

Transparency of Qualifications

a European Process a Challenge for Citizenship and Social Cohesion

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FOREWORD BY JÁN FIGEL'

*Commissioner for Education, Culture,
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Bringing down barriers

Integrating Europe's education and training systems is one of the main policies of the Union, especially as concerns the delicate junction between learning and work. At present, education and training achievements are structured and represented in different ways in the different countries of the Union, which prevents citizens from having their qualifications understood and recognised throughout Europe. It is clear that we need to bring down these barriers to allow European citizens to move freely across the Union as they seek to further their education, hone their skills, and find employment. I need not stress how crucial this is to the free circulation of people, capital, services, and goods enshrined in the treaties of the Union.

At their ministerial meeting in Maastricht, 14 December 2004, 32 Ministers responsible for vocational education and training in Europe reiterated their commitment to enhancing European cooperation in vocational education and training (VET), which they first agreed in Copenhagen in 2002, together with representatives from European Social Partners and the European Commission. Promoting mobility in Europe was among the main goals they agreed, and transparency of qualifications a crucial precondition to achieve it.

Within this context, I am very pleased the European Network of Education Councils - EUNEC - has taken up the challenge to promote transparency of qualifications in Europe. Actors such as EUNEC and its members who advise their governments and exchange information on the education policies of their countries have a pivotal role in ensuring the implementation of the agreed

results of the Copenhagen process, such as Europass, the common quality assurance framework, the common principles for recognition and validation of non-formal and informal learning, and the forthcoming European system of credit transfer for VET (ECVET).

The seminars organised by EUNEC in Riga (June 2004) and in Brussels (October 2004) offer on the one hand a platform for the dissemination of the priorities and results of the Copenhagen process to a wider audience, and on the other hand provide an opportunity for mutual learning and debate on these results and on related developments taking place at both national and sectoral level. It is very gratifying to see that the Leonardo da Vinci programme is instrumental in making such events possible.

Looking to the future, work has started on the next stage of improved transparency which is to develop a European Qualifications Framework (EQF). EQF will provide a focal point for linking together diverse strands of work under the Copenhagen and Bologna processes, in the field of transparency and recognition of qualifications, as an integrated part of the Education and Training 2010 work programme. It will function as a kind of reading grid making it possible to understand how different forms of education, training and learning can be compared, linked and combined, and enabling citizens to navigate within and between complex systems. It will therefore provide a major boost to mobility, lifelong learning in Europe. In due course, we look forward to the support of EUNEC in making this endeavour better understood and widely disseminated among its members throughout Europe.

March 2005



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INTRODUCTION

What is EUNEC? Which are its fields of interest?

Nowadays, education and training engages not just the school system but involves numerous agencies and sectors in the social, cultural and economic life. The necessity to evolve to lifelong learning is already part of national and European policy.

The education partners are numerous. Individuals and professional, cultural, economic, national or regional institutions participate actively in the development and implementation of policies and activities in education and training.

In recent years, the public recognition of these social partners and the setting up by the state of formal institutions of consideration and consultation is increasing on national and European level. Almost all Member States of the European Union, have national or regional education councils, composed of representatives or experts in different fields. They have diverse remits, but they all consult on and carry out research on education and training policy. To encourage closer cooperation, the education councils created in 1997 a European network of national and regional education councils. EUNEC made a website (www.eunec.org) to communicate about its objectives and activities. The English site is regularly brought up to date and hold information on EUNEC's activities, statements and advice.

Besides the activities specifically concerning "Education and training 2010", EUNEC discussed the following subjects:

- The risks of commercialisation of education and training in a conference in The Hague, 28 February and 1 March 2003.
- Education for citizenship and more particularly for European citizenship, with the councils' specific concern on equity, equality and social cohesion. Seminar 'Citizenship education, social cohesion and equal opportunities' – Brussels 2002. Seminar 'Becoming a responsible citizen in Europe – The contribution of education' – The Hague, 23-25 September 2004.

EUNEC and the Lisbon goals 2010

The vision of the European Commission¹

The Union must become the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world capable of sustainable economic growth with more and better jobs and greater social cohesion (European Council, Lisbon, March 2000).

To achieve this ambitious goal, Heads of States and Government asked for "not only a radical transformation of the European economy, but also a challenging programme for the modernisation of social welfare and education systems". In 2002, they went on to say that by 2010, Europe should be the world leader in terms of the quality of its education and training systems.

Making this happen will mean a fundamental transformation of education and training throughout Europe. This process of change will be carried out in each country according to national contexts and traditions and will be driven forward by cooperation between Member States at European level, through the sharing of experiences, working towards common goals and learning from what works best elsewhere (the "open method of co-ordination")

To ensure their contribution to the Lisbon strategy, Ministers of Education adopted in 2001 a report on the future objectives of education and training systems agreeing for the first time on shared objectives to be achieved by 2010. A year later, the Education Council and the Commission endorsed a 10-year work programme to be implemented through the open method of coordination. Approved by the European Council, these agreements constitute the new and coherent Community strategic framework of co-operation in education and training.

¹ cf. http://europa.eu.int/comm/education/policies/2010/et_2010_fr.html

Ministers of Education agreed on three major goals to be achieved by 2010 for the benefit of the citizens and the EU as a whole:

- to improve the quality and effectiveness of EU education and training systems;
- to ensure that they are accessible to all;
- to open up education and training to the wider world.

To achieve these ambitious but realistic goals, they agreed on thirteen specific objectives covering the various types and levels of education and training (formal, non-formal and informal) aimed at making a reality of lifelong learning. Systems have to improve on all fronts: teacher training; basic skills; integration of Information and Communication Technologies; efficiency of investments; language learning; lifelong guidance; flexibility of the systems to make learning accessible to all, mobility, citizenship education, etc.

Working Groups have each been working over the course of the last two years on one or more objectives of the work programme. The groups are made up of experts from 31 European countries as well as stakeholders and interested EU and international organisations. Their role is to support the implementation of the objectives for education and training systems at national level through exchanges of "good practice", study visits, peer reviews, etc. With the support of the Standing Group on Indicators and Benchmarks set up by the Commission in 2002, indicators and benchmarks are being developed to monitor progress.

"Education and Training 2010" integrates all actions in the fields of education and training at European level, including vocational education and training (the "Copenhagen process"). The Bologna process, initiated in 1999 is crucial in the development of the European Higher Education Area. Both contribute actively to the achievement of the Lisbon objectives and are therefore closely linked to the "Education and Training 2010" work programme.

On 11 November 2003, the European Commission adopted a communication presenting an interim evaluation of the implementation of the "Education & Training 2010" programme since Lisbon. This communication calls for accelerated reforms and a stronger political commitment to achieving the Lisbon goals. It constitutes the Commission's contribution to the joint report which the Education Council and the Commission submitted to the 2004 Spring European Council.

The contribution of EUNEC

Understanding the Lisbon goals and their implications in the field of education and training

EUNEC clarified the importance and the implications of the running European debates to all its members. The network organised two successive projects leading to recommendations to the Commission and raising the awareness of all the leaders in education and training and of the social, economic and political members of the councils represented on EUNEC.

- Seminar on the 'Draft interim report on the objectives report' – Brussels 8 December 2003. Explanation by Luce Pépin of the European Commission and debate on the report with proposals of amendments.
- Conference on the interim report of the Commission 'Education and Training 2010: the success of the Lisbon strategy hinges on urgent reforms' – London 27 January 2004.

A contribution to the evaluation of the Copenhagen process and the dissemination of its acquirements

The importance of the Copenhagen strategy brought EUNEC to work on the transparency of qualifications. The network obtained financial support of the Leonardo da Vinci programme. This contribution passed in two phases, of which this publication gives an account.

- A preparatory seminar in Riga (21-22 June 2004) brought European experts (Commission and CEDEFOP) together with representatives of the members of EUNEC to analyse the problem area, to define EUNEC's proper priorities and to

choose the general outlines for the conference in Brussels. It was also an excellent occasion to understand the specific issues facing the new member states, which had a large contribution in Riga.

- A big conference in Brussels on 25-27 October 2004 has been taking stock of all issues regarding transparency of qualifications. EUNEC was able to draw on to the cooperation of several representatives of the European Commission (DG Education and Culture), of CEDEFOP and of the political world. The conference led to formulating EUNEC resolutions, which were communicated by every regional or national council to its political authorities and by EUNEC to the Commission and to the Dutch Presidency of Europe.

- 1. THE EUNEC CONFERENCE
WITHIN THE LEONARDO
DA VINCI PROGRAMME:
APPROACH AND
METHODOLOGY**

1.1 Structure of the work

To increase the transparency of qualifications, EUNEC has been working in four phases:

1. CEF and Vlor had already been reflecting internally on the Lisbon strategy. They gathered a selection of European and national texts on the subject and launched a European approach. The two Belgian councils became the pivots of the Leonardo project, thanks to a grant for the organisation of events (seminars and conferences) on Vocational Training under the framework of the Accompanying Measures of the Leonardo da Vinci Programme (DG EAC/82/03).
2. A seminar in Riga on 21 and 22 June 2004², reserved for European experts and EUNEC members, prepared the conference in Brussels. Experts introduced the issue by referring to the work in progress and the European goals. We enjoyed the support of CEDEFOP with Mette Beyer Paulsen, of Tom Leney who was preparing the Maastricht study and of Baiba Ramina of the Latvian National Observatory and Academic Information Centre.

EUNEC spent much of the time trying to understand the issue from the point of view of the new member states by including

² List of the participants: Executive Committee: Fons van Wieringen, (Onderwijsraad - the Netherlands), Simone Barthel (CEF – Belgium), Tom Leney (QCA – UK), Jacques Perquy (Vlaamse Onderwijsraad – Belgium)

Members: Alain Bultot (CEF – Belgium), Manuel Porto (Conselho Nacional de Educaçao – Portugal), Pranas Gudynas (Educational development centre – Lithuania), André Gauron (HCEEE – France), Jānis Eglitis (Latvian Association of School Leaders – Latvia), Anthony De Giovanni (National Curriculum Council – Malta), Louis Van Beneden (VLOR – Belgium), Roos Herpelinck (VLOR – Belgium)

Experts: Baiba Ramina (Academic Information Centre/ Latvian National Observatory – Latvia), Mette Beyer Paulsen (CEDEFOP), Krista Loogma (Estonia Education Forum – Estonia)

EUNEC Secretariat: Marie-Thérèse Boyen (VLOR - Belgium)

a presentation of their vocational education and training systems. Well known educationalists made valuable contributions: Pranas Gudynas of the educational development centre of Lithuania, Antony De Giovanni of the National Curriculum Council of Malta, Krista Loogma of the Estonia Education Council and Janis Eglitis of the Latvian Association of School Leaders.

The representatives of 10 member councils of EUNEC had a debate and formulated questions, on which they hoped that the conference in Brussels could give answers. They also made a proposal for resolutions.

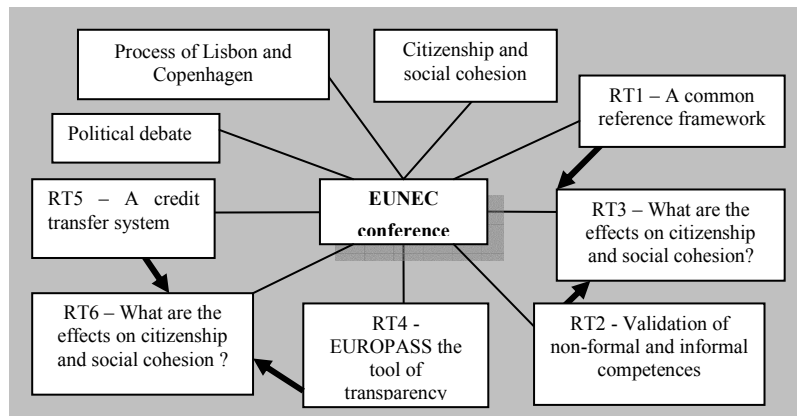
A report was sent to participants. It was also distributed to the participants of the councils in Brussels.

3. The conference in Brussels was attended by more than 120 persons. It was held between 25 and 27 October 2004 and dealt with the questions of Riga. Several responsible persons of the DG Education and Culture met representatives of EUNEC's councils. The delegations of the councils were composed of persons of their member organisations, for instance social partners. The members of EUNEC amended and voted resolutions on 'A transparency of qualifications, a service to all EU citizens', which were prepared in Riga. These resolutions constitute the official result of the project. A report of this conference was made and distributed to the members of the Executive Committee of EUNEC. It was the basis of the next stage of the project.
4. Starting from the two reports mentioned above and from the documents of the European Commission, CEF and Vlor prepared this book. They added a chapter concerning the evolutions in Europe in the domain of education and training since October 2004: the adoption of the Europass and the Maastricht Communiqué, which strengthens the European intentions to cooperate on the issue of vocational education and training.

1.2 Methodology

The objective of the conference was to discuss the specific point of view of the education councils on what should be the conditions for transparency of qualifications as a service for all citizens. The structure of the councils, composed of all the actors in education and training, incited EUNEC to work on the question of equality, equity, citizenship and social cohesion. The focus was on which part of the European cooperation on vocational education and training could reinforce or pose a threat to the democratic process, where all citizens are equal. Therefore, the conference gave an important place to the debates with the social partners.

The general reporter, Marc Durando, described the structure of the debates in the following diagram:



The first day was devoted to sketching the background for the conference: Jens Bjornavold (the Lisbon strategy and the Copenhagen process), Domenico Lenarduzzi (equality, citizenship and social cohesion) and Simone Barthel (the questions of Riga).

The second day provided a survey of the European initiatives in VET:

- with the responsible persons of the DG Education and Culture (Carlo Scatoli for Europass, Michel Aribaud for ECVET),

- with European experts (Mette Beyer Paulsen of CEDEFOP, Tom Leney of QCA, Pat Davies of EUCEN),
- with European social partners (Gregor Saladin for the European Metal Union and Chris Serroyen for the Trade-Unions),
- with fieldworkers (F.D. Danguomeau of the DAVA in Grenoble, Alain Kock of the Consortium des competences Wallonie-Bruxelles, Robert Loop of Le Forem Belgique),
- with representatives of the member councils (Jacques Perquy, general administrator of the Vlor; Marc Thommès, president of the CEF; Pranas Gudynas, Educational development centre Lithuania and Krista Loogma, Estonian Education Forum).

The social partners and the members of EUNEC discussed the technical presentations and the tensions between the European expectations and objectives and those of the social partners and representatives of education and training.

To assure an active participation of the attendants in Riga and Brussels, the organisers used tools of written consultation:

- Some tools gave the possibility to express in a short way, without profound analysis, the feelings towards the proposed presentations,
- Other tools permitted to ask questions and to give advice during the explanations.

The reports of Riga and Brussels scrupulously reflect these consultations, which have been reported and synthesised during the two meetings. These consultations based on the questions raised in the debates and amendments of the final statements.

The third day was devoted to more political issues.

The general reporter presented his report to the audience. He summarised the main points and lines of argument.

The statements of EUNEC, amended in the light of the debates held at the conference, the written responses and the official responses of the councils, were voted and approved by the general assembly. Each resolution discussed and voted on.

Finally, the assembly listened to two strong political messages:

- by Marie Arena, minister president of the French Community, who represented at that moment Belgium in the European negotiations on education and training,
- by Ludy Van Buyten, general secretary of Education of the Flemish Community.

EUNEC sent the official resolutions of the conference to the European Commission. Each council passed the resolutions to its government.

1.3 EUNEC's emphasis on a transparency of qualifications

1.3.1 What does transparency of qualifications mean?

This concept has little meaning when applied only to developed tools. Europass has to be the tool of transparency of qualifications.

The point is to allow better mobility of workers by creating an easier understanding of acquired competences with all the involved partners. These competences can be acquired in a formal (diplomas), informal (continued education and training with or without certificates) or non formal (professional and personal experiences) way.

To be useful, transparency of qualifications needs to link in with other important European goals: generating mutual trust based on quality assurance and a European reference framework, including standardised levels of educational attainment and eventually comparable references. This could allow users to get access to several forms of continuous training, which can be accumulated to obtain a new level of competence. Therefore, the European credit transfer system for vocational education and training (ECVET) is being developed. This tool is based on the experience with ECTS in higher education, but it is adapted to vocational education and training. Instead of using learning time as a measure, ECVET will focus on the outcomes of the learning process. Nevertheless, the stake of a transparency of qualifications goes beyond European mobility.

1.3.2 Citizenship and social cohesion

Transparency of qualifications is an issue on European as well as on a national or regional level. In a society, where the economy is in constant evolution and where the labour market evolves with supply and demand on a global level, it is essential that workers should have the competences gained in both IVET and CVET (whether through personal and professional experiences or by a training in the workplace or on their own initiative) recognised and validated.

When we speak of a transparency of qualifications, we situate the issue on different levels, depending of the workers concerned and their actual situations.

For some people, the need for mobility will be European or even international. The free circulation of people and goods is a European right, but it has to be backed up with a European recognition of competences in order to give citizens real access to the European labour market and to allow them to capitalise on their previous experiences gained elsewhere.

For others, the need of mobility is on a sectoral level. Their enterprises relocate and they want to follow them, or they want to find work in the same sector by gaining recognition of the whole of their professional acquirements.

For a large number of workers, the issue will be to get validation of all their achievements, eventually with a survey of their competences, to be able to complete their professional training or to write a job application. This validation will also give the employers the opportunity to understand quickly the level of training of potential workers. Here, we can speak of the maintenance or the increase of 'employability'³.

The member councils of EUNEC want to promote first-rate training but they also absolutely want to prevent social exclusion.

³ The term 'employability', just as human capital, has a negative connotation for a part of the member councils. They fear the danger of vocational education and training in service of the market. This connotation does not exist in Anglo-Saxon and Scandinavian states.

Therefore, they were working together on the complex theme of a transparency of qualifications. They hope that the European work to make the qualifications more transparent will provide the opportunity for each member state to do the same on national or regional level. The member states will have to think about the way they will adapt their qualifications, certificates and diplomas to the European reference framework. They will have to consider the recognition of competences acquired in a non- formal or informal way. They will have to integrate Europass as a tool for mobility between enterprises and between sectors.

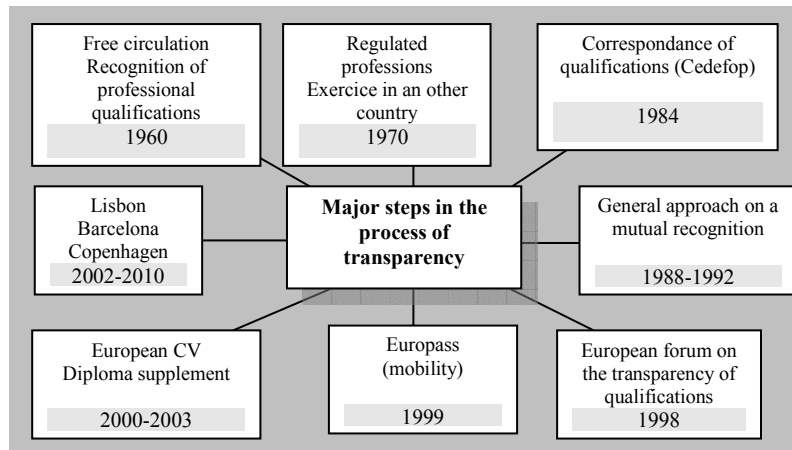
For social partners, this issue is also important and it will be certainly a matter of debate and negotiations. Several sectors are involved and many of them have already started the discussion on a European level. The issue of social cohesion will also allow intersectoral mobility. How can we give equal rights to workers with competences validated in another country, company or sector?

European citizenship can only get real if tangible signs of Europe exist. Only when a real access to qualifications and a real recognition of acquired competences will be achieved in Europe, European citizens will feel interested in this common project.

The member councils of EUNEC wish to participate in this European debate, in the capacity of network but also in the capacity of partner in the education and training policy of their respective countries. They are worried about the quality of qualifications, about citizenship education for young and adult persons and about free mobility of workers. Free mobility has a double meaning: mobility possible thanks to recognition and a transfer of achievements but also mobility chosen by the worker and not imposed by a company or by any other form of pressure.

2 THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS WITHIN THE FRAMEWORK OF THE LISBON STRATEGY: DIFFERENT POINTS OF VIEW

2.1 The major steps in the process of transparency - Marc Durando



2.1.1 The challenge of free circulation

The debate on a transparency of vocational qualifications is not dating from today. Together with the complex questions on recognition, validation and certification, this debate on transparency is nearly as old as the debate on professional mobility.

In fact, this debate is also as old as the question on the free circulation of persons foreseen in article 3 of the Treaty establishing the European Community. The application of this principle was, since the undersigning of the Treaty, the subject of many directives and recommendations. They tried to implement this principle and to strengthen the mobility of citizens between Member States of the European Community, now the European Union.

It is important to state that this mobility has relatively little impact. Statistically it is almost negligible. Inside the regions and the Member States, this mobility is smaller than the mobility between the different states of the United States. In the entire European

Union, the mobility concerns less than 0.4% of the population. This is less than 1.5 million persons.

There are only two exceptions: the mobility in border regions (for instance between the departments in the northern of France and the neighbouring part of Belgium or between Alsace and the neighbouring region in Germany) and the academic mobility of students (the ERASMUS-programme). We can give several reasons to explain the smallness of this trans-national mobility. We can mention the cultural, linguistic and social obstacles. We can also identify economic obstacles, such as fiscal regimes and different systems of social security. However, the growing coordination of the systems has created a significant progress on this last point.

But, the free movement of persons foreseen in the Treaty concerns not only students or the retired. In the first place, it concerns the employed (including the liberal professions). This causes, very directly, the problem of the recognition of vocational qualifications in the context of the European labour market.

This is the most significant obstacle. The procedures of the recognition of qualifications often meet with many difficulties, in spite of many adopted directives on the recognition of qualifications, particularly those of 1988 and 1992, and many other instruments, which are promoting the European cooperation in VET.

We have to treat the problem of the transparency of qualifications in this context. It is linked to another complex question: of which qualifications are we speaking – vocational qualifications or qualifications following vocational training? In the first case, we have also to take into account the fact that vocational qualifications cover an aggregate of competences and experiences. They go further than diplomas and certificates, obtained before entering active life. The second case concerns titles and other certifying attestations, which a person can obtain when they acquire the knowledge and the vocational skills and competences at the end of training.

2.1.2 Recognition of the qualifications

There is another fact that we have to take in consideration. From the beginning of the implementation of the Treaty establishing the European Economic Community, the European approach of the recognition of qualifications (linked on the question of the right of establishment in another country of the European Community) has separated regulated professions from unregulated professions. This distinction concerned a certain amount of professions (doctors, nurses, lawyers, architects, etc...), for which the possession of the title was a condition sine qua non to exercise this profession.

In the mid-seventies, the Council adopted, on the proposition of the Commission, some few directives. These directives fixed for each of the professions the minimal common criteria concerning education and training in all the Member States (conditions of access, duration and contents). The holders of a diploma, ratified by a training, which used these criteria, have the right to exercise the corresponding professions in another Member State on the single condition that they have to register themselves at the qualified authorities of the receiving Member State.

This approach, which even included a profession such as hairdresser, quickly turned out to be contra-productive because the definition of common contents of training in all the Member States was very complex.

Therefore, there was a need to change the approach. This happened in 1988 and 1992 with the adoption of two directives, which enlarged the area of application of the former directives. **These directives created a general system, based on mutual recognition**, starting from the principle that what is recognised valuable in one Member State should also be recognised in another, with reservation of some stipulations of application and of the freedom of establishment.

However, what can we do with unregulated professions and with the recognition of diplomas, titles and certifications of vocational training?

In this sector, quantitatively the most important, the problem of a transparency and thus of a recognition of qualifications was and

still is the most difficult to manage. At this stage, this recognition only was and still is concerning diplomas, either academic or vocational. In this context, the adoption of a directive in May 2001 by the Council and by the European Parliament (the co-decision procedure) has as objective to make a procedure of consolidation and simplification of the juridical texts. The objective was to obtain a more harmonized, transparent and flexible regime of recognition of vocational qualifications. One of the major difficulties in this respect is the fact that the Treaty forbids every attempt at harmonization in VET. The contents and the organisation of education and vocational training are areas, which stay under the responsibility of the Member States. The European Union only can support and complete actions of the Member States. The project of a European Constitution, which is currently in the process of ratification, confirms very clearly this limitation.

2.1.3 Tracks of action to advance

Because it is not possible or at least very difficult to legislate directly on education and on vocational training, the European Union had to use indirect pathways. The report of the High Level group on the free movement of persons, published by the Commission in 1997, noted that ‘under the pressure of national professional groups the presumption of mutual recognition is becoming secondary’. The report suggested several possibilities of work and action. The objectives were to be able to follow-up the evolutions of qualifications and diplomas, to facilitate the dissemination of information and to prepare the standards, which could enhance the transparency and the mutual recognition.

This relatively modest approach is due to the difficulties met by the implementation of the decision of the Council in 1984 on the correspondence of qualifications. This decision was limited, under pressure from some Member States, to qualified workers. This decision, implemented by CEDEFOP, created a large number of studies by experts – including representatives of the social partners. The objective was to identify the specific content of each profession in each Member State in order to obtain ‘tables of

correspondence' between Member States. In spite of efforts from all sides, the work had little impact in the Member States.

More recently, still on the level of the European Union, the adoption of the **EUROPASS - training** in 1999 has marked a new development. The fact is that it was based on recognition of the periods of mobility in initial vocational training, spent in another Member State. This avoided the pitfall of the approach directly centred on the mutual recognition of qualifications. The EUROPASS is a document, which engages the two involved parties and the beneficiary of the training.

Modest as this approach might have been, it has contributed in the course of the last years to the adoption of a whole number of initiatives to enhance a transparency of qualifications with the objective to facilitate a larger transnational mobility. We can refer here, for instance, to **the recommendation of the Commission of 11 March 2003 on a European model of curriculum vitae** or also, in the domain of academic recognition, to **the diploma supplement**. This is a document joined to a diploma of higher education, which views an enhanced international transparency and an easier academic and vocational recognition of qualifications (diplomas, admittance to universities, certificates etc.) We have to notice that this supplement is not an automatic system, which guarantees recognition. It is not a curriculum vitae and it does not replace the original qualification or the report of marks.

But on top of these supporting actions, the European Commission, following its communication of February 2001 entitled "*New European labour markets, open to all, with access for all*", received a mandate from the European Council in Stockholm. The Commission was asked to present specific propositions on a more uniform, transparent and flexible system for the recognition of qualifications, diplomas and periods of study. This new directive on the recognition of vocational qualifications in the domain of regulated professions had to be joined to other actions as result of decisions of the European Councils in Lisbon and Feira (2000). Starting from a public consultation (July 2001), the European Commission delivered a draft directive to the Council and the European Parliament in March 2002. The approval of a

simplification of the system of recognition by the Parliament (February 2004), lead to an agreement in the Council (May 2004).

This legislative progress, concerns only the regulated professions. Without underestimating the implications (it deals essentially with the creation of a more flexible labour market), we still are a long way from a real transparency of vocational qualifications.

Following the initiatives mentioned above (for instance the European CV) the Commission and CEDEFOP took the initiative, since 1998, to create **“The European forum on transparency of vocational qualifications”**. The role of this forum was to contribute to a mutual comprehension and a generally accepted interpretation of the systems of validation and homologation of qualifications in the European Union. The forum also wanted to facilitate the control of innovation in the domain of the transparency and the recognition of qualifications. After all, it wanted to support the efforts of the Member States and the social partners to enhance the transparency of vocational qualifications.

The work of the forum led to a number of recommendations to assure the realisation of the principle of transparency of qualifications. The recommendations are about:

A translation of certificates and diplomas from the moment they are delivered to candidates, which have passed the tests and a delivery of a ‘supplement’ attached on the certificate. This supplement gives account of the acquired competences, but it has not legal status and always has to refer to the official certificate.

To create a “National Reference Point” in each Member State. The function of this reference point, a national partner in a European Network, is to provide a first contact point when questions concerning national diplomas, certificates and supplements can be raised.

To create tools and common resources for the different actors involved in the process and for the members of the target group of this new service on the transparency of their qualifications.

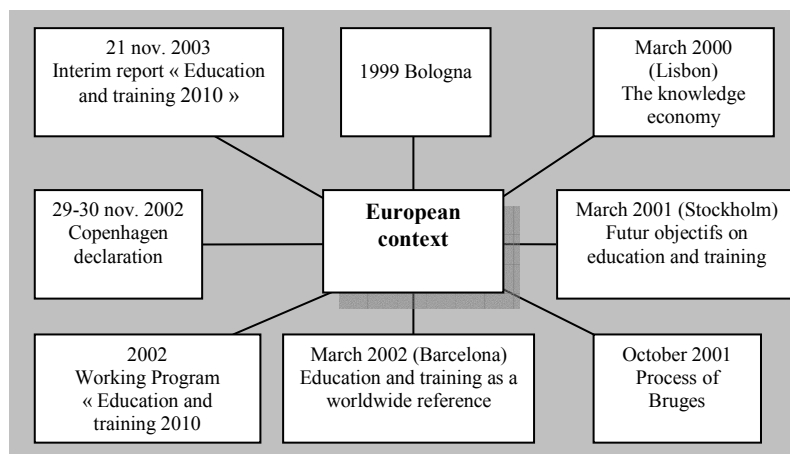
All of this has led to this package, which we can call Lisbon, Barcelona and Copenhagen. It is the subject of today’s discussions.

