starting from their cultural characteristics, some minorities have a different perception of education. It is difficult to take all those cultural characteristics into account.
- In a lot of countries the percentage of Early School Leaving is becoming very high. Moreover, it is growing. All education councils would like to see the issue higher on the national policy agenda. The support provided by Europe is essential, and justified.

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- Participants at the workshops agree that an individual approach (with coaches and guidance, or through repression) is only part of the solution, as we are dealing with a fundamental social problem.
  - We opt for a 'community approach', implying the whole neighbourhood of the pupil (family, neighbourhood, peers,...)
  - We plead for a pro-active approach, rather than a reactive one. When a youngster leaves school, it is too late. The emphasis has to be on prevention.
  - The strategy has to be a global strategy that supports the learning pathways of children and youngsters from Kindergarten until 25 years. The first years are extremely important for the development of learning attitudes and learning strategies.
  - A similar approach will at the same time be an approach that is larger than the field of education. Several government and community services have to work together in a coherent framework.
- The education councils formulate suggestions that go in the same direction in each Member State.
  - At policy level, school guidance is key.
  - A lot of speakers emphasize the need for better coordination between educational levels. The risk of school leaving is highest at moments of transition in education. A policy avoiding Early School Leaving is thus a policy that starts from preschool and primary education. It is certainly not a problem of secondary education alone. Several speakers argue against early selection in education. Children are too often labeled, the cognitive and academic aspect is often overestimated. This does not mean that schools cannot have high expectations from their pupils, but ambitious objectives have to take into account the various talents of people. The society really needs technical and caring talents. There is need for differentiation in the learning pathways of secondary education. The curricula of secondary education have to offer much more vocationally oriented elements, even at a young age.
  - Several countries work with modular education: this allows to validate the competencies of Early School Leavers, and gives them the possibility to go back to education after some years. Some training, offered by SME's or by companies, is more attractive than regular education.
  - Learning and development is more important than formal learning pathways. Some countries are experimenting with distance learning, from community services such as libraries, neighbourhood centers, in order to reduce the distance to learning. All countries are considering systems that validate the learning outcomes of informal learning, or validate the learning outcomes of unfinished

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learning trajectories. The debate on EVC is crucial for the problem of Early School Leaving.

- Participants recognize the distinction between pupils at risk and those who leave school just before the finish. For the pupils at risk, tailored education and differentiated learning trajectories are essential. They plead for development oriented education, based on the level of competences of the pupil rather than on his age. This problem can be linked to the problem of education for pupils with special needs.
- The competence of teachers is certainly an important lever. They don't feel able to face the learning and social problems of the pupils.
- A good coordination between education and the labour market has to avoid dead ends and the fact that pupils step out. Cooperation between school and parents and the neighbourhood is another important lever. The concept of 'community school' offers perspectives.
- The education councils agree on the strategies. They plead for coherent and coordinated strategies, for global action plans rather than for project approach. One sees that, in education, things are often being reinvented, instead of taking advantage of the results of existing projects and integrating them in structural policy. Education, welfare, justice, employment have to coordinate efforts and work together in a holistic approach from the early years, and from the first warning signs.

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# Statements

## ***FOCUS AND STRUCTURE OF THE STATEMENTS***

EUNEC shares the analysis made in the reference frameworks of the Union and welcomes the actions proposed in the flagship initiative “New Skills for New jobs”. EUNEC wants to highlight developments over recent years that need to be better integrated into European initiatives.

These statements deal with the context for reform in VET, the policy measures to be taken into account and the critical conditions to realize the further development of VET-systems.

### *Challenges and context*

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#### *VET in the midst of social turbulence*

Today, VET faces very encompassing and deep rooted structural changes in the economic and political environment. These changes in context have not yet been taken into account in the discussions at EU-level on the renewal of VET.