2.1.4 A European context in full evolution

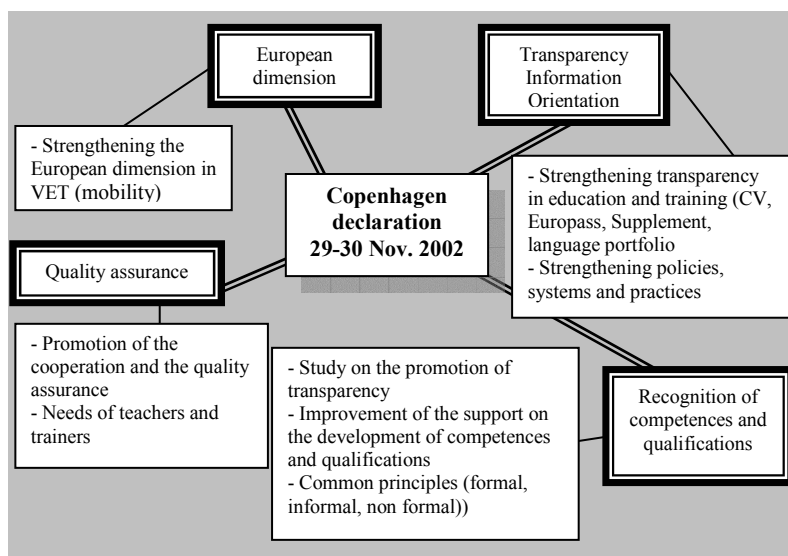
I do not enter into details on the tour of European cities, which gives us the political framework concerning the problem of education and training: Bologna, in fact we should have to say the Sorbonne; Lisbon in March 2000, the future objectives of the system; the process of Bruges, which prefigures the enhanced cooperation in Copenhagen; the systems of education and training becoming a worldwide reference; a work programme “Education and training 2010”; a mid-term evaluation in November 2003, which orders everybody, either the Member States and the citizens, to recognise the urgency of these reforms.

2.1.5 An evolving European context

A quick overview gives us the political framework concerning the problem of education and training: Bologna, in fact we should have to say the Sorbonne; Lisbon in March 2000, the future objectives of the system; the process of Bruges, which prefigures the enhanced cooperation in Copenhagen; the systems of education and training becoming a worldwide reference; a work programme “Education and training 2010”; a mid-term evaluation in November 2003, which orders everybody, either the Member States and the citizens, to recognise the urgency of these reforms.



2.1.6 The process of Copenhagen at the heart of the EUNEC-conference



2.2 The place of VET in Europe

2.2.1 Contribution of Mette Beyer Paulsen (CEDEFOP)⁴

Who are the VET players? Who has responsibilities?

2.2.1.1 Historical elements

CEDEFOP set up a project to study the history of VET in Europe

In the Middle Ages, we can state a common way of acting, which constitutes a common ground in autonomous guilds. We know that the apprenticeship lasted for about 6 years – a longer period than it is now – and that the apprentices lived in a family, where they were educated in the ethos of the trade, the so called TACIT knowledge of a trade, for example what it takes to make a good craftsman.

After the French revolution, we saw the rise of nation states and the industrial revolution. New structures developed in three different ways:

Model A: the liberal market economy model (ex. UK): weak state interference, enterprises/multiple providers, market driven (providers and standards).

Model B: the state regulated bureaucratic model (ex. France) based on national legislation and strong central administration; institutions / schools (with short work placements); weak influence of social partners / labour market.

Model C: the “dual”/“corporatist” model (ex. Germany, Denmark, Switzerland): tripartite partnership/autonomy of chambers or committees with equal representation of social partners, school and (paid) work.

⁴ Riga, June 2004

Model	A	B	C
work culture	economy	politics	society
training model	market forces	bureaucratic	dual control: market & bureaucracy
didactic principle	functional need of enterprise	academic	vocational

Who are the stakeholders with legitimate interests in VET now?

- society,
- employers / labour market,
- social partners / collective agreements,
- operators of training,
- individuals.

VET is a continuous process. Thus, we need serious, quick updating. It is important for the competitiveness but also for a good education. The stakeholders have different shares in different settings: this looks more like a spider's web diagram.

2.2.1.2 Do we need harmonisation?

We need more than harmonisation; there is a tendency of allowing different directions.

Switzerland is a good example of multiplicity. It is striking that in Eastern Europe where they had similar VET-systems, they developed differently after their independence.

We do not need to harmonise as long as VET systems apply to this set of criteria:

- legitimacy, relevant to all stakeholders,
- reliability, common references (i.e. levels) for all,
- validity: measuring what is measurable (knowledge, skills).

The diversity of systems could be a potential for development, if we talk to each other about the differences to be able to trust each other.

Before, we talked about the recognition of (formal) qualifications: this means that we looked at the systems, the certificates, the process and the technical skills. Now, we talk about transparency of qualifications: this means that we now look for information about the outcome of the system, based on a description of technical skills.

2.2.1.3 What is quality?

Quality and visibility of the output: we show what we are doing. It is not so much the quality of standards or the quality of the process but the quality of the outcomes that matters. We have not to superpose the qualification acquired and the qualification required in different countries but we have to look at what is essential and what is not – in a given context. It is not the single elements but it is the totality of the outcome that matters. We have to look for a pragmatic approach rather than to be too meticulous.

The questions are thus:

- How to describe the outcome?
- What do qualifications have in common?
- Which common standards will we use for ‘informative labelling’ or the description of the contents?

It looks easier for technical skills, which are less contextualised and more difficult for ‘soft’ or ‘tacit’, transversal skills.

A fast adaptation to changing needs is a potential for development and dynamism. Creativity lies in diversity. It is your work to define the necessary competences.

2.2.2 Comments by André Gauron

President of the “Haut Comité Education, Economie, Emploi” (France), EUNEC member.

2.2.2.1 Some comments on the French VET-system facing the European models:

The French system is not only model B but also a mixed system: a model with schools, a model with partners. In academic education, there is a state bureaucratic model (B). In vocational education, there exists a corporatist system with a great importance of the sectors, the social partners; the orientation is more the professional training than the response to the labour market.

2.2.2.2 The Lisbon aim is to grow economically; can it be reached without reforming education?

To reach this goal the question is to put education at the centre of the economic process. Perhaps there is no need to reform education but to put it in another place, the central place in the economic process, without exaggeration, just put it in the right perspective.

2.2.2.3 Companies used to offer a specific training for a specific job

Now, young people do not stay in the job for which they were trained. They need a broader education and a better background, to be able to switch jobs. Before we asked the question of HOW to change the VET system, perhaps it is better to ask WHAT we will change. What we do need? For the economist we need more competences and more mobility. However, mobility is not a fact for people (especially not for non-academic jobs); they do not even move in their own countries from one region to another. Mobility is not a choice of the individuals. The lower the qualification, the lower is the mobility, except for family reasons. The workforce will have to become mobile to go to another job or they risk staying without one. Again, this speaks for a more general qualification.

Do we need European qualifications?

Capital and technology are mobile. Everywhere, people use the same technology: thus, we need everywhere the same competences to do the same job (see for example the hotel trade, motor vehicle maintenance...). The difference is how people organise the work, locally or internationally. The need of transparency exists in some sectors.

2.2.2.4 The Bologna process changed the situation.

It has effects on the outcome for VET as well. There is a project of framework with a system of credit transfers. For the 'higher' qualifications, we have more or less the information to make the system transparent. But there is a problem for the low and the medium level qualifications. For them, it is difficult to define comparable levels between sectors or benchmarks. Qualifications are linked to their social utility, which is the result of a collective agreement. People are not paid in relation with their qualification but depending on their job. As long as we do not progress on European collective agreements, there will be no progress in transparency of qualifications.

2.2.3 The questions about VET in the new Member States⁵

Louis Van Beneden, ex-president of EUNEC, conducted a round table at the seminar in Riga. It dealt, one month after the enlargement of Europe with 10 new Member States, with the question how the VET-systems have been evolving in the new Member States in the post-soviet period. What was the former system? How new VET models have been developed? Who was involved in the reform and from whom did they get assistance? What do they expect of Europe? Launched by the Phare programme, the Reform of VET-systems started between 1995 and 1998. It is very remarkable that this evolution was developing in different directions in the Baltic States, depending of the country

⁵ These are extracts of the report of the seminar in Riga, June 2004

that inspired the reform (Finland, Germany, UK...) In Malta, another new Member State, there also has been an ongoing reform in the last decade.

2.2.4 The situation in Estonia - Krista Loogma

President of the Estonian Education Forum

2.2.4.1 History

The VET system in Soviet Estonia was a working class project, highly regulated and bureaucratically coordinated with the labour system. VET had a high status; each student could count on a workplace. The modernization in 70s and 80s has decoupled VET from the general education system. Economical centralisation increased.

In Estonia the level of the basic schools was increasing and there was a big move towards general education. This was a deadlock for students. The VET system was not 'modernized' so the quality and the reputation decreased rapidly hence the low degree of attractiveness of VET.

2.2.4.2 Structural challenges

There was a change in the employment structure and in the structure of occupational profiles and professions. It went from extreme bureaucracy to an adaptation at a liberal system. New companies were founded, others disappeared. There was a big difference between the sectors. Traditional sectors had to restructure quickly. New sectors emerged. For example, small private enterprise in timber and textile quickly reformed because the economy needed them. New technologies, finance, IT expanded rapidly. VET was undergoing a shock therapy under pressure of the enterprises. There was also a marketisation of education, we saw a rapid decline of the VET schools (from 20% of educational institutions to 8 %). The evolutions are different according to the diverse sectors. In this evolution, there is no time for schools to adjust their program. This led to a low prestige of VET.

2.2.4.3 VET reforms

The reform started with the help of Phare programme in 1997. There is not a clear, nor an explicit strategy and coherence in the VET reforms. The VET system was decentralised. The basis of this reform was to be able to respond to the needs of economy. There is no transparency in the reform and its results. There is almost no reflection, no research and no analysis.

The reform has also a structural consequence, the reorganisation of school networks. There were too many VET-schools for too little pupils, based on a lack of efficiency and later on demographical reasons. Regional VET-centres were established. The reform also includes a modernisation of the education system. Social partners were introduced in the school system. What concerns certifications and qualifications, formerly each school certificated. Now, the Ministry of Education regulates the curricula and the certificates. Schools are responsible for the diplomas but not for the qualifications. They introduced also pre-vocational curricula in general education and there is a demand for a higher level for VET teachers/trainers education.

The aim of the reform is:

- to develop an integrated qualification system for achieving comparability and transparency;
- to make vocational standards competence-based;
- to answer to the requirements of employers concerning knowledge, skills, experience and personal values.

However, the system does not work well enough. Many people are working without qualifications, and the employers do not care as long as they do their work correctly.

2.2.4.4 Vocational Standards and Qualification system

We have to improve our VET system. There are some very good schools, but there are also bad schools. This dual quality is the result of the abrupt liberal adjustment. There is also an inequality between schools: some pilot school got money, others did not. And

there is a weak coordination with the labour market. We need a reorganisation of the school networks, in harmony with the market.

2.2.5 The situation in Latvia - Baiba Ramina

Academic Information Centre

2.2.5.1 The past

The evolution in VET is very specific according to the different sectors. But, VET has low esteem; it is considered as education for 'problem' kids.

2.2.5.2 The reform

The reform started with a Phare-programme in 1996. Some curriculum reforms, for instance tourism and hotel or new college programmes, are good products. The support came from Finland, Germany and the Netherlands because Latvia was part of a European pilot project. There was influence from everywhere but mostly from the countries, in which the teacher training was done.

2.2.5.3 Characteristics of the reform

It was a slow reform, the law on VET took 4 years (1995-1999). There was also a reform of the teacher and trainer's education in VET. There used to be 2 categories of teachers: the general subject teacher and the vocational -professional educator. Now, it is mandatory to have higher education with a training in pedagogical skills.

There are e-learning and distance learning programmes for those who do not need a completely new training.

2.2.5.4 The actual VET-system: ISCED-levels

Latvia introduced intermediate programmes to prevent early school leaving (now still 20 %) and a vocational basic education. To assure the quality, the social partners have to approve the standards and the employers have to approve the curricula.

Main aims for the VET-system (2003-2005):

- quality, accessibility (included disable people, disadvantage families...),
- efficiency: occupation / assessment / social inclusion,
- investments.

2.2.6 The situation in Lithuania - Pranas Gudynas

Former director of the Education Development Center of Lithuania

2.2.6.1 The past

VET had a very low prestige for two reasons:

- a sociological problem: some people do not want to have the best possible education and training. For others, finishing vocational education and training is not sufficient, general higher education is better. This was very typical for the transition period from a bureaucratic planned economy to a modern market and information society.
- the bad quality of VET: the content was very specialized and the methodology was insufficient. The curricula were not modern. The equipment was old-fashioned. VET was an uninteresting learning environment. There was also a lack of a vision on the future economy, thus it was difficult to have a vision for VET.

2.2.6.2 VET reforms

Staffs of VET schools were really enthusiast partners in this reform. They were supported by Lithuanian and foreign experts of research centres and universities. It was not easy to involve the social partners. The participation of employers and trade unions was very weak, but together they established the Vocational Education Council. To assure the quality an expert panel (government, administration, chamber of industry...) validates the programmes.

2.2.6.3 Europe and the future of VET

The European expectations are huge. There is a complete change of the culture in teaching. There is a need for better models: we need good examples, which serve the needs of the society.

A big problem is still the very low prestige of VET. Other countries also face this problem. For instance, in Ontario (Canada), they introduced vocational elements in general education.

New priorities:

- bridging the gap between general vocation and the world of work,
- create a credit transfer system between higher non-university education and university.

2.2.7 The situation in Malta - Anthony De Giovanni

Director of Education, Further Studies and Adult Education

2.2.7.1 The past

Since the nineteenth century, there has been a consciousness and slow development of vocational training replacing the guild apprenticeship system. The great systems of fortifications and city walls as well as the sumptuous buildings of Malta provided labour intensive work and a well trained labour force for decades. So did the sea surrounding, perhaps the most important 'virtual wall' of Malta. Until the mid-sixties Malta was mainly a colonial fortress economy. Independence in 1964 and subsequent political development brought about a shift from an economy dependant on the colonial fortress towards industrialization. It may be said that there had been an evolution of a system of vocational education and training in a continuously changing scenario, trying to address new challenges or reacting to whatever was happening in this field internationally, mainly in Britain.

Malta has its particular characteristics, which it shares with other small island states. The educational systems of small island states has been described as 'Topless Systems' (Brock 1984) in the sense that most do not have higher educational institutions able to issue

independent certification, with the result that certification depends on a foreign education institution. This affects the local system of education making it less autonomous and less able to forge curricula, which are tailor-made to the needs of the specific small island state. Malta has had a university for four centuries and for some time now a local system of secondary level academic qualifications is in place. But there is still a dependency on foreign authorities, particularly British for certification in the field of vocational education and training.

Another characteristic of a small island state is its small open economy, which makes it vulnerable and greatly dependent on major decisions being taken outside its shores. This and the process of restructuring and privatization impinge on the planning and management of VET as it is increasingly difficult to identify and anticipate labour market needs in an ever-changing scenario. It is considered important that local VET institutions provide training and qualifications that enable a flexible and multi-skilled workforce.

A third characteristic has to do with the smallness of scales. On one hand the easily reached saturation in specific fields of specialization and on the other hand the dearth of specialized teaching staff in highly specialized fields present challenges to the planners and managers of VET. This is even more pronounced in Gozo, the smaller sister island. Distinctive features of the labour market in Malta are the limited number of large enterprises and the dominance of small and medium-sized enterprises many of which are micro-enterprises. This limits considerably the possibility of in-house VET.

2.2.7.2 The reform

There has been a long series of events since 1990 contributing to the evolvement of VET.

The Industrial Training Act of 1990 set the legal framework for reforms in VET. The Employment and Training Corporation set up in the same year was entrusted with the dual function of job placements and industrial training. The four year Technician

Apprenticeship Scheme, set up by subsidiary legislation, complemented the earlier Extended Skills Training Scheme which itself evolved from previous apprenticeship schemes.

In the mid-nineties, Malta began restructuring its economy towards higher skilled, high-value-added service industries and electronics. This required more flexible workers with basic understanding of technology and soft skills promoted by general education. This brought about the phasing out of the Trades schools at lower secondary level. These trade schools set up in 1972 were intended to offer education resembling the place of work aiming at providing literate workers with craft-level skills that could be upgraded. However, they offered an impoverished curriculum often leading to blue-collar low-paid work as well as reinforced traditional destinies for women often leading them towards the textile sector. These concerns for equity and for postponing the selection and channelling of students contributed towards the closing down of trade schools. A new curriculum was designed introducing primary and lower secondary students to skills that aided better appreciation of the role of technology in contemporary life and encouraging suitable approaches to learning.

A major VET development was the establishment in 2001 of the Malta College of Art and Technology (MCAST), which clusters together nine post-sixteen vet institutions, projecting a more contemporary image of VET to attract able students and offer a credible alternative to academic higher secondary schooling. Credit equivalence is a basis for transfer to university degree course. The College also offers second chance education.

Malta's certification systems have largely focused on academic courses, which run against the interest of young people who do not attain the secondary education certificate. At post-secondary level there is considerable dependency on foreign, mainly British, VET institutions. With the creation of MCAST a debate ensued about the need for the accreditation of prior experience and benchmarking the levels of achievement across the curriculum. This brought about the creation in 2000 of the Malta Professional Vocational Qualifications Award Council (MPVQAC) seeking to

construct a national competence-based vocational qualification framework for initial and continuing training.

Satisfying the need for a vocational qualifications framework, sustained by appropriate organizations, systems and policies is very paramount to put VET on solid footing.

2.2.7.3 Europe

As a result of the Copenhagen declaration, the Maltese authorities have accepted to establish the necessary tools of transparency, linked with Europass.

2.2.8 Conclusions

In the new Member States of the European Union:

- VET has a bad reputation, even in the former soviet states, where vocational education formerly had a good reputation,
- the authorities choose broad vocational education, which prepares flexible workers with transferable competences. The students have to be able to adapt themselves to diverse situations. The reputation of VET is increasing,
- there are problems of orientation, information and guidance,
- there is a tendency to link their VET to the market, more specifically the labour market.

2.3 EUNEC questions after the seminar in Riga

The seminar in Riga prepared the conference in Brussels. The participants expressed their preoccupations on transparency of qualifications through written the answers on exercises. This resulted in the formulation of questions. At the beginning of the conference in Brussels, these questions were put at the disposal of the speakers and the participants.

2.3.1 Developing European reference frames of qualification?

- We do need more information on the aims of the transparency approach. Does transparency of qualifications aim at:
- Overall mobility on the national or European labour market?
- Mobility in sectors where it is relevant and feasible?
- Resolve frictions on the labour market and eliminate black labour markets?
- Create a European space of education using the same “language”?
- Developing different tools of transparency for the labour market and academic mobility?
- A next step is to elaborate an operational European qualifications framework:
- But what is meant by “qualification”, “qualifications framework”, “certificate” “competence” and what is the relationship between these concepts?
- How can we describe pathways, credits, output...?
- Who is describing, on what level (region, country, Europe), by which agent? What is the link between a European and a national qualifications framework?
- Should the framework contain restricted or general specifications on the qualifications? How can the common European framework respect the specificities of the country/region?

- What is the role of the sectors (metal, bank sector, insurance ...) in this process (to collaborate with VET, to organise VET, to structure VET)?
- Is it desirable to develop sectoral frameworks or one interprofessional framework?
- Which instruments do currently exist in Europe? What are the future developments concerning national instruments such as ROME (France) and the standards developed by the QCA (England - United Kingdom)?
- What are the social, economic, educational and national implications of the transparency of qualifications?

2.3.2 What changes are needed to achieve transparency?

- What are the conditions for Europass and the system of credit transfers to become transparent?
- Should the content of Europass be open or prescribed?
- What are the necessary conditions to achieve transparency? For instance, how can the instruments developed for guidance and orientation contribute to transparency of qualifications?
- On which conditions a European reference framework can be a tool of transparency?
- What is the impact of any changes on national VET-systems?
- It is necessary to clarify the link between the Bologna and the Copenhagen process. In this, we should be aware of the difference in the steering mechanisms in both processes. The Bologna process is initiated and developed by the institutions for higher education themselves; whereas the Copenhagen process is initiated and steered by the Union and the governments.
- Can we use the same principles for the description of academic and vocational recognition?
- Is the Bologna process dealing with highly qualified and the Copenhagen process for the low and medium qualified?

- What is the timetable to implement the new transparency tools in VET-systems? Is the timetable feasible for all sectors involved?

2.3.3 Validations / Recognition of competences

- Which links do we have to set up between the systems of certification of each European country and the process of validation of competences?
- The concept of validation applies to the acknowledgement of formal and informal competences. Do we know examples of good practice?
- What are the differences and what are the links between the academic validation and the validation in VET?
- How do we enhance public confidence and the confidence of users in the validation of competences?
- Do the common principles defined at the European level contribute to this confidence?
- What can quality assurance add to the domain of validation?
- Clarifying the conditions to achieve real transparency
- What is the role of the European level and the national level in formulating a quality framework and who controls it?
- Who are the agents involved in which stage of the process (public authority, providers of VET, social partners, economic sectors, commercial sector of educational and training institutions). A close collaboration with social partners is required. Who is the interlocutor of the social partners (teachers/schools, region, others)? Who is certifying VET?
- These questions were used to prepare the conference in Brussels where EUNEC wanted to try to answer them with leading experts in charge various projects on the level of the Commission, experts of CEDEFOP, QCA, persons in charge national for VET and political representatives of various Member States.

2.4 Enhanced European cooperation in vocational education and training⁶ - Jens Bjornavold

*European Commission, DG Education and Culture,
Vocational Training Policy Unit.*

2.4.1 The context

J. Bjornavold will outline the direction, the emphases, the results and the discussions of the Copenhagen Process. The Copenhagen Process was initiated in November 2002 at a meeting in the Danish capital to agree a Declaration on enhanced cooperation in vocational education and training (VET). This declaration responded to a request from the Barcelona European Council in March 2002 to take action in the field of vocational training, similar to that taken under the Bologna declaration in higher education.

The Copenhagen process is an integrated part of the Lisbon strategy in which VET must be developed to play an active and key role in furthering lifelong learning policies and supplying the highly skilled workforce necessary to make Europe one of the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economies and societies in the world. The development of a true European labour market relies heavily on having a skilled adaptable and mobile workforce able to use its qualifications and competences as a kind of common currency throughout Europe. In this respect, the main aims of the Copenhagen process are the development of lifelong learning and the development of mutual trust between the key players.

The Copenhagen process is an accelerated measure to improve the quality and attractiveness of VET, which is lagging behind other fields of education, and to raise the parity of esteem between them. The process is based on a voluntary approach. It is based on an agreement between 31 countries, the European social partners and the European Commission. They try to avoid a top-down approach

⁶ presentation in Brussels, October 25th 2004

and to define the objectives through common work. The main goal is to provide concrete and practical results with clear objectives and clear time schedules.

In July 2004, the European Commission adopted proposals for an integrated action programme in the field of lifelong learning. It is aimed at enhancing complementarity between policies in the field of education and training and social and economic strategies, and provides a tool to support both social cohesion and competitiveness. The programme will better support policy developments at European level in education and training, notably in relation to the Lisbon strategy and to the strategic objectives provided in the 'Education and Training 2010' work programme.

2.4.2 The seven main objectives set by the Copenhagen declaration

- Europass, the single framework for transparency of qualifications and competences.
- Cooperation in quality assurance in VET.
- European Credit transfer system for VET – a system that enables individuals to progressively obtain credit points based on the competences they acquire along the vocational learning route, in both formal and informal learning.
- Common principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- Strengthening policies, systems and practices for lifelong guidance.
- Support to the development of qualifications and competences at sectoral level.
- Attention to the learning needs of teachers and trainers in VET.

Technical working groups and expert groups have been established by the European Commission to develop common European references and principles aimed at supporting Member States' policies in the fields of quality, transparency and recognition. Although such common references and principles do not create obligations for Member States, they contribute to developing

mutual trust between the key players and encouraging reform; They take into account the diversity and specificity of VET systems in Europe. What results have been achieved since 2002 which are directly relevant to citizens and enterprises?

2.4.2.1 Europass

The Europass portfolio gives the citizen simple access to a flexible tool for the presentation and the promotion of his qualifications and his competences. It will be an open framework, which brings all the instruments of transparency together (mobility, diploma and certificate supplements, language portfolio, European CV...). It will rationalize and co-ordinate the efforts at national and European level to increase transparency. The national Europass centres will have to co-ordinate this process at national level but they will be linked together in a European network. The Europass will be formally adopted by the Parliament at the end of 2004. It will be launched at a special conference under the Luxembourg Presidency on 31 January and 1 February 2005. The pass will be available in spring 2005. There is already a pilot version on the internet (<http://europass.cedefop.eu.int>).

2.4.2.2 Quality Assurance in VET

The work started in 2001-2002. It is a difficult issue to work on because it touches the responsibility of all the Member States. The Common Quality Assurance Framework (CQAF) builds on national experiences to identify areas and criteria, crucial for quality assurance. It raises questions and suggests answers to systems and provider levels. It is consistent with other relevant instruments, in particular EFQM and ISO. The CQAF is trying to reduce the differences between countries on a voluntary approach.

The CQAF is a model, which includes four steps: planning, implementation, evaluation and review. Core criteria are associated with each step. Self assessment plays a key role in the used methodology. It uses a monitoring system and a measurement tool (peer review), based on a common set of reference indicators. The CQAF was adopted by the Education Council in May 2004.

2.4.2.3 ECVET

ECVET reflects the progress that made on higher education. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS), based on a voluntary approach, is now being used in more than thousand universities in Europe.

The aim of ECVET is to support mobility by enabling the accumulation and the transfer of learning outcomes, results and competences, by promoting transparency and comparability between education and training programmes, curricula and systems. A proposal will be presented at the Ministerial meeting in Maastricht 2004. It is a very complex issue. The diversity of VET systems in Europe, with a large number of different models, makes it very difficult to find common principles. How will we define the common units? In ECTS, they are based on the workload. In ECVET, the units will be based on learning outcomes. The model is still being developed. There are many questions, which have not been solved. There are different possible solutions and many possible alternatives. In spring 2005, there will start a test with several models of credit transfer in VET.

2.4.2.4 Validation of non-formal and informal learning

A draft set of common European principles for validation of non-formal and informal learning have been endorsed. Such common principles should outline how individuals can have their competences validated in a fair and transparent way. The systems and methodologies at European level have to be comparable and have to develop high quality. The common approach will provide a basis for comparability between validation approaches in different countries, at different levels and in different contexts. The European inventory, now being set up, on non-formal and informal learning will be a crucial instrument. The inventory, to be published at the end of 2004, will show what kind of initiatives and methodologies exist in Europe. It will also monitor the follow-up of the common principles, formerly agreed.

2.4.2.5 Lifelong guidance

If you develop lifelong careers where you combine learning in different contexts, in different institutions and where you combine different learning outcomes and learning providers, this is of course getting very complicated. Without guidance, without proper counselling, we risk that especially those, who are in the weakest position, lose their way in the maze of education and training systems and facilities. One of the main problems is the fragmentation of the guidance services. The Copenhagen process encourages a more holistic approach.

The aim is to strengthen policies, systems and practices that support information, guidance and advice. The recommendations of the Council (May 2004) have centred on access to guidance, on quality assurance for guidance delivery and on the role of guidance in human resources development.

2.4.2.6 Sectoral level

We can observe a tendency that stakeholders on sectoral level, social partners, employer's and employee's organisations, professional associations and multinationals, gradually are becoming more active players in the area of education and training. Their initiatives search for European and international solutions concerning standards, certificates and qualifications.

The problem is that there is a lack of visibility of these sectoral efforts. At the moment, CEDEFOP is trying to make a database of the best initiatives. There is also an agreement that the Leonardo programme should give more attention to sectoral initiatives. The objective is that up to a third of the Leonardo budget has to be used to support this sectoral approach. Last October, a conference in The Hague, focussing on this theme, was a revelation for all the participants.

2.4.2.7 Teachers and trainers

This is not really followed up at the moment. It will be a priority in the next stage of the process in Maastricht. If you want to change VET systems, the role of teachers and trainers is crucial. It is

important that we pay attention to the needs and the changing role of teachers and trainers in a knowledge society.

2.4.3 The future of the Copenhagen process

The Joint Council and Commission report 'Education and Training 2010' (February 2004) covers the process of the objectives, the Copenhagen process and lifelong learning, and paves the way for a more integrated approach to these stands of work. The Joint Interim Report identifies a number of levers and priorities for reform in key areas, to make European education and training systems a world quality reference by 2010 and lifelong learning a concrete reality for all.

The necessary reforms and investments should be focused particularly on:

- the image and attractiveness of the vocational route for employers and individuals in order to increase participation in VET.
- achieving high levels of quality and innovation in VET systems in order to increase participation in VET.
- linking VET with the labour market requirements of the knowledge economy for a highly skilled workforce, and especially, due to the strong impact of demographic change, the upgrading and competence development of older workers.
- the needs of the low-skilled and disadvantaged groups for the purpose of achieving social cohesion and increasing labour market participation.

In December 2004, the Ministerial meeting should adopt a new communiqué setting out future priorities and strategies, in view of the recommendations of the interim report.

2.4.4 The Maastricht Communiqué

On 14 December 2004, the Ministers responsible for Vocational Education and Training of 32 European countries, the European Social Partners and the European Commission will agree in the Maastricht Communiqué on modernising their vocational education and training systems in order to become the most

competitive economy and offering all Europeans, whether they are young people, older workers, unemployed or disadvantaged, the qualifications and competences they need to be integrated into the emerging knowledge based society, contributing to more and better jobs.

On a national level the communiqué will put the emphasis on strengthening the contribution of VET systems, institutions, enterprises and social partners to the achievement of the Lisbon goals. On a European level, the communiqué will support the development of transparency, quality and mutual trust to facilitate a genuine European labour market.

2.4.4.1 National level

Priority should be given to:

- the implementation and use of the agreed instruments,
- improving public and/or private investment in VET, including by public-private partnerships and where appropriate, by the training incentive effects of tax and benefit systems as recommended by the Lisbon European Council,
- the use of the European Social Fund and the European Regional Development Fund,
- the further development of VET systems to meet the needs of people at risk of the labour market and social exclusion,
- the development and implementation of open and flexible learning approaches,
- the increased relevance and quality of VET through the systematic involvement of all key partners,
- the early identification of skills needs,
- the further development of learning-conducive environments in training organisations and at the workplace,
- continuing competence development of VET teachers and trainers.

2.4.4.2 European level

Priority should be given to:

- the consolidation of the existing Copenhagen priorities,
- the development of a European Qualifications Framework,
- the development and implementation of ECVET,
- the examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of VET teachers and trainers,
- the improvement of the scope, precision and reliability of VET statistics.

2.4.4.3 The European Qualifications Framework (EQF)

The core of the EQF will be provided by a set of common reference levels. These will make it possible to compare and link the growing diversity of education, training and learning provisions existing throughout Europe.

Reference levels need, however, to be complemented and supported by a range of instruments and common guiding principles agreed at European level. The main purpose of this framework would be to strengthen transparency and mutual trust and to provide a common direction to future developments, politically as well as practically.

One common European approach has to reduce barriers. It is not a question of replacing existing systems but the EQF must stimulate the co-operation.

2.5 State of mind of the EUNEC members after the first day⁷

At the end of the first day of the conference, the participants could express their feelings on the major topics of the conference. On a paper, they could express their agreement (green), their doubts and questions (orange) and their disagreement (red) concerning some statements.

These are the results of the “Prise de température”

Propositions	Green	Orange	Red
The transparency of qualifications is a problem, which occurs in all the European countries. This problem must stay a national competence.	2,8%	36,1%	61,1%
The transparency of qualifications is a real European problem. It must be treated on the European level.	71,1%	28,9%	0,0%
If qualifications are more transparent, it will enhance social cohesion in Europe.	51,3%	43,6%	5,1%
The transparency of qualifications is an indispensable tool to encourage lifelong learning.	79,5%	20,5%	0,0%
European citizenship is growing slowly. Every action that enhances mobility contributes to this process.	78,4%	21,6%	0,0%
It is important that everybody have access to pertinent information. Everybody must be able to get a better comprehension on the objectives and the tools of the transparency of qualifications.	92,3%	7,7%	0,0%
It is necessary to define a common European framework for qualifications.	82,1%	15,4%	2,6%
Tools of transparency have to be understandable and manageable for all.	100%	0,0%	0,0%

⁷ Brussels, October 25th 2004

The conception of tools has to be developed in a common dialogue with all the stakeholders (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers, public responsible).	97,4%	2,6%	0,0%
The transparency of qualifications should be primarily concerned about the most vulnerable groups in our society.	35,9%	51,3%	12,8%
The transparency of qualifications concerns all the workers in the European Union.	82,1%	17,9%	0,0%
The transparency of qualifications is only a concern for few persons (cross-border workers, the executive staff).	2,6%	5,1%	92,3%
Primarily, the transparency of qualifications is a concern of the sectors.	11,4%	45,7%	42,9%
The transparency of qualifications should be introduced in the systems of education and training. It should be a concern of all the levels of education and training.	92,1%	5,3%	2,6%
Every progress in this process should be a subject of a national debate with all the stakeholders. It is necessary that the education field is involved in these prospective reflections.	100%	0,0%	0,0%

3 EQUITY, EQUALITY, CITIZENSHIP AND SOCIAL COHESION

As we said in the introduction, the member councils of EUNEC are composed of all the partners in the world of education and training. The social partners play a very important role in most of councils. This explains the preoccupation of the European network of education councils with the citizenship of young Europeans. To become an active citizen, you need a fair society, where everyone has the right to equality and where social cohesion is generated ongoingly. EUNEC also wants to stress these preoccupations in the context of a transparency of qualifications.

Europe says that it does not want to lose any competences; it wants to increase the number of qualified people by recognising non-formal and informal competences; it also wants to increase the participation in lifelong learning and to reduce the number of early school leavers. EUNEC endorses these viewpoints to the extent that the human person has to be placed in the centre of all these tools. Education has to deal as much with personal development and citizenship as with employability. Terms such as ‘development of human capital’ and ‘the use of human resources’, suggest a system of education and training that is subordinate to economic growth and where there is not much attention to social cohesion, equality and citizenship.

During its activities, EUNEC has emphasised education for citizenship. Before dealing with this question within the framework of the Copenhagen process on the Leonardo conference in Brussels, EUNEC formulated statements on this topic on a seminar in The Hague in September 2004.

3.1 EUNEC proposes the vision of the Councils

*EUNEC defined recommendations for citizenship education (The Hague, September 2004)*⁸

In a first stage, EUNEC defined some big principles on education for European citizenship.

Some councils used these principles to provide advice to their national or local authorities.⁹

Schools and the education system have to play a valuable role in the citizenship education of youngpeople. They have to teach them to take their responsibility in the society, to adopt a civil attitude and to act democratically. Schools and education systems have to develop civil competences and values.

It is important that the pupils take their responsibility in the immediate neighbourhood and get involved in activities linked with democratic procedures and strategies. This supposes an acquirement of competences in the scholar curriculum. A school should be a place where pupils learn to act as democratic citizens. This supposes a participative culture at school. To the extent that schools are capable to organise a real reflection of the pluralism of the modern society in their classrooms, this micro cosmos can offer the possibility to the young persons to learn to live in the diversity.

By developing negotiation strategies, by listening, by forming an opinion, by coping with power and with all sorts of duties and by respecting interests and problems of other persons, pupils can take part in the essence of democratic citizenship.

In a second stage, EUNEC tried to develop principles and statements for education to a European citizenship.

These statements were proposed to the councils of the different Member States. It is obvious that not all the councils had the same

⁸ Statement on education for European citizenship. You find the entire text on www.eunec.org

⁹ For instance: the CEF used this text in the first part of its advice 81 (<http://cfwb.be/cef>)

vision on the way such a citizenship education should be developed. A few councils had reservations on the description of the content of such an education. For some of them it was too prescriptive, for others it was too ambiguous. This EUNEC-text is thus a working document that can serve as a starting point for an internal reflection in each of the councils. In the statements, you can read the following propositions.

European societal citizenship encompasses knowledge and acceptance of societal and political practices in Europe and a willingness and ability to contribute to a shared European culture. European citizenship is one level in a global concept. In the citizenship-concept the following levels are integrated: personal responsibility of the individual; responsibility in social networks/communities; citizen in the local community; citizen in the region and national state; citizen in the European context and citizen of the world. European citizenship needs to be developed at the individual level as well as at the group level. To become European citizens people need to connect with society, which can only be achieved if they feel involved in it. If people are or do not feel accepted, that is if they are not full members of a group or community, they do not feel responsible. For this reason, the primary objective is to strengthen public engagement with society and particularly with Europe.

Living in a multi-cultural society is not an easy perspective for all Europeans. A citizenship education has to include an intercultural dialogue in order to find a new social cohesion. European citizenship built on the humanistic tradition of our continent, should also encompass a responsibility towards the construction of a more peaceful and prosperous world order.

An important goal of civil society on the European level is to contribute to the establishment and maintenance of networks and communities through which learners (future alumni) gain access to the social resources necessary for securing and maintaining employment and for acquiring a place in national society and European society. Education may thus play a valuable role in enhancing social cohesion.

How can schools contribute to this process? Learning for active European citizenship is competency-based learning. A European citizenship competency means that the citizen possesses the abilities to apply knowledge, skills and attitudes to perform adequately activities in a European context. The citizen is able to act responsibly and actively participate in Europe's public domain. Schools and education systems take a responsibility to prepare all categories of youngsters to behave as citizens, active and responsible.

An important contribution of the education sector to the project Europe is more transparency in qualifications. This concerns both vocational (Copenhagen process) and higher education (Bologna process). This transparency is necessary to obtain more mobility, both professional and academic.

3.2 Equity, citizenship and social cohesion - Domenico Lenarduzzi¹⁰

*Honory director-general – European Commission
Education, Youth and Culture*

I believe that concepts, decrees, laws or directives do not make Europe. Europe is becoming reality by the intention to create networks and by cooperation on common objectives.

I have to say that EUNEC did an excellent job. EUNEC started very rapidly, then there was a certain slowing down, but now I believe that you have a new momentum and I hope that this will continue because Europe has to realise itself and that only can happen near to the citizens.

3.2.1 Equality, citizenship and social cohesion, an inseparable trio

They have asked me to speak about equality, equity, citizenship and social cohesion. I think that we cannot speak about citizenship or social cohesion if there is no equality. Equality, the chance to have the same opportunities, is very important in this process. A person, who doesn't have equal opportunities, cannot be a citizen because he doesn't have all the chances to be a full citizen. Moreover, if he isn't a full citizen, there is no social cohesion. Therefore, these three concepts are closely connected.

This is not only true on the European level, but also on the local level. If you want to be a citizen, you must have the same opportunities, the same chances. Social cohesion concerns the regional, national and naturally the European level. You will find many traces of this concept in European treaties, in the fundamental rights and in the new European constitution.

But why, more than ever, equality, citizenship and social cohesion are so important? At the beginning of the third millennium, the

¹⁰ D. Lenarduzzi participated at the first meeting with the foundation of EUNEC. This presentation was made on the first day of the conference in Brussels (October 25th 2004)

evolution to a knowledge society is taking place very rapidly. You can even wonder if people will be able to absorb all these evolutions. Nowadays, not only the production of material goods is important, the production of knowledge and skills is fundamental.

3.2.2 Education and training, cornerstones of the knowledge economy

More than ever, if you are concerned about knowledge and skills, education and training are the basis, of the knowledge economy. This has been changing very fast. In the past, you had on the one hand education and training and on the other hand, the economy, the industrial activities. Nowadays education and training are closely linked to the economy, and this link is indispensable.

This is the reason why Europe is no longer observed only as a space with common agriculture policies or as the monetary zone of the Euro or as a motor of the economy. Europe is also essentially considered as a space of education and training. This is the new reality.

A few moments ago, we were laughing about the European Council in Lisbon. We were saying that the Lisbon process would change everything towards 2010: we will get total employment, we will invest in research at least 3% of the GNP, we will have a new social model, etc.

The Lisbon-declaration (2000) was indeed very ambitious but it was also very to the point. The heads of State and the heads of the governments were aware of the rapidly changing society. We were living in a knowledge society and we had to be careful that we didn't fall behind in comparison with our major competitors in America and Asia. All of us had to be aware of this change and we had to open the dialogue on it. The summit in Lisbon set out a new ambition for the EU. The political leaders formulated the ambitious goal of making Europe by 2010 the most competitive and dynamic knowledge-based economy in the world. However, the objectives of Lisbon were not only economical. The European leaders emphasized also on European citizenship and on social cohesion. We had to create more and better jobs and by enhancing social cohesion, it should be possible for all young persons to achieve Equity, Equality, Citizenship and Social Cohesion

their aims and to develop their personality. Therefore, we have to consider the Lisbon process in its entirety; it is not a merely economic or utilitarian vision. I think it is essential to emphasize this.

3.2.3 A construction site, where every European citizen has his role to play

At first, Europe has been constructing a common market, then they made the Euro, but now there is a new construction site. A knowledge-based Europe is a challenge that will lead to more European citizenship. Therefore, the role of education and training is essential. Every young person must be able to assure his personal development in the best way.

Education and training have not only the task to prepare good workers, with high qualifications at employability. The human being is more than this. The development of an own personality, the valorisation of personal aptitudes, the possibility of living together in a society, all these things constitute citizenship. If they are present, there will be social cohesion.

In the year 2000, the heads of State were conscious of this and they asked us to be also conscious of it. At this moment, at this conference, you are engaging with this changes, with this knowledge society.

This means that every one of us has the task to keep informed permanently, not only from a professional point of view but also from a personal, institutional, social and cultural point of view. This is a necessity. I know this; you know this, because you are working in the education and training field. I think and I hope that you know it. But, it is fundamental, that also every citizen has to know it.

In former days, a minority was guiding a majority, which we called the silent majority. Nowadays, in a knowledge society, there cannot be a guiding minority and a silent majority. Every one has to take up his own destiny. Every one of us must do a self-evaluation, must be able to analyse his own needs and must work

to meet all the requirements of the society and to integrate in this society.

Maybe you will say to me: this sounds very well, but in reality, is this possible for every citizen? I would say: it should be possible! It is necessary that we give every citizen the education and the knowledge that gives him the possibility to integrate further in the society. This is our fundamental responsibility. We have to make sure that young persons, who enter in our schools and later leave our schools, have acquired this basic education and training. They should not only acquire technical skills, but they also have to be able to know and to evaluate themselves. They have to understand that the time, when people first went to school to learn and afterwards entered in the active life to work, is over. Lifelong learning is the new principle. Therefore, basic education and training are very important. Education and training have a huge responsibility. This is the big challenge. Nobody should leave school without having acquired basic skills.

One of the objectives of the Lisbon strategy is to reduce the number of pupils who don't finish lower secondary courses with at least 50%. Up to now, there are far too many of these pupils. Those, who don't finish lower secondary courses in a society, which is in full scientific, economic, technological, social and cultural evolution, will not have the possibility to adapt themselves, to follow and to take their places in this society. **We run the risk of creating the most dual society, which ever has existed.** Those with few educational achievements run the risk of not being able to participate in the society. This is not because they are not smart enough (95% of the population has the capacities to acquire the basic competences); it is because they are marginalised by this society. They simply don't live in the best social environment and the school often isn't able to communicate with them.

Nowadays, a person, who is marginalised by school, will also be marginalised by society for the rest of his life. In former days, you could leave school even without being able to write or to read, but you could work in a company, on a production line, in a job that required always the same action or in the agricultural sector.

Society was able to integrate persons with a lower level of schooling. Today, this is no longer the case.

Someone, who doesn't acquire the basic skills, cannot be participative. He cannot be a citizen, because being a citizen means being active, a passive citizen doesn't exist. It is necessary that a citizen is able to get involved in the society, is able to develop himself, is able to valorise his aptitudes...and each of us has enough aptitudes to succeed in this task.

The knowledge society is not the society of researchers or scientists. It is not the society of trade union leaders and the social partners of the world of education. The knowledge society is the society of all the citizens. We are not always aware of this reality and that is the big challenge for all of us. Future generations will be confronted with big challenges: the ageing of the society, the problem of the immigration and the problems of developing countries. There will be drastic changes, of which we are not yet conscious today. But we will be better prepared for this unknown future, if each of us is aware of this evolution and of the necessity to develop in a new direction.

3.2.4 The social system, an objective of the Lisbon strategy

This is one of the reasons, why they set objectives in the Lisbon strategy.

I will not talk for too long about employability, but in Europe we reach 62% active persons. We should attain 70% in 2010, so we have to progress by 8%. This looks enormous, because 2010, that is tomorrow. Since Lisbon, we have been making a progress of 3,5%. There are still many efforts to make to reach the objective.

We absolutely have to defend the European social system, because this system, which without doubt has to be improved, takes in consideration every citizen. Solidarity, in the most beautiful and complete meaning of the word, plays an important role in this system. We have to take care that we maintain this, because, even in a knowledge society, we live in a competitive society. Until now, we were competitive towards each other. We

were competitive on the regional, national and European level; this was indeed one of the reasons, why it was so difficult to make a European economic union and to abolish the borders. Today, we have to be competitive with the whole world, within the framework of the globalisation.

Yesterday I was reading figures concerning China. Each year, China actually gives diplomas at 2.800.000 students. Three years ago, they were not delivering the half of it. Can you imagine the number of engineers, of ICT specialist that China is turning out? I am talking of China, but I can also give comparable data, although they are much more restricted, concerning Korea, Japan etc. Actually, the world is bigger than the Western world, Europe and Northern America.

Nowadays, everything is changing and that is fair and I hope that this will go on because we wish welfare for everybody and not only for us. But we have to be aware that we were privileged and that we will not stay privileged. We will be confronted with fundamental changes.

Today, we are concerned about companies relocating. Companies and multinationals close their doors in one country and move to another because the labour is cheaper there. Therefore, we have to be more competitive by producing other things and by developing other activities, which cannot be relocated. However, we have to take care. Intellectual relocation will be the real and fundamental relocation.

Yesterday, I returned from Warsaw by plane. I was sitting next to a man, that I do not know, and I saw that he took his personal computer. He was writing the minutes of the meeting that he had attended. He explained to me that he was a representative of a multinational and that he would send the letter that he was typing to Brazil and to Taiwan. He had to inform the multinational immediately so that they could take the necessary measures immediately. They didn't have to wait till 8 o'clock in the morning, till the secretary of the representative arrived in her office and did the necessary.

With this anecdote, I want to emphasise the fact that there are no more geographical distances at the moment. Nowadays, with the new technologies, it is possible to be present everywhere. The man said that he was astonished by this development, certainly in the domain of information technology. In India, the number of engineers and the ICT-scientist is multiplying. They are trained as well as our scientists but they are much more flexible.

3.2.5 Move forward to a better vocational education and training for all

I say all those things because when we think of Europe, of the European Union, when we think of what Jens Bjornavold was saying, we have to take into consideration that we are no longer limited to ourselves. The concept of Europe runs the risk to be very technical and complex. When we think of Europe, we often stress on details and commas. There are many technical problems in Europe, but we must think more globally about problems.

I have been listening attentively to Jens, because I have left my job at the Commission 3 years ago. I can say that I was a little bit on the origin of the Europass, of transparency, of Bologna. I had already left the Commission when the Copenhagen process was starting up. I am very impressed of what is going on and of what is achieved, but I am concerned. I fear that we are losing ourselves in the technical aspect, in the expertise, in the comparability.

Especially we have to take care of VET in Europe. Article 128 of the Treaty of Rome mentions that every citizen has the right to follow a vocational training in all the countries of the Union. At that moment, they were not yet speaking about education. Although there was a solid legal base, Europe did not make great progress in vocational training, simply because it chose the way of comparability of the content, of technical sectoral aspects. There have been thousands of proposals. It took 17 years to make a directive concerning the architects, because they wanted to compare the curriculum contents in the different countries. And when they finally reached an agreement, it was already out of date. I fear that this is still the reality today, even more than yesterday.

However, we have to succeed, **it is necessary that Copenhagen should be a success**. We are lucky that we already have Bologna. Next year in Norway, the ministers will evaluate this whole process and that is a big step forward. However, we may not stop. If I still would be director-general of education and training, I should start with abolishing all the small technical groups. Technicians always look in the first place at the difficulties and there are enormous difficulties. What we need is a political intention. Therefore, the new Commission has provided a working group on the level of the Commissioners. This group, chaired by the president, will follow up the strategy of Lisbon and will try to catch up with the delay that has occurred since 2002.

In Lisbon, the heads of State clearly declared that the systems of education and training, as they exist now, have several failings. Firstly, there is a lack of flexibility. Primary education, secondary education, university and beside it, vocational training are silos which are separate from each other. They are quasi ivory towers. There are no fundamental links, which allow passing from the one side to the other. As long as we are in this situation, we will not have lifelong learning. Therefore, we must have the nerve to introduce in all the Member States more flexibility in the systems of education and training. This is indispensable in a knowledge society.

In Lisbon the heads of State asked at the ministers of Education to reflect, not individually but as a council, on the question how we could adapt the education system to get on with the knowledge society. **And for the first time, the ministers of Education and training (15 at that moment, 25 today) reached an agreement on a set of common objectives.**

When I use the word common, you have to take into account that, until three, four or five years ago, it would be unthinkable to have common objectives in the education domain.

Today, this is possible because we are aware that every citizen, every young citizen, whether he is Portuguese or Finnish, should have access to an equivalent training, I say equivalent not equal. When they enter the labour market, nationality does not play a role

any more. The employers, as well in the private as in the public sector, will engage the one with the best training.

This is the objective of each minister; either regional or national. At the moment, a minister, who only has a regional or a national view, is not a good minister. He needs to have a European view. Reforms have to be consistent with European objectives, naturally respecting the cultural and linguistic diversity and the competencies of each Member State.

It is unthinkable that Brussels should formulate one unique school curriculum. Our Danish friends had this fear because they had to fight throughout their history against dominating neighbouring cultures. They accepted to enter in the European Union on condition that they could keep their identity. And from the moment they realised that they could totally retain their identity, they became as much supporters of the common objectives in the education field as they were against them in former days.

3.2.6 Evaluation of the common objectives

I will not describe the common objectives, because there are 39 of them. They are about the access, the links, the openness of schools, the quality...The Member States have adopted these common objectives and two years later, they wrote the report 'Education and training 2010'. They made an evaluation of the things, which they have been doing in the past 2 or 3 years.

The first conclusion was that there was a in achieving the objectives that were set, but they considered it as normal because in these first years, they had to agree on standards and indicators, they had to make many analyses and they had to search for more common understanding. However then, they decided that they would evaluate the progress every two years and that they would work together to achieve the common quantitative objectives that they had fixed. This evolution is highly important.

What changed is the fact that the ministers of Education now take responsibility for training as well as education. In former days, this domain was the domain of the ministers of Employment or Social Affairs. There was a great separation between initial and

continuous vocational training. The ministers of Education took this in hand on the European level, because they understood the importance of vocational training and lifelong learning. Now, they are working together with their colleagues of economics and social affairs. The ministers of Economics have understood that they cannot be economically competitive if there are no qualified human resources. The ministers of Social Affairs have understood that without well trained persons, there would be no citizens at all and there would be no European social system. This integration of education and training is an important step in our society.

Another conclusion of the interim report is that we also have a delay in investment. It is true that the heads of state had decided to invest more in human resources and thus in education and training. But, the report noted that, in the last years and I speak of Europe as a whole, there was no increase in investment, there was even a tendency to reduce the budgets. It is also true that a better use of the funds is possible in the world of education. It is not always necessary to receive more money; we have to make better use of it, with a view on lifelong learning.

Therefore, it is necessary that we remind the heads of state that they had promised more investments in human resources. Therefore, the Commission have mentioned to them that they didn't do what they promised. They set as an objective to reduce the number of dropouts by 50%. There is an improvement; it was 20%, now we are at 16 % on the European level. They wanted to achieve that 85% of the young people progress to higher secondary level, today we are reaching 75-76%. There are countries with better results, there are countries with lower results, but the objective is that each country attains 85%.

Another objective is to ensure that all young people acquire new competences. It is no longer sufficient to be able to read, write or calculate, you must also acquire language skills. In a multilingual Europe, it is a necessity to know several languages. It is also necessary to have ICT-skills, to have spirit of enterprise, because in a knowledge society, you have to be able to work together.

If we don't teach young people all these things, they will not only be marginalised at school, but they also will be marginalised in the society. And a dual knowledge society is even worse than a dual economic society, because it is separating those who have many possibilities and capacities from those who have less.

3.2.7 A financial contribution

I want to underline that it seems that, on European level, they have understood the message. They are making budgetary provisions. The current budgetary provisions are cover 2000 to 2007; the next provisions will be for 2007 until 2013. Why do I mention this? Because in the next budgetary provisions, proposed by the Commission, a large part of the finances will be earmarked for human resources. The Dutch presidency is opening these discussions now, and they will last until the end of 2005.

For instance, in the framework of the structural funds, particularly the social fund, the part reserved for human resources will increase by three points.

The regional funds will not be limited to the construction of a highway or hospitals, but they will also emphasise training, thus human resources. This is because they have been realising that it is nice to build a highway in a developing region, but when you don't take care of an adequate training of the citizens in this region, and especially when you don't prevent that these citizens go elsewhere, the region will not develop at all. Therefore, the social and the regional funds will put much more emphasis on human resources.

Moreover, in the proposals of the Commission, the famous programmes Socrates, Leonardo and Youth have be multiplied by four, in comparison with the present situation. I want to stress on the fact that these are the proposals of the Commission, we have to wait for the results after the examination by the council and the parliament.

I want to underline that I believe that the Lisbon strategy is important, even on the level of the council and on the level of the Member States, because they set the objectives. Therefore, we have to remind them permanently of these objectives, so that they

should achieve them. Each year, in March, the heads of State gather in an extraordinary meeting to evaluate what is done and what is not done. It is true that they have been a little bit utopian for 2010, but it is really important that they set these objectives. If we can reach these objectives, I believe there will be much more equality. This is fundamental because equality is the real source of citizenship and naturally of social cohesion.

I will not speak much about the new programmes. You have to know that these new programmes will assure the continuity of those, which exist now, in view of the success that they have obtained. They will be more decentralised, there will be more responsibility for the structures in the Member States and in the regions, and for the social partners. There will be one programme for education and training, a lifelong learning-programme. We will find in this programme the level of schools (Comenius), the university level (Erasmus) and the Leonardo da Vinci-level. But they will no longer be separated; they will live together under the label of lifelong learning. There will also be Grundtvig for continuous training and there will also be some transversal actions: languages, new technologies etc. There will also be a programme for all the community interventions in the neighbouring countries, in the Mediterranean countries and in the countries of the ex-Soviet-Union, which don't take part in the European Union. At last, there will be the programme Erasmus Mundus that does nearly the same on the worldwide university level. During the visits of the European ministers and commissioners to countries all over the world, they received many requests to have links with the European education field, with the European universities, so that they could send and receive students and professors. The Erasmus Mundus programme was an answer to these requests.

3.2.8 Conclusion

I will end by saying that the essential and fundamental objective is that we should make every citizen aware of the fact that nowadays it is necessary for everybody to learn permanently, to get educated, to learn to learn what is indispensable. They only can succeed in

this, when we, as society and as education and training field, provide them with the necessary means.

I believe that the Lisbon strategy is important even on the level of the European council and on the level of the Member States, because they have set the objectives. Now, we have to push them to achieve these objectives. You know that the heads of state have each year in March an extraordinary reunion to evaluate what is done and what is not done. It is certain that, in March 2005, we will see that Europe has been too utopian for 2010, but it was a good thing to set the objectives.

If we could reach the objectives, I believe that there would be much more equality. This is fundamental because equality is the source of citizenship and social cohesion.

3.3 What to adopt of this approach? (M. Durando)

Without pretending to make a summary of the Domenico Lenarduzzi's contribution, we will keep in mind the following elements:

We will not come back on the contribution of education and training to the Lisbon process. A Europe of knowledge leads to a European citizenship. Domenico Lenarduzzi has tried to draw a parallel line to the human dimension, the personal development. This is one of the fundamental values essential for competitiveness, which depends on qualifications and competences. He recalled that the tools of recognition and transparency have to be centred on the personal dimension. They have to allow to everybody to become a learner. It is on this condition that we can enhance social cohesion.

We will not give details on the benchmarks but we encourage the participants to reread them, because we believe that we can consider the five benchmarks, mentioned by the Commission, as tools of social cohesion. However, as said in the contribution on the place and attractiveness of VET, problems of drop-out (leaving school without qualifications), completing higher secondary studies, acquiring basic skills and lifelong learning are really core European issues, if we want to be present on the international scene.