We witness rapid and unpredictable:

- changes in the labor market, with uncertainty and unpredictability growing. This makes identifying the skills needs for the future very difficult. When working on qualifications, education and training needs to have a dual focus: developing actual and new skills for existing jobs as well as new skills for new jobs. In order to be responsive to the actual and future needs of industry, it is imperative that there is good cooperation between the world of education and the world of work. Bridges will have to be built. We need good interfaces between the labour market and the education system.
- developments in qualification levels. Although there seems to be a drift towards more and higher qualifications, there will also be the need for medium and even lower level qualifications.
- changes in the budgetary environment for education and training. A lot of education systems have to deal with financial austerity and the ensuing cutbacks.

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### *VET from an educational and pedagogical perspective*

There is a long existing tension between the vocational and the more general or academic strand in education. Often, students and their parents make choices in favour of the academic strand, and this has to do with the poor image of VET in a lot of member states. Very often, only those pupils who fail in the academic strand, go to VET. The fact that many teachers consider teaching in VET to be a second choice makes the perception of VET even more negative.

EUNEC thinks that if VET is to be viewed as a valuable learning pathway in itself, there needs to be a focus on improving its attractiveness and social acceptance.

VET is a pathway set up for pupils who choose this route for the pleasure of learning by doing, driven by the ambition to become competent artisans or technicians. Raising the wellbeing of learners, strengthening self-confidence and offering a positive developmental trajectory are as important for the renewal of VET as the preparation of appropriately skilled youngsters and adults for the labour market.

Educational benchmarks reflect societal regard for different types of education. In these educational benchmarks, appreciation for the VET pathway should be more apparent. An indicator for employability might help.

### *Policy measures*

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#### *What are the skills and competences for tomorrow?*

The European Commission documents express a strong belief in the accurate and early identification of labour market skills and competences. EUNEC does not question the value of identifying and articulating these skills.

But if we consider all different areas of competences needed, we see that they are all inter-related: “Key competences”, “soft skills”, “learning competences”, “life skills” and “career management skills” are prerequisites for the further development of each individual. They offer pupils a broad basis to deal with the unpredictability of the labour market, with further lifelong learning and with wider changes in society. The development of these skills and competences are necessary for new and actual jobs; they are applicable in different life situations and over a long period.

#### *VET as a positive choice*

Raising the sense of purpose is very important. What students learn in VET has to have a clear sense of purpose, for the students, for the parents, for the

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teachers, and for the labour market. Students have to be aware of the fact that what they learn is important and relevant. They should become self-confident learners, believing in their ability to perform and to be successful. If students have a clear understanding that what they can learn in VET will help them to succeed in the labour market, and in life, they might choose VET as a positive option.

Motivation and passion are essential for a successful VET learning path. VET should no longer be presented as a deficit model, but should provide a competence-building learning environment and a positive career option, offering good opportunities for personal development and integration into the labour market. Students need to find positive role models in their family, in the group of professionals they are in touch with and in their peer group. They need personalities of whom they say: that's what I want to become.

The perspective of the student in VET has to be taken more on board. School as an affirming social experience can enhance the wellbeing and motivation of the students; those who are not happy at school may not make positive choices.

In order to realize this shift towards VET as a positive choice, we can rely on examples of good practice in different Member States. Mainstreaming VET subjects in general education can be one way to enhance its prestige.

EUNEC wants to consider the construction of a more mixed educational pathway: integrating general, qualification oriented education with a learning competences based pathway. In most countries students have to choose between VET or academic learning pathways; they should be encouraged and enabled to experience both realities.

EUNEC wants to develop more flexible strands in the bridging zone between education, work and socio-cultural development. Certainly for early school leavers these alternative strands offer new opportunities.

### *Strengthening VET from a lifelong and inclusive perspective*

VET is part of Lifelong Learning, from cradle to grave.

The new VET should start in preprimary education and lead the pupil through coherent lifelong learning pathways. This necessitates the introduction of practical and technical competences in the curricula of primary education.

If VET students are to become motivated learners, it is important for them to pursue a set of achievable goals based on zones of proximal development

(ZPD - Vygotsky<sup>6</sup>). This approach would ensure that students take pride in their achievements, and step up to the next level, with even more motivation.

If we want VET learners to be confident, VET will have to offer pathways to ensure students are enabled to step up from one qualification level to the next.

Unquestionably, education systems should strengthen the synergy and permeability between professional and general education, compulsory education and VET, education and workplace based learning, education and other learning environments. Permeability has to be a leading principle; mutual trust between sectors and social partners is necessary.

This progressive learning model would also help to avoid dead ends.

### ***Guidance and counseling***

We refer to the EUNEC statements on 'Guidance', Budapest, 2009<sup>7</sup>.

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### ***Conditions***

#### ***Teachers matter!***

Teachers are a critical factor in the success of VET.

Good teachers in VET need a balanced set of purely technical competences and pedagogic competences. In school teams, there is need for mutual respect between teachers coming from a general education background and teachers coming from a technical background. Both are equally valid and complement each other.

Working conditions have to be optimal for the teachers; they need to have enough opportunities to acquire relevant workplace experience. They will achieve more if they are treated with trust, as responsible professionals.

Teachers should develop their competences throughout their professional career. They should keep in line with recent developments in industry and the labour market. This will require returning to industry to build up inside information.

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<sup>6</sup> L.S. Vygotsky: *Mind in Society: Development of Higher Psychological Processes*

<sup>7</sup> Statements on 'Guidance through transition moments in the learning pathway' ([www.eunec.eu](http://www.eunec.eu))



### ***VET as a community project***

If education wants to offer a broad spectrum of both general and vocational subjects, schools will have to work together with the broader community. School is not the only place to learn; we should look for opportunities to take some of the learning out of the schools. The workplace is a powerful learning environment too.

The building of a responsive VET system (including LLL) demands a high rate of investment, both from the publicly financed education system and from other public financial streams, including the labour market. EUNEC states that investing in VET is as important for innovation in society as investment in higher education. The social partners also have to take responsibility both financially and in other ways, for example through internships.

Respect for VET goes hand in hand with esteem for both professional and technical workers. The media can play an important role in how these professionals are perceived and appreciated by the public.

### ***Rational educational planning and building mixed educational arrangements***

In order to offer VET as a lifelong educational *arrangement* for students and adult learners it is necessary to offer mixed schools where pupils have the opportunity to choose either a general strand, a VET strand or a mixed strand. This diversity should at least be offered regionally and in an accessible way.

Sharing of resources between initial VET and LLL offers a lot of opportunities. The same is true for academic and VET learning pathways.

### ***Benchmarking***

We are not pleading for more benchmarking from the European Commission in the context of New Skills for New Jobs. We are convinced that more peer learning opportunities will enhance the success of VET. Instead, we are asserting that existing benchmarks should reflect more appreciation for VET as a valuable strand in education.

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## List of Participants

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Bàrtolo Paiva Campos	CNE (Portuguese Education Council)
Magdalena Pawlowksa	European Youth Forum
José Pessanha	European Commission
Sandra Rodrigues	PhD student in adult education
Agnes Roman Education)	ETUCE (European Trade Union Committee for
Ilona Šedienė	Lithuania
Tas Szebedy	Education Council Hungary
Peter van der Hallen	VLOR (Flemish Education Council, Belgium)
Adrie Van der Rest	Secretary-Director Onderwijsraad (Netherlands)
Giedrė Vėsulaitė	Lithuania
Christian Vulliez	Haut Conseil de l'Education (France)
Jiri Zajicek	Union of Schools' Associations (Czech Republic)

Next to the international audience, members of the Portuguese Education Council participated at this conference, as well as Portuguese education experts and stakeholders.

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**NEW SKILLS FOR NEW JOBS.  
CHALLENGES FOR VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING IN THE 21ST  
CENTURY**

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