The risk is that knowledge will create further social division (this is also linked with a numeracy divide– we have spoken of such a risk in accordance with an electronic Europass). We should not arrive at a system, which makes the people, who are already participating, stronger and which marginalises more and more those who don't have access to it.

To conclude, how can we reconcile our European social model with the objective of competition, set in Lisbon and Barcelona.

What do we have to keep in mind and what questions can we ask concerning this process?

The danger of this comparative approach ought to be emphasized, even if the working groups are the result of the method of open coordination. Domenico Lenarduzzi touched on the importance of these working groups and the relevance of some of these groups. He wondered if we should not promote other methods, such as substitution or complementarity.

We also may not forget the timescale. This element was not frequently mentioned by the different speakers. They presented projects and tools but they never situated these tools in time. Let's think at the ECTS, formulated in 1986. The French Ministry of Higher Education needed 15 years to issue a decree, which asks at the universities to use the ECTS. 15 years!

Domenico Lenarduzzi said that the systems lack flexibility; there are no crossing places. Starting from this conclusion, we can think about the creation of zones of mutual trust. The speaker emphasized this proposition. Only the courage of the Member States can permit us to make a clear progress, in order to escape from the perverse effects of the comparative approach.

4 EUROPASS AND THE WORK IN PROGRESS:

**TRANSPARENCY AS A
SERVICE TO ALL CITIZENS**

The Copenhagen process and achievement of the Lisbon objectives has led to four major works in progress. The objective is to strengthen the European cooperation in VET.

On the European council of ministers in Maastricht,¹¹ a few weeks after the EUNEC conference, Jàn Figel', the European commissioner, has affirmed the priority on the attractiveness and the quality of VET. The Dutch presidency emphasised the necessity to develop European certifications of basic competences and the professionalisation of teachers and trainers.

Jàn Figel' announced that a first document on the common reference framework of qualifications would be ready in April 2005. It will be discussed on the conference of ministers in Bergen in May 2005. A widespread consultation of the EQF blueprint of stakeholders in the members and of social partners, industry and service sectors will be held from April until October 2005. At the end of 2005 or in the beginning of 2006, the EQF proposal of the Commission will be formally presented.

EUNEC invited in Brussels European experts to clarify the works in progress or to present good practices and running processes. This chapter reports of their contributions. In italics, you will find the achievements until 12 February 2005.

CEDEFOP put all the documents at the disposal of the whole education field on the web¹². With its virtual communities, CEDEFOP also organises a forum on the web on the big European issues in VET.

It is a pity that these texts are generally only available in English. We see the same on the site of the Commission. This prevents the access to the debates of a large part of the education field. Teachers, trainers, members of parents' associations, representatives of trade unions do not read easily English, even if they are multilingual. Europe translates the texts only when they are adopted.

¹¹ 14 December 2004: this meeting strengthened the Copenhagen declaration and published the Maastricht Communiqué.

¹² www.cedefop.communityzero.com

This problem looks rather innocent but it blocks a gradual mental evolution and it makes the democratic debate more difficult. The fact that the texts are written in English strengthens also the risk of a cultural dominance. For instance, a term as ‘employability’, which don’t have a negative connotation in English, strengthens the feeling of the economic slant in the European project of education and training when it is translated in French or in a Latin language.

4.1 Developing a common reference framework for VET

4.1.1 Some questions after the evaluation of the process of Copenhagen - Tom Leney¹³

Director QCA London and member of the Executive Committee of EUNEC

4.1.1.1 The importance of VET in Europe

In a learning society, vocational education and training has a pivotal role to play in raising the skills, knowledge and competencies of high- and low-skilled workers as well as labour market entrants. The ageing profile of European populations makes this task the more urgent as fewer young recruits are available to enter the labour market yet employment levels should rise, as older people have to be encouraged to remain economically active for longer, and as competing demands make a strong call on limited public expenditure.

VET is enormously important in Europe. VET has a strong tradition in Europe and there is a big variety in systems. Any coordination will be very sensitive. European VET as a whole has distinctive characteristics. Crucially it builds on the values, priorities and infrastructures of national, sector and local systems of VET. Increasing levels of co-operation at the European level is

¹³ Tom Leney is the author of the evaluation report (Maastricht study) of the Copenhagen process for the Maastricht conference in December 2004.
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providing support and leadership for building VET systems for optimal economic and social performance. It can also ease some of the frictions in the labour market.

4.1.1.2 Reasons for coordination

There are two basic reasons to work on the coordination of VET-systems. The first reason is to strengthen the European dimension. The second reason is to give everybody better chances by improving transparency.

4.1.1.3 The priorities of the Copenhagen process

The priorities for enhanced cooperation are strengthening of the European dimension, improving transparency, development of information and guidance systems, the recognition of competences and qualifications and the promotion of quality assurance. Yesterday, J. Bjornavold gave an outline of the seven concrete main objectives or programmes set up by the Copenhagen declaration. The Copenhagen actions are important levers that will generate a more active role for VET in developing lifelong learning policies. But, they are incomplete as they now stand. Innovation in teaching and learning is missing from the current programmes as a concrete action that underpins most VET developments and reforms.

The European Qualifications Framework is a simple answer to a complicated problem. It is a model, which combines Bologna and Copenhagen. It is a kind of template to compare. You can see roughly, where any qualification is in the scheme. It is important to create zones of mutual trust. Not everybody must go at the same time to the same system. It must be built bottom up. In contrast with ECTS, the credit system for VET is based on acquired skills and competences. ECTS is based on the hours spent to achieve the level. The validation of non-formal and informal competences offers many new possibilities for all European citizens. It can be the golden key to unlock the door of lifelong learning.

4.1.1.4 Main challenges

Improve quality in VET

The challenge for Member States is to maintain and improve the quality of IVET, to make provision attractive to stakeholder and client groups, and to provide flexible linkages between pathways, and with general and higher education.

A measure targeted at young people is to make higher education more accessible for students on VET programmes, together with the creation of occupational oriented programmes at higher education level. Meeting labour market needs by creating close partnership with industry and social partners is a needed component in making VET both attractive and flexible.

Raising participation in VET

Participation in lifelong learning is one of the main means to ensure the continuous adaptation of skills to the requirements of the economy and the quality of life in society. Yet overall levels of involvement in CVT in Europe are so low as to constitute a major challenge if effective lifelong learning strategies are to develop. This is a challenge for all stakeholders.

Adult learning reinforces skill differences resulting from unequal participation in initial education - the 'Matthew'-effect': those with lower levels of educational attainment have a low rate of participation in continuing education and training. For those with a high education level, the participation rate in LLL is more than six times higher than for those with a low level of education. Younger employers are more likely to participate in training than older ones. Participation also varies sharply between the sectors. When low sectoral participation rates are combined with low country participation rates, the opportunities for some groups to engage in training in Europe hardly exist. Addressing these issues – and groups excluded from the labour market – is a high priority for developing effective and inclusive lifelong learning strategies.

To achieve the priority of implementing effective and inclusive lifelong learning strategies in practice, the existing low levels of

participation in CVT must be addressed as a matter of urgency in most countries and in most sectors.

Funding VET

The Lisbon European Summit called for an increase in per capita investment in human resources. Competing demands on state, company and family budgets call for efficient spending in VET. The conclusion that increased levels of expenditure will be required is inescapable. Funding strategies that depend on the state and also on partnerships with social partners, the private sector, and expecting individuals to bear some of the costs of training are all in evidence. This has implications for governments and the public sector, for work organisations and the social partners, and for individuals.

4.1.1.5 Conclusion

As Europe develops towards a more open and international labour market, VET can reduce barriers and ease frictions that currently inhibit mobility of workers and learners. VET has a contribution to make towards a European labour market. But it is not a major driver for creating greater migration of people. The key challenge is not a great technical work. Few people know what the Lisbon process is. It is important that we extend the reach of the European message. Future developments of European cooperation should involve a wider public. This must include larger communities of policy makers, researchers and practitioners.

4.1.2 Steps towards transparency - Mette Beyer Paulsen

Project manager, CEDEFOP Thessalonici

CEDEFOP assists the European Commission in the promotion and the development of VET.

4.1.2.1 Context

M. Beyer Paulsen gives a short summary of the political background of the process. The Lisbon goals: growth, better jobs, social cohesion achieved by subsidiarity, the open method of coordination, the voluntary approach and convergence; the concrete objectives of Barcelona: quality, lifelong learning and validation of learning; the enhanced co-operation in VET of the Copenhagen declaration; the common European framework for qualifications based on transparency and mutual trust in Maastricht (December 2004).

4.1.2.2 What are the real needs?

A well qualified workforce, flexible, able to develop and adapt to new conditions. Social cohesion, based on active citizenship and personal fulfilment.

4.1.2.3 How will we realize these needs?

Relevant authorities have to develop relevant high quality education systems and qualifications, in cooperation with the legitimate stakeholders. They have to inform about qualifications so that they can be interpreted, understood and used in another context. We don't need a harmonisation but we need a common framework, so we can understand each other and compare the different means of qualification. "We don't need a Euro, but we need a EMU", in order that citizens gain vertical and horizontal mobility: inside national labour markets, between sectors, transnationally.

4.1.2.4 The Common Reference Framework

The proposal of a common reference framework (this is still a working document, it is discussed at the moment and normally it

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will be proposed in Maastricht) includes 8 common reference levels, with two dimensions: quantitative horizontal levels and qualitative vertical levels. The qualitative dimension is intended to be related to the national and sectoral VET systems in terms of the knowledge, skills and competences normally included in qualifications. Three criteria should be developed to signal to the users the nature of the qualification and that is expected to be matched to reference levels. These are broadly defined as follows: described in terms of learning outcomes; capable of being assessed; quality assured. It works with modules, credits and units. Vertically, the system provides eight common reference levels:

Level 1: General compulsory education, basic skills

Learning normally acquired during compulsory education and considered as contributing to a general knowledge and development of basic skills. Learning is not usually contextualised in work situations.

Level 2: Compulsory education + basic induction to work

Completion of compulsory education, which includes an induction to work. Basic knowledge of work can be acquired at an educational establishment, in an out-of-school training programme, or in an enterprise. Generally it is not occupation specific. The range of knowledge, skills and competence involved is limited. Qualification at this level indicates a person can perform basic tasks and exercise repetitive skills in a controlled environment. All action appears to be governed by rules defining allowable routines of strategies.

Level 3: Basic vocational qualification at upper secondary level, basic job skills

Completion of a basic vocational training qualification introducing the idea of job competence. It is normally considered part of upper secondary education. This qualification shows a person has basic skills suitable for many job functions and the capacity to carry out tasks under direction. Most action of people at this level of qualification is deliberate repetitive application of knowledge and skills.

Level 4: Upper secondary education + work based training programme, can work independently

Qualification at this level normally includes upper secondary education and a work based training programme in an alternance or apprenticeship scheme and involves developing knowledge linked to a specific occupational sector. People qualified at this level are able to work independently on tasks and have the capacity to apply specialist knowledge, skills and competences. They will have extensive experience and practice in both common and exceptional situations and be able to solve problems independently using this experience.

Level 5: Full vocational training qualification, complex work situations, bridges 2° and 3° education

Completion of a main vocational training qualification such as apprenticeship or higher education training. This form of qualification involves significant theoretical knowledge and involves mainly technical work that can be performed independently and entail supervisory and coordination duties. Qualification at this level indicates a person can deal with complex situations and their performance can be a benchmark for others. They will have considerable experience and practice across a wide range of work situations. This qualification level often bridges secondary and tertiary education and training.

Level 6: High level theoretical and practical knowledge, HE institutions, 'Bachelor'

Qualification at this level covers a high level of theoretical and practical knowledge, skill and competence, entailing a mastery of the scientific bases of an occupation. Qualification at this level means a person can deal comfortably with complex situations is generally autonomous and can assume design, management and administrative responsibilities. They are equivalent to undergraduate honours degrees. Study for these qualifications outside work takes place mostly in higher education institutions.

Level 7: Specialist theoretical and practical knowledge, HE institutions, “Master”

These qualifications recognise specialist theoretical and practical learning that is required for work as (senior) professionals and managers. People qualified at this level will have a wide breadth and depth of knowledge and be able to demonstrate high levels of specialist competence in an area. They will operate independently and supervise and train others where they can be inspiring. These qualifications are equivalent to masters degrees. Study for these qualifications outside work takes place in specialist higher education institutions.

Level 8: Highly specialised, dealing with complex situations, “PhD”

These qualifications recognise people as a leading expert in a highly specialised field dealing with complex situations and having the capacity for long-range strategic and scientific thinking and action. Such experts develop new and creative approaches that extend or redefine existing knowledge or professional practice and often teach others to be experts and masters. The qualifications are equivalent to doctoral qualifications. Study for these qualifications outside work takes place mostly in specialist higher Education institutions.

4.1.2.5 Challenge and questions¹⁴

The challenge is to create robust and flexible systems able to develop and adapt to new needs, to communicate and to interact and to accept outsiders and to show mutual trust. However, there are some questions:

- How can we describe tacit knowledge?
- How can we describe the “ethos” of a craft?
- How can we realize transfers between different work cultures, work organizations and work conditions?

¹⁴ More information on www.cedefop.eu.int/www.trainingvillage.gr

- Can different systems (school based, work based and hybrid) provide qualifications, which can be described and be substituted? Do we want to?
- What can we do to be open, flexible and tolerant and to maintain quality?
- What is essential, what is not – in a given context?

It is important that we focus on the totality of outcome, not on single elements. There is a large common element with space for differences. When we focus on the details, we never will find solutions. Maybe we can consider this starting point: the creation of new instruments has to focus on mutual trust, on the question: “How would you like to be treated when you want to study or work abroad?”

4.1.3 The EMU-pass, the first profession pass in Europe - Gregor Saladin

Director of the Swiss Metal-Union, Project manager of the EMU-pass (European Metal Union)

4.1.3.1 The European Metal Union

Gregor Saladin represents the “Union Suisse du Métal”, which is a member of the European Metal Union. The European Metal Union (EMU), the organisation responsible for the EMU professional pass, is a pool of national employers’ associations in a community of interests of the metal working industry. As a whole the EMU2 unites about 38,000 companies employing about 480,000 employees. The participating countries are: Germany, Luxemburg, The Netherlands, Austria, Switzerland, Hungary and Italy.

The objectives of the European Metal Union are the exchange of knowledge and experience; transparency of job profiles in order to make them comparable on a European level; look after the interest of its members with a view to rules and



regulations, certification, subsidy, labour law matters, etc.; promotion.

4.1.3.2 The EMU-Pass

The European Metal Union created the EMU-Pass. This was the first profession pass in Europe. The reason why EMU started this project was the difficulty to compare the systems of education and training in different countries. The purpose is to increase the exchange of professionals in the metal industry in the European countries, based on comparable, recognisable and certified competences.

The EMU-Pass is a personal badge for skilled workers in the metal industry, reflecting experience and professional practice. The EMU-pass is an up-to-date

overview of the competences and the professional career of the individual holder. The EMU-Pass is a personal identity card, which reflects the holder's practical experience with regard to both quality and quantity. It can only be acquired by trained professionals from the engineering branch defined by the EMU. Therefore, the EMU-Pass proves the international practice of trained professionals.

The EMU-pass is issued by the national professional associations of the EMU and enjoys their reciprocal recognition. Employers, course organisers as well as examining boards of the EMU member associations, are authorised to enter endorsements. The national association, where the EMU-Pass is issued, keeps a register in the European databank. Only the details of addresses, basic training

and the number of the EMU-Pass are registered. To describe the level of competence, they use a taxonomy with five levels.

The personal data of the holder of an EMU-Pass are protected and can only be registered by the holder himself. The registry serves to allow reciprocal notices of jobs offered and wanted, as well as statistics purposes of the EMU.

The employer, who employs an employee holding an EMU-Pass in his company, is obliged to draw up a job reference in accordance with the EMU professional pass concept and to enter this as an endorsement in the EMU professional pass at the end of his employment. Such employment should last for at least six months to entitle the holder to such endorsement.

The 'Reporting Card' inserted in the EMU-Pass must be sent to the national association which issued the EMU professional pass by the holder of the EMU professional pass at the end of an employment. This serves statistical purposes and up-dating of address details. The EMU issued more than 500 EMU-Pass in the different countries. They also want to develop a EURO-job database in the future.

4.2 Validation of non formal and informal competences

If you want to promote a real mobility of workers in Europe and between the sectors on regional and national level, it is important to be able to validate acquired competences of non-formal and informal learning. This is the reason why several Member States have developed tool of validation. In the future, these tools will suppose mutual trust, a common reference framework and the use of a credit transfer system. On the European level, common principles have been adopted.¹⁵

The European Union financed common working and experimenting programmes. The Transfine-project was very important. It gathered a large partnership of different organisations (universities, VET-providers, social partners) to work together at a common objective. Pat Davies was responsible for this project and present the general principles. F.D. Danguomeau, coordinator of the VAE at the university of Grenoble, explains how the principles are applied in the French education system. Alain Kock will give another example, the project of validation of competences in Belgium (The French part of Belgium).

4.2.1 Transfer between formal, non-formal and informal education - Pat Davies

Project coordinator TRANSFINE, Executive secretary of EUCEN (European Universities Continuing Education Network)¹⁶

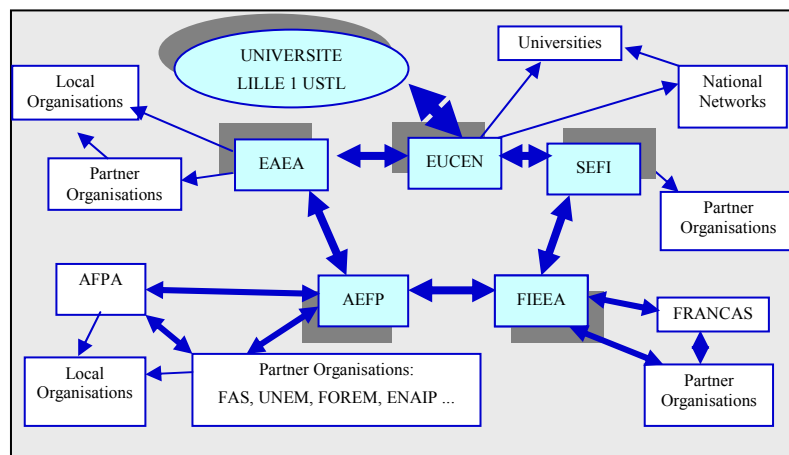
Transfine, financed by the Joint Action Programme, wanted to construct bridges between qualifications: a system of transfer and accumulation of training credits for lifelong learning. They designed and proposed to the European Commission a European framework for recognition of formal and informal learning. The project included three phases. In the first phase, they made a

¹⁵ The project was debated in May 2004 and adopted in Maastricht

¹⁶ www.transfine.net

review of all EU and national initiatives. Transfine decided not to start from zero. They were looking at all the existing European projects. In the second phase they made case studies and feasibility studies in 5 countries (Estonia, France, Italy, Norway and the UK). France, the UK and Norway have at the moment the best systems. Italy and Estonia have just been starting with the development of a system. The purpose of this second phase was to describe what is happening at the moment and to investigate the possibilities of a common European framework. In the third phase they made a proposal to the European Commission. When we started with this project, we used the term “recognition”. We did this very consciously. We wanted to propose a broad and open vision on the problem. Now, the Commission speaks about “validation”.

ORGANISATION OF THE NETWORK PARTNERSHIP



4.2.1.1 Purposes of the project

The project has three general purposes:

- mapping and matching of skills, knowledge and competences to formal education qualifications, work requirements and personal aspirations,
- research on the entry to and the progression in training programmes,

- research on the continuity and training programmes or on the mobility (geographic, between sectors...).

NGO's are important players in the supply of formal and informal learning processes. Their staff, their clients and their volunteers work all together to create learning opportunities for many lot of persons and they offer many possibilities on the informal level.

A European framework is important, but we have to respect the diversity. It is necessary to work at first at national level, in order to clarify objectives and to adopt a common language. Evaluation, accreditation, validation, recognition...are terms with a different meaning in different languages, and all these terms are translated differently. Each country has also a local development cycle. There is a need for flexibility. The European system cannot be heavy and bureaucratic.

4.2.1.2 Questions and tensions

By constructing a European framework, we struggle with some questions

- Should we focus on student workload (cf. higher education) or on learning outcomes (cf. VET)?
- On competences?
- On educational standards or on employment standards? Here, there is a danger that we will develop two systems (outcome-based and time-based) of recognition and validation, which will enhance the difficulties to exchange and to compare.

There are also some other tensions

- Should we emphasize on summative or on formative assessment?
- What do we do with behavioural competences and personality competences (soft skills)?
- With voluntary and professional values?
- Do we have to recognize the competences of volunteers (for instance in NGO's)?
- Do we have to involve the candidate in the assessment process?

- Who will be the owner of the accreditation process?
- Will we work bottom-up or top-down?
- How flexible can we work?

4.2.1.3 Proposal

Therefore, Transfine made a proposal. This proposal is the base of the actual text of the European Commission. Transfine proposed to develop on short to medium term a methodological architecture with six topics: a set of principles, a set of tools, a shared language, a system of quality assurance, co-operation between actors in different sectors and arrangements for sharing experience. On longer term, Europe can develop a structural framework.

A set of principles

This has to be a light and developmental set, not a heavy and bureaucratic system. It is a comprehensive common framework with flexible implementation, focussed on learning outcomes, not on teaching inputs. The system must be open to all and voluntary. It has to be learner centred, located in a personal development plan. The learner also needs a framework for advice, guidance and support. Self awareness, peer to peer counselling and post assessment guidance are important principles in this process.

A set of tools

- Transfine did not create new tools, but started from tools, which already exist.
- For instance, ECTS at the universities. This tool works very good. It is more than an exchange of credits, there is also an information package, a learning agreement and the transcript of records. How can we use this tool to validate formal and informal learning?
- Transparency tools (a system of five levels, the Europass portfolio: Euro CV, diploma/certificate supplements, mobilipass, the European Language Portfolio, the Computer Driving Licence...). In the report, we describe the pros and the contras of all these tools.

Other elements

- a shared language;
- quality assurance;
- meeting places (zones of mutual trust, projects...).

On longer term a structural framework of reference levels should be made. The qualifications have to be mapped on the framework. Curricula and qualifications have to be expressed in terms of credits. We have to create new meeting places. This could be new institutions, new accreditation centres and new advice and guidance centres. The funding of the system will be very important. It has to be a key to encourage the participation of persons, who are untouched by the system. Personal development is an individual right. There is an enormous task for the marketing and the dissemination of these principles. Europe, national states, all the stakeholders, NGO's have to play their role in this process.

4.2.1.4 Refine¹⁷

After all Ms. Davies mentions that she is the co-ordinator of a new project, REFINE. This project is a joint action project for recognising formal, informal and non-formal education. It is the aim to test the tools for a European methodological framework for recognition of non-formal and informal learning. The project wants to foster trans-national and trans-sectoral collaboration and to build understanding of and confidence in practices and in the involved procedures.

¹⁷ REcognising Formal, Informal and Non-formal Education

4.2.2 Validation of acquired experiences in France - F.D. Dangoumau

*Coordinator of DAVA (Dispositif académique des
Validation des Acquis) in Grenoble*

F.D. Dangoumau gives us an example of good practice. She explains the system of validation of acquired experiences in France.

4.2.2.1 The French law

In France, they have more than ten years of experience. The French system is based on the French law of June 20, 1992, which permitted to recognize professional experience in the educational system. The new law of January 17, 2002 (known as the law of social modernization) broadened the right to validate the acquired experiences. You can get entry to a diploma on the pure base of experience. The law gives the permission to every individual person, who has developed competences, knowledge and aptitudes in accordance to a title or a diploma, to obtain this diploma or a part of it. This right is applicable to every person, who is engaged in the active life at least for three years. This active life includes not only professional experiences but also activities as volunteer. The system covers thus paid, unpaid and voluntary work. The candidate can benefit of a validation leave of 24 hours and of personal guidance. Periods of apprenticeship or participation on a system of alternating learning at a school can be subtracted from the asked period of three years. The three years don't have to be achieved in succession. The candidate can accumulate this period during his whole career.

4.2.2.2 The VAE (Validation of acquired experiences)

The French system validates not only professional competences, but also competences, which are acquired in voluntary work. The system can deliver different certifications: a technical or vocational diploma (on secondary and on higher level), a professional title or a certificate of qualification. These are certificates, which are issued by different professional branches. All the certifications are

written down in a national register of certifications. This national register contains a description of all the recognised professions, diplomas, certifications and titles in France. A separate commission, established by the law of 2002, develops this register. The commission makes an analysis of all the titles, certifications and diploma in France, in order to have the opportunity to compare them on national and international level.

The VAE (Validation des Acquis de l'expérience) is a way of validation, it is not an exam. The jury has to validate achievements; they do not have to penalise faults. This is quite innovative and it is a revolution in education and certification. The VAE validates purely on the base of experiences.

4.2.2.3 Procedure

The candidate has to make a dossier. This dossier describes the acquired experiences. It is composed of two different parts: a request of admissibility and a description of the activities in accordance with the diploma. The drafting of the dossier is a complex but formative activity. It often happens that the candidate gets a better idea of his competences while he is completing his dossier. The candidate can get methodological assistance. This assistance, individual or in-group, facilitates the drafting work and prepares the candidate for the jury. At last, the candidate has an interview with the jury. This is not an exam or a test, but a conversation.

The system makes a difference between reception, guidance and certification. The regions have to establish contact-points, which give information, orientation and guidance. The Ministry of education has been withdrawing from the guidance. The law provides market-oriented guidance. It has to be paid. A candidate can ask his company to pay his guidance or recognized equivalent bodies fund it. This often gives some problems. Some employees are afraid to ask it because they fear for failure. These centres do not deliver diplomas and certifications. That is a case for the certifying bodies.

For ethical reasons, there is a strict distinction between the information and the certification services. The jury is independent of the guidance. It is composed of persons of the education department, of the professional sectors and of teachers and trainers. They have a very difficult and complex job. The jury has to link the activities of the candidate with the reference framework of certifications.

Mrs. Dangoumau gives also some examples of the possibilities of the VAE. For instance: Mrs. X works since 3 years in a crèche. She has no diploma. She wants to get a certificate. She can make an application to the VAE.

She finishes with some statistic data. There is an increasing demand. In 2003, they gave information to 71217 persons. 15346 were guided, 15782 dossiers were presented and 160 dossiers were dismissed. They delivered 6958 (49,1%) diplomas and 5405 (38,1%) partial certifications. 77,34% of the candidates were at work. 19,64% were searching for a job. 3,02% were inactive.

4.2.3 The development of a system to validate professional competences in the French-speaking part of Belgium - Alain Kock

Responsible for the "Consortium des competences" for the French Community, the Walloon Region and Brussels

4.2.3.1 Why a mechanism for the evaluation of competences? Which was our situation at the beginning?

The reason why they work at the validation of competences is that there is no validation of acquired experiences at the moment. You can only get diplomas and certificates in the official institutes of education and training. For practical and informal training, there does not even exist an official system. The new system will permit at a new high official body to deliver diplomas and certifications.

An additional difficulty in Belgium is that these matters are situated on different levels of authority. Therefore, the French community, the Walloon Region and the Brussels region had to negotiate. They funded their system on the experiences in the UK Europass and the Work in Progress

and in France. In June 2003, the three governments involved approved a decree on the validation of competences. There is also, on the national level, a right to validate competences. This is only one sentence in an enabling legislation but it isn't really implemented at the moment. This right is based on two pillars. The first pillar is the management of competences and skills by the public services of employment. It has the objective to describe the profile of the different professions as a public standard. The second pillar is the validation, which has the objective to make someone's competences visible. Both objectives are complimentary.

The new system of validation has the ambition to be significant for workers and for public and private organisations. The objectives are to record the competences of the workers and to give them a practical value. These validated competences can give access to training, to orientation and to recruitment. The right to validate competences is an individual right. It cannot be imposed by the employers or by the unemployment services. At the moment, the system is still under construction.

4.2.3.2 Organisation

The three governments, the social partners and the public made a new structure with a consultative commission and a consortium. This consortium is composed of five public services for adult training, training of employees and training in SME's.

The structure is meant for employed and unemployed persons, older than 18. They can belong to the public or private sector. They have some rights and guarantees: it is an individual request; it is free of charge; there is a free choice of the validation centre; the dossiers are treated confidentially; there is a possibility of appeal.

The validation will be recognised by the three communities involved. It will give access to the recognised training-centres and to scholar certifications. It can also give access to a job.

The consortium will recognize centres of validation. This could be public or private operators. These operators have to respect the strategic orientations. There will be an initial and yearly recurring audit to assure the quality (qualified personal, location, material

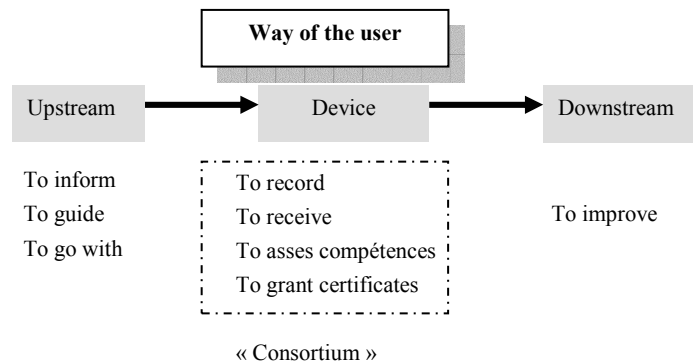
equipment). They will also establish an external accreditation organism.

The system will not use the methodology of a dossier. They will organise a small test and when the candidate succeeds in this test, the jury partners will validate his competences. Guidance is provided.

4.2.3.3 State of affairs

At the moment, the system has a legal, regulatory and methodological base. The other instruments have to be established in the near future. The social partners have to formulate the general objectives and to validate the references. They recognise the validation centres, participate at the jury and give each year advice on the report of activities. The system is piloted by public services but will be open for private providers (social partners). This will have as effect that the titles or competences could be valorised in their own institutes.

Then which is the way which will be traversed by the user?



4.3 Validation, common reference framework, factors of social cohesion? Debate with the social partners

At the end of the first two issues, we asked the question on which conditions a common reference framework for VET and the validation of non formal and informal competences could improve citizenship and social cohesion. To answer on this question, Chris Serroyen gave a vision of the trade unions. Gregor Saladin replaced the German member of UNICE, who was unable to attend for professional reasons. The point of view of the members of EUNEC was presented by Pranas Gudynas of Lithuania and Jacques Perquy, general secretary of EUNEC and general administrator of the Vlor. The participants of the conference were able to put their questions on paper. Marc Durando, the general reporter, presented a synthesis of these questions. Finally, every council received a questionnaire to take position on the statements prepared at the seminar in Riga.

4.3.1 The vision of the Trade Unions - Chris Serroyen

Counsellor of the study centre of the ACV (Trade-Union - Belgium)

The Trade Unions are happy with the spectacular progress that was made in Belgium and in Europe with report to recognition and validation. A few years ago, Belgium had serious arrears in comparison with the other countries. But, as Alain Cock has said, we are clearing away these arrears. On international level, the OECD and the World Bank inspire us. Their reports offer interesting material to make the ideas real. However, the Trade Unions are a little bit worried about the final result of this process. The proposals of the European council are moving away from the declaration of Copenhagen. For instance: we don't find the concept 'individual right' in the final texts.

4.3.1.1 Recognition and validation of informal and non-formal learning

The Trade Unions are very happy with the evolution towards recognition of competences. They require that the results of this process should be the property of the individual person. The validation of informal and non-formal learning is a necessary condition to enhance social cohesion and to give chances at semi- and unskilled workers. However, it is not a sufficient condition. The examples of different countries are proving this. Other conditions have to be met.

We have to create the necessary tools. At first, we have to focus on the persons without official certificates and qualifications. For them, we have to create a second track of validation. We may not forget that these dossiers are very complex for unskilled workers. It is very important to provide lifelong guidance and advice. On this theme, we dispose of excellent European directives. What do we do with failures? What do we do with partial failure, or to say it more positive, with partial success? We have to offer new easily accessible possibilities. For low- and unskilled workers, the recognition may not refer to exams. The systems must be easily accessible for everyone.

This process is not an objective on itself. It has to be useful for the individual workers. The certificates must give them benefits: access to new training possibilities or access to a job. It must permit individuals to shorten the duration of their training and to move up on a higher level. These are essential conditions to improve social cohesion by the recognition and the validation of competences.

4.3.1.2 The Common Reference Framework

With regard to the common reference framework, C. Serroyen is quite sceptical. At the moment, many countries even don't have a national framework. It is already very difficult to create such a framework on the regional and national level. It is necessary to create realistic expectations. There are huge problems of exchangeability. However, Europe can give us some inspiration.

The proposal looks very complex (with vertical and horizontal sublevels) and is clearly based on the existing levels on education. Is this the right approach? Are the teaching institutes able to reach these levels? Do they have the means? It will be necessary to increase substantially the investments in education and training. This problem was stressed too little in Lisbon. For research and development, the Council formulated the objective of 3 % of the GNP. For vocational education and training, they only gave the Member States a recommendation to increase the expenditures in VET, on the condition that their budget allows it. The quality of the vocational education and training has to be assured and this will cost money.

4.3.2 The Lithuanian point of view - Pranas Gudynas

Educational Development Centre – Lithuania

4.3.2.1 European citizenship

European Union citizenship confers special rights: freedom to move and take up residence; the right to vote in local elections; diplomatic and consular protection; the right of petition and appeal to the European Ombudsman; the right to work in nearly any position anywhere in the Union. The last-mentioned right is fundamental. Other rights depend on it.

The free movement of labour is most difficult to achieve. The problem is the lack of effective mechanisms to implement this right. Without the European right to work, the European Union citizenship would be only declaration. The free movement of labour is crucial for the social cohesion in the Union.

4.3.2.2 The international conference in Vilnius

The international conference ‘Transparency and recognition of qualifications: challenges and new Member States’ was held in Vilnius, 14-15th October 2004. It was organized by “Leonardo da Vinci” program. The plenary report “50 Years of European Efforts in the Field of Transparency of Qualifications” was made by M. Richonnier, director, DG Education and Culture, European Commission. The participants were governmental and non

governmental institutions, private companies and 30 guests from EU and new Member States. There were discussions on the following issues: the most effective ways for new Member States to join European efforts in the field of free movement of labour; the major elements of the European strategy of transparency and recognition oriented towards 2010 (and beyond); the involvement of social partners into the process of decision making; employing voluntary, bottom up approach.

4.3.2.3 The efforts of Lithuania

Lithuania made some efforts to develop a national qualification system. They developed:

- a National Qualification Framework,
- qualification standards (occupational, descriptive),
- qualification procedures and institutions.

They also want to implement Europass, so they are creating:

- a National Europass Centre (responsible for coordination, training, information dissemination, Europass information system),
- a Europass Diploma Supplement for higher education from year 2005 (responsibility of universities),
- a Europass Diploma Supplement for VET from year 2005 or 2006 (at the first stage responsibility of MES),
- a European language portfolio (pilot project).

4.3.2.4 The social partners

The social partners expressed following opinions. The efforts of the EU in the field of transparency and recognition of VET qualifications are a big challenge and good opportunity for Lithuania. We need the common reference framework for VET as fast as possible. From the existing experience of private companies, the EURES network, Practice and other projects, we can state that validation of formal and informal competences will improve the chances of those citizens of Lithuania, who want to work in other EU countries. It also will help to improve the quality

of VET in Lithuania. We also need a flexible and descriptive common reference framework (fitting different traditions in different EU countries, not bureaucratic, not regulatory). The Common reference framework has to be oriented into competence based qualifications. The big threat is that procedures will be too bureaucratic and will last too long (4 months and longer). A serious problem is the recognition of non-formal and informal acquired qualifications. Existing standards are more training standards than qualification standards. We need more EU assistance in this field. Other serious problems are the unsatisfactory foreign language and ICT skills of qualified workers in Lithuania. These are obstacles for free movement of Lithuanian workers.

4.3.3 The vision of the education field - Jacques Perquy

*General Administrator of the Vlaamse Onderwijsraad
(B), General Secretary of EUNEC*

4.3.3.1 Equality and equity

J. Perquy starts with the problem of equality and equity. The OECD gives a good and useful definition of these two words. The word equality has been too often used interchangeably with the word equity, yet they actually mean two distinct things. Equity is about fairness and justice, rather than about providing the same service to everyone. In other words, equity is about access to equal opportunity, i.e., about varying provision of the service to meet different needs. This implies that some unequal treatments can be justified provided the criteria for discrimination and intended outcomes are equitable. The term equity is distinguished from equality: while equality is about treating all individuals the same, equity is about treating individuals fairly by taking differences into account. These definitions are important for the emphasis we are laying concerning transparency.

4.3.3.2 The position of the Vlor

The Vlor tries to give advice to the Flemish minister of Education on each important document of the European Commission. We advised on Europass, on the common principles of quality and on

the principles of validation of informal and non-formal learning. Globally the Vlor gave positive advice on the European developments in VET, because these evolutions give new impulses to the local education and training system. For instance, we are favourable to the flexibilisation of education systems, to the recognition of non-formal and informal competences and even to the open method of coordination, because this method gives a lot of freedom to the Member States.

Nevertheless, J. Perquy wants to make some critical reflections. We speak too easily about vocational education and vocational training as one issue. We forget that vocational education nearly always belongs to the compulsory education. For instance, modularisation is quite more difficult to organize in compulsory education than in adult education. Education has more tasks than only to provide vocational training. What is the contribution of the general education in this process?

A next critical remark, and this is always forgotten, even in this conference, is the question of the respective responsibility. What is responsibility of the different actors (the government, the sectors, commercial partners) in the development of the system? Today, we heard for instance the example of France, where the government set up a system of validation. We also were informed about the system of the European Metal Union. Will every Member State or every sector develop its own system? J. Perquy doesn't think that this is a good evolution into more transparency.

It is also important to point at the risks of the commercialisation of validation. For instance, the European Computer Drivers Licence was entrusted with a commercial company, which resulted in the fact that you have to pay to get it. So, it's not all roses there.

4.3.3.3 The recognition of non-formal and informal learning

It is very positive that Europe does not impose an own system, but aims at quality standards for the respective national systems. They also presume a reference framework of qualifications. This directive will improve our system, because we have to develop a

framework of qualifications, across the system of education and training, which should also be recognised by the labour market.

Will the recognition of non-formal and informal learning not undermine or erode the existing educational system? The Vlor thinks that the validation of competences should be extended to formal learning too. Students also acquire many competences in a formal system of education, so they should be able to validate these competences.

Fortunately, the European Commission involved the social partners in this process. However, the Vlor states that the providers of education and training are hardly involved in the development of the new systems. Our government does not organize education any more, so it is evident that the providers of education and training have a stake in this process.

4.3.3.4 The common reference framework of qualifications

Are the eight levels detailed enough to guarantee the entry from the bottom up? It is also necessary that the European common reference framework should include all the levels of education, even the higher education. We hope that, next year on the conference of Bergen, the universities will not be obstructive to this framework and to the exchange of credits. The Vlor thinks that even the initial education and the general education should be involved in this framework. J. Perquy pleads, just as Pat Davies, for the development of a common language, a common framework of concepts. Are we sure that we mean the same thing when we use words as qualifications, certificates, validation, recognition...?

4.3.4 The vision of the employers - Gregor Saladin

Director of the Swiss Metal-Union, Project manager of the EMU-pass (European Metal Union)

We cannot stop the globalisation. We must look with an open view to these evolutions. The entrepreneurs of little enterprises often resist to such innovations. For instance, in Austria, the employers said that they employees do not go abroad, so the EMU-pass is not necessary. Nevertheless, it is very useful and necessary to compare competences. It is a question of competitiveness in a flexible market. In the future, it will not be the matter to compare titles and diplomas but we have to compare competences and skills. We need a simple system to compare quality.

4.4 Synthesis of the reactions of the participants on the common references framework and the validation of competences

The development of a common reference framework for VET	
Green	
The development of a common reference framework on national level will permit the transferability between academic and alternative learning pathways. It is important to let know at the society all the possible learning pathways for young persons.	MT
We need rapidly a common reference framework for VET, because we are developing a new national system of qualifications.	LT
It is impossible to have a transparency of a certificate without a common European framework of competences. It will be necessary to educate teachers and trainers in the matter of competences. A common framework does not mean uniformity. Importance of the notions: zones of mutual trust It is necessary to valorise VET. Mobility is a means and not an objective on itself. Importance of the flexibility in VET.	B (fr)
We have to keep space for local freedom.	
It is a real need for citizens and a must for the application of human rights such as mobility and the equality of chances. It can enhance the motivation and the participation in VET. It can enhance the quality of VET.	RO
It permits a better mutual comprehension between systems of qualification.	

It permits to develop individual pathways, to evaluate pupils on the base of competences, to give qualifications and certificates and to compare levels of competences. It permits to emphasize on the common needs at the European and the national level.	RO
Concerning the reference levels, is it always necessary to describe them on national level. Isn't it preferable to describe them on a regional and European level?	EE
Red	
It is necessary to add a ninth level for a professional baccalaureate.	EE
The ECTS system is not working as well as we think. There are differences on the level of unities between universities. This problem will be even much more important concerning ECVET.	G,
The common reference framework with eight levels is derived from a scholar system and does not take in account the competences, acquired at the workplace.	B (nl)
Orange	
How can we consolidate the role of the public power and the social partners in the European disposal?	
Shouldn't we broaden the actual framework of VET to the general and the art education?	
Is higher education supposed to integrate the common reference framework and the ECVET-system?	
More flexible pathways in VET ask more competences and professionalization of the trainers. Nowadays, we don't give enough attention at lifelong guidance.	
The difference between level 3 and level 4 is not clear. We lack information about the horizontal and vertical dimension in the framework.	
We have to put the accent on learning outcomes, but what process has to be developed?	
Is it possible to integrate the EMU-pass in the Europass?	

The framework will be successful if everybody accepts it, if there is a balance between the needs and the expectations, if it is obligatory and if all the actors have the necessary competences.	
Are the simple, legible and few reference levels not contradictory with the complexity in the field (particularly in the field of validation)? It is necessary that we add at level 1 and 2 competences in ICT?	
A common approach will be a useful model, but it may not become obligatory. There is a contradiction between higher education and VET.	UK

The validation of non-formal and informal competences	
Green	
Important for the society Necessity to promote these instruments	B (fr)
We have to insist on the possibility to acquire competences via volunteer work.	MT,
The French government has played a decisive role in the validation.	B (nl)
Red	
Is it right that an individual has to pay to obtain the validation of his informal competences and why?	
Orange	
How can we create a legislative common framework to validate competences? How can we respect the diversity of local aspects when we create common systems?	RO
How can we create simple and transparent procedures and tools without neglecting the complexity and the diversity of situations, values and traditions? What does the quality assurance measure in the methodology of validation?	RO

4.5 Short summary of the reactions of the participants - Marc Durando

Director of development at the “Pôle Universitaire Européen de Lorraine – Metz – Nancy”.

General reporter of this conference

M. Durando is the general reporter of the conference and he tried to give a short summary of what has been happening during the conference. It was not so easy to do this job. In two days, we have heard eleven speakers and the audience was able to give its reactions by filling in some papers with questions and reactions. Tomorrow morning, M. Durando will gather the reactions and the headlines of the conference in his general report.

Yesterday we heard some interesting things about the process of Copenhagen. During the lectures of Bjornavold and Lenarduzzi, they confronted us with the two aspects of this process.

The first aspect is a rather technical one. The European Union is preparing many of tools to get a more transparent system of qualifications. The Union is designing the Europass as a model for transparency. Furthermore, the European Union is developing common reference frameworks on qualifications, quality systems, guidance and principles of recognition of non-formal and informal learning.

At the other hand, Lenarduzzi showed us how important this process could be to enhance the social cohesion in Europe. It is the human side of this process. The European social model is probably in danger. How can we combine the principles of the European social system with the need of competitiveness? The achievement of a European citizenship is one of the most important projects of the future. This is not a matter of technical details, but it is a matter of persuasion and belief.

This morning we got a lot of information. The audience could give some reactions and ask some questions on paper. M. Durando gave a short summary of the questions on these little papers:

- Should we create national or European systems?
- Is it possible to create more transparency and to respect the national traditions?
- Is this not a contradiction?
- Should we create one or more systems to validate credits?
- What will be the value of a diploma in the future?
- Will schools come under pressure?
- What is the parallel between the level of education and the level of competence? Who knows what is happening at the moment?
- What is the relevance of the working groups?
- What would be the role of the teachers and the trainers in this process?
- Who will take care of the communication towards the world of education?
- Will more transparency enhance social cohesion?
- How can we clarify the debate on equality and equity?

4.6 Europass, the European tool of transparency of qualifications

4.6.1 Europass, the single framework for the transparency of qualifications and competences - Carlo Scatoli

Policy developer – project manager, European Commission EAC B 1 Unit 1 Development of vocational training policy

The Europass decision establishes a transparency framework in the form of a portfolio of documents, with a common Europass logo. It will help to get better communication on qualifications and competences when European citizens apply for a job or a learning opportunity. The Europass is not a recognition of qualifications and certificates. At the moment, Europass brings together five documents established at European level, but it is open to further tools.

4.6.1.1 The Diploma supplement (1996)

This supplement can be delivered together with a higher education diploma. It describes the qualifications acquired by the holder of that diploma. It is a personal document. The supplement is promoted through the Bologna process and is legally enforced in some countries.

4.6.1.2 The Certificate supplement (2003)

This document is the result of a consultation between the Commission and the Member States. The Member States have agreed to use a common document for this certificate. This supplement will be delivered together with a vocational training certificate. It describes the competences and the qualifications acquired by any holder of this certificate. Thus, in contrast to the diploma supplement, the certificate supplement is not a personal document.

4.6.1.3 The European Language Portfolio (1998)

The European Language Portfolio helps citizens to describe effectively their language skills and their development. The European Commission was developing this tool and also takes care of the promotion. It is making use of the Common Reference Framework for Languages, a system recognised by the European Council. The citizens complete it themselves (self-evaluation).

4.6.1.4 The European CV (2002)

The European CV helps citizens to complete a CV highlighting their competences. It provides citizens with the opportunity to present in a clear and comprehensive way information on all their qualifications and competences. The common template supports communication in mobility situations. Guidelines and examples are provided. It has been developed because of a request from the council in Lisbon.

The Europass-CV includes categories for the presentation of: information on personal matters, language proficiency, work experience and educational and training attainments; additional competences held by the individual, emphasising technical, organisational, artistic and social skills; additional information which might be added to the CV in the form of one or more annexes.

4.6.1.5 Europass-training (mobility) (2000)

This Europass-training records periods of work-linked mobility – satisfying certain criteria – achieved by students or trainees. It is delivered to them by the organization sending them on the mobility experience. It is completed and ratified by both the sending and the host organisation.

4.6.1.6 The new-Europass (2005)

These five documents are the content of the ‘new’ Europass-portfolio that soon will be approved by the Council and the Parliament. Europass wants to be an open system. The holder can

add some more documents to his portfolio. It is also possible that in the future other official certificates could be created.

The Europass has a legal basis. In 2003 the commission did a proposal. This proposal got a favourable opinion of the Committee of Regions and the European Economic and Social committee (April 2004). The European Parliament had a first favourable reading with minor amendments on April the 21st 2004. At the end of October the Council will take a common position. The Europass was already proposed on the Council of May 2004, but it was not possible to get an agreement, because of technical reasons. With the enlargement of the Union, the document had to be translated into the new official languages. In principle, the decision should be taken in January 2005. Europass will become valid in March 2005 and is expected to become operational in April-May 2005.¹⁸

The Europass provides added value. Bringing the transparency documents into a single framework with one logo, coordinated by a single body, will result in easier access, in a stronger communication impact, in a more effective management and in a coherent strategy for the transparency of competences and qualifications.

The Europass portal will provide information on the Europass documents. It will deliver an interactive service, organised according to the different nature of documents: issued documents (diploma supplement, Europass mobility), certificate supplement and documents completed by citizens (CV, portfolio of languages).

The Europass portfolio folder is a typographic product to be issued or a printout from the portal. This paper documents are in principle the printed version of the electronic documents. Persons, who don't have access to the internet, can ask for these documents at the National Europass Centre.

¹⁸ The Europass was approved end December and was launched officially on 31 January and 1 February 2005 in Luxembourg.

In each country a single body shall carry out or coordinate all Europass related activities (the National Europass Centre). The tasks of these centres are the promotion of the Europass, the management of the documents and the networking at national and European level.

4.6.2 Europass, a contribution to transparency - Robert Loop

Le Forem – Belgium, Member of the Copenhagen coordination group

Is Europass really the instrument of transparency?

Europass is a significant contribution to transparency, but it is important to situate Europass in the whole of the Copenhagen process. The objective of the Copenhagen process is to create more trust by offering more transparency. The partners in this process are the labour market, the providers of work, education and training and the citizens. We have to develop mutual trust inside each category of partners and between these three partners. The common reference framework of qualifications and competences consist of seven points.

4.6.2.1 Europass

C. Scatoli has explained the Europass, therefore R. Loop will not go over it again. But, the Copenhagen process has developed other important instruments, which could be used to enhance the quality of the Europass.

4.6.2.2 Enhance the quality of the instruments and the achievements

The working group in charge of quality, has developed a guide for self-evaluation. They made an evaluation of the output and a set of indicators on the systems of education and training. Their report was finalised at the end of 2003. This was followed by a first modest peer review in 2004. The question is how we can make a link between this working group on quality and the Europass. How can the improvement of quality have an influence on the instruments in the Europass?

4.6.2.3 Common reference levels

This is the cornerstone of the common framework. The council will mention this common reference framework of qualifications in its Maastricht communiqué in December 2004. The data of these levels, which we have heard this morning, are still hypothetical. The report of experts (2004) will be proposed at the Member States in 2005 and it will come into use in 2006. It is a very complex matter, but is very important that each Member State starts with the thought process so that there can be an input of both sides. The answer on this essential question will enhance the quality of the Europass in the future.

4.6.2.4 Credit transfer system

M. Aribaud will explain this tool later in this conference. In 2004, there was a report of experts. At the end of 2005 there will be a proposal for the Member States. It will come in use progressively and voluntarily in 2006. This time schedule is conditional, because it will be necessary to give the providers time to adapt at this new system.

4.6.2.5 Lifelong guidance

Lifelong learning guidance is another a working group. We expect a guide and a manual in 2005. Lifelong learning guidance is not only information, not only orientation and not only coaching. These three elements are essential and they also play an important role in the development of the quality of the Europass.

4.6.2.6 Validation of formal and informal learning

This validation will have an influence on the development of the reference framework. It will play its role in the reflection on the reference levels. What is the value of a credit unit? Which definition will we use for these credit units?

4.6.2.7 Upgrading of sectoral experiences

This point is recently developed and was the issue of a conference in The Hague. It deals with the valorisation of sectoral experiments, which could contribute to the content of the Europass.

4.6.2.8 Conclusion

One of the key points of the implementation of the Europass is to develop the Europass near to the citizens. As M. Durando said, it is all well and good to discuss the development of tools and instruments of transparency here but in the end it is the citizens who have to use them. Every citizen has to feel the benefit. The tools have to be their property. The access to the information, real guidance to lifelong learning and close coaching are very important in this context. This is not only a European problem; it should be a challenge for all Member States. R. Loop emphasises that guidance should take place close to the individuals, particularly the low-skilled and those who have little experience with these new European tools.

4.6.3 Questions of participants

Is the Europass-database safe and can it be controlled?

C. Scatoli: Europass is not a database. There is a portal site, where people can get information and where they can download the documents, but there is no central database. On the national level, a database can be developed, but this is the responsibility of the Member States. They are responsible for the security of these data. This is closely linked with the laws on the protection of privacy. There is no problem therefore on the European level, because Europass does not keep data.

The European Language Portfolio is a tool for citizens to fill in themselves. What is the use of such self-evaluation?

C. Scatoli: It has the same function as a CV, it records the competences of the person in question, but in this case on a linguistic level.

We have many foreigners in Luxembourg who think they know a language. I think that the certification of the language competence must be done by someone, who is really fluent in that language. So we need a language portfolio with different levels of competence and knowledge, but the levels have to be certified by authorised persons. (Mr. Elsen)

C. Scatoli: The European Language Portfolio does not certify the language competence. It is an instrument of communication for the citizen. With this tool, he can refer to the common framework, which is held by the European Council. In this way, the citizen can assess his language capacities. For instance, what is an average level? Are you able to hold a telephone conversation in a foreign language? Can you communicate in a professional context? Are you able to write in a foreign language? The language portfolio is not intended to certify language competences. It is a tool for communication; we can consider it as a specialised section in the European CV. It is possible that, in future, tools of language certification, with on-line tests, will be developed and will be added at the Europass. However, at this moment, these tools don't exist.

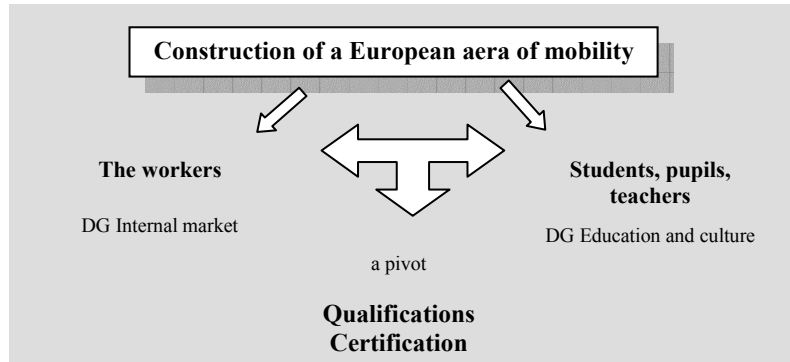
4.7 The European credit transfer system for VET

4.7.1 Presentation of system ECVET - Michel Aribaud

*European Commission – DG Education and Culture –
Unité B1 – Development of vocational training*

4.7.1.1 Context

The Copenhagen declaration set the priority of developing a credit transfer system for VET.



At the moment, this project is still being developed. In higher education, there is already a system of credit transfers (ECTS). We can learn a lot from the development of this system, but we have to take into account the specific characteristics of vocational education and training. This project is more than a transcription of the existing credit system in higher education. It is based on the research for original solutions, adapted at VET. A group of experts, the social partners and CEDEFOP are exploring possible options for the design and the development of a credit transfer system, compatible with specificities of vocational education and training.

We have to see this project as part of the development of a European communitarian space intended to increase mobility. Mobility is the core concept in this project. This mobility includes workers, pupils, students, teachers and trainers. Since the seventies, Europe is working on a common labour market. There were different emphasises during the years: equivalence (70-ies),

correspondence (80-ies), transparency (90-ies) and the construction of a European reference framework (since 1999).

Since Bologna (1999), Europe is working on a common space of education and training. A first axis runs from Lisbon (2000) to Barcelona (2002). Europe has been developing a programme with 13 objectives to modernize the education systems. Key concepts are the exchange of good practice and the development of communitarian policies on education and training. The second axis runs from Bruges (2001), over Copenhagen (2002) to Maastricht (2004). This process is intended to enhance the quality of vocational education and training and to answer some of the challenge of the knowledge society. These two axes come together in the validation and the recognition of qualifications and certificates. They must lead to more lifelong learning of European citizens. All citizens, young persons and adults, have to be involved in this process.

This European cooperation has lead to a harmonisation of the procedures (The directive on the recognition of professional qualifications) and to the construction of new instruments of transparency (ECTS; ECVET; a common reference framework of qualifications; common principles for lifelong learning, lifelong guidance, quality assurance and the validation and recognition of non-formal and informal learning; a European CV; a diploma supplement; a certificate supplement; the work on correspondence; the Europass).

Thus, ECVET must be considered part of this whole process. ECVET is a priority in the Copenhagen process. The working groups of ECVET have a double task. On the one hand, they have to orientate the work. They have to explore the possible options of the design and the development of a ECVET-system. On the other hand, they have to make proposals to put the system into operation. The working groups are not working in an ivory tower. They have to watch over the applicability of the concepts. The major obstacle is the extreme diversity of systems of VET in Europe.

4.7.1.2 Aim

The overall aim of ECVET is to contribute concretely to lifelong learning. ECVET should facilitate on the one hand, mobility of trainees within their individual VET pathway and between different national systems, and encourage and promote, on the other hand, individual geographic and professional mobility. ECVET should also include in its principles and organisation all formal, non-formal and informal training, education and learning processes. Therefore, it should support individual development and employability.

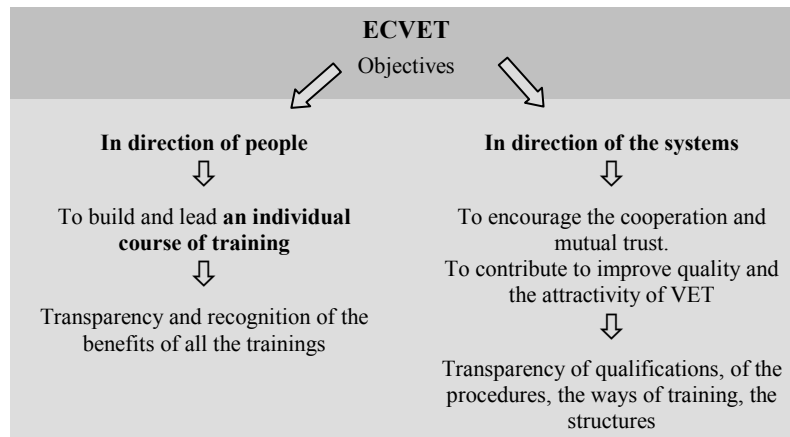
4.7.1.3 Objectives

This aim can be broken down into two objectives:

- In the perspective of allowing everyone to create and follow individual learning pathways, ECVET improves transparency and recognition of learning outcomes (be they acquired through formal, non-formal or informal learning activities), with a view to their accumulation and transfer within and between various VET systems.
- In the perspective of management of VET systems, ECVET should, through development of mutual trust between the stakeholders of national VET systems, encourage cooperation between respective authorities, education and training providers, teachers, trainers and learners, within and beyond national frontiers. ECVET should thus contribute to the quality and attractiveness of VET systems.

ECVET requires and promotes transparency of qualifications, procedures, learning processes and structures. ECVET is based on the establishment of mutual trust between VET authorities, providers in terms of assessment of the knowledge, skills and competences acquired, and the level of achievements of mobile VET learners or trainees.

4.7.1.4 Operational functions



ECVET should also allow individuals:

- to move from one national, formal VET system to another; to access the formal VET system from a non-formal learning context; to transfer learning outcomes between such systems and learning contexts. (function: TRANSFER),
- to accumulate and have valued learning outcomes along their individual learning pathway. (Function: accumulation, capitalisation, valorisation).

These two operational functions are absolutely inseparable, but the two concepts pose different technical questions. We have to find solutions for these questions, to provide users with a usable tool.

4.7.1.5 Field of application

- ECVET is designed for VET systems as a whole (formal and non-formal VET, initial and continuing VET). At first, the working group will give priority to the formal system because there, the needs and the demands are most urgent. Formal systems also allow better to control the applicability of the system.

- ECVET is aimed at learners at any level of the formal VET systems, whether their learning pathways include workplace or school-based learning experiences. This results in a problem in higher technical education, because the systems of ECTS and ECVET have to be linked. This problem is not solved at the moment.
- ECVET makes it possible to link and to combine formal and non-formal learning experiences.
- ECVET promotes access to formal VET systems on the basis of non-formal and informal learning.
- ECVET is designed to be used by any accredited VET provider.
- ECVET can be applied in a regional, national, European or even international context.

4.7.1.6 Reference framework for ECVET

ECVET rests on three essential rules, which are the pillars of its effective implementation:

The objectives a learning pathway, a training programme or elements of qualification are expressed in terms of knowledge, skills and competences to be acquired and mastered at a given reference level. They are agreed formally, assembled and organised in units. These are output-objectives. In the ECTS the credits are based on the workload of the students. ECVET has another logic than ECTS.

It is based on the convention defined at European level that a maximal number of credits is allocated to a set of units, corresponding to a complete learning pathway, VET programme or qualification. This convention makes it possible to allocate to each unit (or sets of units) a number of credit points according to the relative weight of each unit. The transfer value of each unit may thus be defined in terms of credit points.

An agreement, documented in a ‘memorandum of understanding’, links the institutions which implement a learner mobility experience based on the ECVET mechanism. This agreement formalises the zone of mutual trust between the institutions. It

comprises, on the one hand, the set of units, which are subject of learning in one VET system or the other, and, on the other hand, the characteristics of the training modules, the programme or traineeship in which the learners will take part during the mobility experience. This memorandum of understanding, along with other documents (Europass, certificate or diploma supplement) secures the transparency of the individual mobility process, the learning outcomes, and the acquisition of the corresponding knowledge, skills and competences.

4.7.1.7 Units, modules and credits

Units are concerned with observable results of a learning process. (outcomes/output).

Modules are about the means and the management of learning pathways: programme, methods, duration (process). Credits concern the exchange and the capitalisation (quantitative representation of a pathway). They are tools to communicate between various systems.

4.7.1.8 Problems and timing

We have to define the position of individuals in a learning pathway, which includes mobility. This position has to include the various ways of learning of these persons. How can we do this in a practical way? How can we develop a dialogue between the different systems?

We have to involve all the European citizens (lifelong learning) and all the ways of learning (formal, non-formal and informal).

We have to organise a system of accumulation and capitalisation of acquired competences.

We have to create a flexible system of modularisation of learning pathways.

We hope that the council of Ministers will refer to the proposed ECVET approach in the Maastricht Communiqué in December. At the end of the first trimester of 2005, we want to design an experimental framework for ECVET, which we want to implement experimentally in the second semester of 2005 and in the first

semester of 2006. At the end of the first semester 2005, there will be a formal proposal from the Commission on the ECVET system. We hope that ECVET can be implemented extendedly in the second semester of 2006.

4.7.2 Questions from participants

Pat Davies indicates a danger. We are creating two systems: ECTS and ECVET, with a different logic. This will raise new barriers. Will the universities accept ECVET?

Michel Aribaud answers that the technical aspect of ECVET and ECTS will not solve the problem of the compatibility between universities and the world of VET. It is very difficult to overcome these differences. The link between VET and universities is not easy because of the different logics they use. Professional education has outcome-based objectives. The universities are much more orientated on academic contents and schemes. The existence of two different systems and I agree with Ms. Davies, can harden the barriers. I think we will meet contradictions, which will be difficult to solve.

The representative of Portugal: I am a little bit confused by your explanation. I think that the two systems will each go its own way. I am afraid that there are two different arguments, which will drift more and more apart. I understand the need to make the things not too simplistic but I think that this approach will create great difficulties. The universities will have the space to escape from the logic of application of VET. The logic in VET is a learner-centred logic and not a teacher-centred logic. When there are no possibilities to communicate between these systems, I see big problems. What is your opinion on this matter?

Michel Aribaud: I completely share your concern. An overall applicable system will be very difficult. In the first place, ECVET has been created to enhance horizontal and geographical mobility. The working group has made the choice to start from what already exists in VET. They did not start from a total new technical, purely

theoretical system, where everything should be very easy. They started from the reality of vocational training and its objectives.

4.8 On which conditions Europass and the credit transfert system could improve citizenship and social cohesion?

Some representatives of the Councils members of EUNEC and the stakeholders give their point of view known about these two European instruments.

4.8.1 Krista Loogma

Estonian Education Forum

4.8.1.1 Introduction

Europass is an important social project. We have to approach this project from the point of view of the institutions and from the point of view of the individuals. In Estonia, and in the neighbouring countries, the Europass system is still in its infancy. Some instruments are already introduced, for instance, the diploma supplement, but till now, there was not a public discussion on Europass. Public awareness of Europass therefore is very low.

4.8.1.2 Institutional backgrounds

VET in Estonia is decentralised, weakly standardized and has a strong differentiating effect. Vocational standards and qualification system (VSQS) is the basis for curriculum design in VET and the award of qualifications. It has to create more transparency of qualifications for employers and employees. The implementation of VSQS is hard to evaluate. We don't have analyses on this domain. But, it is good that we have developed vocational standards. Institutions organise the qualifications exams and award the qualifications.

4.8.1.3 Viewpoints of the actors

In the small society, there are many other mechanisms working to identify the competences of someone: social networks, personal

relations etc. The awareness of employees of VSQS is still low. The meaning of formal certificates is different at secondary VET and at higher education levels. The meaning of informal and non-formal learning is extremely important for employability. The significance of VET for lifelong learning is secondary.

4.8.1.4 Identification and validation of informal and non-formal learning

This is one of the most important parts of Europass in Estonia. In many economic sectors the informal and the non-formal learning and previous work experiences have much more importance than formal education. Many old and young employers do not want to go back to the formal system of education. But they surely want to validate their acquired competences. The validation and the recognition of these competences have to be emphasised in the context of lifelong learning. This is very important for the European labour market, but also for the labour market in Estonia. Employers in Europe attach more interest to acquired competences than to formal qualifications.

4.8.1.5 Who can benefit from the Europass?

Highly specialized workers and professionals intending to move into the European labour market and groups of employees with a better position benefit the most from these new developments. We have to make other groups aware of the chances of Europass: hesitating learners, workers with good technical and poor general skills and young workers, intending to move into the European labour market.

4.8.2 Marc Thommès

President of the CEF (Conseil de l' Education et de la Formation – B)

The debates on Europass and on ECVET are very technical. It is not easy to find good solutions. For instance, ECTS and ECVET are two different systems. They should not be looked at together because they measure different things. We have to build bridges between these systems but they have a different basis.

M. Thommès is pleased that the Europass was presented as an open system. It is important that the Europass system has been creating some opportunities to the VET-system. It is no longer only the case of universities. We have to avoid an elitist approach of mobility in Europe, when we work out the practical conditions.

Yesterday, D. Lenarduzzi referred at the European social model. The whole of instruments, which we will develop at national and at European level, has to correspond to this European social model. Participative democracy, for instance with a role for the NGO's, has to be fostered. We also have to emphasize the role of all the social partners in this process. Their presence in the debate is decisive. M. Thommès points at the regulating role of the public government. In the discussion on equity and equality public authorities have an important place. To treat people who are unequal equally is to increase the inequality they suffer. Thus, the participative democracy and the European social model have to be integrated in this process.

What is the final objective of Europass and ECVET? Is it in the first place professional mobility? M. Thommès hopes that the European evolution essentially will lead to an amelioration of the VET systems. However, there is a danger of marketisation in VET. M. Thommès gives the example of the European Computer Drivers License. This certificate is delivered by a private organization. How is it possible that the Commission has provided money for such a private system? Who controls this system? We must be wary of these developments.

To enhance social cohesion we have to open the system to the professional sectors. Even interprofessional cooperation is inevitable. But the management of the system has to be built on an equal representation of all the social partners. This will lead to a regulation inside the existing systems.

A last remark of M. Thommès concerns the financing of these new systems. These systems will be very expensive, so VET will need the necessary means. Maybe we will have to establish priorities. Which systems will we offer? The problem of the financing will lead as a matter of course to a self-limitation of the supply.

4.8.3 Chris Serroyen

Counsellor of the study centre of the ACV (Trade-Union - Belgium)

4.8.3.1 Europass

Social cohesion is not the same as social equality but more social equality is surely a necessary condition to achieve more social cohesion. The trade unions have no fundamental objections against Europass and ECVET. The opposite is true. Europass is coming at the right moment. Many organizations are working with portfolios, so some standardization is a matter of importance. A broad cooperation will be necessary to impose one methodology. All kinds of training have to be implemented in the Europass-portfolio. Cooperation from the social partners and companies is necessary. Nevertheless, C. Serroyen wants to make some remarks.

All kinds of training have to be included in the Europass portfolio. The cooperation of companies is necessary. Companies often refuse to give certificates of competences to their employees. Other companies consider the certificates of their employees as the property of the firm. When the employee leaves the firm or is dismissed, he cannot take the certificates with him.

The Europass have to be used broadly. We have to search for as many users as possible. It is meant for young people, adults and all kinds of students. Even employers have to learn to work seriously with the system of portfolios. An electronic database can be dangerous. C. Serroyen gives an example of employers who use the Flemish database of unemployed persons to eliminate the CV's with names with a foreign origin.

C. Serroyen has the impression that the system is deduced from systems of higher education. From the position of semi and unskilled workers, the system looks very difficult. Working with portfolios is not so easy for them. Even the internet can pose some problems. We will have to provide training for basic ICT-skills. Guidance will be necessary to overcome barriers. A human approach to semi and unskilled workers is desirable. The accessibility of the system for everyone is very important.

Another problem is the guarantee of privacy. Many competences of employees can lead to difficulties with employers. Will an employee be able to adapt his personal portfolio at diverse circumstances? Will an employee be able to hide some things of his past? For example, someone is a member of a trade union. Does he have to mention it in his CV or may he suppress this information?

Trade Unions also fear that the unemployed will be obliged to place their portfolio at a public forum. Many unemployed people are ashamed of their situation and don't want to make it public.

It is also very important that we teach the workers to learn skills and competences. They have to be able to accumulate and to describe acquired competences in their career.

4.8.3.2 ECVET

The system of ECVET holds out a prospect of a reduction of the duration of the training. At the moment, there is a small participation in lifelong learning. The major reason is a lack of time and money. Lifelong learning is a serious investment of time for an individual. Flexible systems, with accumulation of credits, are welcome. A lot of confidence is needed to recognise the different outcomes. What will we do about the autonomy of the education and training institutes? There is a lack on trust of education and training in other institutions and in other non-school situations.

The Trade Unions plead for a broad interchangeability of credits. There must be a link with higher education and with general education. It is also important that students in general education, also on secondary level, learn to describe and to validate their competences.

The engagement of the social partners is crucial. How will we validate training in the workplace? How can we enhance the quality of this training? It is good that the system of ECVET gives a lot of attention to all the competences, even those which are acquired in voluntary work or on the shop-floor. But there are many practical burdens between this dream and its realisation. We

have to work on enhanced trust. However, the lack of trust is often justified. The quality of on-the-job-training often is inferior. It often is a form of cheap employment. Quality control is absolutely necessary. It is important that we avoid exams and tests for semi- and unskilled workers.

The accessibility to the system can be a problem for people from outside Europe (immigrants, asylum seekers). Will they be able to transfer their competences to credits? Inside Europe we made great progress, but can we also use the system for foreigners coming from outside Europe?

Who sets the standards of qualifications? Serroyen pleads for a crucial role of the social partners. They are better placed than the education and training institutes. They have a broader view on the needs of the sectors and the labour market. This requires a dialogue between employers and employees. In this dialogue we have to look for future needs.

4.8.4 Gregor Saladin

Director of the Swiss Metal-Union, Project manager of the EMU-pass (European Metal Union)

G. Saladin says that the cooperation between the social partners will be very important for the success of the new European tools. Europass is very interesting for the mobility of young workers in Europe. It is very important that we don't put too much stress on diplomas. Competences and experiences are surely even important. The experience with the EMU-Pass proves the significance of acquired competences and skills.

For Europass and ECVET a good marketing strategy will be crucial. When people don't use these tools, the whole process is a wasted effort. Europe has to provide the means to convince his citizens of the benefits of these new tools. In the first place, we have to create a common language to understand each other.

4.9 Synthesis of the reactions of the participants concerning Europass and ECVET

Europass, the European tool for transparency of qualifications	
Green	
Europass is the best key for the future of mobility.	MT
Europass will enhance the chances of Lithuanians, who want to work in the other Member States. It will also enhance the quality of VET in Lithuania.	LT
These instruments are useful, practical and accessible to a wide audience. They represent good means for Europeans who want to study and work in different countries.	RO
Orange	
The language portfolio is a tool of auto-evaluation. This does not allow a validation.	
The European CV, integrated in the Europass, has only sense when it is associated with a framework of competences. It doesn't contribute to the social cohesion because it favours a certain elitism and the pregnancy of diplomas. It doesn't permit the valorisation of acquired competences.	B (fr)
How can we guarantee the individual and collective rights of the users? How can we transform the portfolio of competences in professional guarantees?	
The language portfolio has a limited value because it is a system of auto-evaluation. The combination with a formal certificate could improve the credibility and the utility of this tool.	RO

ECVET	
Green	
OK, because it allows to give individual and collective guarantees at the users (in contrast with the existing systems).	
ECVET creates a larger mobility	MT
OK, but there are three possibilities to accredit: the student, the school or an external organisation.	EE

It gives the possibility to create an own learning pathway in the domain of lifelong learning.	
ECVET encourages individual pathways and gives the possibility to validate professional acquirements. It is a practical tool which has the advantage that it is built on the experiences of ECTS. In comparison with ECTS, there are elements of added value.	RO
Red	
The objective of ECVET is not the mobility; the real objectives are equal chances and equal conditions.	EE
I am against, because only the social partners decide on the standards.	B (nl)
The participation of parents is important.	B (nl)
Orange	
Will they measure and compare competences? (qualitative values)	EE
The tools (ECTS and ECVET) are not sufficient to assure mobility. We need enough financial ressources to design an equitable procedure.	B (fr)
Can we imagine ECVET without a link with a reference system of competences? Aren't we taking a risk to provide building stones without a plan to use them?	B (fr)
Which quality levels and which levels of real integration do they aim when they provide such a short timing to implement ECVET?	B (fr)
What cohabitation is possible with the ECTS for higher education? For instance, an academic bachelor is worth 180 ECTS, a professional bachelor 180 ECTS plus X ECVET.	F
How can we pass the obstacles between higher education and VET? How can we reduce the financial and administrative obstacles to implement ECVET?	RO

4.10 What do we have to keep in mind? - Marc Durando

4.10.1 Common reference framework – Elements emphasized by the round table

- ◆ The role of vocational training, in particular its attractiveness compared with the benchmarks. By enhancing transparency, everybody has the possibility to make progress. This concerns the question of transparency as a tool of social cohesion. How? Transparency is necessary but not always sufficient...
- ◆ There was a consensus on the European reference framework on qualifications. In the forms, which the participants filled in, there were few references to this issue. However, there were many questions. This framework necessarily touches on the development of a zone of mutual trust.
- ◆ Is it wise, relevant or useful to bring about reconciliation between the approaches of VET and higher education? We heard this question several times. They use different approaches, but they are not necessarily contradictory, they could eventually be compatible.
- ◆ At the end, and this is worth mentioning, we got a presentation of a sectoral tool (EMU-pass). This tool is created by a union of employers and allows transfer, within a sector, of skills and competences throughout Europe.

What are the questions about a common reference framework?

We shall retain only a few issues and questions on for possible further debate.

- ◆ One or more credit systems (ECTS, ECVET)?
- ◆ There will be eight reference levels, but many participants mentioned that the basic skills don't appear clear enough in

this framework. However, these basic skills have to return in the reference levels.

- ◆ We can also wonder about the complementarities with other classifications. Someone noticed that there is a strange parallel between on the one hand the competence levels and on the other hand the levels of education. Thinking of this remark, we can ask the question: Am I more competent because I followed enough years of study? Can we link competence on the level of education? It is a vast debate.
- ◆ We have heard reactions on transparency, on respect for diversity and we have to proliferate the tools. It all depends on how we analyse this problem. Will respect for diversity really lead to more transparency?
- ◆ What do we expect of a common reference framework? We probably need a debate concerning the different positions. Some persons will choose for the smallest common denominator. They reduce the European framework to the minimum, to be able to continue with a national approach. It is the logic of the resistance towards changes. Others are extremely in favour of a change. Please, give us a real European reference framework, on which we can support to set up the necessary reform of our system. What do we expect? Let's hope that Maastricht will give us some elements. The answers on these questions should not be technical but political.

4.10.2 Validation of non-formal and informal competences - Elements emphasized by the round table

- ◆ The presentation of the Transfine-project introduces an interesting element: it is one of the first moments where we could see a connection between institutional reflections, ministerial experts in the working groups and the field, where providers work. Pat Davis has pointed to the key

role of the NGO's in this process of validation and that is important to keep in mind. They are essential players.

- ◆ We were reminded of the learner centred approach.
- ◆ It is not sufficient to think, to reflect and to have these tools available. It is also important to let people know they exist. It is necessary that the citizen knows where to find this information.
- ◆ Then we have got a presentation of two national instruments, a French one and a French-speaking Belgian one. It was difficult to summarise because we heard about the VAE coming from the VAP after the CQS (all these are French acronyms). The Belgian system of validation of competences doesn't go as far as the French one, because it doesn't not necessarily end with certification. But both systems have the same aims.
- ◆ The basic functions of the validation systems are functions of information, guidance, validation and some certification. Therefore, it is essential to include the social partners. Some participants wonder in their written reactions about the weight of the social partners in this process of certification. Some of them point out that the social partners are not empowered to certify and others that a equal representation is not a the same as domination by the social partners. This was mentioned by a large part of participants. The general reporter only echoes of these written interactions, without making a judgement.

What are the questions about the validation?

- ◆ How can we link the Copenhagen process with the field? We have the impression that we live in two worlds. At one end, there are many persons working at the Copenhagen process. At the other, we have teachers and trainers, providers, who are working on projects, in particular in community programmes such as Leonardo. We don't have feel that the results of these projects are used to support the work of the experts.

- ◆ We can also wonder if the real experts are not working in the projects and not in the technical working groups. The real expertise is in the projects, because they are making and developing everyday Europe.
- ◆ We have also learned that, before making common reference levels, we have to construct a common framework of concepts and definitions. Do we really talk about the same things in Europe?
- ◆ We also start to see, and this was confirmed in the other round tables, that we have different approaches. One is based on diplomas and another on competences.

4.10.3 Europass - Elements emphasized by the round table

- ◆ Is Europass the tool of transparency, the contribution to transparency to enhance mobility? Carlo Scatoli has presented this tool. Open or closed? With or without an integration of a sectoral approach? With tools such as ECDL? There was a debate, there were no answers.
- ◆ Naturally, there will be more trust with more transparency.
- ◆ It is the only moment where we were aware of the contribution of the Europass on the issue of guidance.
- ◆ Of course we touched on the problem of the accessibility to information and the danger of exclusion of lower skilled workers. Shall a fully electronic Europass lead to an elite use of this tool?
- ◆ Is this the best way to take competences into account? This is a question of Gregor Saladin, the Swiss representative of the European Metal Union (a federation of employers), who presented the sectoral EMU-pass.
- ◆ Thus, it is important to reflect on the methods of implementation of the Europass in the future and on the experiments, which shall be made.

4.10.4 ECVET - Elements emphasized by the round table

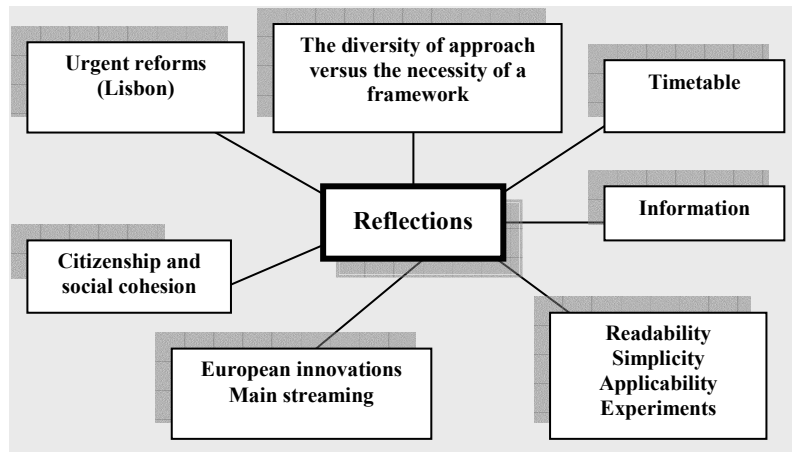
- ◆ What can we retain on ECVET? One, it is a developing project, two, it is very complex. ECVET is developing principles of operation; it will have an impact on the existing systems. It will not be a simple tool.
- ◆ It will be a new fact in learning pathways. It will be a new means to manage, define or organize learning pathways.
- ◆ We can wonder about the application of ECVET in higher education. This was mentioned by two persons in their written reactions. It will be interesting to see how universities will recognize themselves in this approach. However, the universities are number one in professional education. The university is more than knowledge in an ivory tower, in Europe many universities are involved in professional development.
- ◆ Are there two different approaches? Are they contradictory or not? The ECTS uses grades and diplomas, based on duration. ECVET uses training objectives and is based on learning outcomes.
- ◆ A last question concerned the level of national and European decision-makers. What can be the contribution of the communitarian programmes in this experiment? Seeing that we will have some legislative actions and some common provisions... seeing that they will start with some experiments...what will be the contribution of the communitarian programmes? What will be the legitimacy of the use of the public communitarian means of Leonardo according to ECVET?

4.10.5 What is the effect on citizenship, on social cohesion?

- ◆ This was one of the major objectives of this conference. But, it is not easy to summarize these round tables, although we had some excellent presentations. They focussed on the necessary conditions, under which these new tools could enhance social cohesion.
- ◆ We already have said that ECTS and ECVET measure different things, but they are not fundamentally contradictory. An attempt to try to start with a change of some elements in ECTS causes problems. We took 15 years to convince the universities that it should be important to create European instruments of transparency. Therefore, now let's try to assure that ECTS works. Later, we can build bridges between the two systems.
- ◆ The Europass, independent of its elitist deviation, has to concern everybody. Europass is not only a tool, which favours mobility. It should go further. Europass can contribute at the improvement of our systems. This is the problem of the political acceptance on the level of the Member States or the regions.
- ◆ We have to wonder about the acceptance of our systems at the European social model that we wish to develop. We have to strive for a solution of this basic problem, what do we expect from Europe.
- ◆ We may not forget the regulating role of the public authorities, in particular concerning the debate on the principles of equity and equality.
- ◆ We mentioned the danger of marketisation, starting from the example of ECDL. To avoid such changes, we essentially have to adopt the joint management. From the moment where there is a danger of marketisation, we can set up some tools. The joint management also represents some guarantees to assure that everybody's interests will be taken into account.

- ◆ The implementation of the disposals will be expensive. We hardly spoke about money. We don't really know what all these tools will cost, but it is sure that the implementation of ECVET will be very expensive on the level of the Member States and their systems. Therefore, we will rapidly see a self-limitation, as mentioned by Marc Thommès. On which base and with which priorities will we agree to limit the costs and how will this happen?
- ◆ We also need an appropriation of these tools by the citizens. This is the question of information. This is important. It should be interesting to know if there is an inquiry of Eurostat about the number of directly involved persons, who know what is happening at the European level. Europe for the citizens, it is a debate and an interesting challenge.
- ◆ An interesting element to keep in mind concerning ECVET, is what was said by the union representative Chris Serroyen. The obstacles for lifelong learning are essentially linked with the duration, with the dispensation for learning and with the time persons can or cannot spend. Therefore, ECVET can contribute to an optimization of the duration of a training, in proportion to the achieved credits. The possibility to accumulate credits can enhance the participation in lifelong learning. This is one of the benchmarks of Europe concerning education and training.

4.11 Reflections - Marc Durando



- ◆ What do we do with the urgency of the reforms? Two or three times, there was spoken of the urgency, but what do we do? Nevertheless, a Europe of the providers exists. It is real. They are working. What is the structural feedback? How can we take into account what is happening in the field concerning the systems and the powers of decision. This is actually the issue. Talleyrand said: 'When it is urgent, it often is too late.' Let's hope, there is no total urgency!!
- ◆ On the one hand, there is the diversity of approaches; on the other hand, there is the need of a framework. This is a truly political debate. It is a true debate about the positions, which should be taken concerning the principle of subsidiarity. What do we expect of Europe on this level?
- ◆ We didn't really discuss about the time factor. For instance, ECVET, we are experimenting. At which moment will ECVET have the same position as ECTS? Are we speaking of 15 years, 20 years or do we think of an earlier implementation? On which moment will we dispose of all the elements, of all the cards in the game of education and training?

- ◆ Which information and which information process? This is certainly the weakness of the Commission. They do many things but they often fail at the level of the supply of or the access to information. This deserves certainly more directive actions, which will permit us to get access to the information on a more pertinent way.
- ◆ We will also keep in mind the principles of readability, simplicity, applicability and experimentation. We may not forget one thing: technical working groups are necessary, but we also have to experiment. When we start experimenting, we will deal with the problem of European innovations within the framework of the programmes and with the problem of the place of the European programmes in these disposals. We cannot ignore programmes as Leonardo, Socrates. One of the issues is the famous, very often mentioned, mainstreaming of these programmes. How can we integrate the results of communitarian innovations? How can we measure the effects of return, which specific innovations cause in the systems by the adaptation of existing disposals or by the creation of new disposals?
- ◆ At last, we may not forget that all of this should contribute to strengthen the concept of citizenship and to enhance social cohesion in Europe.
- ◆ There is no doubt that CEDEFOP is a necessary partner in this European innovation. They make it possible to work not only on the comparability but also on the European innovations. They allow us to see to what extent the European innovations on the level of the programmes have an influence on national or regional disposals.

To finish, maybe there is another way to approach Education and Training. 'The engineers that we are educating and training in our faculties and our schools will be working within five or six years. The teachers, which we are instructing, will communicate their knowledge to pupils, who will start their professional life within 15 years. They should be adapted to this future world, not to the

world, in which we live now and even less to the world of our childhood in which each of us always has the tendency to replace himself subconsciously. When we think of the way knowledge and methods are passing on now and when we see the pace, at which the world is changing, it is normal that we are confused. A 50 years old teacher passes on knowledge, which he has obtained 25 or 30 years ago, to his pupils, who will use it 10 or 15 years later. The period of communication of knowledge runs this way to some 40 years. This is two times longer than the period, which involves the big transformations caused by human beings.¹⁹

This is maybe the mission of our systems of education and training.

¹⁹ Extract of Gaston Berger – Sciences humaines et prévisions – La revue des deux mondes, N° 3, 1957

5 POLITICAL VISIONS AND STATEMENTS OF EUNEC

5.1 The statements of EUNEC²⁰

EUNEC is particularly concerned about the role of education and training in the personal development of learners and in the reduction of social inequality. EUNEC hopes that the search for transparency of qualifications will contribute to an equal access of all learners to a qualification and to more social cohesion.

We want to stress the following topics:

General principles

1. The construction of transparency of qualifications is a process, which can assure the recognition of experiences, of initial education and continuous learning and of informal and non-formal learning. Therefore, it is a factor of social promotion to all European citizens.
2. The objectives of creating transparency in qualifications have to integrate the five following dimensions:
 - a. focus on the learner by valorising flexible, diverse and efficient ways of learning
 - b. lifelong learning
 - c. mobility
 - d. durable integration in the labour market and in the society
 - e. accumulation of acquired competences, rather than display of errors.

²⁰ The General Assembly of EUNEC debated on these statements on the last day of the conference in Brussels. The statements were prepared at the seminar in Riga and got their final redaction by a team of the CEF and the Vlor, under supervision of the Executive Committee. You can find the results of the debate in the annex.

3. Transparency of qualifications should also contribute to create more chances for the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. under- and unskilled workers,...). We certainly need qualification levels for all categories of competences, even for the learners with the most feeble competences, on condition that it is not a mere statistic instrument.
4. Without touching the principle of subsidiarity, EUNEC claims that common European principles for transparency are important, but they must respect the country's specific economic and cultural context. However, Europe has to provide a common language and a common reference frame to improve the communication on qualifications.
5. It is important that common instruments for transparency of qualifications use a broad concept of durable professionalization and employability in the long term. In the discussion with stakeholders and the European institutions, EUNEC will emphasize the importance of this broad concept.
6. Equal access to a qualification and to lifelong learning enhances European social cohesion. Therefore, it is necessary that the European Union, in co-operation with all the partners in VET, creates the conditions for a real recognition of qualifications and gives the right of a geographical, professional and social mobility to all the citizens of all Member States.

Area of application

7. In the context of lifelong learning, the construction of a transparency of qualifications touches not only the vocational education and training but also the secondary and higher education. This implies coordination between the Copenhagen and the Bologna process.

Tools

8. In order to be useful for all citizens, tools to enhance transparency must be simple and practical. They must be understandable and manageable for everyone. Still, guidance should be provided if necessary.
9. The development and the implementation of any initiative to enhance transparency have to reinforce the efforts already made to clarify the concepts in use.
10. Tools to enhance transparency (Europass, validation of competences, the credit transfer system for VET, etc.) have to be developed in a common dialogue with all the stakeholders (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers).

Involvement of all the partners

11. Transparency of qualifications and the question of enhancing equal access to qualifications are strongly influenced by the economic conjuncture and the developments on the labour market. Nevertheless, the education field must have the possibility to take part in the political debate; more particularly, it should be involved in the implementation of the tools of transparency. Where their role is important, the NGO's also have to be consulted.
12. In the context of citizenship, it is necessary that learners should be involved in the process of reflection on the evolution in VET.
13. In order to develop a real participation in the Copenhagen process, it is necessary that the abundant information already available should be accessible and comprehensible to the education field and its partners.

14. A coordinated communication strategy towards the public opinion and the employers and employees in particular is necessary to strengthen the public awareness towards more transparency of qualifications. This strategy could create the indispensable mutual trust and strengthen the credibility of the system to employers and employees. To enhance the confidence in the system, both at national level and European level, it is necessary to involve all the local partners (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers) in the process.
15. Changes in the VET-system cannot be realised without the active collaboration of the providers of vocational education and training and the teachers or trainers. However, such a change shall only be possible when the European Union and the Member States provide real implementation strategies, accompanied by the necessary means. It is important to maintain a bottom-up approach based on common principles

5.2 Transparency of qualifications in the French Community of Belgium and in the Walloon region - Marie Arena

Minister president of the French Community, responsible for compulsory education, Minister of the Walloon region, responsible for vocational training of adults.

5.2.1 The importance of transversal competences

In the complex institutional context of Belgium, the introducer has described very well my functions and authorities. These authorities give me the opportunity to link education, training and lifelong learning. I can work in a large area concerning the acquirement of competences. Unfortunately, in contrast with my Flemish colleague Frank Vandenbroucke, I am not the minister of employment. A few years ago, I had this authority, but then I was not minister of education. Today, there are many discussions on the convergence between employment and education. The French community has chosen to split the two functions. The reason is that the French community does not want to orientate too rapidly the education field in the direction of employment. This sort of orientation is often an example of short-term policy.

5.2.2 Transparency and power

Today's theme is the transparency of qualifications, in matters of training and competences. First, I want to say that everybody, who has worked in management, knows that grey areas are areas of power. These grey areas give people the possibility to take possession of these zones, because they are not clear. This power is often in favour of the person, who uses it and in disadvantage of a collective approach. This is one of the reasons why enterprises search for a system of full quality. This quality system avoids grey areas and gives no one an authority that he does not have. In the world of education and training, we have to deal with the same problem. When there is no transparency of qualifications and knowledge, these are zones of power. For instance, enterprises and

employers can demand an over-qualification in periods of slowing economy. In periods where there are fewer people in search of employment than there are jobs, employees can take the power. Workers without or with lower qualifications can use this situation to require a higher salary or to obtain a better position. These are examples of dysfunction. A company, which demands over-qualification and does not recognise the competences of the employee and therefore does not pay him the necessary salary, creates a dysfunction. An employee, who takes advantage of the situation, to obtain a higher position, without having the required skills, creates a dysfunction because the company cannot carry on that way. Therefore, it is important to eliminate the grey areas, to give correct information at all levels (regional, national, European) and at all times (in a period of slowing or booming economy). This transparency should reinforce and facilitate employability but also, and that is my concern, active citizenship, social integration and personal development of individual persons.

5.2.3 The transparency of qualifications in the French Community and in the Walloon region

The question is how we can work effectively on a transparency of qualifications. We have been opting for a method of consultation, a method of partnership and dialogue. When we speak of transparency, there are many actors involved: the individual, the employee, the future employee, the pupil, the student; we have also the public training providers, the private training providers and we have naturally the industrial world. These are the so-called social partners, the representatives of the employers and the representatives of the trade unions. Thus, we will work together with all the actors in the field.

When we work on the theme of lifelong learning and training of adults, this cooperation is not so difficult. In that area, there is a tradition of social consultation. As part of interprofessional agreements, there is an important investment in the matter of training, which is already discussed between the social partners, the training providers and the political authorities.

It is not so easy when we enter the education field. This is a much more closed world. Here, social consultation with different players is considered a little bit as a factor of perversion of the education system. Introducing discussions with the social partners is introducing short-term values in the education field. However, education should be a process and an investment in our society on the medium- and the long-term.

Therefore, when we want to start a dialogue on education and training with social partners, trade unions and employers, we have to take some precautions. On the one hand, we have to make the debate fruitful; on the other hand, we must prevent a transformation of the education system into a system that is totally focussed on the labour market. For instance, today, we need so many computer specialists, so we will form this amount. Tomorrow, we don't need such type of specialists, so these competences will not be recognised any more. Working this way, competences will last no longer than three years. This is not really the system we want to develop. We want to open doors but we want to keep in control of the process. Therefore, we will see to what extent we can open doors.

5.2.4 The action of the French Community-Walloon and Brussels regions towards a strategic contract

On the level of education, we are working at a so-called strategic contract on education. This contract will give the broad outlines for the term 2010-2015. It will emphasize two pillars that we consider essential.

5.2.4.1 The basic skills

We would like that the majority of young people should acquire the basic skills. We want to avoid mechanisms of exclusion, which end in the fact that some persons don't have a place in society. Almost everybody should get access to these basic skills that allow personal development and active citizenship. This does not include an obligation of results but we want to achieve at least an obligation of effort.

5.2.4.2 Orientation towards qualifying studies

How can we revalue qualifying studies? When someone has acquired the basic skills, he can start thinking of a sort of orientation. This orientation should also consider a vocational guidance, even in the adolescence. Here, we start to work at a sort of orientation. A first crucial point is how we can organize, objectively and with quality, this orientation of adolescents of 14 years.

We want to achieve an orientation of high quality by creating transparency. We would like to start gathering, together with the social partners, complete information about the exercised professions in their companies. This complete information includes also the information on the asked competences, as broad as possible, in these professions and on the ways to achieve these competences. Here, we have to create a close partnership between the world of the companies and the world of education. This partnership should work on the identification of professions, not on a short term but on medium or long term, on a description of the necessary competences and on the possible branches of study, where people can acquire these competences. This is a first level of transparency that does not exist in the French Community at the moment.

For instance, when a young person wants to become a civil engineer, we cannot say easily what the exact content of this profession is. We can certainly say which branch of study he has to follow but it is very difficult to say what sort of work he will exercise and in what sort of company. As civil engineer, you can do some tasks in one company, but other tasks in another company. We can say the same thing about a lawyer. The area of possibilities of this profession is very extensive.

Nevertheless, it is important that we can present to young people the whole area of possibilities of a profession. Working together with companies can help us to give information as complete as possible. This really is the first level of transparency, which is necessary in the guidance of young people.

Why are we so interested in orientation and guidance of young people? Because we are aware that a positive choice towards a profession is a guarantee of success, not only in this future profession but also in the study and training that he chose to acquire the competences of this profession. Negative and forced choices often end in a failure. Afterwards, at the age of 25 or 30, we have to regain these young persons, who made insufficiently founded choices. This recuperation demands an enormous investment of work. Therefore, investing in guidance, with as complete and adequate information as possible, is a win-win situation. It is advantageous for the learner and it is advantageous for us, because we will have less difficulty to fit him in the society.

5.2.5 Qualifying studies and work-linked training and apprenticeship

The second important action is to work on work-linked training and apprenticeship. Here, it is also important to find a close partnership with the business and industrial world, not to deliver them unprepared young persons, but to permit young persons, in function of identified competences, to complete their theoretical studies at school with acquirements in a real firm.

Plastering a wall of 2 meters in a workplace at school is not the same as plastering a wall of 5 meters in a company. There, you have to build a scaffold and take care of the safety rules. Work begins at 8 a.m. and ends at 17.30 p.m. Notions of productivity, time, security, performance have to be acquired in the context of an enterprise. These competences should be learned from the beginning of a vocational training. Therefore, we have to work on sandwich courses. We do not say that it is the role of the companies to give this training, but we want to complete specific competences, determined on the level of the education system, with the reality in an enterprise.

We also have to be very clear in defining the role of the enterprises in this process. If a young person completes his knowledge with an apprenticeship in a company, it will be necessary to certify this acquired competence. The question is ‘Who may certify?’ My point of view is that we must leave the authority of certification to

the public sphere, to the field of education. Companies do not have to make certifications. The company is an important partner in training, but it may not have the authority of the certification of acquired competences.

5.2.6 Lifelong learning

If it was sufficient to get a scholar education to guarantee the personal development until the retirement at the age of 65, we did not have to talk any longer about what is happening after the compulsory education. However, we know that our society is organized in such a way that learning has to continue during the whole life. Naturally, this includes the competences acquired in education, but also the competences acquired outside education.

Outside education, there are two ways to acquire competences. The first way is very simple. It is the formal training. You go to a public or a private training centre and you attend at a training course. This course gives the right to attend at certain modules or to an official or non-official certification. Anyway, you will obtain a document, which proves you attended this course.

The second way is much more complicated. It is the acquirement of skills and competences on the working floor. At the moment, these competences are not recognised at all in the Walloon region. This is very strange, because we are always talking about a society of lifelong learning. That is the reason why the French community is working at a dossier to recognize these acquired competences. This has to guarantee the mobility of employees in a company, to another company, between companies and even intersectoral.

5.2.7 Validation of competences

Therefore, we want to design a service, which makes it possible to recognize elsewhere acquired competences. This is a very complicated matter. You have to bring together the actors of education and the actors of formation. You have to know that these competencies belong to different authorities in the French-speaking part of Belgium. The actors of training come from the sector of employment. When you work on the validation of competences in the context of lifelong learning, this is naturally a concern of the

sector of employment. You have to define how competences can be proved in the context of a promotion, in the context of a job or as part of a change of job. We had to bring around the table the social partners, the trade unions and the employers. I have to admit that it was not easy. Everybody participated with his own ideology, with his own opinion in this debate. For instance, will the validation and the recognition of competences give the right to a higher salary? The employers were in favour of the recognition of competences, because it should allow them to identify the real competences of their employees and to recruit the right competences. However, giving financial rights to these competences in a company was a bridge too far for them.

After all these debates, we have created a consortium of validation of competences. The objective of this consortium is to define, all together, the competences needed to exercise a profession. We do this all together: employers, trade unions, training providers and education. We describe knowledge and capacities you need to know to be able to exercise a profession.

Every individual person has the right to validate his personal competences concerning an exercised profession. We will not give this tool in hands of the employer who could say to his employee: 'You have to validate your competences and on this base I will see whether I keep you in service or not, or give you a promotion.' It is really an individual right, which is given to individual persons in function of their scholar education and training or their professional career. I think that this is important for two reasons.

Firstly, it is really a recognition of an individual track. I often have met employees who made their career in a complete other direction than this of the diploma which they obtained. I think for instance of lawyers, who often make a career in the management of companies. We can say the same of chemists. And, how many computer specialists have a diploma of informatics, which corresponds with their competences and skills. We find it an obstacle to their personal and individual development if we ask them to go back to an education system to get the recognition of their competences. Therefore, it was necessary to go further and to be more flexible concerning the recognition of these skills. It really

is a promotion and a recognition of the individual effort and that is good.

Secondly, it is important that someone can make an inventory of his competences. In that way, he can see what he is missing to get a good position in the labour market. Therefore, it is important to have a tool to help this person. If someone wants to orientate his career in another direction, we can tell him where he stands. We can recognize his acquired competences and tell him what he has to do to obtain more qualifications. In that way, he does not have to start from zero. He can complete the competences he already acquired either in education or in a formal public or private vocational training or because of an individual effort. In the Walloon region, we want to raise the percentage of participation at training systems. Therefore, this tool can also facilitate the access to training courses.

This new service will start in September this year. It took a lot of time because the consortium had to develop many tools concerning the evaluation of competences. Now, we have the pattern, so we can start testing these competences in the most objective way, together with the social partners. This system has to permit us to obtain the pursued objectives.

Nevertheless, there are also three dangers concerning this service.

I already said that there is a danger that the business and industrial world considers this as tool for its own purposes and not as a matter of an individual person. I do not diabolize them, but there is a real danger they will use this system to cast doubt on certificates given by the education system. For instance, you are a qualified physician and you work in a firm. This enterprise can be of the opinion that you are not the best physician of the world and therefore she can push you to validate your competences. When it turns out that, on the base of the validation of competences, the result is less good than your educational certification is presuming, the company could use the system to destabilize the educational validation system. This is not our objective. We do not want to devalue the education system at all. Therefore, we need beacons to avoid misuse of this service, which is made for personal

development. We may not let it use for the contrary. The system of validation of competences never may question certifications obtained in education. Educational certifications should be of lasting value. We will have to guarantee that their will not be a conflict between the two systems.

A second problem, that we have met, is that we must avoid effects of notoriety in vocational training. What do I mean with these effects? You have heard in my speech that, when I spoke of vocational training, I mentioned public and private providers. I will give an example. Nowadays, there are private trainings in informatics provided by international companies, which sell software. I will give no names, there are more than 3000 such companies. So, there is a tendency to recognize only these trainings, because all the companies use this software. We have to stop this evolution. The service of certification is not a tool, which validates an effect of notoriety concerning mark X or Y, but it should be a tool, which validates competences. We have to avoid that these competences should be linked too closely at one product used at a certain moment. For example, if someone wants to be a specialist in computer networks, he does not have to be able to work with product X or Y. He has to be able to use all kind of tools, Linux or others, to solve problems, whichever product he uses. This is a very complicated problem. But, we have to avoid that competences are linked too closely at the logic of the market or at the use of machine X or Y. Therefore, we have to permit an identification of competences that is as broad as possible. I spoke of informatics, but the same problem occurs in the graphical industry. There are not 3000 four-colour printing presses. If we are linked too strongly to the industry, we risk organizing the promotion of a brand. So, we really have to be alert.

A last danger, it is often mentioned in Europe, is the question which competences we will validate. Knowledge, skills or also personal attitudes? We have to be careful with the validation of personal attitudes. We only may validate what is strictly necessary for the practice of a profession. For instance, when you work in a commercial function and you want to validate your competences, it is obvious that being extremely introvert and unable to

communicate are relevant attitudes. But, in another context, being extremely introvert can be irrelevant. So, we have to be very careful with the validation of personal attitudes. They are by nature less open to objectification; misuse is much easier.

5.2.8 Conclusion

You should have noticed that recognition and validation of competences are placed in a context of personal development and not in a restraining or excluding context. All the tools, which we have developed, have to meet this generous objective. We have to avoid all the tendencies, which create segregation and exclusion of persons, who should enter in the logic of validation. I would like to give you rendezvous in two years. This is the period, which we will need, to evaluate the two new mechanisms, the strategic contract in education and the validation of competences. We have ambitious goals. But, I think that in a society, which is really focussed on lifelong learning, everybody shall share these objectives.

5.3 Transparency of qualifications in the Flemish Community - Ludy Van Buyten

Secretary-general of the Ministry of Education (Flemish Community)

L. Van Buyten begins with congratulations towards EUNEC. The department of Education in Flanders will take along the EUNEC-statements to the different moments of consultation, which will prepare the Maastricht Communiqué. They agree with most of the statements and the public servants will use this support to speak with more power and authority on the European forum. The conference used an interesting way of working. The abstract method of open coordination became on this conference much more concrete on the domain of vocational education and training.

The Maastricht Communiqué is searching for a consensus between 25 Member States. The ministers of Education and the social partners of 32 countries will sign this document. We (The Flemish department of Education) are very pleased with the emphasis on two items:

- the attention on vulnerable groups and social cohesion,
- the innovative approaches on learning.

The conference of Maastricht will focus on two initiatives, which were already mentioned in the declaration of Copenhagen (2002):

- Common reference levels as the basis of the European framework of Qualifications,
- The European Credit transfer System for VET (ECVET)

The common reference levels are the basis of everything we would like to achieve on the area of transparency. They are the missing link. Without common reference levels, we cannot build a European framework and we cannot work at a credit system. The fact that we are developing common reference levels is a breakthrough.

The strengthening of the link between education and the labour market fits in a vision, which would like to reconcile these two logics and cultures. There is more than one bridge between the

world of working and the world of learning. There are many crossing-places, which result in win-win situations for everybody. Transparent qualifications can help as anchorages, while citizens are passing through learning pathways.

Transparency of qualifications should also enhance social cohesion. We have to take care of vulnerable groups. Nobody should be excluded of the process of lifelong learning.

The development of a reference framework of qualifications is necessary. A global framework should enclose all the qualifications, diplomas, certificates and recognitions of competences. In the future, it will enclose all the official learning results, ratified by the Flemish Community.

Therefore, we need some basic conditions.

- Everybody has to use univocal concepts. Competences and qualifications are key concepts.
- Every kind of vocational training, in or outside the school, has to be enclosed in the framework.
- The recognition of competences cannot replace certificates. The accumulation of competences can lead to get a certificate on the condition that it is integrated in and completed by elements of a general education.
- Specific final attainment levels of vocational training in the education system and standards for titles of professional competences in systems of recognition of non-formal and informal learning have to be geared to each other.
- Providers of training can design their own training programmes. But, they have to make clear where and how their training fits in the framework.

We are pleased with the European developments (Bologna, Copenhagen) to enhance coherency, transparency and equivalence of qualifications. We think for instance at the Europass. Here, it is very important to develop an equal entry to the system and guidance on demand. The recognition of informal and non-formal learning will shorten and facilitate the learning process and enhance the chances on the labour market. The development of a

quality assurance framework is crucial. The methods of evaluation and the ways of validation are important criteria. The nomination and the accreditation of evaluating and validating institutions will also be crucial. That way, we can build flexible pathways, which will respond to talents, interests and ambitions of young persons and adults. The conversion of competences in transparent qualifications can be improved by the creation of a modular education system based on credits.

We have to encourage cooperation and synergy. If we want to realise our ambitious plans, we have to bring together all the providers of vocational education and training. More transparency in supply, flexibility and the use of e-learning are key elements in this debate.

In Flanders, the concentration of work, education and training in the authority of one minister offers exceptional opportunities. During this legislature, we will bring together in one policy all the running initiatives on the crossroads of education, training and work. Learning and working will be placed in a continuum.

To give these innovations a chance, we have to start with little steps, in consultation with the social partners. On the long term we can establish 'experimental gardens' (cf. Accent on Talent) and learn cross-border on a European scale.

We cannot permit ourselves the luxury to make no progress in vocational education and training. The question is no longer if we will go for it. The question is how we shall go for it.

5.4 Closing of the conference - Fons van Wieringen

What have we done during this conference? We have gathered a lot of information about the recent evolutions in Europe in vocational education and training. At the end of this conference, maybe we can formulate five criteria, to which new systems have to correspond.

- They have to support a broad concept of learning. There must be different pathways to acquire competences and qualifications.
- They have to be fair, with attention for vulnerable groups. The discussion on equality and equity is very important.
- They have to be multifunctional. They have to create new possibilities of transfer, accumulation and validation.
- They have to be simple. We must avoid bureaucracy. Mutual trust is indispensable.
- All the stakeholders have to be involved in the implementation of these new systems.

The president thanked all the participants and speakers. He had a special word of thank for Simone Barthel, the chairwoman of the conference. Finally, he expressed the hope that EUNEC should be able to organize more such conferences in the future.

6 THE COPENHAGEN PROCESS: OPPORTUNITIES, PITFALLS AND PROSPECTS

As a result of the conference and taking into account the recent developments which have lead to the Maastricht Communiqué, EUNEC wants to clarify its statements. In this chapter, we will give a contextual reading of the statements. In this way, we want to contribute explicitly to the debate on vocational education and training in Europe. The Copenhagen-process and the mission of education and training

EUNEC is particularly concerned about the role of education and training in the personal development of learners and in the reduction of social inequality. EUNEC hopes that the search for transparency of qualifications will contribute to an equal access of all learners to a qualification and to more social cohesion.

The education policy of the European Union got a strong impulse with the declaration of Lisbon in March 2000. To become the most competitive knowledge economy in the world, a dynamic education policy in the Member States is necessary. Knowledge and competences of employees become more and more crucial production factors. In that sense, the initiatives of the Union concerning education and training are inspired by economic objectives. The Copenhagen process aims at a transparency of qualifications to enhance the mobility on the labour market. The employability of employees will also increase because there will be a clearer view on their competences. Also the possibility to increase someone's competences by lifelong learning will be stimulated.

As Domenico Lenarduzzi correctly mentioned at the conference, a vital labour market, with more people finding a better job, is a guarantee to maintain the European system of social security, with its very large protection. The maintenance of the European model of social security surely contributes to more social cohesion in the European societies.

EUNEC has another approach of education and training. EUNEC's approach does not exclude a more labour market orientated vision, but it wants to broaden and to complete it. EUNEC looks at the education policy from the vision of all the stakeholders in

education and training: the providers, the pupils and their parents, the teachers and trainers in the broad society (employers and employees). We also want to apply this approach in continuous and lifelong education and training.

From an educational point of view, education and training have to educate young persons to become critical and mature citizens, who are able to take up responsibility for their personal life and in society, and who can find their place in the labour market. Especially in vocational education and training, we may not forget this emphasis on citizenship and personal development. EUNEC wants to link the research on competences and the transfer of competences with the notion of active citizenship. The qualifications that young persons acquire in education and training, have to guarantee, next to their integration in the labour market, that they can take up social responsibilities.

Equal opportunities are the second explicit emphasis of EUNEC. All citizens have to get large opportunities to develop competences. Education systems do not only have to guarantee the equal access of young persons and adults but they have to design instructional processes in a way that even people with learning difficulties can acquire the necessary competences. This must allow them a full integration in the labour market and society. The tools that Europe is developing on a transparency of qualifications have to guarantee the inclusion in the education system of vulnerable groups and people with learning difficulties. The care for equal opportunities is not a necessary consequence of the development of a knowledge-based society, on the contrary. A knowledge-based society, which is primarily focused on economic development, will not integrate people with inadequate competences. Therefore, they risk to be marginalised. The choice for equal opportunities is thus a political and ethical consideration.

In the third place, EUNEC thinks that education and training have to deliver an important contribution to a new social cohesion, in the Member States but also as European in the European Union. The transparency of qualifications can be the basis of mobility, which gives new chances for the concept of a European citizenship. This means that education and training cannot be limited to the

preparation of the entry in the labour market. Education and training have to work on the education of values and attitudes for young persons. Even in the professional and personal training of employees, we must have attention for this broad concept of education.

These conclusions have important consequences for the process on the level of the Union and the Member States.

We see a special need, on the regional or national labour market as well as on the international level, to develop tools to be able to 'read' qualifications. We see that at the moment multinationals (Microsoft, fastfoodconcerns, Coca-Cola) implicitly or explicitly use their own qualification structures. Sectors also take initiatives in that direction. To ensure the employability of their graduates, educational institutions will consider these frameworks. The opinion on the mission of education and training, as mentioned above, will not play a role.

Therefore, it is socially not desirable that only the industry gets the authority to develop such tools. It is desirable that the tools of transparency of qualifications are a public good, legitimated by the broad society. The public authorities have the task to regulate in this matter. They have to watch over four things:

- the general social concerns (environment, safety),
- the durability of professional competences,
- the broad personal education of young persons (including competences of citizenship),
- the guarantee of equal access to competences, by making social corrections.

The common European principles have to guarantee the readability of the national tools of transparency of qualifications.

In the development of reference frameworks, next to the public authorities, two other social sectors have to be involved. The social partners have to report the needs of the sectors to the education and training field. But, the educational sector also has to play a very active role in the debate; this is a guarantee for a broad concept of education. The education field also is familiar with the interests

and the needs of their pupils and students. They can balance the 'learnable' competences and the personal characteristics. They can define the competences for starters in the labour market and the competences that have to be acquired by skilled workers in the work place. The education sector has to convert the diversity of functions and professions in clearly profiled course programmes. This has to lead to durable employability. Therefore, education councils can play an important role in the national debates on the tools of transparency.

6.1 General principles

6.1.1 A competence-based approach, independent of the learning pathway

The construction of transparency of qualifications is a process, which can assure the recognition of experiences, of initial education and continuous learning and of informal and non-formal learning. Therefore, it is a factor of social promotion to all European citizens.

The development of transparent qualifications has to lead to a better functioning labour market, in the Member States as well as at the level of the European Union. Employers will be able to make a better assessment of the competences of employees, without regard to the place where he was trained: in education, in a training centre, in the home state or in an other Member State. Moreover, the labour market will be able to use the competences, acquired in the workplace, in volunteer work or in social life in general. By a better mobility, the European labour market can be organised more flexible. Nowadays, mobility only concerns very highly educated persons and unskilled workers. A transparency of qualifications in VET can offer new mobility opportunities to average skilled workers.

But, transparency also has an educational meaning.

The possibility to assess competences is necessary to design efficient learning pathways and to support the process of choice of studies. During a long time, a certificate was considered as the only

instrument to prove the competences. At the moment, the situation is changing. Now it is important to evaluate the initial situation of the pupil or the student correctly. Otherwise, there will be inadequate learning pathways. They can be a useless repetition of competences, which the student already has acquired, or the courses can be much too difficult. Therefore, it is important that the tools are independent of the learning pathways. Where the competences have been acquired, at the workplace, in a school, by lifelong learning or by informal and non-formal learning is not relevant. The tools will allow to organise guidance on learning pathways and choice of studies.

6.1.2 The educational surplus value

The objectives of creating transparency in qualifications have to integrate the five following dimensions:

- **focus on the learner by valorising flexible, diverse and efficient ways of learning;**
- **lifelong learning;**
- **mobility;**
- **durable integration in the labour market and in the society;**
- **accumulation of acquired competences, rather than display of errors.**

EUNEC asks that the tools that are developed should be usable from the point of view of the labour market as well as from the educational point of view. A qualification framework, reference levels and a credit transfer system offer new opportunities to give the vocational education and training a new impulse. This is necessary because we can state that the vocational learning pathways are not attractive enough for pupils and students.

The tools linked with the Copenhagen-process start from the accumulation of acquired qualifications and competences. Especially the credit transfer system, but also the reference framework of qualifications, provide the basis for this accumulation. They offer the possibility to concentrate the learning pathways on the learning needs of young persons and adults. Now

the learning pathways are strongly determined by what schools provide and by a year group system. In future, the policy makers must aim for more flexible and more individual pathways.

This way of thinking, with a maximum valorisation of former acquired qualifications and competences, provides also an excellent basis to lead adults to lifelong learning. Adults ask for short and targeted trainings to meet their learning needs. The combination of work and family is for many persons very hard. If employers ask an effort for lifelong learning, the pressure of time can be a big problem.

Mobility will surely contribute to a more flexible labour market but it has, with a good agogic and pedagogical interpretation, also an important educational dimension. The enlargement of the horizon, the development of intercultural competences and the development of a European spirit are the most remarkable elements. Therefore, it is very important that the transparency of qualifications causes not only a professional but also an academic mobility.

The principle of accumulation also has as a consequence that education systems can anticipate on the need for success experiences of young persons. Young persons often choose for VET after a failure in general education. This failure is very negative for their self-image and often leads to a negative attitude towards school and learning. Such young persons are the most vulnerable ones to leave school without qualifications. A credit system, eventually linked with partial qualifications in the reference framework, can permit to send them into the labour market with a qualification. We can also expect that this form of recognition will stimulate them to take up their studies later.

6.1.3 Attention for vulnerable groups

Transparency of qualifications should also contribute to create more chances for the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. under- and unskilled workers, etc.). We certainly need qualification levels for all categories of competences, even for the learners with the most feeble competences, on condition that it is not a mere statistic instrument.

Transparency of qualifications is often seen as a necessity for university graduates and executive staff members in Europe. Nevertheless, it is also important for the average and low qualified employers.

A knowledge society risks to become a dual society. Sociological research points out that the level of qualification is very significant for a person's place in society. Therefore, people will strive for a qualification that is as high as possible, for themselves and for their children. Considering the importance of knowledge and a high level of competences, there is a real danger that low or unqualified persons will not be able to work in knowledge-based companies. Without targeted efforts to enhance their competences, they are threatened to get marginalised.

Therefore, it is important to make an inventory of basic competences. We also have to work on partial qualifications that are recognised on local and European level. In that way, low and unskilled persons can be integrated better in society.

A framework of qualifications, which describes the lowest level too high, could have as consequence for the low skilled persons that their qualifications have no place in the framework. This could cause an even larger exclusion of the labour market. It is crucial that the transparency of qualifications is not only meaningful for the highly educated, but it also has to be a steppingstone to training and work for the low skilled.

For this reason, it is also important that the framework of qualifications includes the validation of informal and non formal learning experiences. In the present conditions, persons without a diploma or a qualification are often considered as persons with few

competences, even if they have a large experience in a sector. In fact, they do not have a low level of competences but they cannot prove it with a certificate. Therefore, it is desirable that the Member States should use and implement the developed European tools in their systems of education and training: Europass, the validation of informal and non-formal learning, the reference framework of qualifications, ECVET...

6.1.4 A common language within the subsidiarity principle

Without touching the principle of subsidiarity, EUNEC claims that common European principles for transparency are important, but they must respect the country's specific economic and cultural context. However, Europe has to provide a common language and a common reference frame to improve the communication on qualifications.

To be able to accumulate acquired competences, we need a common reference framework of qualifications in Europe. This framework, with generally recognised levels and including a modular VET-structure in all the Member States, will have to take into account the local and cultural characteristics. This means that all the Member States will have to review their systems of VET and validation.

EUNEC insists on the development of a set of tools on the transparency of qualifications, which guarantees the readability of national qualifications in other contexts. It would be pernicious to aim at a more radical harmonisation in VET, comparable with the Bologna process in higher education. The context of higher education is different from the context in VET or in adult education and training.

VET offers a range of courses, provided by diverse educational sectors, training providers and sometimes even by the sectors and the enterprises. This diversity meets with the special needs of the regional, national, sectoral or international labour market.

Besides the specific needs of the labour markets, there is also the own context and tradition of every Member State concerning

education policy: the extent of centralisation, the role of private providers, the impact of local authorities, the relationship with employment policy, etc...

EUNEC thinks that it is important that every Member State can shape its own policy concerning VET, taking into account the local context but watching over the readability and transparency on national and European level. EUNEC finds that the tools for the readability of qualifications as they are developed in Europe now, fit perfectly in this principle of subsidiarity.

6.1.5 Education and training lead to a durable employability

It is important that common instruments for transparency of qualifications use a broad concept of durable professionalization and employability in the long term. In the discussion with stakeholders and the European institutions, EUNEC will emphasize the importance of this broad concept.

The term ‘employability’ is the object of a debate, especially in Latin countries. They fear that the emphasis on employability will narrow the broad task of education and training to the preparation for a job. Fewer and fewer employees are sure of a stable career for the same employer or in the same sector for a long period. Employees are considered to anticipate flexibly on career opportunities and on rapid changes in the production process and the organisation of companies and sectors. Employees should have the right and the possibility to permanent updating of skills and competences. This way, they will be able to stay employable in their own enterprise or sector or to change to an other sector.

For EUNEC, it is obvious that education and training use a broad concept, in the field of general education as well as in the field of professional training. This broad education and training guarantee the lifelong possibility to keep up with new evolutions and to acquire new competences when employees need a reorientation of their career.

EUNEC thinks that the European tools may not exclude a broad concept of education and training. It would even be better if these tools could be an incentive to design a broad concept of learning.

As we said above, EUNEC insists on a broad social debate, with all the stakeholders in education, on the framework of qualifications and the other tools of transparency. The employers or the sectors cannot take such fundamental decisions only by themselves. Education councils are necessary consultation partners in this debate.

6.1.6 Right on geographical, professional and social mobility

Equal access to a qualification and to lifelong learning enhances European social cohesion. Therefore, it is necessary that the European Union, in co-operation with all the partners in VET, creates the conditions for a real recognition of qualifications and gives the right of a geographical, professional and social mobility to all the citizens of all Member States.

Mobility offers not only the possibility to organise the labour markets more flexibly. It provides also a contribution to the development of a European identity. It offers a chance to cultural exchange on the European continent. Employment in an other Member State asks for a full recognition of the qualifications and competences by the labour market of this state. As we mentioned above, mobility is nowadays especially oriented to highly educated and unskilled persons. Mobility is not a reality for the average skilled. These persons often work under the level of their qualification because they cannot get their competences recognised. They often have to do unskilled labour. In that sense, the recognition of competences in the whole European Union is not only a matter of geographical and professional mobility, but also of a real social promotion for many employees.

On the other side, recognition has to play its role in the labour market of the country of origin. Forced mobility for reasons of a badly functioning labour market must be restricted to the

minimum. This means that employees must be able to realise their qualifications in the own labour market.

The recognition of experience and competences requires common or comparable procedures of validation in each Member State. It is the issue to guarantee the access of everybody to training possibilities and to the validation of competences. This access should be independent of the level of education or of the country of origin.

6.2 Area of application

In the context of lifelong learning, the construction of a transparency of qualifications touches not only the vocational education and training but also the secondary and higher education. This implies coordination between the Copenhagen and the Bologna process.

EUNEC states that the Union is designing common principles for the development of national qualification frameworks, but only within the framework of the Copenhagen process. This should mean that the structures would be limited to vocational education and training.

Nevertheless, we see comparable evolutions in higher education. On the conference in Berlin, the ministers authorized for higher education, pled for a qualification framework for higher education linked on broad descriptors that describe the level of competence in general terms. These descriptors are now available in the form of the Dublin-descriptors. EUNEC thinks that the development of both frameworks has to start from common principles, which ensure interchangeability. The first reason for this complementarity is that the majority of the courses in higher education prepare for the labour market. Therefore, they must be involved in the global logic of vocational education and training. In that sense, research on qualification frameworks offers the possibility to link the Copenhagen and the Bologna process (cf. the Maastricht study of Tom Leney).

In the majority of the Member States, vocational training is linked with the employment policy, while initial vocational education is embedded in education structures (secondary education, short higher education courses). The major challenge is to provide links from one system to the other by recognising the acquired competences. At the moment, higher education is working with ECTS. Every Member State should think about bridges between both systems and develop a credit system for vocational education and training.

But also in general, it is desirable to design coherent learning pathways overlapping the different levels and sectors of education. Higher education is a logical follow-up of the compulsory education. In that sense, it is desirable that the general secondary education should find a place in the framework of qualifications. This must allow to create useful transitions and bridges for pupils and students who do not follow an appropriate learning pathway. It is also necessary that we design learning pathways for second chance education, different from the initial education. This guarantees the full civil effect of these pathways. The reference framework of qualifications gives the opportunity to get the different education systems out of their ivory towers and to establish coherent systems of lifelong learning. As Domenico Lenarduzzi said, these systems have to interfere with each other, just like the links of a chain.

The Member States have to design such a qualification structure, taking into account their own national specificities in education and training. Nevertheless, the European Union could give some incentives to persuade the Member States to use a coordinated approach.

6.3 Tools

6.3.1 Simple and practical tools

In order to be useful for all citizens, tools to enhance transparency must be simple and practical. They must be understandable and manageable for everyone. Still, guidance should be provided if necessary.

Much more than in the past, the concept of durable professionalisation on one hand and of lifelong learning on the other, starts from a more diversified career history. In a career, there are different transitions, for which the individual has every time to acquire new competences. In this concept, one departs from the fact that each individual has the capacity to describe clearly his learning needs, in order to develop his personal and professional life. It is also evident that each individual can outline the right learning pathways to achieve these objectives. However, this requires effective learning strategies and an efficient use of time.

It is obvious that not all individuals have these capacities. We risk creating a gap that limits the chances of integration in labour market and in society. Therefore, it is important that public authorities establish systems of lifelong guidance. They should also create tools that permit to individual persons to evaluate their acquired competences and their learning needs in a realistic way. They should also have the possibility to communicate correctly about these issues with employers and education institutes. Here we think on systems of validation of acquired competences, the diploma and certificate supplements and the Europass as a whole. Common European principles should guarantee transparency and comparability of the national approach. These tools also have to be manageable for the users. Therefore, the Union has to incite the Member States to guarantee the usability and the simplicity of the tools.

6.3.2 Common concepts

The development and the implementation of any initiative to enhance transparency have to reinforce the efforts already made to clarify the concepts in use.

EUNEC states that many concepts are vague and multi-interpretable, for instance: informal and non formal learning, competences, skills, qualifications, attitudes, knowledge etc... We use these notions more and more in the jargon of education and training. A transparency of qualifications supposes a clear definition of these terms. Starting from these definitions, each Member State can design its own methodologies.

There is even a discussion on the area of application of the Copenhagen process. This deals not only with good definitions but also with different education traditions and different sensitivities in the Member States. It is for instance remarkable that the notion 'employability' evokes other ideological reactions in the Anglo-Saxon than in the Latin countries.

EUNEC considers the work of CEDEFOP on this issue as very useful. It is an important starting point for the development of a clear framework of definitions and concepts in all the Member States and languages.

6.4 Involvement of all the partners

Transparency of qualifications and the question of enhancing equal access to qualifications are strongly influenced by the economic conjuncture and the developments on the labour market. Nevertheless, the education field must have the possibility to take part in the political debate; more particularly, it should be involved in the implementation of the tools of transparency. Where their role is important, the NGO's also have to be consulted.

Tools to enhance transparency (Europass, validation of competences, the credit transfer system for VET, etc.) have to be developed in a common dialogue with all the stakeholders (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers).

Transparency of qualifications is a service to employers and employees, by which the labour market can use and evaluate the competences of an individual more efficiently. But, transparency is not sufficient to vitalise the labour market. Education and training cannot solve all the problems of a stagnating labour market. Nevertheless, they can contribute to the education and training of the influx of a permanently evaluating labour market.

The tools for a transparency of qualifications, instruments of internal communication between education institutes and of communication between the fields of education and of labour, cannot be established unilaterally. The needs of the labour market, the concerns of the education field and the education culture of the Member States have to be items of the debate. Therefore, the tools will be a result of a negotiation between education partners and socio-economic partners. Even the socio-cultural field can provide an important contribution to the development of second chance learning pathways.

As we mentioned above, public authorities have to confirm the framework of qualifications and the accompanying tools as public goods. This supposes that they guarantee a juridical foundation of these instruments.

6.4.1 Communication with pupils and students

In the context of citizenship, it is necessary that learners should be involved in the process of reflection on the evolution in VET.

Above we mentioned that the research on transparency of qualifications should be the result of a negotiation between the socio-economic and the education partners. Nevertheless, it is as important that the learners should be involved in this thinking process on vocational education and training. We already pled for simple and transparent tools. Only when we involve the users in the development of the tools, it will be possible to guarantee their workability.

If the tools are negotiated with the social partners, there is also a real influence of the trade unions, which look after the concerns of the employees and thus indirectly of the learners.

6.4.2 Communication with the education field

In order to develop a real participation in the Copenhagen process, it is necessary that the abundant information already available should be accessible and comprehensible to the education field and its partners.

The information on the Copenhagen process is abundant; things are evolving very rapidly. The impact of the research in VET is immense. Nevertheless, we state that this impact hardly reaches the education field. It seems that the expected evolutions, as result of the common principles and the enhanced cooperation, miss the educational sector and the teaching staff completely.

In any case, it is important that the information is available and manageable for the educational sector. A big problem is the fact that the information often exists only in English. This causes problems for many persons in the field and for the average population. It obstructs the possibility to get informed and to participate at the debate.

Of course, when the texts are officially adapted, they are translated in all the languages of the Union. But the difficulty appears earlier. When you cannot read the preparatory texts in your own language, it is difficult to get familiar with the ideas, the concepts, the resolutions and the recommendations and to evaluate the impact of these developments on each of us.

Starting from the principle of subsidiarity, many responsible persons in education and many teachers and trainers think that what is happening in Europe will not have an influence on their job. They underestimate the influence of the open method of coordination on the ideas and the practice of education. The experience in higher education proves that education institutes are, sooner or later, obliged to adapt themselves to the European reality.

6.4.3 Communication with the public opinion, with employers and employees

A coordinated communication strategy towards the public opinion and the employers and employees in particular is necessary to strengthen the public awareness towards more transparency of qualifications. This strategy could create the indispensable mutual trust and strengthen the credibility of the system to employers and employees. To enhance the confidence in the system, both at national level and European level, it is necessary to involve all the local partners (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers) in the process.

We already mentioned that establishing transparency of qualifications is a matter of both social partners and education field. The system has to build up credibility from both sides. Therefore, not only the education field needs a communication strategy. The social partners, employers and employees, will also need information on the transparency of qualifications in their negotiations, to be able to tailor the level of competences of an employee to a place in the labour market.

The common reference framework of qualifications should lead to a better understanding of the acquired or the required level. The use of tools as Europass, the validation of competences and ECVET should support teachers, trainers and social partners.

This supposes a broad communication, information and training strategy, which has to promote the use and the implementation of these new tools. To change the state of mind in the Member States, the influence of the public opinion and existing customs has to be taken into account.

6.4.4 Consultation with school boards and school staffs

Changes in the VET-system cannot be realised without the active collaboration of the providers of vocational education and training and the teachers or trainers. However, such a change shall only be possible when the European Union and the Member States provide real implementation strategies, accompanied by the necessary means. It is important to maintain a bottom-up approach based on common principles.

The debate on the transparency of qualifications is not so easy. Above, we mentioned the confusion of concepts in different education systems and languages. As we said before, the omnipresence of English does not facilitate this issue. By translating the texts only at the end of the decision-making, cultural divergences often appear very late. Moreover, in these conditions it is very difficult for national or regional providers of education and training to participate in the debate. EUNEC wants to support the dissemination of the ideas of the Copenhagen process and to stimulate the debate. Therefore, we also translated and edited these texts in English, French and in Dutch.

Before the providers of education and training can formulate a statement, they are superseded by the rapid evolutions. A good communication with the providers, with clear time schedules, is necessary to give them the possibility to formulate their opinion. All scientific research on educational innovation and change proves that innovations have few chances to succeed when the partners in the field do not subscribe the objectives.

Jens Bjornavold mentioned in his lecture that the Copenhagen-process didn't pay enough attention at the role of teachers and trainers in the innovation of VET. This is absolutely a gap in the work of the Commission until now.

7 A QUICK VIEW ON THE EUROPEAN ACTUALITY AND EUROPEAN REFERENCE TEXTS

7.1 The adoption of the Europass

On 15 December 2004, the decision n°2241/2004/CE of the Parliament and the Council installed a European framework for transparency of qualifications and competences (Europass)

On 31 January and 1 February 2005 Europass was presented on a conference in Luxembourg in the presence of Mady Delvaux-Stehres, minister of Education and Vocational Training of Luxembourg, which fills the presidency of the European Union, and of Jan Figel, European Commissioner of Education, Training, Culture and Multilingualism.

7.2 Enhanced European cooperation in VET

On 15 November 2004, the Council reviewed the resolution of 19 December 2002. The Council and the representatives of the Members States fixed the future priorities of enhanced European cooperation in VET.

7.3 The Maastricht Communiqué

On 14 December 2004, the Maastricht Communiqué revisited the objectives of the Copenhagen Declaration. The ministers of Education and Training of 32 European countries and the social partners agreed to strengthen their cooperation concerning:

- modernising their VET systems in order for Europe to become the most competitive economy,
- offering all Europeans, whether they are young people, older workers, unemployed or disadvantaged, the qualifications and competences they need to be fully integrated into the emerging knowledge based society, contributing to more and better jobs.

7.4 Follow-up of the Copenhagen process

- ‘Achieving the Lisbon goal: the contribution of VET’ by Tom Leney and others, November 2004.

- ‘Vocational education and training – key to the future. Lisbon-Copenhagen-Maastricht: mobilising for 2010.’ CEDEFOP synthesis of the Maastricht. Study by Manfred Tessaring and Jennifer Wannan, 2004.

7.5 Some important documents concerning the transparency of qualifications

Adopted on 28 May 2004

- Conclusions of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on common European principles for the identification and validation of non-formal and informal learning.
- Council conclusions on quality assurance in VET.
- Resolution of the Council and the representatives of the governments of the Member States meeting within the Council on strengthening policies, systems and practices in the field of guidance throughout life in Europe.

7.6 Proposal for the next generation of a EU programme in the field of lifelong learning

On 14 July 2004, the Commission adopted a proposal for the next generation of a EU programme in the field of lifelong learning. The new proposal is built on experience gathered with the existing generation of programmes, such as Socrates (education) and Leonardo da Vinci (vocational training). Based on this experience, and taking into account new policy developments, the Commission proposes major changes. These changes are mainly the result, on one hand, of critical remarks offered in the mid-term evaluation reports on Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, and, on the other, of a public consultation process launched in November 2002 and concluded at the end of February 2003, in which all major stakeholders in the field of education and training had the opportunity to participate.

The new Integrated Action Programme in the field of lifelong learning comprises sectoral programmes on school education

(Comenius), higher education (Erasmus), vocational training (Leonardo da Vinci) and adult education (Grundtvig), and is completed by transversal measures and an additional Jean Monnet programme focusing on European integration. The proposed budget is € 13.62 billion for the total period 2007-2013.

The aim of the new programme is to contribute through lifelong learning to the development of the Community as an advanced knowledge society, with sustainable economic development, more and better jobs and greater social cohesion. It aims to foster interaction, cooperation and mobility between education and training systems within the Community, so that they become a world quality reference.

As regards the four sectoral programmes, quantified targets have been set in order to ensure a significant, identifiable and measurable impact for the programme. These targets are as follows:

- For Comenius: to involve at least one pupil in twenty in joint educational activities, for the period of the programme;
- For Erasmus: to contribute to the achievement by 2011 of three million individual participants in student mobility under the present programme and its predecessors;
- For Leonardo da Vinci: to increase placements in enterprises to 150,000 per year by the end of the programme;
- For Grundtvig: to support the mobility of 25,000 individuals involved in adult education per year, by 2013.

7.7 Career guidance

In December 2004, the OECD and the European Commission published a handbook for policy makers concerning career guidance. You can find it on the internet.

http://europa.eu.int/comm/dgs/education_culture/publ/orientation

7.8 The follow-up of the Bologna process

Ministers responsible for higher education in 40 European countries will meet in Bergen on the 19-20 May 2005 to take stock of the progress of the Bologna Process since the Berlin meeting in September 2003 and to set directions for further development towards the European Higher Education Area (EHEA).

<http://www.bologna-bergen2005.no>

7.9 The European presidency

- 1st semester 2005: Luxembourg
- <http://www.eu2005.lu/en/index.html>
- 2nd semester 2005: The United Kingdom
- 1st semester 2006: Austria
- 2nd semester 2006: Finland

8 ANNEX: DEBATE ON EUNEC'S STATEMENTS

1 The construction of transparency of qualifications is a process, which can assure the full recognition of prior learning experiences and of informal and non-formal learning. Therefore, it is a factor of social promotion to all the European citizens.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0
We need to develop a set of common definitions. What is the difference between informal and non-formal?			
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
We have been working at the demonstration of competences for 15 years (output model). We have to reinforce the system.			
P	0	1	0
It is a factor, but it is not sufficient to assure a complete recognition.			
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0
We have to enhance the credibility of certifications and to stimulate the motivation for lifelong education and training.			
EE	0	1	0
A complete recognition is impossible.			
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	76,9%	23,1%	0,0%

2 The objectives of creating of transparency in qualifications have to integrate the four following dimensions:

- focus on the learner by valorising flexible, diverse and efficient ways of learning,
- lifelong learning,
- mobility,
- durable integration in the labour market.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0

We would like to add a reference to the accumulation of learning by experience. This is a major item for a paradigm in education and evaluation.

NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0

The system has to be directed at the needs and the interests and aspirations of the different citizens. We have to facilitate the credibility by making dynamic changes in the society and the knowledge economy. We must work at the participation of the social partners and the construction of bridges between education systems and the demands of the labour market.

EE	0	1	0
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Maybe the integration in the society is more important than the integration in the labour market.

LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	84,6%	15,4%	0,0%

3 Transparency of qualifications should also contribute to create more chances for the most vulnerable groups in society (e.g. under- and unskilled workers,...). We certainly need qualification levels for all categories of competences, even for the learners with the most feeble competences.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
To obtain these objectives, we have to create tools for a positive discrimination.			
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0
We need levels of qualification, which are more refined within the 8 levels.			
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	0	1	0
The system could be very difficult for non qualified workers.			
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0
EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
This is very optimistic.			
G	1	0	0
L	0	1	0
It is a positive evolution that the competences will be recognised, if it is in function of the qualification of workers. To present diplomas at the most feeble groups is of no use if these certificates are not recognised by the employers. Then, it is only useful for statistics.			
Total	76,9%	23,1%	0,0%

4 Without touching the principle of subsidiarity, EUNEC claims that common European principles for transparency are important but they must respect the country specific economic and cultural context. However, Europe has to provide a common language and a common reference frame to improve the communication on qualifications.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0
We need more references to the reality of education.			
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
We are searching for a model of transparency, not for a simple convergence.			
P	1	0	0
These decisions and measures on a European level can also represent a challenge and a stimulus to the introduction of reforms. On an international level, we can go beyond the difficulties.			
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	0	1	0
There are significant differences between the national and the European context.			
EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
We agree if a common language does not mean that Europe will impose this common language.			
Total	84,6%	15,4%	0,0%

- 5 It is important that common instruments for transparency of qualifications use a broad concept of durable professionalization and employability on the long term. In the discussion with stakeholders and the European institutions, EUNEC will emphasize the importance of this broad concept.**

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
The term ‘durable professionalization’ does not reflect enough the diverse professional pathways, which can be horizontal and vertical (intersectoral and promotion).			
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	1	0	0
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
This is the case for initial vocational education and training and for the integration of unemployed persons.			
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0
EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	0	0	0
Total	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%

6 Equal access to a qualification and to lifelong learning enhances European social cohesion. Therefore, it is necessary that the European Union, in co-operation with all the partners in VET, creates the conditions for a real recognition of qualifications and for the mobility of all the citizens of the Member States, particularly the citizens of the new Member States.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
We have to specify the type of mobility.			
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	1	0	0
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	0	1	0
The last remark may disappear.			
EE	0	1	0
The mobility is not an objective.			
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	84,6%	15,4%	0,0%

- 7 In the context of lifelong learning, the construction of a transparency of qualifications implies not only the vocational education and training but also the secondary and higher education. This implies coordination between the Copenhagen and the Bologna process.**

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0

We suggest cutting the statement in two parts: the integration Bologna – Copenhagen and questions on the implication in the primary and general education.

NL	0	1	0
UK	1	0	0

Surely, but it will no be easy.

P	1	0	0
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It is important to avoid the risk, already mentioned, of creating two systems of certification, which cannot communicate with each other and are not linked with each other.

E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	0	1	0

In some countries, VET is a part of the compulsory secondary education.

EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0

Total	76,9%	23,1%	0,0%
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8 To obtain the goal of social cohesion, tools to enhance transparency must be simple and practical. They must be understandable and manageable for everyone.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0

We think that the instruments should be simple and practical for the policy makers. To change for everybody by all the citizens.

NL	0	1	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	0	1	0

What is the meaning of simple and practical and how can these tools contribute to a better social cohesion?

EE	0	1	0
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We don't need too simple tools or tools, which are only valuable on short term. Guidance is important.

LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	69,2%	30,8%	0,0%

9 Tools to enhance transparency (Europass, validation of competences, the credit transfer system for VET, etc.) have to be developed in a common dialogue with all the stakeholders (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers).

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0

It is necessary to develop means and investments in the education and training of teachers and trainers concerning the European common reference framework.

B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	1	0	0
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0

We have to assure the link between the systems of education and training and the demands of the labour market.

EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%

10 Transparency of qualifications and the question of enhancing equal access to qualifications are strongly influenced by the economic conjuncture and the developments on the labour market. Nevertheless, the education field must have the possibility to take part in the political debate; more particularly, it should be involved in the implementation of the tools of transparency.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	0	1	0

It is difficult to find an excellent and permanent connection work/training. Therefore, we have to develop people's capacities of learning and adaptation. We must also encourage national and European continuous studies.

B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0

We would like to make a distinction between the responsibility of education towards other sectors in the society and the implication of education in the debate of transparency.

NL	0	1	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0

It is necessary to take into account the viewpoint of the teachers, trainers and the persons responsible for education.

EE	1	0	0
LT	0	1	0

The free circulation of persons is very influenced by the economic conjuncture and the labour market. Nevertheless, the education field has to be involved in the implication of transparency.

G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	69,2%	30,8%	0,0%

11 In the context of citizenship, it is necessary that learners on the one hand, and vulnerable groups on the other hand, should be involved in the process of reflection on the evolution in VET.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
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F	1	0	0
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We can also rely on the work concerning non-formal and informal learning and on the experience of the NGO's.

B (Fr)	0	1	0
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The political representation (the representative democracy), the public powers and the social partners are the guarantees with regard to the vulnerable groups. We have also to develop mechanisms of consultation and participation, which distinguish the strategic, tactical and operational options. On these different levels, the participants are different.

B (VI)	1	0	0
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NL	1	0	0
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UK	1	0	0
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P	1	0	0
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E	1	0	0
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MT	1	0	0
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RO	0	1	0
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This statement suggests that vulnerable groups and learners are two different groups.

EE	1	0	0
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LT	1	0	0
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G	1	0	0
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L	1	0	0
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Total	84,6%	15,4%	0,0%
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12 In order to develop a real participation in the Copenhagen process, it is necessary that the abundant information already available should be accessible and comprehensible to the education field and its partners.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
We must inform, encourage, create and after all have synthetic and structured information, with a common language, common concepts and increased means.			
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	1	0	0
NL	0	0	1
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
Maybe a new aspect could be added to this need of a systematic communication to a broad public by identifying the particular needs, by assuring that everybody knows the tools of transparency and by adding a social value at the vocational education and training.			
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0
The dissemination of information is necessary to enhance the awareness of the different actors and to contribute at the creation of a positive attitude towards this project.			
EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	92,3%	0,0%	7,7%

- 13 A coordinated communication strategy towards the public opinion and the employers and employees in particular is necessary to strengthen the public awareness towards more transparency of qualifications. This strategy could create the indispensable mutual trust and strengthen the credibility of the system to employers and employees. To enhance the trust in the system, both at national level as well as at European level, it is necessary to involve all the local partners (social partners, VET-providers, teachers and trainers) in the process.**

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	1	0	0
Every Member State should officially subscribe this agreement in its education objectives.			
B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (Vl)	1	0	0
NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0
P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	1	0	0
EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	1	0	0
Total	100,0%	0,0%	0,0%

14 Changes in the VET-system cannot be realised without the active collaboration of the providers of vocational education and training and the teachers or trainers. However, such a change shall only be possible when the European Union and the Member States provide real implementation strategies, accompanied by the necessary means.

Country	Green	Orange	Red
F	0	1	0

What will we do with the informal and the non-formal learning? Here, the actors are not often teachers and trainers. We will have to take care for the integration of these sorts of learning.

B (Fr)	1	0	0
B (VI)	0	1	0

We have to distinguish the different levels of decision making. What is the role of Europe, the national states, the sectors, commerce? We insist on the importance of a strategy of implementation.

NL	1	0	0
UK	1	0	0

Some countries have efficient strategies of change, Denmark for instance.

P	1	0	0
E	1	0	0
MT	1	0	0
RO	0	1	0

The strategies of implementation have to be very sensitive towards the specificity of every national system of education and training. The coordination has to be a bottom-up approach.

EE	1	0	0
LT	1	0	0
G	1	0	0
L	0	1	0

Changes cannot be realised without consultation of the council, where all the partners are present.

Total	69,2%	30,8%	0,0%
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